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Some Realities For The Parlour Politicians

The newly-elected leader of the DUP is of the opinion that the world is 6,000 years old. That is a ridiculous opinion based on a book of fictitious tales. In this scientific age we know the world is a lot older than that. So how old is it? No figure springs to mind.

Science has been unable to find a beginning to anything but some local changes in our immediate neighbourhood. It has been unable to find a beginning of the whole thing. And, if a beginning cannot be found, the opinion that the universe had no beginning because it was always there arises naturally, even in the most advanced scientific minds. And, if it was always there, then it has no age. The philosopher Kant gave the matter some serious thought a couple of centuries ago and concluded that the opinions that the world had a beginning or that it had no beginning were equally absurd. And, in that case, the matter is not worth thinking about. It gets you nowhere in the end. And, in current affairs, a belief in 6,000 years is certainly no more disabling than a belief in 6,000 billion years, or in infinity.

The only relevance of the 6,000 years is its indication that Bible Christianity remains a constant orientating belief in Unionist Ulster after 400 years of existence, while Roman Christianity, established by Cardinal Cullen in Nationalist Ireland, has collapsed after less than two centuries without being replaced by any other orientating world view.

The Ulster Unionist Party broke apart in 1972 when Whitehall denied it a military role in the War launched by the IRA in 1970. It became three Parties—known as the *Treble U C*. One of them, led by Brian Faulkner, accepted the *status quo* while refusing to conduct a Government under it. Another, the *Vanguard Party* led by William Craig, effectively became an Ulster Independence party, declaring “*Ulster A Nation*”. The third, led by the Biblical fundamentalist Paisley, had a policy of proper integration of the North into the British state. Though Paisley was persuaded to de-emphasise

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President Higgins On The Irish Famine And Jerusalem Evictions

Why did RTÉ choose to omit footage of its report on the President’s Address from the RTÉ News website and Facebook page?

On Sunday, 16th May, the President of Ireland gave an Address in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, to mark the National Day of Famine Commemoration, where he stated

the following:

“The Times of London’, a newspaper frequently hostile to the efforts to relieve the Irish Famine, could editorialise in the 1880’s on what the significance of a growing proportion of the Irish in an emerging powerful nation would be. It was there in the US, one of the strongest countries of the future, they would ensure that the Irish Famine of the 1840s would become

EU: *Another talking shop?*

The EU launched its ‘*Conference on the Future of Europe*’ on 9th of May on the back of “*A Joint Declaration by all EU Institutions on the Conference of Europe engaging with citizens for democracy*”. This states its *raison d’être* as follows:

“Building a more resilient Europe 70 years ago, the Schuman declaration laid the foundations of our European Union. It started a unique political project that brought peace and prosperity, improving the lives of all European citizens. It is now appropriate to reflect on our Union, the challenges we are facing and the future we want to build together with the objective of strengthening European solidarity.”

And the more specific challenges are:

“Building a healthy continent, the fight against climate change and environmental challenges, an economy that works for people, social fairness, equality and intergenerational solidarity, Europe’s digital transformation, European rights and values including the Rule of Law, migration challenges, security, the EU’s role in the world, the Union’s democratic

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a central part of collective memory, and a significant element of United States politics. ‘*They will never allow us forget it*’, ‘The Times’ editorialised in the 1880s.”

Famine and displacement

“Yet the very vastness of these numbers of emigrants, and their vital importance to the course of Irish history, may sometimes obscure the enormity of the internal displacement, dispossession and forced migration during An Gorta Mór [The Great Hunger] and the decades and centuries which preceded it. The plantations, dispossessions and

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integrationism, his party has been the *de facto* British party in the North. In a dispute with ex-Conservative Minister Enoch Powell (who joined Faulkner's party), he asserted John Locke's "*social contract*" view of the State against Powell's absolutist view—with Powell, as we recall, being supported by the historian Marianne Elliott.

The point at issue was whether the requirement of obedience on the part of the subject—there was no British citizenship in those days—was conditional or unconditional. Was there a reciprocal relationship between the subject and the sovereign, or was the sovereignty of the State absolute and one-sided?

Paisley's social-contract view—that the State has obligations towards the subject, and that the loyalty of the subject is conditional on the State meeting its obligations—seems to have been reasserted by Joel Keys in his evidence to Westminster's *Northern Ireland Select Committee* on behalf of the *Loyalist Communities Council*.

The *Irish Times* comments that the election of Edwin Poots to the DUP leadership "*is a step backwards towards a more confrontational style of politics*". It says that "*his primary objective*" is removal of the Protocol (which governs trade between Northern Ireland and Britain under the withdrawal agreement). But, the paper says, the Protocol is the instrument of "*an international treaty*" and therefore all that Poots can do about it is "*huff and puff*". When the DUP members see that Poots can do no more than Arlene Foster did, they will leave him. Some will go to the even more fundamentalist Jim Allister and *Traditional Unionist Voice*, while others will go to the "*centre-ground*", the Alliance Party presumably. Therefore "*the elevation of Poots could well increase the potential for the growth of a strong middle ground alternative*", and "*the appeal of tribal politics*" would be undermined (IT 17.5.21).

Politics is a very confrontational business. It is so under democracy

where small differences are grossly exaggerated between rival parties. It is even more so in Northern Ireland, which is not a democracy and has never been a democracy. It is an undemocratically-governed region of the UK state, excluded from the party politics of the state. In democracies the electorate swings to and fro between the rival parties. In NI the rival political bodies are not parties. The main ones represent nationalities.

The *Irish Times* chooses to refer to them disdainfully as *tribes*. The formation of the Northern Ireland structure reinforced their existence as "*tribes*". There have never been electoral swings between these!

The middle ground between Unionist and Nationalist has never constituted an "*alternative*". It had a brief moment of illusory existence as an alternative after 1998, when Mallon led the SDLP and Lord Trimble led the UUP and they were both on a policy of breaking the Provisionals. But nothing came of it.

Gerry Fitt's insight told him that a Unionist is a Unionist is a Unionist. When the Union is what is at issue, adjectives have no currency. And, by the same token, a Nationalist is a Nationalist is a Nationalist.

The kind of thing the *Irish Times* means by the middle-ground is on the margins. The Alliance Party lives on the margins. In the classifications of the 1998 Agreement, it is *Other*. Because it is marginal, it can evade the issue and pick up the votes of those whose position is that they wish the world was not what it is and are determined not to deal with it as it is. (Its other source of support is tactical voting by minority populations stranded in areas in which they cannot possibly hope to elect a 'tribal' representative.)

Because Alliance was marginal, it was decided at the outset that it should have the Justice Ministry, which could not be trusted to either Unionists or Nationalists. But, if the Party grows beyond a certain point, it must become either Unionist or Nationalist—unless it strikes out on an Ulster independence course.

The *Irish Times*—Britain's newspaper in Ireland—was fiercely anti-Brexit and it is having difficulty in orientating itself after Brexit. It points out that the DUP might have prevented the Protocol by supporting Teresa May's deal with the EU. The paper, expressing the failed, patrician, Protestantism of the South, has never felt at ease with the very different, and very vulgar, Protestantism of the North, and therefore has never understood it.

Teresa May's deal would have kept the UK as a whole virtually within the EU, bound into its arrangements, but without representation in the governing body. The DUP, committed to leaving the EU for its own reasons, helped to ward off that half-way house, and helped Johnson to hold out against the attempt of the anti-Brexit majority in Parliament to prevent the Government from either governing or calling an election—without having the coherence to form a Government of its own—until the Scottish Nationalists buckled and allowed an Election to be held. And now the Unionists expect Johnson to deal with the Protocol compromise that was needed to get the Referendum result implemented.

Poots has indicated that it is not his intention to tackle the Protocol head on. His first task is to bring Unionism together for the next Assembly Election and win 45 seats—a majority—and then see what happens.

One thing is certain: Unionism cannot be united *against* what the IT calls its “heartland”—only *by* its heartland.

Between Unionism and Nationalism as political forces there is no “middle ground”. The difference between them is not comparable to the difference between political parties in a state. They are not, in the Six Counties, parties competing for the right to govern the State. The Six Counties is not a state. The issue is which state they should belong to. The region in which they operate is a politically disconnected part of the British state which is, in other respects, an integral part of the British state.

The 26 County state asserted *de jure* sovereignty over the Six Counties for 60 years. It revoked that claim of sovereignty in 1998 with the permission of the IRA and changed it into an *aspiration*. It is not an aspiration that is actively pursued by the old established parties of the Free State. They hoped and expected that Provisional Republicanism would wither away under the influence of the radical reforms it had brought about in the internal structure of Northern Ireland and the peace made possible by those reforms. But it did not wither away. It not only displaced the SDLP as the major Nationalist Party in the North, but re-established itself as a major party in the South, where it had gone into decline in 1926 with the formation of Fianna Fail.

In the mid-1920s the Party that won the Treaty War kept Fianna Fail out of the Dail by means of the Treaty Oath. In recent years the Treaty Parties (Fianna Fail having

Mediahous Ireland and Eoghan Harris

Further to the sacking of Eoghan Harris by the *Sunday Independent*, an interview with the new owner of that newspaper, Peter Vandermeersch, on RTE radio (The Business, 15 May 2021) is worth a listen. Its podcast can be accessed at this link: <https://www.rte.ie/radio/radioplayer/html5/#/radio1/21954116>

Regarding Harris, Vandermeersch said there was no doubt but that Alan English, the *Sunday Independent* Editor, was right in the action he had taken: Harris's hiding behind an anonymous Twitter account had been wrong. As he was an “important columnist”, it had been necessary to “think about the consequences” of sacking him over a 45-minute phone call with English, he said.

Asked whether he was angry about his wife, Francine Cunningham, being criticised through one of the Twitter accounts being linked to Harris, Vandermeersch said it was between “mildly irritating and not being thought about”. Regarding the accusation that his wife was responsible for ‘greening’ the *Independent Group* he said she was irritated that having been outside the country for 25 years and having a career as a corporate lawyer (not to mention that she has no connection with her husband's business), the assumption was still being made that because she was a Northern Catholic, she was some class of Provo.

In the light of all this, it is most unfortunate that Vandermeersch's interest in the *Independent Group*, now known as *Mediahuis Ireland*, is purely commercial.

What is needed in the Irish media after twenty years of Anglophile propaganda is precisely a “greening” of a significant player in that market. By that I mean shifting to a position sympathetic to Irish national culture, and viewing the world through that prism.

Since the national element in Ireland has always looked to the Continent rather than Britain for international support, it would make sense for *Mediahuis Ireland* to orientate its editorial identity around a position that is both European and national.

As well as restoring an element of diversity to media discourse in this country, such a change would assist the political class in adjusting to post-Brexit realities.

Dave Alvey

become one of them) have kept Sinn Fein out of Government Office on the grounds that it is a Fascist Party. The Party which alleges that Sinn Fein is a Fascist Party is Fianna Fail. Fianna Fail is in office with Fine Gael, which was founded as a Fascist Party in the early 1930s. In the thirties, when Fascism was a going concern in Europe, Fianna Fail as an Anti-Treaty Party fought off the threat of Treatyite Fascism with the active support of Sinn Fein.

Fianna Fail disowned its Anti-Treaty origins a generation ago, falsified its history, and went into decline, making way for the rise of Sinn Fein, which outvoted it at the last Election.

But Sinn Fein is not actually filling the position once held by Fianna Fail. It is ill at ease outside the Six Counties. Instead of standing by the state that was actually constructed by the nationalist movement in defiance of British power, it disparages it and declares itself willing to throw it back into the melting pot—at least its Leader does.

Thirty years ago the doctrine of *post-nationalism* was preached at the National University. And a book about the *end of history* by an American author became a world best-seller. The arrival of the era of the *Last Men* was announced. Henceforth the world was to consist of nondescript consumers in the world market. For the last US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, perfection would be reached when there was a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise in every major street in a world of streets.

In Ireland in recent times difference has come to be earnestly deplored as being divisive. The Black and Tans were to be commemorated in future as comrades of the Volunteers. There was even talk of professionalising the GAA. It began to seem that all that would remain would be the insidious force of music—the medium which Plato insisted should have no place in his orderly Republic. RTE had made a brave attempt to suppress it but had failed—and by trying to suppress it and failing had made a gift of

it to the other side—the historic “*illegal organisation*”.

Throughout this process of existential melt-down of the culture of Nationalist Ireland, Unionist Ulster remained what it had been ever since it took a stand against Cromwell on the ground of the Covenant in 1649 and declared support for the outlawed King Charles II.

Demands are now being made from various quarters for the holding of the Referendum on unification provided by the 1998 Agreement. The Dublin Establishment has no appetite for it, but at the same time it cannot opt for a Partition settlement.

Former Taoiseach Enda Kenny sold to the EU the idea that the Partition in Ireland was of a kind with the Partition of Germany. Even he must have known that there was no substantial resemblance between the two. The nationality on both sides of the German Partition was German. The Irish Partition ran between Irish and British nationality, though with an Irish minority on the British side. And the British nationality was not a mere extension of personnel of the British state, as the Anglican body in the South had been, but was the organic growth of an early 17th century colonisation—partly by migration and partly by official settlement. It had a will of its own—a thing which the Protestant Ascendancy of the Irish Parliament never had, even though it took advantage of England’s difficulty in America to gain Legislative independence in 1782.

It still has a will of its own and it seems determined not to tolerate the degree of unification by stealth achieved by placing the Irish economic border in the sea between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

The British Government too seems intent on eroding that economic border within the UK. And there are signs that it is feeling out the possibility of making Northern Ireland part of the general consciousness of the British public in a way that it has never been in the past.

The working out of this uncertain situation depends on the art of politics, rather than on determination by any overall force. And the art of politics is not something in which the EU excels just now.

Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin has said repeatedly that the holding of a Referendum would be divisive and he is against it. Whenever it is held it will be divisive, because it is about a division. But the holding of a Referendum is provided

for by the Agreement that ended the War and, insofar as the Dublin Government played a part in negotiating that Agreement, it insisted that there must be an Irish Dimension—which was divisive.

It seems probable that a Referendum will be held only if Sinn Fein establishes a position at the next Election that makes it impossible for a Government to be formed without it.

The Agreement, as far as we recall, provides for a Referendum to be held in the Six Counties, assuming that, since the 26 Counties has always represented partition as a basic national injustice, it is for unification as a matter of course. The decision is to be made by a majority: 50% plus 1, with the uniting to take the form of a Constitutional transfer of its semi-detached political position within the British state to full incorporation into the Irish state that actually exists, with the various Ulster forces then being left to find their place in the politics of the state, influencing it as best they can. This is what was NOT done with the Six Counties when they were made into Northern Ireland.

If the Referendumists do not stand by the Irish state that was actually constructed by the Irish independence movement, but posit an ideal state that it to be remade according to the heart’s desire, then they will only be chasing rainbows.

EU: Another talking shop? continued from p1

foundations, and how to strengthen democratic processes governing the European Union.”

These and many more are all very worthy aims and they seem to have only missed the promoting of motherhood and apple pie.

The Irish Government is taking a very cautious approach to this Conference along with 11 other Member States and has come out against any reforms that would entail a referendum. This is a very sensible approach if the grandiose purposes outlined so far are anything to go by. The State appreciates that in all such declarations the devil is in the detail

and in the deciphering of the actual meaning behind the political codes inherent in such declarations—and what is omitted is as important as what’s included.

Barry Andrews, a Fianna Fail MEP, has criticised the Government for its approach:

“Government must engage seriously in Conference on the Future of Europe.”

The Government has already adopted a curious position on the Conference on the Future of Europe which is due to start work in earnest on May 9th. Alongside 11 other member states, it has effectively decided to pre-emptively oppose any major changes that might be proposed by what is intended to be a citizen-led, bottom-up exercise in participatory democracy” (Irish Times, 3.5.21).

He goes on to quote a poll by the European Movement:

“The EMI poll published recently on Irish attitudes to various current legal obligations is worth thinking about. A majority of people polled (52 per cent) hold the view that now is the time to reform the EU even if this would result in a referendum. It would be wrong to conclude that this means that 52 per cent people are in favour of increased powers for the EU but at least it should encourage the Government to be open to the possibility of emerging opinions, particularly among young people. There was also, surprisingly, a majority for further co-operation with the EU on security and defence policy. As the late Brendan Halligan pointed out in this newspaper some years ago, “neutrality has become more a matter of theology than international politics.””

What does this mean? What actual “*defence and security*” concerns do young people have? Mr. Andrews does not specify but in the current western context it is a blindingly obvious code for a more aggressive attitude towards Russia—including military preparations and abandoning neutrality to participate fully in this. Russia is now strong and independent and that qualifies it as a threat to Europe by the powers that be! But where exactly is Russia threatening Ireland and Europe? Its most recent threat was to supply its anti-Covid vaccine if the Government and the EU allowed it to do so!

Russia has never been in the habit of threatening Europe but the reverse is undoubtedly true—and repeatedly so throughout history.

So what specific reforms does Mr. Andrews have in mind that he hints at as obliquely and as insidiously as possible? I suggest that, before he seeks to convince the Conference of what he has in mind, he

seeks to convince his fellow Irish MEPs, Clare Daly and Mick Wallace—who are voices of sanity in the European Parliament on the obnoxious Russophobia that pervades the place. He could start that debate tomorrow and not wait for these Conference arrangements to do so. That would tease out what exactly he has in mind on behalf of the young people concerned with their security and defence.

He goes on:

“Nevertheless, there is in my view a strong argument for increasing EU competence in the area of public health even if it requires treaty change and a referendum in Ireland. We can’t return to “business as usual” in the future and a broader discussion needs to take place about the global governance of the production, procurement and distribution of vaccines given the enormous gaps across the world.”

Very good idea. But how to get to the detail beyond just a ‘broader discussion’? The traditional Commission method for approaching such an issue was for the Commission to analyse the existing health services of each of the 27 member States in detail; compare and contrast them; highlight best practice and propose practical solutions to improve the service across the whole EU; and get the Council to agree them and, finally, Governments to implement them!

This would entail quite some work. There are a myriad vested interests in every country that are all well represented in the Brussels lobby world. And they have to be neutralised—for the most part. Not a task for the faint hearted. Mr. Andrews should propose, monitor and report regularly on such a project. Could he possibly do something more important?

I recollect a Commission official who had some words framed in pride of place on his office wall. They were the few words that survived from his initial draft for a run-of-the-mill Regulation after its scrutiny and amendment by numerous Committees and lobbyists right up to the Council of Ministers!

What pride there would be for a Commission official who could claim the same for his part in creating an EU Competence in the health service for the EU across its 27 Members rates—a health service that delivered for half a billion people!

Maybe the very quickly agreed commitment by the NATO members of the EU to spend 2% of their GDP on ‘defence’ might be a model here? Another per-

centage figure to be proposed for the peoples’ health service following that for their defence—or before? Maybe there should be a referendum on this? Some thoughts for Mr. Andrews.

He advises that “*There is no appetite for or interest in the EU institutions themselves or their relative powers.*” This is curious. Nothing to see here, apparently! But he must have noticed how a crucial existing power arrangement in the EU can be changed overnight by an office holder such as Ursula Von der Leyen. She certainly has an appetite for change. She has decreed that the Commissioners must be split 50/50 on gender lines and Member States must comply with this by proposing two candidates, with one being female. This overturns the most long-standing and proven arrangement for establishing the real nexus between Commission and Member States—the absolute right of each country to choose who to submit as its Commissioner. Yet this practice which was taken for granted since the inception of the Commission has been abolished on

a whim by Von der Leyen. And there was no Conference arranged to discuss this change in the power relationship between the Commission and the member States. The innovation is wrecking a crucial arrangement at the very centre on the EU.

In a related institution, the European Central Bank, Andrews must have noticed that Draghi has changed the whole basis of its operation by doing ‘whatever it takes’ to save the Euro—another fundamental change in power arrangements!

The difference between the two is that one is a wrecking development and the other a most constructive one that set the scene for a European recovery post-Brexit and post-Covid—and he is already implementing it in Italy.

But Andrews seems oblivious to these things. They are not to be discussed at all by this proposed all-encompassing Conference! If such an event were to transpire, the citizens on whose behalf it aspired to deliberate would see its fruits as gobbledygook from on high!

