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# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

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## Europe Wastes A Crisis!

The EU is in the first place a large-scale administrative project with a political purpose. Administration is basic to it. Its political purpose cannot be pursued directly. Steps towards its realisation can be taken administratively by the competent handling of practical problems that arise. Crisis is opportunity—as Jacques Delors explained. (Another of his pithy remarks was that “*you cannot fall in love with a market*”).

The pursuit of an ideological system is rarely compatible with practical politics, and it is entirely out of place in a multi-national, multi-state body like the European Union.

The European Union has just wasted a major crisis because it has fallen into the grip of an ideologist.

The Covid outbreak required regional European handling, but was not given it.

It intersected with Brexit. The British State can be very competent indeed when it has a mind to be. It handled the crisis by large-scale investment in the production of multiple vaccine projects, at a time when it was unclear which ones would be successfully developed, and then ensuring ample supplies for its own population of whichever vaccines proved to be effective—and by a degree of laxity in the implementation of Lockdowns which made them tolerable to the populace. It also spent money like water.

By contrast, the leadership of the European Union failed to intervene actively to promote a *European* vaccine. And it made the miscalculation that its premier duty in negotiating supplies of vaccines was to obtain value for money: rather than ensuring plentiful supply. This was a bizarre approach, given the massive costs of developing vaccines.

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## What is the EU's 'rule of law'?

Ireland got another opportunity to carry on the EU crusade against Poland and Hungary at a meeting of the *Institute of International and European Affairs* in Dublin on 2nd February. Minister of State for European Affairs Thomas Byrne said that “*Ireland supported the continued article 7 procedures against Hungary and Poland, one of the most serious moves the union can take against member states. The procedures were invoked because of rule of law concerns*” (IT 3.2.2021). He repeated versions of this *mantra*, parrot-like, throughout the meeting.

The Hungarian speaker, Minister for Justice Judit Varga, made the point that what was at issue was a Member State's policies on social, cultural, economic, immigration and suchlike. Such matters could not be described as ‘*rule of law*’ issues. She concluded that

“Democracy was an important value and if different choices are made in

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## The *Irish Times* and the Mother and Baby Home

*The Irish Times* never hesitates to demand openness, transparency and accountability for others, but never applies those lofty standards to itself. When its President for Life, Major Thomas Mc Dowell, was exposed by this magazine as a treacherous racist, the voluble organ of political correctness was left speechless.

The suppression of Niall Meehan's

letters to *The Irish Times* on the subject of Bethany Home suggests that a raw nerve has been struck (see *Irish Political Review*, February 2021). His revelations disturb the newspaper's cosy narrative of specifically Catholic Church culpability. Bethany Home was a Protestant institution which buried at least 262 of its infants (61% of these deaths occurred from 1935 to 1947),

and moreover had involvement by *Ralph Walker*, one of the most influential figures in the history of *The Irish Times*.

Walker was the nephew of Hettie Walker who was the Residential Secretary of Bethany Home from 1922 to 1955.

His father, Joseph, sat on the Home's Management Committee.

The recent report of the Commission of investigation into Mother and Baby Homes

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*And Where Is Irish History!*

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In particular, the Commission refused to shoulder 'indemnity liability', such as had been negotiated by vaccine producers in the USA and UK. (We are not clear whether such a liability was in the end accepted by the Commission.)

On top of that, the European Medicines Agency, which is tasked under the European Treaties with approving vaccines for use in the EU, has been dilatory in clearing vaccines for use in Europe that have been freely used for months elsewhere.

And there was a 'Cold War'-type attitude to the successful and cheap Chinese and Russian vaccines which, as we go to press, still have not been cleared for use in the EU.

These short-sighted attitudes have disadvantaged Europeans in accessing vaccines.

The major act of the President of the EU Commission was to invoke Article 16 of the Brexit agreement to prevent vaccines produced for Britain in Europe from crossing the Irish border into the UK.

Pressure had previously been applied to Britain to ensure that there was no trade border within Ireland, but then—on the spur of the moment—the old border within Ireland was restored.

That measure was revoked the following day. It was explained away as an accident or a mistake.

A competent administration could not have made such a mistake on a point that had been so much in the limelight during the preceding months. It was a moronic decision by a President of the Commission whose mind was on higher things.

Article 16 was intended for use in dire emergencies. It was a concession to Britain and it was taken for granted that only Britain would invoke it. But it was invoked on a trivial issue by the EU. The subsequent decision not to act on the decision, made after the President of the Commission was told the facts of life, could not de-invoke it.

About six months previously President von der Leyen had sacked the Trade Com-

missioner, Phil Hogan, because, while on a visit to Ireland, he had attended a golf dinner organised by a Committee of the Dail. Hogan had broken no Irish law by attending the dinner, and guidelines for EU personnel were much more lax than anything contemplated in Ireland—but the President saw that the sacking of Hogan would go down well in certain quarters in Ireland. The Irish Government was finally in the hands of Fianna Fail and Taoiseach Martin, who was a 'political correctness' extremist, gave no backing to Hogan.