Jack Lane

President Higgins

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exclusions of the previous decades had created a particular congested dispersal of population on impossible holdings of land, with the poorest living in what were near serf-like conditions.”

“No people are, thus, better equipped to understand the impact of the term ‘eviction’ from this period than the Irish people and their friends in the United States or elsewhere, who are aware of the Irish experience. Irish people can understand so well the events that tragically are unfolding elsewhere, as I speak, in the Middle East. Evictions are provoking conflicts in States that, yes, are entitled to their security but who are violating the basic laws that are the tools of internationally-recognised protection against illegal eviction and destruction of homes of those whose rights are generations embedded, and should be acknowledged, and supported, by ALL in the international community.” (See <https://youtu.be/Yogxd-P1hNeA> from the 8th to the 11th minute of the President’s 30 minute address.)

Sunday evening’s RTÉ News, at both 6 pm and 9 pm, carried an excellent report by John Kilraine on the President’s address, which began with the President’s statement that that Irish people “*can understand so well*” the events unfolding in the Middle East as they commemorate The Famine. Kilraine’s report was accompanied by footage of the President delivering, with passion, the paragraphs

quoted above.

The text of Kilraine’s report can be seen on the RTÉ News website. But for news reports of significance, it is customary to also post the TV footage on both its website and Facebook page. Yet in this case there is a complete absence of RTÉ footage. Why? For fear ‘offence’ might have been caused by the President to one or more States?

The President has posted his delivery of the full speech on his own Facebook page. But, separately, he has also posted footage of him delivering the paragraphs quoted above. It would have been unnecessary for him to do so if RTÉ News had posted the footage of its own report.

Hereunder is the text of John Kilraine’s coverage of the President’s address:

“President Michael D Higgins has said Irish people ‘can understand so well’ the events unfolding in the Middle East as they commemorate The Famine. Mr Higgins was speaking as he laid a wreath during the National Famine Commemoration at Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin this afternoon. The ceremony included military honours and a wreath laying ceremony in remembrance of all those who suffered or perished during the Famine.”

“President Higgins spoke about the Famine as a defining moment in Irish history, that has shaped not only our history but also our relationship with land,

migration and politics. He also linked Ireland's harrowing experience with the Famine to our contemporary fight against hunger, poverty and forced migration. He said Ireland has a moral obligation to remember and to ask its friends not to surrender in our time to indifference."

"President Higgins said said 'evictions are provoking conflicts in States that are entitled to their security but who are violating the basic laws that are the tools of internationally-recognised protection'. Globally, 34 million people are at risk of famine, including in Yemen where 250,000 have died from violence, starvation and preventable illness over the past six years, he said."

"During Ireland's famine, he said the UK had effectively abdicated its

responsibility. Instead of treating it as a humanitarian crisis it adopted a laissez-faire attitude and allowed the export of grain, stopped the soup kitchens and allowed 500,000 evictions."

"President Higgins said it was an 'ideological tendency' that sanctioned 'poverty amidst plenty, conspicuous consumption amidst mass starvation - an ideology that felt unchallenged in elevating the right of property to that of a natural law'. 'The Covid pandemic has surely shown us that there is not only need for a better paradigm of existence, but that it is achievable with a harmonious, sustainable connection of economy, ecology and ethical society'. An estimated 22,000 famine victims are buried at Glasnevin Cemetery."

Manus O'Riordan

An Irish Romance

Ethna Carbery (Anna Bella Johnston, 3 December, 1864 – 2 April, 1902), Irish journalist, and poet was born in the townland of Kirkinriola, Ballymena, County Antrim, in an Ireland under total occupation by the British Armed Services, and its mercenary, the also armed Royal Irish Constabulary. I have sought to find out something of the daily life of Ethna, but can't find anything, anywhere. I say this because Ballymena had a mainly Protestant population, still called the *Ballymena Scotch*, within my own lifetime, because of their accents and fundamentalist Protestantism (known as *the black Presbyterians* in Scotland) which was to produce, in years to come, the Reverend Ian Paisley.

The townland, in which Ethna was born, was originally called Kilconriola (*Cillconriola* in old Irish: the language does not have a K). Eventually Scottishised to *Kirkinriola*, Kirk being Scottish for church. That shows the influence of the Scottish settlers, going back centuries.

But something rubbed off—an Irish sense of humour. Within the environs of Ballymena is the large village of Ahoghill, whose townspeople fellow Protestants in Ballymena once described as those: "*who call soda bread, pastry*", being looked on as exceptionally rural.

Cullybackey, also within the Ballymena environs, is again described by the Protestant townspeople as: "*the back of the mountain*", meaning—of course, then—it was hopelessly rural, and, fortunately, hard to find! It is also, or was, "*the hide of the twisted mouth*": twisted from generations

of drinking under the village pump!

These two villages are predominately Protestant but have a strong Catholic minority, with well-established Catholic Churches, known—when most Protestants refer to Catholic churches—as '*chapels*', thus attempting to lower their status.

Kirkinriola, where Ethna comes from, has an especially well-established Catholic Church. Basically, Catholicism has refused to go away in the Ballymena area, and there must have been severe conflict during the time Ethna was born and lived in the area. This experience, when added to the experiences of her father, Robert Johnston, a timber merchant and leading member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, would have driven her to the only resistance she had at the time—her writing and poetry.

Her mother, Marjorie (Mage) Magee, came from County Donegal. Robert Johnston, her father, had grown up hearing stories from the last veteran Irish Irishmen who had fought at the Battle of Antrim and personally knew a lot of Young Irelanders from the 1840s, before himself becoming involved in the 1867 Fenian Rising. He later oversaw the re-organisation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the 1880s. Later he hosted many of the future leaders, of the 1916 Uprising in his home on the Antrim Road, Belfast. Ethna's future husband, Seamus MacManus, poet and folklorist, called Robert Johnston: "*The connecting link that kept the spirit of freedom alive for more than a century*".

From the age of 15, when Ethna had

her first piece published, she contributed poems and short stories to a number of Irish periodicals, including *United Ireland*, *Young Ireland*, *The Nation* and the *Catholic Fireside*. She participated in the commemorations of the 1798 Uprising. She also toured the country with Alice Milligan and Maud Gonne. In 1900 she was a founder-member of *Inghinidhe na hEireann* [Daughters Of Ireland], the revolutionary women's organisation led by Maud Gonne. She was elected as Vice-President of the association, along with Jenny Wyse Power, Annie Egan and Alice Furlong. She and Milligan wrote and produced plays as part of its cultural activities.

In October 1895, with Alice Milligan, she produced the *Northern Patriot*, the journal of the commemorative *Henry Joy McCracken Literary Society*. But, after just four issues, she was dismissed. The sponsors were wary of an association with her father, an active Fenian. Milligan resigned in solidarity, and, working out of the offices of Robert-Johnston's timber yard, they launched their independent monthly *The Shan Van Vocht*, producing 40 issues. Leading literary revivalist Padraic Colum attributed its success to "*a freshness that came from its femininity*". Ethna Carbery—then still Anna Bella Johnston—and Milligan were joined as prominent contributors, by Alice Furlong, Katherine Tynan, Margaret Pender and Norah Hopper. The first issue gave a platform to socialist Republican James Connolly.

On 22nd August, 1901, she married *Seamus MacManus* (1867-1960), a contributor to the magazine, and moved with him to Revlin House, just outside Donegal Town. It was then she started writing under the pen name of *Ethna Carbery*, because she had taken the married name of MacManus and didn't want to be confused with her husband, also a writer.

She died of gastritis on 2nd April, 1902, aged 37. Her husband, who was three years her junior, outlived her by 58 years. They had only been married for a year and he was never to marry again, such was his devastation. He set himself the task of having her poetry published in the collection, *The Winds of Erin* (1902), which was phenomenally successful over the next few years. Some more volumes followed.

At the fiftieth anniversary of her death, a public address was given by Sinead de

Valera which stated: “Among the poets Ethna Carbery would always hold the foremost place and, even though her life was short, it was full of devotion and idealism” (Irish Press 2/4/1952).

Her other collections are: *The Passionate Hearts* (1903), *Stories*; *In the Celtic Past* (1904) *Hero Tales*; *We Sang for Ireland*. Poems of Ethna Carbery, Seamus MacManus, Alice Milligan (1950): Poetry.

Something from *The Pensive Quill*, an online magazine, relates how when Bobby Sands, while in the H Blocks of Long Kesh (H6) in 1979, got a collection of poems by Ethna Carbery smuggled in, after blanket-man Dixie Elliot had posted a memory of Brendan ‘The Dark’ Hughes, which included a stanza from a poem by Ethna Carbery. Sands liked that stanza so much he said he would write to her and tell her how brilliant her poetry was. That was when The Dark shouted out to him, from his cell: “You’ll need to get an Ouija board, Bobby, she died 77 years ago”.

The whole wing erupted with laughter. But Bobby had the last laugh for she had already written to *him*. Such is Northern humour even when the dead are dead and some are about to die. How could Bobby resist Ethna with her message to him in *Mo Chraoibhin Cno!*:

A sword of Light hath pierced the dark,
our eyes have seen the Star:
Oh Eire, leave the ways of sleep now days
of promise are:
The rusty spears upon your walls are stir-
ring to and fro,
In dreams they front uplifted shields—
Then Wake,
Mo Chraoibhin Cno!

The little waves keep whispering where
sedges fold you in,
And around you are the barrows of your
buried kith and kin;
Oh! famine-wasted, fever-burnt, they fade
like the snow
Or set their hearts to meet the steel—for
you,
Mo Chraoibhin Cno!

Their names are blessed, their *caoine* sung,
our bitter tears are dried;
We bury Sorrow in their graves, Patience
we cast aside;
Within the gloom we hear a voice that
once was ours to know—
‘Tis Freedom—Freedom calling loud,
Arise!
Mo Chraoibhin Cno!

(*Mo Chraoibhin Cno!*—my cluster of nuts
= My brown-haired (Ireland).)

And so the poetry gushes on like a freed river for another four stanzas. It was telling Bobby and his fellow POWs that they were right in what they were doing.

Ethna Carbery lives in a number of forms. Her *The Ballad of Roddy McCorley* went on to live in the souls of The Dubliners, The Clancy Brothers and the Pogues, plus many other lesser-known music groups.

*

Roddy McCorley was a Presbyterian from Duneane, County Antrim whose political convictions rose from the treatment dished out to his family by landlords. McCorley’s father had been hanged for sheep stealing and, as a consequence, the rest of the McCorley family were evicted from their smallholding. In Ethna’s ballad she puts McCorley in the thick of action during 1798 rebellion at the Battle of Antrim. McCorley is credited with leading a band of rebels at Toomesbridge and leading them to the capture of Randalstown. In the aftermath of the defeat of the United Irishmen, those not killed or captured went on the run, including McCorley. He joined the *Archer Gang*, a group of rebels led by Thomas Archer, who lived the outlaw life in the valleys and glens of Antrim. McCorley’s exploits against the authorities gained him folk hero status, but like all true romantic outlaws, he was finally caught when an informer betrayed him to the English Redcoats. McCorley was court-martialed in Ethna Carbery’s birthplace Ballymena, and was subsequently found guilty. From there he was marched to Toomesbridge, on 28th February 1800. He was hanged near the bridge and his body buried beneath the gallows.

Fifty-two years later the remains of the young rebel were recovered by his nephew, Hugh McCorley, who was the Foreman of works at the new Toome bridge on the River Bann. Hugh recovered his uncle’s remains and, on 29th June 1852, they were reburied in an unmarked grave at Duneane Cemetery. There was no memorial, with Presbyterianism having settled down—united no more, though fleetingly, with Catholicism.

Ethna writes of when there was hope:
“Oh see the fleet-foot hosts of men who
speed with faces wan,
From farmstead and from thresher’s cot
along the banks of Bann.

They come with vengeance in their eyes;
too late, too late are they,
For young Roddy McCorley goes to die
on the bridge of Toome today.

Oh Ireland, Mother Ireland, you love them
still the best,
The fearless brave who fighting fall upon
your hapless breast.
But never a one of all your dead more
bravely fell in fray,
Than he who marches to his fate on the
bridge of Toome today.

Up the narrow street he stepped, so smil-
ing, proud and young,
About the hemp-rope on his neck, the
golden ringlets clung;
There’s ne’er tear in his blue eyes, fearless
and brave are they,
As young Roddy McCorley goes to die on
the bridge of Toome today.”

This is followed by four more stanzas.

A good inspiration for Bobby Sands in deciding his own poetical future, and the immediate urge to do something with his own life for the Northern Catholic population, in its oppressed situation.

It all ties in with the poetry of Ethna Carbery.

Wilson John Haire. 10.5.2021

Anger And Dismay:

Victor Grossman on the assault on Gaza
continued from page 27:

demanding “the full force of the law” against anti-Semitism.

Annalena Baerbock, the Greens’ candidate to be next German chancellor, interrupted her attacks on *détente* with Russia to visit a synagogue and declare that “I am shaken to hear that Israeli flags are being burned in Germany... In these difficult hours we stand firmly at the side of Israeli women and men... Israel’s security is part of German state reality”.

Armin Laschet, her Christian Democratic rival in the race for top office, not wanting to be outdone, demanded that the flag of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) be forbidden in Germany—although this secular, pro-Marxist organization rejects anti-Semitism.

A counter-demonstration was quickly organized at the Brandenburg Gate, where more political leaders added their anxious voices, denouncing burnt or torn flags and stones and again stressing Germany’s unalterable support for Israel’s right to protect itself. The dead children of Gaza went unmentioned.

It was a professor with Palestinian background who noted sadly: “I believe it is time for the people of Germany and the German elite to stop making Palestinian children in Gaza pay for the crimes of the German people against

Brian Boy Magee.

“I am Brian Boy Magee –
My father was Eoghan Bán –
I was wakened from happy dreams
By the shouts of my startled clan;
That marked where our homestead stood,
My mother swinging from her hair –
And my brothers lie in their blood.

In the creepy cold of the night
The pitiless wolves came down –
Scotch troops from the Castle grim
Guarding Knockfergus town;
And they hacked and lashed and hewed
With musket and rope and sword
Till my murdered kin lay thick
In pools by the Slaughter Ford....

I shall go to Feidhlim O’Neill
With my sorrowful tale, and crave
A Blue-bright blade of Spain,
In the ranks of his soldiers brave.
And God grant me the strength to wield
That shining avenger well –
And the Gael shall sweep his foe
Through the yawning gates of Hell....”

Anna MacManus. c1641

Gill’s Irish Reciter. Edited by J.J. O’Kelly.
M. H. Gill & Son Ltd. Dublin. 1907.

“I had a good war.”

Elizabeth Bowen in a letter
to her great friend and Editor, William Plomer. 1945.

Elizabeth Bowen.

A Review of Patricia Laurence’s biography.
Part 13.

In last month’s *Irish Political Review* (May 2021), I ended my article by stating that Laurence made another claim in her book that left me flabbergasted but I will have to park that as I need to look more closely at the Manserghs – both father Nicholas and son Martin. When Kevin Rafter brought out his biography of Martin Mansergh in 2002 (New Island, Dublin), it was rightly seen as more of an authorised biography than a truly independent one.

And of course Rafter himself is seen by the Establishment as a safe pair of hands – given all his government appointments. In 2019, he was appointed Chair of the Arts Council, with other numerous juicy

jobs including Chairperson of the Compliance Committee of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and Chairperson of the Independent Advisory Committee of *Culture Ireland* etc.

Noel Dorr’s review of the book in the *Irish Times*, 9th November 2002, allows that the author described his work as “*an unauthorised biography*”. Despite Dr. Mansergh being a “*bit taken aback at first, flattered but not really sure about the subject*”. But Dorr states that “*it is also clear that*” Martin Mansergh “*gave very considerable help to the author*”. I love that in the review, Dorr quotes from a letter that Martin got from John Major in December 1994, when Fianna Fáil went out of Office, that stated how Major found

Mansergh’s “*profound historical knowledge*” to be an “*invaluable asset*”.

And how would Major know this? Of course his aides could have alerted him, but John Major was not very bright (in fact, the Westminster media spoke constantly of his dimness)—and there was genuine shock when evidence emerged of his affair with the Conservative Minister Edwina Curry (who also had something to do with an egg scandal of all things!) If Dorr considers writing that Martin Mansergh was “*a one-man think-tank for Fianna Fáil*”, well where have they landed now?

Whence our strong republican ideals and great pragmatism that certainly was there on Charles Haughey’s watch against an engulfing tide of political madness of the Progressive Democrats/*The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* titles. Charles Haughey had a use for Mansergh and it certainly was not the other way round—though after reading this book one could be forgiven for thinking otherwise!

Martin Mansergh’s grandfather Philip St. George (PSG for short - reverentially referred to as that ever after by the writer) inherited the lands at Grenane, Co. Tipperary after several heirs died without issue in 1906. When a biographer writes about someone having a “*colourful life*” they are usually telegraphing something more than just ‘colourful’ but family reticence bears down on them and so one can just pick up the bare nod and wink. And that is more than enough more often than not.

Here I have to ask, is it always the case that the gentry, Anglo-Irish like the Bowens and here the Manserghs, have to imbue their antecedents with bogus titles – many biographers of the former have been reduced to querying how Elizabeth Bowen just used royal lineage like Henry III etc, and hoped we’d all be so impressed by it that we’d let it go.

There is a sentence in the Mansergh biography that must be used in full and it is this:

“He” (PSG) “set sail for South Africa in 1892 where he made contact with a cousin who introduced him to Cecil Rhodes, the *British businessman* and founder of the De Beers diamond empire” (Italics – JH).

Rhodes was no businessman but an Imperial slave-driver and one of the foremost of Britain’s brutes. Like Milner, and later on Smuts, they harvested the Africans for their mineral/land and labour just as did the Belgians in the Congo. That there was no Casement there to report back to the mother country and wider community

their vile trade didn't stop them in the least. But what about PSG Mansergh? What Rhodes purported was a railway that would "expand British rule across all of Southern Africa". And Mansergh was his man – he went on to work as a surveyor under Rhodes and they built the railway and some bridges along the way.

"Rhodes" according to Rafter "was obviously pleased with his Irish" (?) recruit—a set of three initialled goblets presented by Rhodes to Mansergh is still in the possession of the family." The Manserghs might find that that loot from Africa might yet have to be restored to their rightful owners, with even Rhodes statue in Oxford facing increasing calls for it to be offed from its plinth.

Appropriating the culture of others has consequences in today's world and isn't it time that Ireland too asked for our looted *Annals*, gold, silver etc to be returned to its native people/places? Museums in Germany are leading the way but the UK will have to follow – slow and all as they are with it, even the Greek marbles saga still rumbling on.

"Martin Mansergh believed his grandfather's experiences in southern Africa increased his understanding of the desire of local populations for independence from colonial rule. While there is no written evidence to support this view, PSG Mansergh did adopt a neutral attitude to the heightened nationalism that engulfed Ireland after 1916."

Just observe the language used here by Rafter and it is used by all of Ireland's revisionist historians now. The "nationalism" and "Ireland" have preceding words that are hefted with negative meaning. What really happened after 1916 has to be cancelled in the real sense of that word as used in today's language. A democratic mandate that led to the 1918 Election is concealed and quite literally cancelled.

Another Mansergh,

"Martin's godfather – General Sir Robert Mansergh served in the British Army in the Far East during the Second World War and held the position as Master Gunner. His godson remembered him as a very courteous gentleman, who once said that the Manserghs were too gentlemanly to thrust their way to the top. However, "Uncle Bobs" as he was affectionately called by the family, rose to become Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in Northern Europe in the three years after 1956."

Rafter admiringly writes that a lot of Manserghs "were born outside of Ireland because their fathers were in the British forces overseas". Martin's grandmother

was born in 1876 in Dum-Dum in Bengal, "the area that gave its name to the lethal bullet".

"Martin", Rafter acknowledges, was born in the UK because of his father's "academic" position. Well – indeed!

What caught me on the hop was the use of the diaries – even if very limited – of Professor Nicholas Mansergh in this book. And here I think that Martin Mansergh has given a hostage to fortune. Over the years there have been calls on Mansergh to publish these diaries but one never really knew if they existed or not. Now, for the first time, we know they are in Friarsfield – Martin's home – and, even if this was published in 2002, obviously not much was made of that rather explosive admission.

According to Rafter,

"Nicholas Mansergh's regular travels between Tipperary and Oxford" (surely London? JH) "saw him mixing in senior political circles on both sides of the Irish Sea."

"For example, a diary entry for Saturday 5th May 1934 records meetings in Dublin with the Clerk of the Seanad, the Controller of Prices, an official of the Land Commission and Séan Hayes, a Fianna Fail TD for Tipperary. Another entry from the summer of 1938 recounts a tour of 10 Downing Street given by a senior advisor to the then British Prime Minister.

The Irish-born academic was as at home in the halls of Oxford, and the political circles of Dublin and London..."

During the war years, according to Rafter, Mansergh—

"was employed at the Ministry of Information where he was involved with the Anglo-Irish Information services and cultural relations... In 1942, he was appointed to Head of the Dominions Section and less than two years later, was appointed Director of the Empire Division... From there to Ottawa in 1944 and in 1945, he filled a similar role in Pretoria. Mansergh also visited Southern Rhodesia and Kenya. *The report of his visit to Canada – marked 'Secret' – observed:*

"Exiles – particularly Irish exiles – tend to become fundamentalists in politics."

Rafter adds: "It was an interesting comment from a man who was himself in the category of exile."

Of course, Nicholas Mansergh was no exile – he was an Imperial servant to his masters in London and as he was writing *secret reports about the Irish* – surely he too can be now termed a spy. No wonder Martin Mansergh gets so furious with the Aubane Historical Society. In that now

infamous letter that he wrote to 'The Irish Times' on 3rd May, 2004, he scathingly observes:

"While I am not accused of being a spy, my father, who was a British wartime civil servant in the Ministry of Information," (MoI) "which dealt with press and public relations, is so accused, which is the next best thing. To correct other errors by Clifford, Nicholas Mansergh went to school in Ireland, not in England. He was not an imperialist, but an anti-imperialist, as he told this newspaper in 1984 and he wrote with a deeply sympathetic understanding of Irish and Indian nationalism."

(What Brendan Clifford, historian and author of many books and pamphlets but of no 'Secret' memos, makes clear is that Professor Nicholas Mansergh went to school in the North of Ireland and thereafter in Dublin but did all of his University schooling in Cambridge, UK, which was the most important part of all! And if taking on the Smuts Professorship and all that accrues from that, Martin still wants to distance his father from Imperialism's dirty work – well I think frankly we'd all try that if we were being honest. It is not a good fit for even the most lauded English academic – and let's face it – he was never that either.

But in that same poisonous letter calling Aubane "conspiracy theorists" – that old dog whistle for all failed politicians because they hold a theory contrary to the one held by the likes of Martin Mansergh – he says:

"I am frankly incredulous that anyone in 2004 should seek to impugn the Irishness of 'The Irish Times' and treat it as an agent of British influence in Ireland. Certainly, as a successful paper for modern Ireland, it does not reflect the values of de Valera's Ireland any more than it reflects the old values of Anglo-Ireland."

Here Mansergh conflates two differing ideologies and tries to burn them on the pyre of modernism. But he still has a lot of fish to fry and he is only getting started:

"Douglas Gageby, a former Irish intelligence officer... [was 'The Irish Times'] Editor during most of the Troubles... wasn't he surely a match for any counter-influences?"

And now watch the scorn and condescension drip from Mansergh's pen:

"One should not confuse opinion columns, editorials or letters pages with mainstream news coverage."

That's telling the Clifford/Aubane lot – but there is more to come. Up next for a good old kick is poor Dan Corkery (after Sean O'Faolain's recent outrage at him

getting a Professorship of English at UCC without a university education—more than O’Faolain could take.) Which reminds me did Martin ever get a Professorship—kidding of course—he did not. And just watch the next bit of bilious sectarianism which in my opinion is odious to the core. Continuing: the “*days are gone ... when Patrick Kavanagh, subsidised by Archbishop McQuaid, deny the Irishness of Yeats*”. Mansergh could not let Paddy go by without the Archbishop bit. What a pity he had to descend to this!

But these are the starters—it is Elizabeth Bowen he wants to have his say about and here he is going all out with spit flying:

“No self-appointed cultural guardians have any right or authority to strip Elizabeth Bowen of her Irish nationality, background and birthright, or to deny her contribution to Irish as well as English literature. Lane and Clifford have done a service in publishing her actually quite sympathetic confidential war-time reports as a writer and journalist on public opinion in Ireland and its attachment to neutrality. They were sent not to an intelligence service but initially to the junior Minister of Information, Harold Nicolson”.

The Diaries and Letters of Harold Nicolson, 1939-45, Edited by Nigel Nicolson (his son) Collins Press, London, 1967, reveal a more honest account of what went on in the MoI. Under Duff Cooper, it was ineffective, which was acknowledged by Harold Nicolson himself. He wrote that it needed to be an “*an offensive instrument, its value to our war-effort will be diminished by the constant sniping from the rear*”. (Nicolson meant from the press which parodied it endlessly with one wit calling it “*Cooper’s Snoopers*”.) Then along came Brendan Bracken, Churchill’s most intimate advisor, who got rid of the Bloomsbury thicket and put it on a war-time footing with the best of people dedicated to Britain’s war-effort.

As Nicolson himself wrote:

“At present the Ministry is too decent, educated and intellectual to imitate Goebels. It cannot live by intelligence alone. *We need crooks.....*”

And before Nicolson could turn, he was sacked.

10th July, 1941.

Diary.

“I wake up feeling that something has happened, and then remember that I have been sacked from the Government. Go to the Ministry and start clearing out some of my private possessions... I mind more than I thought I should mind. It is, mainly, I suppose, a sense of failure...”

Harold Nicolson is very good about

what should have happened. “*But if I had more power and drive, I should have been offered Rab Butler’s job at the Foreign Office which I should dearly have loved*”. This is his sacking letter from Winston Churchill:

“My dear Harold Nicolson,

The changes at the Ministry of Information lead me to ask you to place your Office as Parliamentary Secretary at my disposal.

I should be very much obliged if you would give your services to the public as a member of the Board of Governors of the BBC, where I am sure you could make a most effective contribution. This would not entail the vacation of your seat in the House of Commons, nor the renunciation of your salary as a Member. I propose to issue a certificate under the House of Commons Disqualification (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1941.

Yours sincerely,
Winston Churchill.”

Harold Nicolson, MP, did not like to be landed with his role at the BBC but was comforted by Violet Bonham Carter, another member of the Board of Governors. He was also told by Duff Cooper who had also been replaced by Brendan Bracken as Director of MoI and Walter Monckton to take up the role but he writes:

“I realise that this means the end of my political ambitions which I may ever have cherished. I am hurt and sad and sorry. The P.M.’s Secretary telephones to say that he wants a reply at once, and could I send it by taxi. Well, I send it.”

So, Martin Mansergh to whom did Elizabeth Bowen’s spy reports go to if Harold Nicolson was no longer at the Ministry of Information?

Julianne Herlihy ©

More to follow next month: Mansergh and Nicolson and Laurence.

The Henry Jackson Society

Sixty years ago when it looked like *World War Three* was about to wipe us all out I bought a copy of *Newsweek* and, probably a copy of *Time* magazine. A picture in one of them showed an American Senator being given a message on the crisis at an airport. The caption named him as ‘*Scoop*’ Jackson. Another fifty years passed before his name surfaced again, without the nickname but with his baptismal or given name Henry. Today an association bears his name, an association which I fear is dedicated to starting *World War Three* and the elimination of life on this planet.

Apparently Senator Jackson was a ‘*liberal hawk*’ and advocated the use of force by the USA and its client states to remove Governments they disapproved of and their replacement by regimes sharing liberal democratic principles.

No matter how long or how hard I scratch my head, I cannot think of a single instance where this policy has been pursued. Since the British and/or Americans ousted Premier Mossadeq in Iran in 1953, or ousted another democratic ruler in Guatemala, helped install Suharto in Indonesia, and General Pinochet in Chile, they have invariably imposed murderous and corrupt despots on formerly free peoples.

It seems the *Henry Jackson Society* was founded by Douglas Murray, who

first came to my notice when, aged about 29, he appeared on television wearing a sneer and patronising everyone else on the panel, the youngest of whom was twice his age and all of whom had more distinction. For instance, Nigel Lawson, who, whatever his faults, had fathered a beautiful daughter.

Douglas was a protege of the insufferable twerp Michael Gove, who is listed as another member or director of the Henry Jackson Society, which includes former spooks, neo-con hawks, generals and politicians from Britain, the USA and Baltic states rearing to have a go at Russia.

The United Nations Charter, the International Court of Justice, and the sovereignty of independent states mean nothing to these zealots who hold them all in contempt. As they also hold the principles of liberalism and democracy. It would be nice to think they were still acneid teenagers, using hackneyed clichés in a school debate. But they have enormous influence.

For example, when did you last hear a radio or TV reference to the *Government of Syria*? It has been bad-mouthed as ‘*the Syrian regime*’ which is calculated to have us support the war waged on it by the Americans and the British, and to accept without question allegations spread by the US and UK regimes. Allegations which, most probably, should be scooped as if they were dogs’ droppings, and binned.

Donal Kennedy

Part 5 of a *Biographical Sketch*

(Part 4 appeared in the April *Irish Political Review*)

In Defence of Dorothy Macardle

Since her death in 1958 Dorothy Macardle's reputation has rested mainly on her authorship of the definitive Republican history of the 1916-23 period, *The Irish Republic*. In recent times attention has focussed on her novels and on feminist campaigns she was involved in during the 1930s. Yet the range of her interests was wider than those categories and her contribution in fields like opinion journalism, internationalism, and anti-Fascism, were all significant. This article covers these aspects of Macardle's story.

The following selection of snippets from *Irish Press* articles mainly from the 1930s, but also from the 40s and 50s, provide a taster of writings on miscellaneous topics that she contributed for the paper.

'*Daniel Corkery on Synge*', 13 October 1931 ("The whole chaotic problem of Anglo-Irish literature Mr Corkery treats with an intellectual courage and discrimination that are a tonic to the mind. His judgements on the writers—Maria Edgeworth, Thomas Davis, Gerald Griffin, Somerville and Ross, Shaw, Lennox Robinson are searching yet, one is persuaded, fair.")

'*Inns and Innkeepers*', 19 February 1932 (A pean of praise for the traditional inn, "To take mine ease at mine inn! Driving the last many miles through rain and darkness, on a winter evening, how one can warm one's very bones with repeating the Compleat Angler's immortal phrase! What a vision of comfort it evokes.")

This is an account of how coldly she was treated as an unaccompanied woman in Continental hotels, and a plea on behalf of all travellers on the human need for hospitable treatment.)

'*How Bridges Beautify Cities*', 13 January 1932 (Recalls bridges she enjoyed seeing as a child—in Geneva, Grenoble, Bruges, Amecy, especially the Ponte Vecchio across the Arno in Florence, not forgetting Dublin's Liffey, and castigates modern town planning: "Utility and uniformity must be served. Streets are built that have no more beauty than a prison, and dreariness closes over the spirits of man.")

'*The Myth of the Ogre De Valera*', 22 March 1932 ("By what authority has Mr Denis Gwynn written a 'life' of the Irish leader? None, says Miss Dorothy Macardle, who in this article finds in it neither accuracy nor consistency but a desire to create a figure to satisfy the prejudices of the English people.")

'*Children and the Theatre*', 20 April 1932 ("When a school or a group of little friends is engaged in a private production it will provide entertainment and experience to let the youngsters devise their own play. To dramatize some episode from history will bring the period to life for them as no lesson book or lecture could do. The children should be made individually responsible also for the several departments of stage-management—costumes, properties, curtain, music and 'noises off'. Splendid lessons in responsibility, initiative and team-work are learnt in this way, for acting is the great cooperative art, in which the success of one is inseparable from the success of all.")

'*The Glen of Secrets*', 20 July 1933 (an account of a car journey with fellow Republicans from Dublin to Waterford and back through Tipperary, the destination being a cottage in the Nire valley where the Republican army and members of the Republican Cabinet met in March 1923. Guarded by members of their flying columns and 'their allies the hills' de Valera, Tom Barry, Austin Stack, Frank Aiken and Liam Lynch decided there to continue the fight. Erskine Childers stayed in the same cottage on his final journey to Wicklow. "The valley seemed a place of mourning and desolation . . . The memory of defeat overshadows us, and grief for men who died". On the journey home they draw solace from a view over the Golden Vale, "shining and green and peaceful, a land of promise".)

'*A Breath of Air of the West*', 10 November 1933 (An account of a three-day car journey with companions in Connemara in which the landscape causes "a load of dullness to slip from us". She writes, "We used to play a game in prison which we called, "*Counties*". One described three

features, no more, of a landscape, and the others guessed which county you had in mind. Galway was the easiest always: a brown bog, a lake and low walls of unmortared stone.")

'*The Allenwood Turf Winners*', 23 April 1934 (Describes a turf cutting competition in County Kildare opened by de Valera. [Irish opinion was divided over whether the harvesting of peat could be economically viable, with pro-Treaty adherents being sceptical and anti-Treatyites favourable. The later success of Bord na Mona vindicated the latter.] "Those who trooped down the bog road to the school-house for the dancing and music were perhaps happier still. They had been told that their skill was needed; that the Government wanted, for fuel, an extra five hundred thousand tons of turf; that scientists in Dublin were discovering new ways in which turf might be used. Their isolated lives had been linked to the life of the nation; they had been given a place in the vanguard of Ireland's forward march.")

'*An Irish Book of Stage Designs*', 30 November 1934 ("Our generation may perhaps stand indicted at the bar of Posterity for the channels to which its progress has been confined; for contributing more to convenience than to beauty and advancing science rather than art.")

'*Beautiful Stained Glass*', 25 December 1934 [Christmas Edition] (How the founding of a stained glass workshop in Dublin in 1903, *An Tor Ghloine*, spawned a craft whose works can be viewed in hotels and churches of all denominations in Ireland and abroad. "Harry Clarke looked back as do all workers in this medium, for its perfection, to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, nevertheless, his work belongs to no period and no school but his own. Those attenuated figures with narrow hands, gaunt faces and sloped shoulders, have not been created elsewhere in glass.")

'*Journalist the Black and Tans Wanted—Hugh Martin's Notable Services during the War of Independence*', 7 December 1936 ("When I met him in the house of Erskine Childers, Hugh Martin was 'on the run'. The Black and Tans had sworn to silence him. While he ran, he wrote, however, and the *Daily News* was publishing regularly those articles which did more, probably, than any except Childers own writings to shock the English people into a reluctant knowledge of the truth.") [Hugh Martin's contribution will be described more fully

in a later article in this series which will deal in more detail with Macardle and the *Irish Bulletin*.]

'*London Night*', 17 October 1940 (Describes graphically an experience she had of the London blitz. "I walked along the path, splintered glass crackling under my feet. Where had I done that before? When? Long ago: Balbriggan..." [Macardle reported on the sack of Balbriggan on 20 September 1920 for the *Irish Bulletin*]

'*Protecting the Children*', 11 September 1941 (Describes the effects of tuberculosis on impoverished households and advocates for increased public resources in fighting the disease. "Throughout Eire, new laboratories, clinics, wards and sanatoria could be opened. It is only a question of finding the means. Nothing but lack of accommodation forces our doctors continually to refuse sick children the hospital treatment which they need...")

'*Portrait of a Happy Warrior*', 11 June 1952 (An obituary for her lifelong friend Linda Kearns MacWhinney a year after her death. Kearns had played a leading role in both Cumann na mBan and Fianna Fail. "It was indignation over the neglect of the sick during a typhus epidemic that first made her feel that Ireland must have a government of its own. It was visiting a hospital that she first met Thomas MacDonagh." [In *Times of Peril* by Nurse Linda Kearns, first published in 1922 was re-published by Athol Books in 1995. The names of people and other details deliberately kept out of the pamphlet are filled in by Macardle in the obituary.]

INTERNATIONALISM

Before describing Macardle's commitment to internationalism it is necessary to outline, as context, the Irish Government's international policy as developed by de Valera from 1932 onwards. In his biography of de Valera, David McCullagh quotes from the statements of respected Irish diplomats like Frederick Boland, and from editorials in leading world newspapers like the *New York Times*, underlining how the new Irish leader became a world figure and "*the new strong man*" of the League of Nations. Quoting a secondary source that for Dev, "*foreign affairs meant more than simply Anglo-Irish relations*", he acknowledges that "*his high profile at Geneva helped improve Ireland's international stature*". (vol 2, p. 94).

McCullagh, however, refrains from passing judgement on Irish foreign policy

in the 1930s and 1940s, although he associates Irish policy with the word '*appeasement*' in that way hoping to close off thought, and says nothing about whether de Valera was right or wrong in his belief that the machinations of the Great Powers, especially Britain, were undermining the League and pulling the world towards war. The following extracts contain more useful summaries of the role played by de Valera in the League and his view of British diplomacy.

"He took the League in earnest and was as influential in its affairs as it was possible for the leader of a small unarmed state to be. He put the League to the test for a second time [over Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, now Ethiopia; the first test was the Japanese takeover of Manchuria in 1931], and for a second time it was found wanting. He made a hopeful speech as President of the League in 1932. Three years later, as it became obvious that the League would not take effective action to stop the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, he proposed, in effect, that it should scale down its pretensions and assume a much more modest role in world affairs. And he suggested that there should be a Great Power Conference to make a new settlement in Europe in place of the Versailles settlement which was no longer functional." (*Elizabeth Bowen – "Notes on Eire"*, by Brendan Clifford, 1999, p. 89).

...

"The responsible thing for Britain to have done was what de Valera suggested it should do: make a Great Power re-settlement in Central Europe which would be functional in the framework of the new socio-political realities and clear the Versailles resentments out of the way. What it chose to do was connive at Hitler's breaking of the Versailles conditions, one after another. Because of the lack of prior agreement, there was a sense of European crisis each time Hitler moved, and there were feelings of considerable unease about Hitler's adventurism within his own power structure, particularly on the military side. But, each time, Hitler's judgement of possibilities proved to be sound, and his standing was enhanced, and the advisers of caution were demoralised." (Ibid, p. 91)

As is clear from her journalism, Macardle was well travelled and interested in international affairs. She became something of a convert to internationalism as a political outlook in 1935 arising from a two month stay in Geneva reporting for the *Irish Press* on the Assembly of the League of Nations. Over the years she continued to admire de Valera's abilities in international diplomacy, counting him, in a speech in 1944 to a large Wolfe Tone Commemoration in Holloway Hall, Lon-

don, "*one of the three great statesmen of the last forty years*", the others being Franklyn Roosevelt and Thomas Masaryk. She did, however, diverge from him in continuing to believe in the League when he had given up on it in the late thirties; and, regarding neutrality, she privately admitted to being torn between wishing that Ireland could contribute to the war against Nazism and "*the conviction that we have the right to stay out of it*" (letter to Frank Gallagher, 13 March 1944).

In one of the first articles that she filed from Geneva, "*The Nations Dream of Peace*", she imagined a Rip von Winkle figure believing that

"... the great dream had come true, of Dante, Cruce, Grotius, William Penn, of the Abbe de Saint Pierre, of Rousseau, of Jeremy Bentham, of Immanuel Kant, of Thomas Aquinas and all the humane thinkers of Christendom! Here at last is the Parliament of Man!" (Irish Press, 13 September 1935)

But that was mere journalistic colour. She well understood the pitfalls and delusions threatening the work of the League as when she noted, "*Idealism can paralyse patient endeavour*". Recognising that the League remained "*a centre of the old diplomacy based on secrecy and intrigue*", she referred to its being "*born a twin of the evil Versailles Treaty and cannot escape sharing some of its heredity*".

Regarding de Valera she stated:

"It is good to discover, at Geneva, that no nation's representative is held in higher esteem than Ireland's" (ibid).