So Hogan was sacked. And President von der Leyen asked that Ireland should nominate Mairead McGuinness as a replacement—having promulgated a novel rule that a male and a female should always be nominated by national governments for her to choose from. Her over-riding object was not good government, but the achievement of gender parity.

The practice that she inherited was that national governments submitted a single nomination for Commissioner.

It seems that Simon Coveney (who had some actual experience of the world, though not as much as Hogan) had considered going for the job until it became clear that Von der Leyen wanted McGuinness for it.

As a result of these Irish miscalculations, Ireland lost the position of Trade Commissioner held by Hogan. McGuinness was given a position more in keeping with her lack of governing experience, Financial Services.

Von Leyen was a failed German politician with a talent for self-promotion in the ideological sphere of *Genderism*—which apparently does not yet extend to transgenderism at this level.

McGuinness also has a talent for self-promotion, but is even less a competent politician or administrator than Von Leyen.

It must be remarked that previous generations of ambitious lady professionals would have regarded with disdain this kind of crude Genderism: they would rise on their abilities or not at all.

There is a problem about the doctrinaire application of Genderism to affairs of State, and particularly to a complex political structure that is in the process of being created.

It's a man-made world in public affairs. During the past half-century this world has been trivialising and marginalising domestic affairs. There is brutal competition between men in political affairs, ensuring that the most able get to the top. In a well-

established state, operating by routine, it may be a matter of no consequence if gender equality at the top is established by law, instead of by women entering the political process in equal numbers with men and fighting their way to the top in competition with them.

But the EU is a work in progress, in a disorderly world, and it is therefore a matter of consequence if people are effectively brought from outside the system and placed in positions of power just because they are women.

Elizabeth Bowen is a feminist icon, but her feminism was fundamentally different from Ursula von der Leyen's. She, Elizabeth Bowen, was the equal of any man in this world made by men: and she would prove it without fear or favour.

Angela Merkel is that kind of feminist. But she promoted Von der Leyen from a position of mediocrity in German politics to a position of authority in European affairs, and Von der Leyen replaces Phil Hogan with Mairead McGuinness.

The European Commission is being made the 'House of Lords' of European politics—a prestigious dumping ground.

\*

Another recent EU initiative connected with Covid is the attempt to establish "conditional budgeting". What this means is that allocation of EU Budget funds to the various states should be applied to discipline these states into behaving in accordance with whatever the fashionable idea of good conduct is.

The intention was to apply this approach against Hungary and Poland, who are regarded as being out of order because they have introduced measures to support family values and grow their populations, and they refuse to seal off the Judiciary from the conduct of government and place it in authority over the Government—a thing which is not done in the West European states themselves, not even in the goody-goody Irish state of recent times.

It was assumed that the Hungarians and Poles, having recently emerged from the misadventures of the 20th century—from 1914 to 1990—and been taken in hand by the EU, could only live under West European tutelage. The EU found it was mistaken. The Hungarians and Poles showed that they were willing to block the Budget unless the authoritarian element directed against them was removed. It was removed.

On February 14th Ireland's largest circulation paper, the *Sunday Independent*,

## The Hagia Sophia

Richard Pine, writing recently in *The Irish Times* stated: "The diktat by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan last year that the former basilica of Hagia Sophia – arguably the heart of Orthodox Christendom – should become a mosque was designed (successfully) to provoke international outrage" (8.2.21).

That is an entirely false statement. Turkey's President Erdogan permitted Friday prayers to be held in Hagia Sophia for the first time since Ataturk desecralised the Mosque/Church and turned it into a museum. During Friday prayers the Christian symbols and mosaics, which were notably saved and preserved by the Ottomans (from previous attempts by Romanist Christians to destroy them) are briefly covered. They are uncovered again when Hagia Sofia returns to its museum status for the rest of the week.

In some ways this was a move to garner domestic support in Turkey by Erdogan. But it really had nothing to do with wanting to be offensive to the West except in the way that the West's predictably ignorant reaction might be useful to build his support in Turkey.

Pat Walsh

asked "Why Has The EU Remained Silent About Fascist Regimes Operating Within Its Borders?". The "fascist regimes" are the elected Governments of Hungary and Poland, along with Russia. The article has the title, "EU is timidly complicit in allowing democracy to be dismantled". It is illustrated with a photo of Alexei Navalny, with the caption, "J'Accuse!". That, as far as we recall, was the title of Zola's book about the anti-Semitic Alfred Dreyfus trial.

The blurb on the *Sunday Independent* article says: "Our obsession with Trump blinds us to the real fascism going on under our noses".

It would have been sensible if the author of the piece, Eoin O'Malley, had told the EU to tend to its own affairs before laying down the law for the USA and Russia, over which it has no semblance of jurisdiction and no influence. He does not do that. He dismisses the futile propaganda campaign directed towards the USA, but takes Russian affairs to be EU business.

The US is not image-conscious in its relations with Europe. The US is a self-sufficient absolute state sovereignty. It is the creator of modern Europe, and it does not look at itself in the mirror of its creature. It currently demands that its European creature should break off relations with Russia, or else it will be chastised. The basic demand is that Germany should break its contract with Russia for the supply of cheap gas.