Apart from expressing the *Irish Press* view, a reason behind her enthusiasm for the League was the opportunity it afforded for advancing the cause of women. A short *Irish Press* report, headed "*Equal Rights – Irishwomen to Assist World Campaign*" (5 September 1935), describes how a delegation of women from Ireland—comprising Macardle, Helen Chevenix and Lily Lennon—was travelling to Geneva to secure support for an *Equal Rights Treaty* at the League. The report stated that the delegation had been authorised by a women's conference presided over by Louie Bennet. It went on:

"The meeting expressed satisfaction at the hearing given [by de Valera] to the deputation but regrets were expressed that Mr de Valera had not given definite assurances regarding the request for reconsideration of Clause 12 of the Conditions of Employment Bill" (Irish Press, 5 September 1935).

As part of her coverage of the Assembly proceedings, Macardle was able to give publicity to the lobbying activities of Chevenix and Lennon. In a front page article she also paraphrased the contribution of John Hearne of the Irish delegation to a debate on the status of women as follows:

“It was obvious that the employment of women in certain industries and the conditions of their employment in all industries was a question which, on the highest moral and social grounds, must continue to engage the careful attention of the legislatures” (Irish Press, 19 September 1935).

Over a week later Macardle described how a resolution from Hearne was instrumental in defeating a move to have the rights of women removed from the League’s agenda (*Women’s Cause at Geneva*, 30 September 1935). That article was prominently displayed and had a photograph of Chevenix and Lennon. Anyone familiar with how media works will appreciate that, by being allowed to report on a cause in which she was an activist, even in the 1930s, Macardle was being treated generously by the *Irish Press*. She concluded the article with the sentence: “*No decisive action has been taken, but brains have been set to work.*” In other words, she understood the limited significance of passing resolutions at international conferences but also that relatively powerless lobby groups must draw succour from small advances.

The significance of the active support provided by de Valera’s Government for the women’s cause at Geneva, and of the publicity his newspaper gave to a minor pressure group, is not acknowledged in either of the biographies of Macardle. Both actions contradict current narratives about misogyny in Fianna Fail in the 1930s.

Macardle’s commitment to internationalism moved up a notch when she returned to Geneva in August 1937. As she explained in an *Irish Press* article on her return, she had intended passing through the city *en route* to a holiday in France but decided instead to enrol on a 10-day lecture course run by the International Federation of League of Nations Societies. The lectures covered:

“... all that has been done and is being steadily achieved, for the improvement in the condition of labour, for education, nutrition, health and the prevention of disease, for the suppression of the drug traffic, and the regulation of migration, intellectual co-operation for peace” (Irish Press, 16 September 1937).

The course included a lecture on the position of women in society from a representative of the Disarmament Committee of Women’s International Organisations. Referring to a contribution from a student of the course who was a Zionist Jew, she states that controversial questions were not avoided. The student argued that the British Government was to blame for the troubles in Palestine. She continues:

“The Great Powers were not spared by the lecturer. Objectively, without evasion and without rancour, they showed how much the fears of France and the vacillating of Great Britain had done to weaken the League” (ibid).

Later that year Macardle joined an Irish body focussed on international issues, *the Institute of International Affairs* which was launched on 30th of October. The membership included Louie Bennet, Quaker James Douglas, Minister for Finance Sean McEntee, two interesting members of the judiciary of the time, James Creed Meredith and George Gavan Duffy, and the future diplomat, William Fay. From an *Irish Press* report of a meeting of the Institute in which Fay was the main speaker (Irish Press, 4 December 1937), the consensus of the group seems to have been that if the collective security of the League of Nations failed, preserving Irish neutrality might prove impossible.

OPPOSITION TO FASCISM

Macardle’s staunch opposition to Fascism was of a piece with her internationalism but it is convenient to treat it separately. As seen in Part 3 of this series, a three-part series of articles she wrote for the *Irish Press* in 1933 on the subject of democracy and majority rule constitutes probably the definitive Fianna Fail answer to the fascist beliefs of General Eoin O’Duffy. As was demonstrated in her reports from the League of Nations, she wanted the League to be “*a secure bulwark against tyranny, aggression and war*” (Lane, p. 191), following de Valera she wanted economic and military action taken against Mussolini over that leader’s invasion of Abyssinia. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in July 1936 she joined the Spanish Medical Relief Committee in Ireland, a body that worked in support of the Spanish Government.

In her biography of Macardle, Nadia Smith describes the common ground existing between opponents of Fascism in dissident republican organisations and figures in Fianna Fail like Macardle. Having alluded to Mary MacSwiney’s continuing leadership of Sinn Fein and

Cumann na mBan, Smith states:

“Dorothy knew many other dissident and left-wing republicans, such as Frank Ryan, whom she had first encountered in her kitchen at Herbert Place, George Gilmore, and Peadar O’Donnell. While she shared their sympathy for the republicans in the Spanish Civil War and their opposition to the Blueshirts, a group modelled on Continental fascists, she did not share their socialist commitments and their insistence on remaining outside Fianna Fail.” (p. 71)

The reference to meeting Frank Ryan pertains to an incident that throws light on Macardle’s personal life. Ryan, aged 24 began an affair, in 1926, with Macardle’s flat mate, Rosamond Jacob, aged 38. While Ryan was engaged in disrupting the Poppy Day commemoration of that year, he called to Herbert Place a few times to stay the night with Jacob. The matter became a sore point between the flatmates. Jacob recorded in her diary how an infuriated Macardle demanded that she, “*tell that young man that he is never to do it again...it was indecent!*” (Smith, p. 55). Her Victorian upbringing had, apparently, left its mark.

In the Spring of 1938 Macardle accepted an invitation to join an official Irish delegation to the New York World’s Fair. The delegation comprised Eoin MacNeill, President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, James Hamilton Delargy from the Irish Folklore Commission and Macardle, who was tasked with speaking on Irish literature, the purpose of the visit being to ensure that Irish publications were “*properly represented*” in public and institutional libraries across the US (Lane, p. 192). In addition to her speaking engagements, Macardle took advantage of her time in America to give a notable address on internationalism and the growing menace of Fascism.

The occasion was a commencement address to Mills College, Oakland, California, an all-girls establishment much like Alexandra College, following which she was awarded an honorary doctorate. Leanne Lane uses three extracts from the Address, each worth reproducing, and summarises its introduction as focussing on “*the growing insularity and narrowness of political thought in Europe*”, a Continent that had “*the poison of imperialism in its system*” (Lane p. 194). The first extract reads:

“Coming from a country which was forced to make a bitter struggle for its freedom; belonging to the generation

which made that struggle, I have seen nationalism proscribed and persecuted and grown, in consequence, narrowly intense. And I have seen in England, how imperialist ambitions can vitiate democracy. In Europe I have seen old and new liberties annihilated one by one" (ibid).

Regarding internationalism she states:

"The separate efforts of nations cancel one another out and even defeat their own ends. Competition becomes mutually ruinous. An armament race begins. The human race will cancel itself out if these things go on" (ibid).

The final extract shows how far Macardle was from viewing internationalism in an overly idealistic manner:

"world peace can never be achieved... leaving nations partitioned, liberties strangled, grievances unreversed. No pacifism can be effective that does not seek to remove the causes of war. To deplore the production of armaments is useless while people live in fear. You cannot expect that people will submit, unrelentingly, to the loss of liberty" (ibid).

In 1939 Macardle decided to move to England for the duration of the War; initially she stayed in Sussex with her brother and his wife, later living in rented properties in different parts of London. Nadia Smith describes how she disliked living in England but wished to make a contribution to the war effort. She quotes from a *Script Outline* in the BBC's *Dorothy Macardle* file, explaining why people like her were coming to Britain

"not simply to defend home and country but because of the ideas which they believe to be at stake" (Smith, p. 90).

Macardle believed her most useful contribution could be made by working for the BBC. In 1940 or 1941 she was accepted as a script writer in the Corporation and began giving broadcasts for its Schools' Department and on its North American Service. Smith quotes an official source that Macardle's

"strong Irish republican... but extremely anti-Fascist" political stance 'considerably enhance[d] her value as an objective speaker about present-day England for the North American audience.'" (BBC Writer Archive, Smith, p. 92)

While some of her scripts were rejected and others censored, by 1941 she was making reasonably regular monthly broadcasts. Writing about the broadcasts in the *Irish Press*, without revealing their contents because of wartime censorship, she referred to "*the exacting standards*

of the highly organised, very English, rather pontifical BBC" (Irish Press, 30 July 1941).

Some idea of the contents of her scripts can be gleaned from Lane's footnoted references. In July 1941 she spoke about the volume of refugees from German-controlled Europe in London and how some of them had been victims of anti-Semitism in the interwar period (Lane, p. 199). In a script that she read out on the night of 12-13th November she defended the League of Nations. Accepting that "*the name of Geneva rang as dead as a false coin tossed on a counter*", she still advocated for international cooperation (Lane, p. 200). In repudiating Hitler's New Order, she argued, the Allies were creating "*international democracy*" (ibid). In a December 1941 broadcast she stated that "*in spite of what our own little nation has suffered—in spite of partition and divisions that keep Eire weak and neutral*" she was "*anti-Nazi*" (Lane, p. 198).

That she chose to work with refugees from Central and Eastern Europe in London, as Lane states, underlines how her gaze was "*squarely focussed on Europe*". Her voluntary work for refugees was probably most useful when she was able to draw from it in her journalistic writings. Smith states:

"Dorothy researched stories by conducting interviews in the refugee hostels where she volunteered, and by visiting a school for Czech children. She also spoke with representatives from the Czechoslovak government-in-exile's Department of Information. Laurence Gilliam, the head of the Feature's Department, ran a series called *Escape to Freedom*. Dorothy dramatized a story for the series about Norwegians escaping their country, in addition to giving a talk on Norway for the North American Service" (Smith, p. 96).

Both biographers discuss Macardle's ambivalence on the question of Irish neutrality but neither seem to fully grasp that what matters in politics is what you say publicly. In public Macardle never wavered from defending the policy of the Irish Government. She certainly expressed doubts and wishes about the subject in private correspondence but later in the War she became an articulate defender of de Valera's neutral stance.

Many of the political positions taken up by Macardle during the War are open to debate. A case can be made that, as a leading Republican thinker, she failed to

keep pace with de Valera, that she should have remained in Ireland holding the line on neutrality. Yet despite the difference between them over neutrality, there was no rift. An event in the story of Irish Republican participation in the Spanish Civil War, while not directly relevant, may provide some useful context regarding her decision to move to England.

In a book review in the April *Irish Political Review*, Manus O'Riordan describes how Irish Republicans decided to leave the British Battalion of the International Brigades in 1936 and join the Lincoln Battalion. Past wrongs done to the Irish nation by the English were given as the reason for the move. In retrospect what is significant about the episode, however, is that most Republicans believe it should never have happened, that it represented a triumph of Irish and English prejudice against each other.

Before the decision was made, Charlie Donnelly, Johnny Power and Peter O'Connor, all members of the Republican Congress, "*fought hard to go to the British Battalion*" (A Definitive History Of Irish International Brigaders, *Irish Political Review*, April 2021). In later correspondence on the matter, Frank Ryan charged that "*representatives of the British CP [Communist Party] wrecked the Irish unit*", and the responsible leader, Dave Springhall, was subsequently replaced as Battalion Commissar for his mistake in "*helping the Irish section of the British Battalion to transfer to the American Battlaion*" (ibid).

In that instance what should have happened is that the Irish and English anti-Fascists should have united in their common cause in the British Battalion. As an individual, Macardle made common cause, unapologetically, with the British state in its anti-Fascist aspect, and did so from a European internationalist perspective.

From another angle, socialists will argue that, like most liberal democrats, Macardle seemed to take little account of the objective reality that European Fascism was defeated primarily by the Soviet Union. Whatever about that, there can be no doubt but that the subject of this study acted consistently in line with her belief in democracy and the necessity of international cooperation. Nor did she, while working in war time Britain, shrink from identifying as an Irish Republican.

Dave Alvey

To be continued

A Definitive History Of Irish International Brigaders

Barry McLoughlin, co-author with Emmet O'Connor of *In Spanish Trenches: The Minds and Deeds of the Irish Who Fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War*, has drawn my attention to an error in Part Two of my review in the April issue of *Irish Political Review*. Frank Ryan was captured by the Fascists on 31st March 1938, whereas I had mistakenly written March 30th. There was also a typographical error on my part in the May issue, the omission of the crucial word **not**! I was commenting on the author's statement, "*The outbreak of war on 1 September 1939 created a new context. O'Riordan was bribed with a commission in the army by a senior member of Fianna Fáil. Declining the carrot, he got the stick*", and on the earlier September 2001 notes in Ciarán Crossey's *Ireland and the Spanish Civil War* website: "*This post was offered by a senior member of Fianna Fáil, and was obviously refused*". My comment should have read:

"I asked my father why had he "obviously refused" the offer of a commission in the wartime National Army. "**I didn't refuse it!**" was his reply. He was giving it active consideration, but was not given the time to do so, when the more suspicious wing of Fianna Fáil took action, and the wartime Minister for Finance, Seán T. O'Kelly, signed the order for his internment in January 1940. When I edited the second edition of *Connolly Column* for my father in 2005, I asked my father to correct the error, but he did **not** wish to do so, since he considered that it had been a genuine assumption made in good faith. The problem with an uncorrected error, however, is that it can grow legs, which is why I am correcting it here."

In Spanish Trenches was published just before Christmas. Kevin Myers was chosen by the *Sunday Independent* to review the book for its January 3rd issue, where, as stated in the *Sindo's* subheading, he acknowledged its "*definitive*" character. That was just about the one part of his 'review' with which I would concur. For Myers could not control his own abiding loathing of Frank Ryan and other Irish International Brigaders, and his distaste for aspects of the authors' "*ungenerous*" language. He wrote:

"This work's cluttered cover-design—a sepia picture of the IRA hero Frank Ryan above a banner proclaiming, 'IRISH REPUBLICANS GREET SPANISH REPUBLICANS - SMASH ALL IMPERIALISMS'—is unpromising. Armed Irish republicanism has an almost Haitian ability to worship with vagarious simultaneity at rival shrines, including mass-murdering sectarianism, ostentatious Communion-gobbling Catholicism, sickly Bodenstown sentimentality and socialist self-righteousness. The cover misleads: for it is unquestionably the definitive work on the Irish of the International Brigades... Irish republicans, though largely untouched by Trotskyism, succumbed to rather more parochial deviations: to Ryan's horror, some of them adamantly refused to serve alongside British volunteers. The authors (unusually) exhibit some similar predispositions; observing that 'ethnic prejudices (in the brigades) were common' they continue: 'Typically, Britons passed off friction with the Irish patronisingly as inevitable and understandable.' That ungenerous line, with those stereotyping adverbs, merits revising for the later editions that this book surely deserves, though it is a useful reminder of the venom that the war inspired... At war's end, true to his delinquent vagaries, Ryan threw in his lot with the Nazis, dying in Germany in 1944."

There are numerous International Brigaders whom Kevin Myers unashamedly loathes, and, in the course of his 'review', less than a handful of whom he now affects to respect. In October 2005, the International Brigade Memorial Trust held its AGM in Dublin. In his *Irish Times* "Irishman's Diary" on 19th October 2005, Myers pronounced his anathema:

"Meanwhile, the veterans of the International Brigade in Spain were honoured by both the President and various lefty-dignitaries... One could equally say that the Spanish Civil War was a fight against Stalinist Communism... Mick O'Riordan has been a lifelong defender of the Soviet Union ... He remained an unapologetic defender of one of the worst and bloodiest tyrannies in world history, and on Saturday he was a special guest of the President. How lovely. Maybe we can now dig up some antique defender of Adolf for a trip to the Aras, where he can reminisce about the happy days when he fought

In the *Irish Times* on 9th November 2005, IBMT President Jack James Larkin Jones replied:

"I am sure that this year's Remembrance Sunday services will not provide the occasion for any personal attacks by an *Irish Times* columnist on surviving veterans of the Allied forces in the Second World War, and that the *Irish Times* response would be one of indignation were any other Irish newspaper to act in such a vein. Consider, then, my surprise at the vindictive and highly personalised attack by your columnist Kevin Myers on the fact that the President of Ireland so graciously received a courtesy call from four International Brigade veterans of the Spanish Anti-Fascist War on October 15—the veterans in question being the last two surviving Irish volunteers, Bob Doyle and Michael O'Riordan, and Jack Edwards and myself from Britain... As Spain's democratically elected parliament had been defended by International Brigaders in 1936, so also did its democratic parliament of 1996 unanimously award the right to claim Spanish citizenship to Irish veterans Eugene Downing, Bob Doyle, Maurice Levitas, Peter O'Connor and Michael O'Riordan, together with other International Brigaders from all over the world. When all is said and done, the verdict of history that matters most to us International Brigaders is that of the Spanish people themselves."

Myers had continuing form. Dublin International Brigader Bob Doyle died in London on 22nd January 2009. His remains were cremated on February 10th and his ashes brought back to Dublin by his family on February 14th. Meanwhile, on February 6th, the *Irish Independent* published a diatribe penned by Myers, who ranted:

"Bob Doyle was also a member of the Communist Party, which took its orders from Joe Stalin. The International Brigade that he served in was merely a tool of the Soviet Union—which at the time of the Spanish war, was simultaneously conducting a great purge, three of whose fatal victims were actually Irish (see *Left to the Wolves—Irish victims of the Stalinist Terror*, by Barry McLoughlin). So, there isn't a single part of Bob Doyle's political agenda which was dedicated to democracy and the rule of the ballot box... But naturally, he is to be remembered with a public march from the Garden of Remembrance to Liberty Hall tomorrow week, and no doubt will be celebrated as a defender of democracy and freedom... There's nothing anyone can do about this ..."

See www.indymedia.ie/article/91124 for a report and video footage of the vin-

dication of Bob Doyle by the 600 citizens of Dublin who honoured his memory on that Saturday, February 14th. In my own address in Liberty Hall I proceeded to point out:

“I will also mention one more family, because it is a fitting answer to what Kevin Myers has written. He sought to exploit the Irish dead, including the Irish dead of the Soviet Gulag. One of those was Patrick Breslin, a founding member of the 1920s Communist Party of Ireland, who went to work in the Soviet Union and was unjustly charged with anti-Soviet activities. But his family can be proud of the fact that he maintained his innocence to the very end. Bob, who had himself suffered at the hands of Fascist imprisonment, would have had nothing but admiration for a man who devoted his life to the Soviet Union and who rightly maintained his innocence of any anti-Soviet activities, but who nonetheless perished. And it is a tribute to the horizons of people who are inspired by Bob, that Patrick Breslin’s daughter (Mairéad Patriková Breslin Kelly) and his granddaughter (Lara) are here today to honour Bob Doyle, in spite of the likes of Kevin Myers (Applause).”

This year, having excoriated Frank Ryan in his *In Spanish Trenches* ‘review’, Myers did, however, affect to profess a reverential admiration for fewer than a handful of other International Brigaders:

“Terence Flanagan, as an officer in the Irish Army, ended up guarding former Brigade colleagues who were now IRA-internees. Three other comrades—Michael Lehane, Joseph Ryan and James Haughey—continued their personal war against Nazism in British colours, and in those colours duly perished (RIP).”

Personally, I myself am not the least bit surprised that Myers, a “trained historian” under the UCD tutelage of Professor T. Desmond Williams in the 1960s, could not get his facts right. Joseph Ryan was the only one of those three who might be considered to have perished in British colours, although not as a combatant. McLoughlin and O’Connor remark of him: “*Deserted, repat. 1937, Killed WW2*”. In his 2014 book, *Fighting For Republican Spain*, McLoughlin had previously written of Joseph Ryan’s record in greater detail:

“Arrived in Spain 28. 12. 1936. Arrested Madrigueras January 1937, again with the British volunteer Joseph Moran by police at Valencia without papers 06. 05. 1937, repatriated as ‘useless’ in July 1937. Joined the Merchant Navy at the outbreak of WW2, served as a fireman. Joe Ryan died when his ship, ‘Dunvegan Castle’, was torpedoed by U-Boot 46 off the west coast of Ireland 26. 08. 1940. The ship sunk the following day. There were 27 fatalities.”

In view of the vitriolic Myers denunciation of International Brigade veteran Bob Doyle, it is worth pointing out that Bob also joined the British Merchant Navy in May 1940; participated in English Channel convoys that were bombed by the same German Stuka bombers that had bombed him in Spain; was transferred to the Royal Navy ship the *Anglia*; patrolled the Straits of Gibraltar looking out and listening for German submarines; patrolled the Western Approaches in support of convoys; and, on one occasion, on arrival on the scene where a convoy had been attacked by a German battleship, there was no sight of any ship, “*only bales of cotton, upturned lifeboats and all the flotsam of the upper deck, as we picked up the dead and the dying in the nets slung over the side*” (Bob Doyle, *Brigadista—An Irishman’s Fight Against Fascism*, 2006). Bob did not perish, but lived long enough for Myers to rail against his 2009 funeral.

As for those who did perish in WW2, Myers got it wrong in assuming that Jim Haughey had done so in British colours. Following his release from San Pedro concentration camp, he emigrated to Canada in May 1939. Jim Haughey was an Irish Republican from Lurgan, Co. Armagh, who proceeded to ask his sister to send him both “the *Lurgan Mail* and *Wolfe Tone Weekly* as often as you can”. It was in the Canadian Air Force that Haughey enlisted in June 1941. Haughey was killed in a plane crash in England on 12th September 1943, having foreseen his death in the poem “*Fighter Pilot*”, which he had penned over the name of *Séamus Haughey*, and is listed in Canada’s Roll of Honour.

As for Michael Lehane, he remained very much determined NOT to perish in Myers’ beloved “*British colours*”, as Myers himself had a particular reason to know. For more than two decades of Myers’ journalistic career, from 1982 to 2006, Myers occupied the “*Irishman’s Diary*” column of the *Irish Times*. Day in and day out, Myers could use his ‘*Diary*’ to indulge himself, as in his October 2005 attack on the last surviving International Brigaders. On occasions, someone else might pen the column, whether to give Myers a day off or allow another person, with specialist knowledge of the subject, to write on an event of significance.

Twenty-four years ago, I alerted the *Irish Times* Editor that on 12th May 1997, a very newsworthy diplomatic ceremony would take place in Kerry, involving Ireland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tánaiste, Dick Spring, and Norway’s ambassador to Ireland. For it was in Nor-

wegian colours that the Irish Republican Michael Lehane had perished in 1943, and the Norwegian War Service medal that was due to him would finally be handed over to his last surviving brother Stephen. I persuaded the Editor to allow me write a “*Diary*” column about Lehane. And so, sandwiched between Myers’ own Diaries of May 8th and 10th, my “*Irishman’s Diary*” of May 9th provided him and other readers with the following details:

“For those unfamiliar with the Doire na Sagart mountain borderland that straddles South Kerry and the West Cork Gaeltacht, reference to Droichead Uí Mhórdha, or Morley’s Bridge may only conjure up the first line of that well-known song ‘*An Poc Ar Buile*’. And yet it is to Morley’s Bridge, just three miles east of the Co. Kerry village of Kilgarvan, that the Norwegian Ambassador to Ireland will travel on Sunday, May 11, in order to pay homage at the memorial to one of its most heroic sons... During the Spanish Civil War’s battle of the Ebro, International Brigade volunteer Michael Lehane had been wounded on July 31, 1938, and carried to safety by my father, Michael O’Riordan, whom he cursed all the way down Hill 481, as every jolting step intensified the pain of Lehane’s wounds. On the following day, *Lá Lughnasa*, my father was himself wounded in a further unsuccessful attempt to take that Hill. After the defeat of the Spanish Republic, Michael Lehane and Michael O’Riordan were separated physically but not spiritually. 1940 saw O’Riordan imprisoned without trial in the Curragh Internment Camp and Lehane working on the building-sites of Birmingham. The generous Kerryman forwarded pocket money to his imprisoned comrade and corresponded with him on the unfolding character of World War Two. Hitler had to be stopped by hook or by crook! However, Lehane had a dilemma—perhaps it was the Kerry Republican in him, but he just could not bring himself to put on a British military uniform! He later informed O’Riordan that he had now found the solution to his problem—he would join the Norwegian Merchant Navy and sail in the Trans-Atlantic convoys ferrying much-needed war supplies for the Allied cause...”

“On October 2, 1941, Lehane signed on as a fireman/stoker with the Norwegian steamer ‘Brant County’... A convoy left Halifax, Nova Scotia, on March 2, 1943. Eighteen Nazi German submarines set out to attack it on March 8, and on the evening of March 10 six of them went into action. The initial battle with the Allied escort ships saw one ship torpedoed with, however, two of the subs being hit in turn. But the remaining subs succeeded in torpedoing six merchant ships, the last of them being the ‘Brant County’. In the course of a few seconds during the early hours of March 11, 1943, the midship, including the top bridge, was enveloped

in flames, gas and smoke... The fire on board reached the ammunition part of the cargo, and the 'Brant County' exploded... Twenty-four men perished on board, including Michael Lehané... In January 1997, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally decided to award to Stephen Lehané the Norwegian War Medal won by his brother's heroic sacrifice."

No "British colours" there! Yet Myers further proceeded to reprimand McLoughlin and O'Connor for an alleged omission:

"They also (uncharacteristically) seem to have overlooked the Manchester-Irishman Henry Kelly VC MC, perhaps the only Great War Victoria Cross-winner serving with the Brigades. He also served in the Free State Army during the Irish Civil War, meaning that his enemies in Ireland in 1922 were his allies in Spain in 1938."

Mancunian Henry Kelly was included by authors Richard Doherty and David Truesdale in their book *Irish Winners of the Victoria Cross* (2000), by virtue of his Irish parentage. Following World War One, the Duke of Wellington's Regimental Archives show that Kelly left the British Army in 1920. He then, with his brothers, opened a number of grocery shops in his native Manchester, and proceeded to become a landlord in several pubs. There is nothing to suggest that Kelly had any Irish loyalties, still less that he was sympathetic to, or supportive of, the Irish Republic ratified by the democratically elected Dáil Éireann in January 1919, and against which the British Army was waging a war of suppression. Nor, indeed, is there anything to suggest even a modicum of patriotic loyalty to the Irish Free State, in whose Army Kelly enlisted for its 1922-23 war to dismantle that Republic. There is everything to suggest that Kelly belonged to that coterie of British mercenaries who had been hired out by the Free State for the duration of its Treaty War.

Kelly rejoined the British Army when Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, but Myers stayed silent on his record in that War. For the Duke of Wellington's Regimental Archives, as cited by Wikipedia, reveal:

"At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, aged 52, Kelly rejoined the British army and served from thence as a lieutenant in the Cheshire Regiment. From October 1943 until February 1944 he was placed in charge of the District Claims office of London District, at Curzon Street. He was at that time court-martialled and severely reprimanded for making an allegedly false claim for £2 10s. He later resigned his commission and left the army to return to work for the post office."

But what of Myers' claim that Kelly was an International Brigader? "*Manchester Military & Civilian Heroes*" is a website with the subheading "*Manchester people of courage, self-sacrifice and valour*". Of Henry Kelly it says: "*Much decorated and ever the perennial soldier, Henry was to take part in many of the wars of the 20th century and to earn distinction in all of them.*" It proceeded to claim: "*Henry went on to join the 'International Brigade' as a foreign volunteer fighting against Fascists in the Spanish Civil War and was ranked Commandante Generale. Here he was awarded the Grand Laureled Cross of San Fernando.*"

Kelly did **not** fight against Fascists in Spain, but the credulous compiler of the website could not conceive of the possibility that, if it was true that Kelly had received such an award in Spain, it would be because he had been fighting **for** the Fascists! With his devotion to all things Royal, instinct should have told Myers that, not alone would no member of the International Brigades have received such an award, neither would any member of the Spanish Republican Army itself. For it was the decoration of a Monarchist Order, restored by Franco following his victory.

But, if Kelly was not an International Brigader, neither was he a volunteer in the Irish Brigade of Eoin O'Duffy that set out for Spain in support of Franco, only to ignominiously retire from the field six months later. If Kelly did fight in Spain, it could only have been as a recruit to the Spanish Foreign Legion, a component of Franco's Army of Africa, once again playing the role of mercenary that he previously played in Ireland in 1922-23. The Laureate Cross of Saint Ferdinand is the decoration of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand. Spanish Civil War recipients of that decoration from Franco included El Caudillo himself, and Comandante Mohamed Meziane, otherwise Mohammed Ben Mizzian, the commander of the *Fuerzas Regulares Indígenas* ("Indigenous Regular Forces"), who were the Moorish shock troops of the Army of Africa. In *The International Brigades: Fascism, Freedom and the Spanish Civil War* (2020), Giles Tremlett relates:

"*New York Herald Tribune* correspondent John T. Whitaker had witnessed Ben Mizzian handing two, supposedly leftist, young women over to a group of forty of his men and predicting they would survive only a few hours."

One would hope that the worst that might be said of Henry Kelly in getting that decoration is that he was a Fascist mercenary.

For all of his loathing of Frank Ryan, Myers' "review" studiously avoided dealing with how authors McLoughlin and O'Connor actually addressed the issue of his final years in wartime Germany. There is only one definition of "*wartime collaborator*" common to all dictionaries, such as that of Oxford: "*a person who helps the enemy in a war, when they have taken control of the person's country*". In his 1980 biography, *Frank Ryan—The Search for the Republic*, Seán Cronin had conclusively established that Ryan was the very opposite of being a *collaborator*. He published Ryan's letters to the Irish Minister in Madrid, where he pledged his own total support for de Valera's policy of wartime neutrality, and reported on how he had advised the Germans of the Republic's determined adherence to that policy, and how he also spoke out against any German actions that might undermine the de Valera Government. McLoughlin and O'Connor concur with Cronin, and write:

"Ryan is labelled a collaborator in Fearghal McGarry, *Frank Ryan* (2002). We believe that Frank Ryan was not a collaborator but rather an adviser to German foreign office experts."

A welcome conclusion at the close of this comprehensive history.

See www.international-brigades.org.uk/blog/blog for the International Brigade Memorial Trust Blog of January 29th, which reproduced my review of Giles Tremlett's history of *The International Brigades* in the January issue of this magazine, where I challenged Tremlett's regurgitation of McGarry's "collaborator" charge in considerable detail. On March 19, the Spanish language edition of Tremlett's book was reviewed by Sebastiaan Faber, Chair of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, for *Fronterad Revista Digital*. Faber's concluding remarks translate:

"Occasionally, the narrative dynamism tempts Tremlett to present as facts what are no more than suppositions... More serious is the accusation he throws at Frank Ryan, a fighter for the Independence of Ireland... Tremlett writes: 'Apparently, [in Berlin] Ryan worked with other Irish Republicans who thought that the War presented a unique opportunity to achieve the reunification of Ireland, especially if Hitler invaded Great Britain. So it was that the same ardent anti-fascist, who convinced the 15th Brigade to return to the fight at Jarama, ended up collaborating with the nazis, placing Irish nationalism before any other consideration and forfeiting the right to be considered a socialist'. The truth is that this version of the facts is as yet under dispute, as Manus O'Riordan has explained."

Tremlett's book was reviewed in the *Irish Examiner* on February 13th, as was *In Spanish Trenches*. The following letter from myself was published on February 18th:

"I agree that *The International Brigades* by Giles Tremlett, described by reviewer David Kernek as a 'meticulous, massively detailed history', is a superb history of the Spanish Civil War. It is when Tremlett's epilogue superficially addresses the question of Frank Ryan's role in wartime Germany that he goes astray. The review quotes him as writing that Ryan 'seems to have worked with other Irish republicans who thought the war—that's WW2—offered a unique opportunity to bring about the reunification of Ireland, especially if Hitler should invade Britain', suggesting that de Valera regarded Ryan himself as a threat to Irish neutrality."

"But Ryan did not work with any other Irish republicans in Berlin. The one Irish republican for whose benefit he did in fact work was de Valera himself. In his letters to the Irish Minister in Madrid, Ryan pledged his own total support for de Valera's policy of wartime neutrality, and reported on how he had advised the Germans of this State's determined adherence to that policy, speaking out against any German actions that might undermine the Irish government. In his 1979/80 *Old Limerick Journal* series on Ryan, the distinguished journalist and biographer Michael McInerney also recalled a 1975 interview with de Valera where he referred to Ryan as 'this great Irishman' who 'always put Ireland first in everything he did or said, at home or abroad. He has earned his place in history'. In his review of *In Spanish Trenches*, by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor, Brendan Daly concludes that it is 'unarguably the definitive account of the Irish in the International Brigades'. Indeed it is, from start to finish. Of its epilogue he writes: 'The authors conclude that Ryan supported de Valera's neutrality policy and that Ryan was 'an advisor to German foreign office experts' rather than a collaborator.' I very much welcome the fact that both books were reviewed in the same issue of the *Irish Examiner*."

Daly's acclamation of *In Spanish Trenches* as "the definitive account" has the insight lacking in Myers. In concluding my own review, I do, of course, realise that it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that, in years to come, names of some more Irish International Brigaders might yet emerge. But certainly not the "legendary" Henry Kelly imagined by Myers! While a few more Brigadistas would add individual detail to the authors' narrative, its essential character need not alter. *In Spanish Trenches* is such a thoroughgoing history of Irish involvement in defence of the Spanish Republic that it will surely stand the test of time.

Manus O'Riordan

(Concluded)

Seán MacStiofáin And The Arms Crisis

We are fortunate to have had two readable, well-researched books on the Arms Crisis within the last year. The first, *The Arms Crisis Of 1970, The Plot That Never Was* by Michael Heney, was reviewed in this magazine in July 2020. David Burke's *Deception And Lies, The Hidden History Of The Arms Crisis* (Mercier Press, Cork), also appeared in 2020. Those who want to get to the bottom of the major political event in post-War Irish history would benefit by reading both books.

Burke's research into the whole episode is painstaking, providing useful insights; and he used my *Arms Conspiracy Trials* and *Military Aspects* books to good effect. In addition he has conducted many interviews and has examined sources closely. However, the book suffers from one major flaw: he has allowed himself to be hoodwinked by Irish Special Branch officers. The law-abiding public does not seem to be aware that an ability to lie convincingly is a requirement of police work.

Apart from that general observation, there is a specific Irish problem. The Garda Síochána have been a long time bedding down as a national police force: a process still in train. It is as well to remember that the Irish State has had a troubled relationship with its police force from the time of the Treaty War. To cure this, bizarrely, the present head of the Gardai has been imported from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and there are plans to bring over an officer from another Anglo jurisdiction, Canada.

When the Fianna Fail revolution occurred, De Valera made minimal changes to the police force he inherited from the Free State Government. And, despite his new Constitution, the state could not fully settle down because of the sense of unfinished business in the North. Further, ostensibly because the IRA continued in existence, the *Garda Síochána* retained an anti-Republican bias.

When researching the Arms Crisis it became clear to me that in those years while Military Intelligence had a national orientation, the Gardai and the Special Branch on the whole did not. The then Permanent Secretary at the Department of Justice, Peter Berry, had an anti-republican

bias. He had built up a powerful position for himself, and the police and Special Branch appeared to answer to him rather than to the Minister. During the Arms Crisis he used his position of authority to prevent a Government-authorized Arms Importation from taking place and to place pressure on Taoiseach Lynch to criminalise those involved in carrying out Government policy. (The full role of the British authorities in these events remains to be revealed.)

The senior police officers who feature in Burke's book were complicit in the Prosecution doctoring of documents in order to further the 'Arms Conspiracy' prosecution case. For instance, they would have known that the initial Statement made to the police by Colonel Hefferon (Captain Kelly's superior officer), had been doctored with the result that this important evidence, which exonerated the Captain and implicated the Minister for Defence in the arms importation, was withheld from the Prosecution Book of Evidence. (Colonel Hefferon's original Statement to the police along with the doctored version can be found in my *Arms Conspiracy Trial* at page 493.)

And, as David Burke himself points out, Supt. Fleming gave disinformation to the 1970-71 Public Accounts Committee investigation into the affair (see *Deception And Lies*, pp 102-3).

Burke has studied these matters carefully and has a good grasp of what happened. So it is a puzzle why he then believes sensationalist allegations made to him by police informants, including Superintendent Fleming: 'information' which I think goes against the sense of what actually happened.

At the same time Burke seems to almost excuse Justice Secretary Berry, Chief Supt. Fleming and others for their perjuries on the grounds that Mac Stiofáin had misled them:

"... By 10 November [1969, British Ambassador Gilchrist] was beginning to fall for the notion that Haughey was in league with the IRA. This was exactly what Berry, McMahon and Fleming had come to believe as a result of lies being

peddled to them by The Deceiver [Sean MacStiofáin]...” (Burke, p124).

It should be said that Supt. Fleming believed that Lynch also was implicated in the Arms Importation. Burke himself cites Captain Kelly’s account of what the head of Special Branch remarked. What happened was that, after Captain Kelly was arrested on 1st May 1970, and refused to make a Statement to the police, even after Taoiseach Lynch had exhorted him to do so, Fleming told him he was “*probably right not to make a statement... Anyhow he knew who was involved... and named three Ministers, Haughey, Blaney and Gibbons*”.

Fleming continued: “*he knew who was involved... and named three Ministers, Haughey, Blaney and Gibbons*”, adding that he thought Lynch knew as well (Burke, p226, quoting Captain Kelly’s *Thimble Riggers*).

Burke comments:

“Fleming had ample ground for his suspicion of [Defence Minister] Gibbons and Lynch. Yet, to his dying day, he never aired them, at least not in Public” (Ibid p226).

And this is the man who is trusted over the suggestion that it was information from MacStiofáin that led to the aborting of Capt. Kelly’s final attempt to import arms, through Dublin Airport in April 1970!

Police and prosecution *amour propre* must have been dented by the stinging humiliation of the obviously rigged Arms Trial proceedings. Perhaps this story of being misled by informants was concocted to save face!

Quite apart from that, it is particularly difficult to believe that, if there was informing, it was Mac Stiofáin who was the IRA man who developed this close relation with the police over many years. It would have been more difficult to quarrel with the idea that one of those from the modernising tendency in what was to become the Stickies was responsible for information passed on. But, if one is speculating, surely it is more likely that the Arms Importation ran into trouble when Captain Kelly tried to charter a plane from a Dublin company run by an English retired RAF man in order to import the weapons he had bought for Catholic defence?

Burke suggests that the reason that Mac Stiofáin did not tell the Guards about the attempted Dublin Port importation a few weeks earlier was that there was a plan to hijack the weapons, rather than leave them to be distributed by the Irish Government. And that, meanwhile, Mac Stiofáin had

taken delivery of a consignment of arms from the USA, which meant that arms were less of a requirement.

Against this, it should be said that the Republicans made a distinction between arms for the movement and arms for the Defence Committees. Of the latter MacStiofáin said:

“The famous weapons that led to the arms trial were not intended for the IRA... [They were] paid for out of Dublin government funds... [and] meant for the Belfast Defence Committees.

“My attitude was that if weapons were being imported for defensive purposes in Belfast, well and good, no matter who got them” (*Revolutionary In Ireland*, p140).

A useful point that Burke brings out is that the police attitudes towards arms imports changed after Garda Fallon was shot.

It is alleged that MacStiofáin had been a Garda informant from 1959 onwards. This is hard to credit. Born in London, he joined the republican movement there in the late 1940s, and became an IRA recruit in late 1949. He then went on to build up the organisation and capacity of the unit. In the Summer of 1953 Dublin instructed him to participate in an arms raid, in which he was joined by Manus Canning from Derry and Cathal Goulding from Dublin. The party was caught and jailed, Mac Stiofáin being released in 1959. After his release he went to live in Ireland.

It is alleged that Mac Stiofáin started a relationship with the guards in 1959, that is, when he moved to Ireland after serving six years in a British prison for stealing weapons in 1953. In 1959 the IRA Northern campaign was running out of momentum, though it was to last until 1962. (It should be said that Mac Stiofáin was very committed to that War and was opposed to ending it.)

Having just served a substantial prison term, it seems hardly credible that he would start informing for the Irish State—a State and whose parties he despised as having betrayed republican ideals.

After the 1956 War, the movement was demoralised, and a new direction was needed. That was provided by the modernising tendency which, despite its initial useful broadening of the movement into social issues, eventually was to prove to be so ideological that it could not respond in a realistic way to the crisis which came about in Northern Ireland. In 1968-9 a live political situation was brought about, essentially by the People’s Democracy

becoming the vigorous element in the Civil Rights movement.

The blinkered approach of the Republican leadership meant that Catholics were left undefended in August 1969 and in the following months. That negative stance continued in subsequent months and is what led to the Split of December 1969.

Mac Stiofáin’s 1975 memoir reveals his battle with elements of the pre-Split IRA leadership after the Northern situation became live. Leaders were intent on diverting the resources of the republican movement into social agitation, even after the People’s Democracy—guided by the London-based *New Left Review* and urged on by British Trotskyist tendencies—was successfully bringing about a revolutionary situation, one which was becoming more intense by the day. The danger was that radicalism of any kind on the Catholic side, aimed at the overthrow of the governing institutions, was going to bring a sectarian response in defence of those institutions.

Because the modernisers encountered resistance on the Army Council, in 1968 the leadership made appointments trebling its size in order to bring it under control. Meanwhile events in Northern Ireland were taking a serious course, culminating in a banned Civil Rights march being attacked by police in October—an event courageously filmed by RTE, thus catapulting the issue of Catholic grievances into the public domain in Ireland and around the world.

MacStiofáin relates that he urged the Army Council to prepare a Catholic defence for a coming backlash. He—

“argued strongly that we must make preparations to defend the Nationalist population, some of whom would be in desperate straits in isolated enclaves if an Orange pogrom began. But in spite of the glaring example of Derry, I was stunned to find that some of the members had failed to draw the lesson from the epic happenings of the day. I listened in utter disbelief while one of them got up at a Council meeting to solemnly declare that the British Army would have to protect people in the North from the excesses of the RUC! ... I suggested that, instead of bringing up the strength of the IRA by recruiting openly, we would set up a system of auxiliary units purely for the defence of the Nationalist districts, particularly in Derry...”

“The proposal was shot down...” (*Revolutionary In Ireland*, p112).

MacStiofáin adds—

“An officer in charge of a large area in the North stood up at one of these meetings and said in deep anxiety, ‘Trouble is obviously coming. If it breaks in my area, my entire ammunition supply consists of seventy-five rounds for all calibres. What in God’s name can I do with that? What defence can I provide?’” (p113).

It seems that this plea brought promises of materiel, but “*These promises were not kept*”.

When the crisis broke, the Dublin leadership authorised the transfer of weapons to the North in August 1969, but it was too little too late.

A Defence Fund was established and MacStiofáin obtained commitments from donors:

“But when in September [1969] the Army Council received a report on the defence fund which then stood at a healthy five-figure sum, they proposed that it should all be used for the general finances of the movement.

“Jumping out of my chair at the meeting, I walked up and down the room protesting... Eventually they agreed that less than half of what had been collected would be reserved for the purpose for which it had been subscribed—defence of the Northern Ireland districts. But the first ten thousand pounds would be put into the general funds of the movement.

“I protested angrily against this, insisting that my protest be recorded in the minutes of the meeting...” (p129; he also asked several large donors to defer their donations. Incidentally, MacStiofáin despised Fianna Fail and its business supporters. The people who had promised him large donations: “*were not connected with Fianna Fáil or with Taca, the party’s fund-raising group*”. It might be added that, in his turn, Minister Niall Blaney was concerned that Government-sponsored weapons imports should go to the Defence Committees and not to the IRA as such.)

There was a bizarre incident in August 1969, when Catholic areas had come under attack, which goes against the grain of everything that the Stickie modernisers had been doing until then. That was when Cathal Goulding issued a statement saying that the IRA had been in action in the North and was sending volunteers and weapons northwards. Here is MacStiofáin’s ‘take’:

“...the revisionists in Dublin now made a blunder that brought a hornet’s nest around our ears...”

“[the leadership statement] said that IRA volunteers had taken part in actions in the Bogside and other parts of the North—and went on to add that units were in readiness on the border. It was a political bloomer of the worst possible

indiscretion. The volunteers were furious, while Prime Minister Lynch, regarding this as a challenge, said publicly that his government would not tolerate “usurpation” of their power...” (p125-6).

The Statement also brought unwelcome police attention to activities along the Border. MacStiofáin finally managed to get an explanation for what had been said:

“...After events of the past few days in the North, they feared that Harold Wilson might pluck up enough courage to abolish Stormont altogether. They wanted to save it, and the purpose of the statement had been nothing less than to strengthen Chichester-Clark’s hand when he met Wilson, enabling him to attribute the pogrom and the RUC attacks to the activities of the IRA!” (pp125-7).

It might be remembered that all this was before the Westminster was finally obliged to take the security situation in hand a few weeks later, deploying troops and forcing changes on the majority-rule Government in Stormont. Of course, the intention of the Wilson Government was to settle things down as quickly as possible, have a few cosmetic reforms to the governing arrangements, and pull out the troops.

And that approach was exactly what the Republican Modernisers wanted. They were intent on maintaining the existing majority rule arrangements.

This explanation makes sense in the light of the weird Stickie politics of that period. A distinctive division between the two republican tendencies was to be that the Stickies wanted to keep Stormont, whilst the Provos wanted it abolished.

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The point of reporting these events is to give an idea of MacStiofáin’s position, and so provide a context for the allegation that he was at the same time giving information to the police. He was clearly whole-hearted in his commitment to defending Nationalist areas in the first instance, whilst no doubt calculating that a successful defence might lead to a war of liberation and a United Ireland.

But that is neither here nor there. All the main actors on that stage had ulterior motives. The People’s Democracy, with their *New Left Review* and Trotskyist mentors, had no interest in a United Ireland. They wanted socialist revolution in the British Isles. And the Dublin Government, advised by Captain Kelly, was intent on retaining influence amongst the Northern Catholics, to prevent their radicalisation by various tendencies. As he pointed out

to Lynch in his Intelligence Reports when there were signs of back-sliding, Government credibility would suffer if it failed to provide for Catholic defence, and it would leave the field open to other, radicalising, defenders who could put the Government in an invidious position.

The general allegation promoted by ‘Official’ Sinn Fein/IRA/the Stickies was that the projected Arms Importation of 1970 was an attempt by Fianna Fail to subvert Stickie socialist policies by arming Northern militarists, opposed to their political path. It would be logical, if unforgivable, if a person with this view tipped off the guards about the arms importation by air; it makes no sense for MacStiofáin to have done so.

It is suggested that in the period between the failed Government importation of arms through Dublin Port and that planned by air, the MacStiofáin tendency received a large consignment of arms from America and so he had no compunction about betraying the Government shipment. But why should he have wished to prevent the Belfast Defence Committees getting weapons? As we have seen, he said he had no difficulty with the Defence Committees getting arms.

A more likely explanation for the leak is that Captain Kelly approached an independent airline in Dublin, which was run by a British ex-RAF officer, to fly arms from the Continent to Ireland on behalf of the Defence Forces—an unusual request to say the least! In view of this, it would take more than whispering from Special Branch to lay the blame at MacStiofáin’s door!

MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

Interestingly, citing Conor Lenihan, Burke reports that at the period in question the Irish Cabinet was accustomed to have discussions before the Cabinet meeting proper:

“[in] those days the cabinet met for a period before the actual formal cabinet sessions began as a political group without officials and note takers being present...”

This was the practice after the Lemass era. Lynch would step aside as Chairman (moving out of his seat) “*whereupon Brian Lenihan and Paddy Hillery moved around and co-chaired the deliberations. The civil servants left the room. Notes were never taken*”. (The source for this is cited as remarks made by Conor Lenihan to the Kelly family, see page 48.)

*

Peter Sutherland was a junior barrister

on Captain Kelly's legal team in the Arms Trials, despite being from the Fine Gael stable. This was before he rose to eminence as a Fine Gael Attorney General, European Commissioner, Director of the World Trade Organisation, and—finally—a partner in Goldman Sachs. David Burke interviewed him for his book and reports that Sutherland had “a deep antipathy to paramilitaries of any hue” and was opposed “to Haughey and all he stood for” (p340, citing a biography by John Walsh).

Captain Kelly had initially found it difficult to get legal representation, as Fianna Fail had warned off the legal profession. In my *Arms Conspiracy Trials* I tell the story of how he eventually got a lawyer: with Frank Fitzpatrick, a solicitor, offering his assistance. And I recount Mrs. Kelly introducing me to Frank Fitzpatrick in 2007:

“...He told me that he realised that he had to deal with one of the most serious charges on the Statute Book and he also told me a story which shows that Charles Haughey was not taking things as seriously as he was. During the Summer of 1970—which is to say, before the matter came to court—he was invited by Charles Haughey to see him at Kinsealey. The ex-Minister told him that the whole thing was a “*storm in a teacup*”: politics would take over and the case would be dropped. The main thing was to keep his client, Captain Kelly, quiet, and not to make things worse. Mr. Fitzpatrick's response was that he had a client who had been charged with the most serious of crimes and that he was responsible for ensuring that he had a Defence. Unless they found the absolute truth and told it in court, they were in serious trouble.

Evidently things did not go as Haughey expected. After the first trial opened, he called Fitzpatrick to see him. He admitted that his own assessment had been wrong, that the solicitor had been right and he'd done the right thing in taking the Defence of his client in deadly earnest.

...Mr. Fitzpatrick told me that initially Charles Haughey was reluctant to have his legal team interact with those of the other defendants, though that position was to alter” (*Arms Trials*, p77-8).

Burke obtained an interview with Sutherland (since deceased). He reports:

“Sutherland, it must be stressed was adamant that Capt. Kelly was an innocent man who should never have been charged. He spoke about the injustice he had suffered for decades after he had acted for him, often raising the issue himself. When interviewed for this book in 2013 he commented on the addendum memorandum of 10 February [1970]—which he had not learned about until then—stating

confidently, “well that puts it beyond doubt, he was innocent”. Sutherland also expressed his ‘delight’ at the gift of a copy of Angela Clifford's ‘Military Aspects of Ireland's Arms Crisis’ from me which included the wording of the addendum of 10 February 1970. He said he looked forward to the publication of this book and hoped it would help vindicate Kelly” (*Deception*, p340-1).

The “*Addendum to Memo of 10/2/70*” of 11th February 1970 was a “*Ministerial directive*” to the Army from Defence Minister James Gibbons. It states:

“... a. “At a meeting of the Government held this morning (Friday 6 Feb 70) I was instructed to direct you to prepare the Army for incursions into Northern Ireland.”

b. “The Taoiseach and other Ministers have met delegations from the North. At these meetings urgent demands were made for respirators, weapons and ammunition the provision of which the Government agreed. Accordingly truck loads of those items will be put at readiness so that they may be made available in a matter of hours” (*Military Aspects*, p76).

These instructions were carried out and Arms were placed in readiness on lorries for immediate transfer to the North if required.

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As we go to press the inquest on the ‘*Ballymurphy Massacre*’ of August 1971 is in the news. The court found that the British Army killed ten people unlawfully.

This should not be confused with the *Ballymurphy Crisis* of early April a year earlier, when the contingency provided for by the Irish Government appeared to have arrived. Some of the weapons ordered to be set aside for Catholic defence were nearly sent to Ballymurphy during attacks on civilians. The material was shipped to Dundalk and Captain Kelly was ordered back from his arms purchase mission on the Continent in order to supervise the proposed distribution. Here is Irish Army Chief of Staff General MacEoin's summary of what transpired on that occasion:

“...On 2 April 1990 [sic: should read 1970] Minister [Gibbons] rang Chief of Staff from NAAS. He indicated that he had received information from Mr Blaney that attacks on the minority were planned and that British Security forces would be withdrawn and accordingly would not afford protection for the minority. The Minister felt that material stored in Dublin should be moved forward.

...On the night of 2 Apr 1970, the following items were stored in DUNDALK military barracks. 500 Rifles, 80,000 rounds ammunition and 3000 Respirators...”

When the expected attacks did not occur, most of the weapons were returned to Dublin, leaving about one-third in Dundalk. MacEoin's account continues:

“Meanwhile the Chief of Staff formed a small selected planning Board to prepare contingency plans to implement the Government's directive...” (*Military Aspects* p89-90).

The balance of the weapons were returned from Dundalk to Dublin on 1st May after Intelligence reports that a “*subversive organisation*” was intent on seizing the guns. Coincidentally (or not!), Captain Kelly was taken into custody and questioned on that 1st May.

In the event, the crisis passed over and the weapons were not required.

Angela Clifford

Anger And Dismay:

Victor Grossman on the assault on Gaza
continued from page 7:

European Jews.” No halls were available for people with such ideas.

And, as for those Arabs demonstrating in Berlin, most of them, born here, could not be deported. But they had better watch their step! I could not help but recall the months after Pearl Harbor and how Japanese-Americans were depicted—and how they were treated! Or some Asian-Americans today!

So many people confuse the views and policies of some fanatics and some leaders, whether fundamentalist Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists, with large groups of very varied human beings in each category. To counteract this, in Germany, I would offer two suggestions—though without much hope of great success (except perhaps on a local scale):

Why couldn't the Jewish Community in Germany state its disavowal of all repression of Palestinians in the West Bank, in Israel and in Gaza, its rejection of the accelerated settlement of West Bank areas, the discrimination of the Arab language within Israel, and the isolation and suffocation of Gaza—all policies of Netanyahu, his Likkud and other parties—and thus make clear that these are not “*Jewish policies*” and should not be Israeli policies. It could then call for a united front of both Jewish and Muslim groups and people in Germany to oppose all forms of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia or attacks against anyone because of color, religion or cultural differences. This might be the best way to oppose the sinister elements which have troubled Germany for so long, most terribly when in control, still sinister when underground. It could be a model for all of Europe and beyond it.

Previous Berlin Bulletins, with a bio and list of Grossman's books, in English and German, are available at:
victorgrossmansberlinbulletin.wordpress.com

Harris And Larkin

Paul Larkin, a journalist about whom I know nothing, had an article, *Northern Ireland And Its Protestants*, published in the *Irish Times* on March 25th. I gather that a critical comment on this article was issued as a ‘tweet’ by Eoghan Harris under a pseudonym. This provoked Larkin into taking action to discover the person behind the pseudonym and was one of the factors leading to the sacking of Harris as senior Political Correspondent on the *Sunday Independent*, and the launching of numerous libel actions against him.

I have not seen Harris’s comment, but I’m sure he could not have directed on Larkin’s article the ridicule it deserves. Harris shares too much of Larkin’s view of Northern Ireland for him to be able to treat it in the way that it deserves.

In the early 1970s, as the War in the North was gathering momentum, I debated the matter with Harris in Limerick. The late Jim Kemmy, the Labour TD, arranged it. I argued that the Ulster Protestant community had the coherence of a distinct national body and should be treated as such by the Dublin Government, or, failing that, that the North should be brought within the remit of British party politics, as the state in the North was the British state—Northern Ireland only being a bizarre form of local government insisted upon by Whitehall. Exclusion of the North from the political life of the state was exclusion from the possibility of democratic political development.

Harris denounced this as ultra-Unionist, and he described me as being either a dupe of the Orange Order, or its agent.

I paid little heed to him after that. He was a blusterer. There were many blusterers around at the time. Perhaps he was the most talented of them, and the one with the strongest will to power—and was closer to being a confidence-trickster than a mere *willy-wagger* as Emma Barnett of *Newsnight* would say. But that made no real difference.

Some time later he flipped over into his opposite. I was given to understand when debating with him that he was on the Army Council of the IRA (Official), so I took his flipping over as being incidental to the general flip-flopping going on amongst the Officials in those times.

His appearance, along with Lord Bew, as an adviser to David Trimble during the negotiations following the signing of the 1998 Agreement, seemed to confirm the story that he was a big-wig in the Official IRA. Lord Bew was in that IRA—the *London Review of Books* said he was and he did not deny it. But now I gather that Harris was never in the IRA (Official) at all, though he was its close adviser.

His forceful condemnation of Paul Larkin’s article might be regarded as a form of self-flagellation. Larkin’s article is in substance an article he himself might have written in the early seventies (when opinions on the subject counted for much more than they do now).

His position now is merely the diametrical opposite of the position he held then.

Larkin writes of an incident in the 1950s, at a time when there was a “*sense of febrile, dark corruption at the heart of what passed for civil life in the North*”. And there is a corrupt Judge with his “*home of bone-chilling rooms, peeling facades and fetid and swampish grounds*”, which stands for an image of Northern Ireland itself. In this fetid atmosphere—

“A bright bubbly girl is stabbed to death in a frenzy by a member of her own family for transgressing their fake moral code and even worse, fraternising and seeking to help the impoverished working class—even Catholics. The killing is then covered up by agents of the State as so many murders have been since.”

This is Ulster Unionism, impelled by its desire “*to retain what it can from the Ascendancy system*”.

The Ascendancy system was a monopoly of land ownership, the professions, and political office by members of the Anglican Church. The landlord class on which it was based was given possession of Ireland by the British Parliament following the British conquest of Ireland in what might be called the ‘War of the British Succession’ in 1689-90.

Larkin writes: “*The creation of Northern Ireland was... an outcome of settler colonialism*”. But that means that Northern Ireland was *not* a continuation of a remnant of the Ascendancy system.

That Ulster colony was put in place four centuries ago, almost a century before the 1691 establishment of the Protestant (Anglican) Ascendancy system. Space was made for it by confiscation following a provoked rebellion. And the terms set for it were that it should be a productive colony, self-reliant, and expanding out of itself, as distinct from a ruling stratum which lived by exploiting native labour. Its purpose was to displace the native population, not to exploit it.

It did not adhere rigorously to those terms, and was criticised for that, but in the main it did develop out of itself. And, when a mass working class came about through capitalist industrialisation, it was Ulster Protestant.

The Ascendancy system was not colonial in the sense of being a swarm sent out from the mother hive to make its own way in the world. It was an institution of the British state set up in Ireland, with exclusive powers, to dominate and exploit the native population. It had only a token working class—artisans, not labourers. When a mass working class came about outside of Ulster it came from the native population. It came about later than in the Ulster development, and had little connection with it.

The Ulster colony was overlaid with an Ascendancy stratum of Anglican landlords, but the motor force of economic development lay with the Presbyterians and the Evangelical Protestants. There was, for example, an Ascendancy Borough of Belfast with an electorate, as far as I recall, of twelve. It elected two Anglicans to the Irish Parliament on the instructions of its aristocratic owner.

Meanwhile a town of Belfast had developed apart from the Ascendancy system, and without municipal authority. It had no political representation within the state system until the 1832 reform.

The Act of Union of 1800 deprived the Ascendancy of their Irish Parliament (and the independence it had gained in 1782), and the general Reform Act of 1832 set in motion an irresistible political development which stripped it of all its exclusive rights and powers during the next three-quarters of a century.

The final demolition of remainders of the Ascendancy position was done in 1898 and 1903 by the Local Government Act and the Land Act. In the agitation leading to the Land Act, the Orange tenant-farmers acted with the Catholic tenant-farmers. An attempt by Masters of Orange Lodges to use the Order against the Act was quickly

stopped by the members of the Order. And both of those Acts were brought in by a Unionist Government at Westminster.

Protestant Ascendancy had nothing whatever to do with events after 1903. The descendants of the Protestant Ascendancy were a mere gentry, abnormally wealthy because of what their ancestors had been, but without any exclusive power. They had only the democratic power of wealth. Post-1903 conflict, which shaped events in Ireland, was between the 1610 colony — that had struck root in Ulster and become an industrial power — and the native population of Ireland which had emerged from the subjugation of the Penal Law century of Protestant Ascendancy and constructed itself into a national movement.

These were two very different peoples — different in origin, in economic structure, in religion, in culture, and in ideals. That they were comprehensively different was not a new discovery after 1886, or 1903, or 1912. It came to light strikingly at the time of the *Catholic Emancipation Act* and the *Reform Act*. The Presbyterian radicals who had supported O’Connell’s agitation for Catholic Emancipation — which brought a measure of emancipation to Presbyterians too — refused to follow him into his agitation for a Repeal of the Union, and he denounced them. The fierce dispute between O’Connell and the Rev. Henry Montgomery in 1831 established the positions that were the main ground of conflict under democratisation.

LARKIN/McNAMEE

The title of Larkin’s article is “*Defining the ‘sub-polity’ that is Northern Ireland. Brendan O’Leary’s Treatise And Eoin McNamee’s Novels Are Key To Understanding The North*”.

The relevant novel by Eoin McNamee is *The Blue Tango*, which was published in London, by Faber & Faber, twenty years ago. It is based on the killing of a Judge’s daughter in 1952. The case was well remembered in Belfast in the late 1960s, after which other events overshadowed it. A British National Serviceman, posted to Belfast, confessed to the killing under the influence of a London policeman who was specially brought in to question him. He was found guilty but insane and was sentenced to a mental institution, but was not treated for insanity there. After a few years he was released and sent home to Glasgow on the condition that he would act discreetly. The gossip was that a member of the family had done the killing. The confession was found to have been brought

about by improper means around the time the novel was published.

The novel is a blend of fact and fiction, the fiction being invented dialogues and streams of consciousness, and a couple of purple passages like the following:

“Judge Curran’s father had worked in a slaughterhouse. When he was a student, Judge Curran would go the library, where he consulted geography books and *National Geographic* for the image of a race that resembled his father. The dark elongated face that seemed designed by a hand unfamiliar with faces... During the day he killed cattle and sheep with a bolt gun. At night he worked on the books while the next day’s cattle lowed in the holding pens and he worked as though he might arrive at an infernal calculus that might account for and reconcile their souls to his own.

“One evening he had walked home with his father from the Shambles, where his father was employed. A large sow had escaped from the stockyards and had been cornered by a pack of dogs from the town who were brought to the stockyards by the smell of the meat and a small mongrel terrier... had attached itself to the sow’s udder where it dangled unheeded, uttering low, choked growls, the cow’s dark, vehement blood dripping from its fur. The dogs stood in a circle... growling softly as though they bore for the sow a tormented and exacting love. A brindled greyhound... approached the sow on its left side, its belly touched the ground in an attempt to get the sow to turn her flank to the other dogs... The greyhound had got behind the sow and snapped at her heels, so that she turned again, squealing, and as She did so the man’s grip tightened around the boy’s hand and he began to draw him away, so that the last image the boy saw was of the sow turning towards him, its head dripping, furious mask from some ancient familial drama of blood and dishonour and guile...” (p3/4).

That passage makes up about half of the first, scene-setting, chapter establishing the feeling through which the rest will be read.

Paul Larkin comments:

“... I believe that McNamee’s *The Blue Tango* gets even closer [than O’Leary’s *Treatise*] to the dissolute heart of ‘loyal Ulster’ precisely because it is set in 1952, long before the formal commencement of the Troubles. In the *Blue Tango*, the home of Judge Lancelot Curran — ‘The Glen’ — with its bone-chilling rooms, peeling facades and fetid and swampish grounds, can pass for Northern Ireland

itself. A place where there is an undercurrent of subterfuge and tension in even the smallest transactions. A shabby dereliction of empire in what McNamara memorably calls ‘an aristocracy of ruin’. A bright bubbly girl is stabbed to death by a member of her own family for transgressing their fake moral code and even worse, fraternising and seeking to help the impoverished working class — even Catholic. The killing is then covered up by the agents of the State as so many murders have been since.

“For those who would say that McNamee is using poetic license and exaggeration, Leonard and Hobhouse put it best as far back as 1912 (as quoted by O’Leary) — ‘what is meant by Ulster for these purposes is half Ulster, or the city of Belfast with some adjacent counties... its desire is to retain what it can save from the wreck of the Ascendancy system...’

“It bears stating that the people who did most to push my career and celebrate my abilities come from Ulster unionist background... But these are cultured people who are in embryo what O’Leary has called the consociation of the new dispensation that came after 1998... People who celebrate the best attributes of their own folk. A clear-sightedness, a decency and defence of core humane principles such as the NHS, British jazz and jazz funk, challenging drama and the highest standards in television, writing and poetry. They hark back to Shakespeare rather than Cromwell.

...I have referred mainly to volume one of O’Leary’s treatise, but if those interested do nothing else, they should read the searing depiction of unionist electoral fraud in volume two, and volume three for the way an ingenious route was found to the destination that O’Leary posits as the only one available to any conflict society: power sharing. ‘Power sharing is the opposite of partition’ might be a suitable mantra for the *Treatise* as a whole...”

But isn’t that what we’ve got: Partition with power-sharing — Power sharing with built-in partition!

It would have been relevant to do so when the judge entered politics. The politics he entered was petty local politics. It could hardly have been otherwise as it was politics without affairs of State to deal with, and without an Opposition in its local affairs. The Nationalist Party was not in contention with the Unionist Party for the prize of governing Northern Ireland. It just wanted out of the whole British state.

And the Jurisdiction in which the Judge was a judge: when I had to conduct my own defence of a libel action brought in Belfast by President Mary McAleese, who was at the time a functionary within the

Northern Ireland legal system, I found that it had no law books of its own. Things were done by informal meetings between barristers and Judges. I could not even get an outline of the phases of an action.

I gathered from bickering that I overheard that there wasn't even agreement about whether it was basically English or Irish law. I went by the procedures of English Court actions, but found that they did not apply. Nor did the procedures of Irish Courts. It was something different from both, but it could not tell me what it was. It made itself up as it went along. Informality was the name of the game in those days.

Curran became by arrangement a local Unionist MP in a safe seat. Almost all seats were safe seats, Unionist or Nationalist. It didn't matter. Nothing was at stake. The main business of politics was done by the Protestant and Catholic *Electoral Registration* bodies, which saw to it that every new adult was put on the Electoral Register and was brought to vote on election day to achieve the predestined result. That is how Britain arranged things in its Six County region.

Larkin/O'Leary

Larkin says: " 'The Six Counties' is a perfectly legitimate term for Northern Ireland". But the Six Counties are merely a territorial fact, while Northern Ireland is a Constitutional structure imposed on them. And it was clearly the political structure, not the territory, that caused the trouble.

Did Larkin owe to O'Leary the insight that the two terms are interchangeable? I don't know. But he attributes to O'Leary the notion that "*The creation of Northern Ireland was... an outcome of settler colonialism*", when the newspapers and the Parliamentary record of the time show that the colony had no desire for colonial government, and wanted to remain a politically undifferentiated part of the UK system when nationalist Ireland had left.

Larkin presents O'Leary as an anti-revisionist dissenter within the revisionist orthodoxy of academia: "*O'Leary demonstrates, for example, that Northern Ireland was never a state... It is a 'sub-polity'...*"

When O'Leary's three-volume *Treatise On Northern Ireland* was published a couple of years ago, I glanced through it. I noticed that he acknowledged at the start that Northern Ireland was not a State, and never had been a State. In effect he conceded the case that I had been making since the early 1970s. And in fact he acknowledged that this was so.

He also acknowledged that Angela Clifford's books on Jack Lynch's prosecution of the two Kellys and others was political fakery, which failed only because the chief prosecution witness had an old-fashioned conscience which prevented him at the critical moment from giving perjured evidence. But Angela's books had had their effect by then and the Arms Trials were coming under scrutiny in the Dublin media.

I also noticed that O'Leary had taken heed of the *Veto Controversy* on the nomination of Bishops in the early 19th century, and of Walter Cox's *Irish Magazine*. But they were in a sense ancient history with no immediate bearing on current affairs. Saying that Northern Ireland was not a State was a different matter—or should have been.

In 1993 O'Leary wrote a polemical pamphlet against the idea that Northern Ireland was not a State. It was published in the name of Kevin McNamara, Labour's Shadow Northern Ireland Minister. It disputed the contention that the Labour Party should organise in NI because NI was a region of the British state, and not a separate state. It was titled *Oranges Or Lemons?* The title had much the same meaning as Harris's denunciation of us in the early seventies as being either agents or dupes of the Orange Order.

I published a reply to it under the title, '*Facsimile*' Politics. O'Leary's argument was that there were in NI facsimiles (paper copies) of the British parties and they were just as good as the 'real thing'. He did not reply.

About fifteen years later I gave a talk in Newmarket (Co. Cork) about Canon Sheehan and was approached by somebody who introduced himself as a relative of O'Leary. He challenged me about what I had written against O'Leary. I asked him if he seriously thought that there would have been war in the Six Counties if the Northern Ireland system had not been imposed on them. He seemed to have given the matter some thought, because he agreed at once that there would almost certainly not have been war. He then asked me why I thought O'Leary had written what he did. I replied that it must have been because he had a career to make in British academia, where the parameters within which NI must be written about were strictly laid down and were obviously enforced. He said that O'Leary had now removed himself from British academia and was in the USA.

When I saw in the *Treatise* the statement that I had been right about the "*Northern*

Ireland state", I took that to be the first fruit of American freedom. I then glanced through the book to see if the implications of it not being a state were thought out. I could not see that they were.

In *Northern Ireland: What Is It?* (2011), I reviewed the major Oxford University Press books on Northern Ireland both before the explosion of 1969 (Sir David Lindsay Keir, Thomas Wilson, Barrett & Carter, and R.J. Lawrence) and after it (Simon Prince, Bryan Follis, Marc Mulholland, A.C. Hepburn and J. McColgan). I did not feel inclined to work my way through another one without good reason. O'Leary's finally coming to the conclusion that NI was not a State did not seem sufficient reason, if he did not go on to working out the far-reaching implications of the fact.

I waited to see if anything would follow. What has followed is Larkin's dreadful article in the *Irish Times*.

Brendan Clifford

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The O'Connor Column

Germany, Israel and the Palestinians

In place of thoughts of its own this month, the Column would like to present those of a perceptive American, Victor Grossman, who has lived many years in Berlin, including during the GDR period, and provides regular interesting commentaries on German politics in his "*Berlin Bulletin*" (available on victorgrossmansberlinbulletin.wordpress.com and also as an email circular).

In his latest *Bulletin*, Grossman provides an excellent commentary on the appalling response of the German political and media class to recent events in Palestine/Israel, and accurately exposes both the historical roots of the hypocrisy underlying it and its disastrous consequences.

The *Column's* only quibble with Grossman's analysis is with the hope he places in Jewish organisations in Germany waking up to what is happening and pressuring the political system to change. Unfortunately, in the *Column's* opinion there is very little likelihood of this happening, as all official Jewish bodies in Germany, as well as its influential Jewish press, follow a hard-line stance in support of the expansionist colonial agenda of the "*Jewish State*". Woe-betide any German political or media figure, including on the Left, who challenges this with as much as a murmur! The result is that the response of German politicians and the media to the latest atrocities and ethnic cleansing has been a hysterical campaign against an alleged revival of "*anti-Semitism*" in Germany. It is truly pathetic to see the self-branded 'liberal' Spiegel—which was founded and run from 1947 by a group of people with very close connections indeed to the Nazi-era press and even to the SS—leading this latest thoroughly dishonest campaign, which in its all-pervasive uniformity can truly be described as "*fascist*".

ANGER AND DISMAY

BERLIN BULLETIN, NO. 189, 23 May 2021

Victor Grossman

It's no great surprise that most German media, reporting on the Israel-Palestine war, was one-sided, bigoted and misleading! There were samples of fairer treatment at first, showing the demolition of Palestinian homes, the shutdown of a meeting place for young people, the far-rightist gangs marching in East Jerusalem chanting "*Death to Arabs*", the invasion of al-Aqsa Mosque at the height of Ramadan with stun grenades, tear gas and "*skunk-fluid*" spray. And even timid hints that Netanyahu's provocations aimed at distracting attention, gaining popularity and avoiding a prison term, even if it led, as he certainly knew and planned, to a major round of violence.

But the fairer reports dwindled as the media returned to "*Israel's need for self-defense, the right of every country*"—with no mention of any similar Palestinian need. It equated rockets fired from Gaza, or those ten percent which pierced Israel's protective "Iron Dome" and did then wreck homes and cause deaths, with the constant, hour-long torrents of death and destruction blasted by one of the strongest military forces in the world into a small, densely populated confine, which could in no way deter the fighter-bombers and missiles, the drones circling low, night and day, over homes and families, for Gaza had no "*Iron Domes*" sent over by US arms producers. The media seemed largely to accept the huge disproportion, showing the mourning and heartbreak when a Jewish child was tragically killed by a rocket, but remaining almost silent about Palestinian children.

Ibrahim al-Talaa, 17, told of feeling it was the end for himself and his family.

"The Israeli warplanes bombed many different places in my area with more than 40 consecutive missiles, without issuing the prior warnings they used to issue in the past three wars. The sound of the bombing and shelling was so terrifying that I cannot describe it... As the bombs fell heavy and close, the house was shaking as if it would fall on our heads... My nerves collapsed and I was about to cry out, but I tried to restrain myself, just to give my family some strength. I saw my 13-year-old sister crying in silence. I hugged her for a while trying to cheer her up."

Maha Saher, 27, a mother of two daughters, Sara, 4, and Rama, five months old, told how, during the heaviest of attacks, her daughter Sara wept uncontrollably, asking for her father to return home.

"I don't fear death itself. But I fear to lose one of my children – or they to lose me... I fear they will target my apartment while we are sleeping, as they did with the al-Wehda street massacre."

Israeli warplanes had bombed three houses on al-Wehda street on Sunday, killing 42 civilians, mostly children and women. "They then destroyed the street itself to prevent the ambulances and fire trucks from reaching the destroyed buildings and wounded people," she said.

It was Al Jazeera which quoted one father:

"We awoke in the middle of the night to the sound of the bombardment... Now only two of our family are alive. 14 members, women, children and men, are gone. Six are still under the rubble."

For much of the world, the sixty-six dead Palestinian children remained little more than numbers, like the daily count of new Covid cases. There almost seemed to be media rules for one-sided reporting.

Ongoing descriptions of conditions in Gaza were equally rare. Unlike Ashgerod or Bathsheeba in Israel there was a water shortage, an almost total lack of clean water. We were not told what three or less irregular hours of electricity meant for people with Covid whose oxygen containers need electricity – or incubator babies when generators stopped working. And aside from the days and nights of bombing, how many were told of the decades of enforced shortages, joblessness, isolation, hopelessness and abiding fear in Gaza?

Such one-sidedness might be blamed only on Israel for not permitting journalists to enter Gaza. For the few already there, at Associated Press and Al-Jazeera, bombs aimed at their building, after a 60-minute warning, destroyed equipment and prevented further pictures of Gaza from their rooftop.

However, German media bias is part of a larger picture with a long history.

Back in 1949 the newly-founded Federal Republic of Germany soon grasped that the worsening Cold War enabled it to welcome back all but the most notorious Nazis in every field: schools, courtrooms, the police, universities, top military posts, diplomatic service, all political levels, even as chancellor or president and, in the most essential, basic power positions, the same economic titans

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Ceta trade deal and investor court system

The Tánaiste writes about the expected economic effects from four EU trade agreements with Korea, Mexico, Canada and Japan (“Ireland needs trade deal with Canada”, Opinion & Analysis, April 28th).

However, given current debates about the investor court system under the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (Ceta), he omits one critical detail about the report just published by his department. The overwhelming source of the claimed economic benefits (including over 90 per cent of the impact

on Ireland’s GDP) is the agreement with Japan, which does not include Ceta’s system for investors to sue governments.

We can have trade agreements without giving preferential rights to investors, and we can criticise Ceta without denying the economic benefits of international trade.

The fact that this report estimates the economic impact of Ceta without making any reference at all to the investor court system underlines this point.

It might perhaps have been more helpful if the Government’s economic analysis addressed those aspects of this agreement that opponents are actually criticising.

Dr. Oisín Suttle, Dept of Law, Maynooth University (Irish Times, 30.4.21)

KBC and the banking sector

Does it really matter to many account holders like myself if KBC leaves? Irish banks have little need for little accounts; they don’t really want our business, just our money. It is a sector which has not served Irish society well.

A State-run bank could change that, leaving private banks to manage without the taxpayer continuing to be their guarantor.

Brian Falter
(Irish Times, 20.4.21)

Palestine continued

who built up Hitler and fattened on war profits achieved with mass slave labor.

But there were two conditions for acceptance in the western community of nations. One was loud espousal of democracy and freedom, with elections and a variety of political parties, as long as they were not too conspicuously pro-Nazi – and safely supported western free-market rule.

The second obligation was a repeated, wordy repudiation of anti-Semitism and total approval of anything said or done by the government of newly-founded Israel.

It has held to this exercise in bonding. A key episode was the Eichmann Trial in 1961. Israel refrained from any finger-pointing at active former Nazis and Shoah-leaders, most notably Hans Globke, known as “*the second most important man in West Germany*”. In gratitude, Globke’s protective boss Konrad Adenauer agreed to help finance and build up Israel militarily, with 2 billion marks for a starter.

This policy, praised as admirable repentance, cemented West German rebirth as an industrial, political, military bastion and attack base against the “*Bolshevik East*”. But the obligations remained! Did Israel support Guatemalan killer troops with Galil rifles and Uzi machine guns, and all bloody dictators in Central America with weapons and surveillance equipment? Was it eagerly supportive of apartheid South Africa, also in weapons development? Was it the last remaining supporter in the UN of Washington’s illegal blockade of Cuba after even semi-colonies like Palau backed away? Take care! While progressive Jewish journalists in

Israel opposed their reactionary government, the mildest utterer of criticism in Germany was quickly condemned as an anti-Semite! Or if Jewish as a “*self-hater!*” Ignore that rule at your peril – of almost total censorship and ostracism!

This applied most strictly to the expanding settlement of the West Bank. Roads shut down for Palestinians, with roadblocks and checkpoints at every turn, ever smaller shares of limited water supplies, family ties between Arabs in Israel, Gaza or the West Bank restricted by walls and Israeli soldiers, West Bank children jailed, even tortured for throwing stones, homes with panicked children smashed into at all hours and the recurring bombing of Gaza recalling World War Two (or Korea and Vietnam) – it was all defended, even welcomed by nearly every political leader, publication and journalist as “*necessary self-defense of our eternal friend*” – through thick and thin.

As the polemics against “*Palestinian terrorists*” increased, whose violent or non-violent rebellion against occupation justified every countermeasure, I turned, always a history buff, to a speech by President Andrew Jackson in 1833, when he asserted that the Indians “*...established in the midst of another and a superior race... must necessarily yield to the force of circumstances and ere long disappear.*” They soon did; the U.S. Army moved 60,000 Indians to arid territory west of the Mississippi, with thousands dying in the “*Trail of Tears*”. Are there no parallels today?

In November 1868 George Custer and his Seventh Cavalry attacked the Cheyennes and Arapahos and slaughtered 103 warriors, plus women and children. He reported “*a great victory ... the Indians were asleep... the women*

and children offered little resistance.” He boasted: “*The Seventh can handle anything it meets ... there are not enough Indians in the world to defeat the Seventh Cavalry.*” We know what happened to him.

No, Hamas is not modeled after Sitting Bull or Crazy Horse. But don’t Custer’s boasts find echoes in loud words heard in the Knesset? And again we must face the question: *Which are the terrorists?*

In Pontecorvo’s film *The Battle of Algiers* about the fight for independence after 130 years of French oppression, explosives concealed in baskets kill innocent French civilians. To a bitter rebuke, the Algerian response was: “*Give us your bombers and you can have our baskets.*” Desperate desires for freedom and equality, with no available peaceful response to torture and repression, lead almost inevitably to violent responses – anti-apartheid bombs in South Africa or the explosive derailment of German trains, even with civilians, by antifascist French partisans. Rockets from Gaza were nasty and bloody, but what else was available against fighter-bombers? And with 12 Israelis killed, two of them children, but almost 250 Gazans, 66 of them children, I must again ponder: “*Who are terrorists?*”

The world is grateful for the ceasefire, but the price for it was heavy. Beyond the tragedy of any human loss or maiming on either side, airstrikes in Gaza hit 17 hospitals and clinics, wrecked the only Covid testing laboratory. Fifty schools were damaged or closed, three mosques were leveled and 72,000 Gazans lost or had to leave wrecked homes. Water, electricity, sewage disposal are now almost hopelessly crippled, far worse than before.

As those eleven terrible days ground on, the German media (as in the USA and elsewhere) found it increasingly difficult to distort or ignore what was really happening. More and more people questioned the almost total support for Netanyahu by every party except the LINKE (and even it was sadly split on some aspects). As a result, as if by command, the focus was altered. Not Gaza's rockets became Germany's main enemy but again anti-Semitism.

Of course it existed and, as always, had to be fought, relentlessly, as part of a century-long struggle. Anti-Semitic attacks or actions had indeed increased in recent years—committed mostly by Germanic Nazi-types who hate Muslim "foreigners" as much or more than they hate Jews. In fact, "anti-Islam" attacks were in the majority, if only because so many more Muslims live in Germany than Jews. But also, perhaps, because there are neo-fascist nests ensconced in the ranks of the police, the armed forces – even in some of the high positions which they wholly dominated in postwar years.

Of course, Palestinian desperation inevitably spread to Germany among sons, daughters or cousins of those killed or again homeless in Gaza or suffering under repression in the West Bank and Israel.

A week ago I took part in a demonstration to oppose the bombing of Gaza, alongside many thousands, mostly young Palestinians and other Arabs living in the West Berlin borough of Kreuzberg. Anti-Israeli feelings prevailed in countless signs, most of them hand-made on cardboard. But I saw and heard not one example of an anti-Jewish nature, I saw no crossing of the line to racism. The atmosphere was determined but peaceful; the sunny weather lent almost a picnic aspect.

After two hours my feet gave out and I left for home. Then, in the evening news, I learned that at the end of the march some group had indeed shouted anti-Semitic slogans. This caused the police to step in—hard! Or was it because the huge crowd, though dutifully wearing the obligatory face masks, could hardly keep to full social distancing in the crowded streets? So the march, one of three in Berlin alone that day, ended in violence and many arrests. As for the shouters, it seems that some may have been far-right Turkish groups. Long experience also leads to a suspicion that they included, in part, some hastily recruited provocateurs, so at least the closing minutes of what had been a peaceful demonstration would provide the media and the politicians just what they wanted. They did. And the sober, fair description of the event by a journalist on Berlin's official TV channel was quickly deleted—and replaced by an amazingly abject apology for "biased reporting"!

This disturbed march became the centerpiece of a campaign fed by excited reports about stones thrown at a synagogue, anti-Semitic smearing of a few plaques, burning of Israeli flags in two cities, a punch to someone wearing a kippa. All nasty, but not very hard proof of what the media shouted: "Alarming Antisemitism on the Rise!!!" Yet under the *klieg* lights the politicians outdid themselves in their warnings, while always adding their defense of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state—but now tending to avoid direct mention of Benjamin Netanyahu. Who could admire him?

Interior Minister Horst Seehofer of the right-wing Christian Social Union, notorious for his efforts against refugees and immigrants,

To page 7, column 3

Sunday Independent Censorship

From: Brian Murphy OSB Sent: Friday, April 30, 2021 11:53 AM

To: info@independent.ie

Subject: Fw: eoghan harris article

Dear editor, Apologies for troubling you again over the recent article by Eoghan Harris. The letter below makes clear my sentiments and I hope that you will respond to them in an appropriate manner. I find it hard to believe that a columnist is able to publish historical errors in order to promote a political agenda. The issue has assumed a national importance as in the last week Joe Duffy, in his RTE programme, has made the same allegation as Eoghan Harris, namely that Markievicz shot dead an unarmed policeman. One is tempted to ask if there is some conspiracy at work but that requires the work of a journalist. I simply try to recount a reliable historical narrative.

Sincerely, **Brian Murphy o s b**

Sir, A partial thank you for publishing an edited version of my letter in response to the article of Eoghan Harris, 11 April, in which he stated that Countess Markievicz had shot dead an unarmed policeman outside the gates of Dublin Castle on 24 April 1916. However, your edited version, by omitting the facts which I listed, conveyed the impression that my differences with Harris were merely subjective. That is not the case. The facts are as follows and I feel that your readers deserve to be made aware of them.

Firstly, Constable Michael Lahiff was not killed outside the gates of Dublin Castle. He was killed at the gates of St Stephen's Green, on 24 April, the first day of the Easter Rising.

Secondly, Markievicz was not charged with the killing of a policeman by the military court which tried her on 4 May 1916. She certainly would have been charged, if there was any evidence that she had done so.

Thirdly, Jim Herlihy, in his invaluable history of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (2001), simply records that Constable Lahiff was shot three times at St Stephen's Green. There is no mention of Markievicz.

Fourthly, Herlihy records that Sergeant John Hughes was arrested by rebels in St Stephen's Green early on 25 April but was released on the instructions of Countess Markievicz later in the day.

One may draw one's own conclusions: the evidence, however, indicates that Markievicz did not kill an unarmed policeman but did, in fact, release an unarmed policeman.

Dr Brian P Murphy osb, Glenstal Abbey, Murroe
County Limerick

RTE Distortion Of History

From: Brian Murphy OSB

Sent: Friday, April 23, 2021 10:21 AM

To: joe@rte.ie

Subject: Yesterday's programme

Dear editor,

I write concerning yesterday's programme during which Joe Duffy made the assertion that Countess Markievicz had shot dead an unarmed policeman in cold blood. His statement would appear to refer to the Easter Rising, which began on 24 April 1916, and, during which, Markievicz acted as second in command to Michael Mallin at the Royal College of Surgeons. The allegation by Joe Duffy refers to the killing of Constable Michael Lahiff at Saint Stephen's Green on the day that the rebellion started. However, the trial of Countess Markievicz, which took place on 4 May, made no mention of the death of Constable Lahiff. If there had been any connection between her and the death of the constable, it would certainly have been produced by General Maxwell who was eager to secure her conviction. This account of the death of Constable Lahiff is accepted in Jim Herlihy's history of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (2001). However, Countess Markievicz is mentioned in regard to another constable, Sergeant John Hughes: he was captured by rebels on 25 April but, on the orders of the Countess, was soon released. The historical reality is that Countess Markievicz did not shoot an unarmed policeman but did release an unarmed policeman from captivity. I feel that Joe Duffy should make a public acknowledgement of this reality.

Yours sincerely, **Dr Brian P Murphy osb**
Glenstal Abbey

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

Housing

It is a surprising fact that neither the Constitution of Ireland nor the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union make any reference to a Right to Housing as such.

To be sure, Article 40.5 of the Constitution does state:

“The dwelling of every citizen is inviolable and shall not be forcibly entered save in accordance with law.”

But there is no right to a dwelling place in the Constitution. Nor does the Constitution say anything about rights to food or clothing. It is very obvious that in 1937, when the Constitution was adopted, it was voted on and adopted by people who had housing and food and clothes and who had received their voting cards. A homeless person has no way of getting a voting card even if they had shoes and clothes in which to walk to a Polling Station.

In the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* of the European Union, Article 34 on Social Security and Social Assistance does say in Article 34.3:

"In order to combat social exclusion and poverty, the Union recognises and respects the right to social and housing assistance so as to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources in accordance with the rules laid down by Union law and for national laws and practices."

The problem with this is that we do have the '*National laws and practices*' from the times when Ireland was poorer. But now the Irish State seems to think we have moved on and money is not being provided by the State nor by Local Authorities for housing people who lack sufficient resources.

Instead County Council plans are more for Environmental Protection which is the fashion of the present time. The habitats of birds such as Hen Harriers and Eagles are now regarded as more worthy of using public resources than for human habitats,

"in accordance with the principle of sustainable development." (Article 37)

And so this previously unheard of "*principle of sustainable development*" does not apply to human habitation and the Planning Authorities are restricting the granting of Planning Permission for housing and so driving up the price of land having planning permission, with the obvious result that affordable housing has almost vanished. The system does not stack up and needs to be seriously altered.

Disconnection from the European Union

After one hundred years of independence from England, the Irish State is still not weaned from what Dublin politicians still regard as the Mother Country. As the shock of Brexit begins to sink slowly in – the politicians and the public servants are still acting as if something will turn up.

Two years ago, instead of investing in more ships to serve Ireland's connections with Brussels, with France and with Spain, Irish Continental Ferries sold one of their ships.

The Covid-19 Pandemic since March 2020 has concealed much of what was happening commercially and the Irish media has been complicit with the State in papering over any unpleasant news.

Now, with the feeling that the Covid-19 pandemic is almost over, it has become impossible to keep the lid on such things as Aer Lingus losing one million Euros each day and now having to close down its operations at Cork Airport and Shannon Airport. Flights have been cut severely. Government Ministers have the Government Jet and so they may not have noticed the disconnection from the EU.

During the Second World War, Ireland bought eleven ships, despite strong opposition at the time from the UK; and Ireland traded with another neutral country – Spain. One Irish ship was attacked in the Bay of Biscay by a RAF plane. A mistake the English claimed at the time. But the ship was clearly marked by EIRE and the Irish flag was prominently displayed.

The Government should never have sold Irish Shipping and it should never have sold Aer Lingus. We now have no national airline.

Does the Government yet know we are an island and part of the EU or do they still think we are part of the UK?

They certainly act as if they believe the latter. It all does not stack up!

Michael Stack ©

That was then

continued from page 29

scheme in Letterkenny.

Large quantities of timber were washed ashore on the coast of Donegal and while weighing over one and a half tons, they were manhandled up cliffs from Muckroos to Arranmore, before being loaded on to Johnny Doherty's truck and taken to the workshop in Carrick where they were sawn, planed, moulded and morticed into the manufacture of doors, windows, floors and roof timbers.

The 90 houses were built on mass concrete basis like a lot of public housing in the 1940s, 50s, perhaps subject to a little condensation but solid and much sought-after today. Mica/Pyrite or brown envelopes never came into it—just hard work and community endeavour.

This is now

Fianna Fáil could reap a 'bitter whirlwind' overhousing, veteran party T.D. John McGuinness has warned.

Mr McGuinness's remarks came against the background of a grim *Irish Mail on Sunday/Ireland Thinks* poll, which revealed the party, despite a 20% rise in support for the Government's coronavirus strategy, is flatlining at a support level of 15% (Irish Daily Mail, 17.5.2021)

Twice as many voters have confidence in the capacity of Sinn Féin to solve the housing crisis than for either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael.

The chair of the Oireachtas Finance Committee said of Fianna Fáil's difficulties on housing: "*We will reap a bitter whirlwind if we do not resolve the housing crisis.*" One source noted:

"Fianna Fáil's identity used to be centred on our capacity to build houses. They mightn't have been the best of houses and there might have been a lot of brown envelopes, but at least we built them.

"The people expected to be housed by Fianna Fáil. That's how we got into power. They don't expect us to now, which is why we are where we are."

"We are starting to turn into the Labour Party, and if we are not careful, we will suffer a similar fate."

The Mail on Sunday/Ireland Thinks poll also revealed that Sinn Féin now has a five-point lead over Fine Gael in the battle between the new 'big two' in Irish politics.

Fine Gael's support dropped by one percentage point, to 25% The Greens remain on 3% (no change) and now find themselves behind Peadar Tóibín's Aontú (4%).

The Social Democrats are on 7%, meaning the party has opened up a significant three point lead over Labour.*****

CONNOLLY continued

Nor, and this is even more important, is it at all conceivable that the rank and file of the Irish Volunteer movement could be betrayed as were their forerunners. These Volunteers of '82 were in reality English colonists with a distinctly anti-Irish upbringing and mental outlook. Their enthusiasm for Ireland was the enthusiasm of settlers for their new home, against the government in the home they had left. If they were hostile to English influence they were still more hostile to the vast mass of the natives of Ireland. They considered themselves as British subjects in the first place, and only as Irishmen in the second place.

Their appeal was to the traditions of the British Empire, and to the memory of the 'glorious Revolution' of 1688 – the Revolution that set King William III upon his Irish throne. Irish traditions, Irish heroes, Irish martyrs for freedom, all, all were alien to them, and therefore their betrayal by their leaders was not in their eyes a national betrayal, but only an aristocratic defection in a struggle of two parties within the British Empire. If you grasp that fact clearly enough you will understand why, despite our own criticism of what we deem their lack of vision, we yet refuse to accept our correspondent's comparison as we regard it as unjust to the leaders of today.

The present-day leaders of the Irish Volunteers do undoubtedly hold allegiance to Ireland as their first and most sacred duty. They are not merely dissatisfied subjects of the British Empire, they are dissatisfied to be subjects of the Empire at all. Among them there may be some who hold that to have a Volunteer force at all is enough of a gain for one generation; there may be others who like to play at soldiers but shrink from the reality, and there may be others who were never more than wire-pullers, and who have brought their wire-pulling propensities into their new conditions. No organisation can hope to be quite free of such undesirables, nor even sure of being able to recognise them.

But the one certain mark to distinguish the Irish Volunteers of today from their forerunners is the fact that in their allegiance they set Ireland first. Given that, and all other things can be forgiven them. True, the presence upon their Executive of some of the men who voted the betrayal to John Redmond and his party is a standing invitation to suspicion and distrust.

These men were either false to their trust, or incapable blockheads. In either case they should have been sent back to the obscurity and harmlessness of private life to live under suspicion or pity the remainder of their days. To place them again in power was to forfeit the complete confidence of the people in a time where complete confidence was necessary. Yet we have heard demands for absolute trust and confidence in a body some of whose trusted members have already abused that trust so vilely.

But granting all this the point remains that the Irish Volunteers of our time have that great quality the want of which betrayed their predecessors. That quality is: complete faith in their own country, complete confidence in her destiny to be a nation, and complete reliance upon the power of Ireland to survive all the shocks an adverse fate may bring upon her.

An Explanatory Note

The *National Volunteers* was the name taken by the majority of the Irish Volunteers that sided with Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond in 1914, who called on *Irish Volunteers* to support Britain in the war against Germany '*for the freedom of small nations*'. 11,000 Irish Volunteers opposed the war and retained the name Irish Volunteers, reorganised and, along with Connolly's Citizens' Army, rose on 24th April 1916 to proclaim the Irish republic as a Sovereign Independent nation.

I.C.T.U.—Cuckoo Funds

The Executive Council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has described new measures to tackle the activities of Cuckoo Funds in the housing market as "*limited and minimalist and unlikely to significantly affect the activities of such funds*".

Following a meeting of the Congress Executive Council, Congress General Secretary Patricia King said:

"The minimalist measures announced by the Government to deal with the impact of Cuckoo Funds are unlikely to significantly deter or limit such activities and will do nothing to ensure delivery of affordable housing for all.

"The measures announced by government mean that the speculative funds will remain largely free to continue with 'business as usual' and are likely to focus their attention on the apartment sector, where financial muscle gives them the capacity to effectively set rental prices well above what is affordable for the majority of working people and families.

"The overriding concern of the Government appears to lie with ensuring the continued presence of such funds, even if this means the continued and ongoing dysfunction

of our housing market.

"Indeed, it is this very dysfunction that makes Ireland so attractive for speculative funds and interests.

"Not only is the State prepared to forgo tax from the funds, but the absence of affordable housing has resulted in local authorities entering into expensive, long-term rental and leasing deals with such funds in order to make up that shortfall.

"Ireland's housing market is attractive for Cuckoo Funds and other speculative interests only because it is entirely dysfunctional. Successive governments have allowed housing to become highly financialised and removed from its true social purpose.

"To address that dysfunction we need a major state intervention to deliver decent, affordable homes, cost rental and public housing at scale to ensure housing for all.

"Our housing market will become less lucrative for speculative interests only when we make it more affordable and secure for people.

We can do this by delivering on genuinely affordable homes to buy or rent, ensuring greater security for tenants by ending 'no-fault evictions' and introducing a new, legal right to housing" (*The Echo*, Cork, 22.5.2021)

That was then

J.W. Cunningham, a builder, in 1923 established a famous Co. Donegal family building firm which served the north-west for some 40 years. J.W. Cunningham, and his father, W.J. Cunningham, a master carpenter, regarded building as a vocation and a vital element in the establishment of any community.

J.W. was one of thousands who contributed to the fight for an Irish Republic, working in the Midlands of England he engaged on the supply line of arms to the patriots at home.

When the war was over, he started his contract business in the town of Carrick, in south-west Donegal, not unlike Sean Moylan, who was also a building contractor.

J.W.'s biggest contract was signed in 1941 — a scheme of 90 houses for the Letterkenny Urban District Council. Thanks to his brother and a cousin, a bond was signed with Donegal County Council for the full amount of the contract. It showed an immense act of faith in the ability of J. W.

This contract was undertaken at the height of W.W. II when materials were scarce. Timber stocks in supplier's yards depended on convoys of ships crossing the Atlantic. It was these same convoys, sunk by German U-Boats which came to the rescue of the Ard O'Donnell housing

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LABOUR

Comment

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James Connolly

The Volunteers of '82

From Workers' Republic, 8 January 1916.

A correspondent has written to us asking whether there is not a great similarity between the position and actions of the Irish Volunteers of our day, and that of the Volunteers of '82. He points out that the Volunteers of '82, despite the eulogies lavished upon them by the writers of Irish history, were a ghastly and inglorious failure, and that they were so because they lacked the revolutionary quality. They had England at their mercy, and feared to strike, but when England had them at her mercy she struck without hesitation and without scruple.

The comparison is good, but not perfect. Indeed, no comparison is ever perfect. All comparisons and analogies from history fail in some degree, or at some point. If the circumstances are the same the characters of the actors are different; if the characters of the actors are the same the circumstances are different. Usually there is alike a blending and a dissimilarity on both essentials.

A great socialist writer, Karl Marx, has said that history repeats itself – once as tragedy, and once as farce. We suppose that the real explanation of the supposed tendency of history to repeat itself lies in the tendency of human beings to imitate whatever action has impressed itself much upon the imagination, just as in a company of individuals we generally find some persons almost unconsciously imitating the mannerisms of any obtrusive personality in the group.

Take any great historical crisis, and you will find that whenever a similar crisis arises thereafter there will develop amongst the minor actors in the latter a tendency to pattern themselves after the

outstanding figures in the first. And a still greater tendency amongst the unthinking multitude to insist upon all the actors in the second crisis being invested with all the merits and demerits of their forerunners.

In the case we are considering it is indubitable that the Irish Volunteers of our day deliberately patterned themselves after the Volunteers of Grattan's time, adopted their name, and many of their traditions. It is also true that the great international crisis that has since developed has given to the experience of our own Volunteers a great similarity to the experience of the Volunteers of '82.

The Volunteers of Grattan's time were betrayed by their leaders, as the Volunteers of our time were betrayed by the Parliamentary Party. The Volunteers of Grattan's time broke up without having consolidated their legislative victory, owing to their leaders' faith in the promises of English statesmen just as the Volunteers

of our time were disorganised by the fact of their leaders' trust in the promises of English statesmen.

Despite their enthusiasm for Ireland the greatest section of Grattan's Volunteers became active members of the yeomanry who afterwards achieved notoriety for their crimes against Ireland, just as a considerable section of the Volunteers of our day have become soldiers of the English army – active agents of the military army of the oppressors of their country.

A poem written at the time of Grattan's Volunteers and the United Irishmen somewhat scathingly refers to them in the following manner:

What did the Volunteers?
They mustered and paraded,
Until their laurels faded,
This did the Volunteers!

* * *

How died the Volunteers?
The death that's fit for slaves,
They slunk into their graves,
Thus died the Volunteers!

And our correspondent seems to infer that in this respect history is again about to repeat itself. We respectfully differ with him. We can see no real analogy between the Volunteers of Grattan's time, and the Irish Volunteers since the split. Up till that period the analogy was perfect. Up till that time the stage was set for just such another betrayal, for at least just such another fiasco. But we cannot see that the present leaders of the Irish Volunteers can at all be compared to the crowd of aristocratic, clerical and capitalist reactionaries who steered the Volunteers of '82 to their destruction.

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