Thirty years ago Russia was in the doldrums. The Soviet system had broken down under the stress of the arms race with the United States, which began immedi-

ately after it had destroyed the power of Nazi Germany and Truman took over from Roosevelt. Its organised economy broke down and a market economy took over. But the elements of a market economy were not there waiting to spring into action. Russia, for about a decade of anarchic democracy, was America's to do what it pleased with. What it pleased America to do was plunder it.

A Russian State was reconstructed out of the anarchy, from a base in the security apparatus of the Soviet State. It set about restoring a national economy, on a market basis, and introduced a stable political party to the electoral system.

In the Yeltsin period, when destruction of what had existed was the name of the game, there was a wide variety of fly-by-night parties, without continuous existence from one election to the next, which made political construction impossible.

The present Russian system is crudely representative. The wonder is that it exists at all, not that it lacks some of the finer touches of functioning States that have been evolving for generations or centuries. Fully-fledged democratic states are not constructed by revolutions. They are modifications of well-established nationalist states. British democracy came about as a modification of a strictly aristocratic system that had been operating for a couple of centuries.

What is lacking in Russia is an Opposition Party which is part of the system established by Putin. It is not within Putin's gift to create an Opposition Party of that kind, which aspires to govern the existing system with marginal modifica-

tions. Navalny's Party—if his sloganising following can be called a Party—does not have that aspiration.

The history of attempts over the past three-quarters of a century to manufacture democratic states around the world according to a master-plan, each with inbuilt party-antagonisms which somehow produce stability, should raise doubts about whether it is a realisable project, rather than lead to the idea that, if it fails to happen, the reason lies in the personal qualities of leaders.

The *Sunday Independent* writer tells us that “*the trial of Alexei Navalny shows the further dismantling of human rights and the rule of law in Russia*”.

The Russian democracy which Putin dismantled (i.e., the anarchy which he curbed) reduced life expectancy in the mass of the people by almost half, but allowed complete freedom in the use of money. All that was needed for the enjoyment of every conceivable Human Right was sufficient money. For a people accustomed to living on means supplied by State arrangements, life in market freedom was crushing.

Edmund Burke, in a campaign against the ideology of Human Rights introduced by the French Revolution, said that the basic human right was the *right to be governed* in an orderly and tolerable way. Given that as a base, other things might be added. He exerted a major influence in warding off revolution in England in the 1790s, and preserving the existing system—with all its acknowledged corruption and inequities—because it was an existing system. Democratisation of it began very gradually about half a century later, after French revolutionary democracy had collapsed.

All of that has little or no bearing on life in Western Europe today, but it remains relevant to the condition of the greater part of the population of the world.

The *Sunday Independent* complains that EU Minister Josep Borrell was humiliated on a visit to Moscow. He had to stand in silence while Foreign Minister Lavrov “*harangued the EU*”. What Lavrov did was point to the undeniable fact that the EU was proving not to be a reliable body with which one could make a deal, because it was not independent. It was still bound to the will of its creator by both financial and spiritual ties.

Russia had asserted its independence as a condition of its survival and development out of the American-inspired anarchy of the 1990s. The choice was to be plundered

out of existence, or assert a national will, whatever the cost. Europe, on the other hand, was a beneficiary, material and political, of American policy against Russia after Russia had broken the power of Nazi Germany.

Nationalism equals Fascism: that seems to be a reasonable equation in the mindlessness of “*post-national*” Ireland:

“But we don’t even have to go as far as Moscow to see fascism in action. It is happening within the EU’s own borders. Tonight Klubradio, Hungary’s first radio station in the post-communist era, goes off the air—having lost its broadcasting licence... Viktor Orban’s Fidesz party decided the radio station broke administrative rules. The station appealed, but it was hardly surprising that it lost that appeal. The Hungarian courts are also controlled by the Fidesz party...

“Orban effectively shut down the country’s premier university when it became a source of criticism of his government. He took control of the judiciary by first reducing the retirement age of judges... He then took control of judicial appointments and reduced the power of the Constitutional Courts...

“The upshot is that Hungary is regarded as only “partly free” by Freedom House, a measure of how democratic a country is.

“Hungary offended Western sensibilities with its attempts to stop migrants crossing its borders during the migrant crisis...

“Orban frankly declared Hungary an ‘illiberal democracy’, one where Christian values would be supported...

“Hungary is a model for Poland, where the Law & Justice Party has undermined judicial and media independence.

“Why has the EU allowed this to happen?” (Freedom House is an American Government-founded and -financed non-Governmental organisation.)

All securely-established states have effective control over law-making, the administration of law, academic life, and broadcasting.

Broadcasting was a State monopoly in Britain and Ireland until quite recently. When commercial broadcasting was introduced it was under licence from the State.

Britain recently stopped Chinese State-funded broadcasts into Britain. When China retaliated in kind, the BBC responded with a hymn of praise to British broadcasting by its Foreign Affairs correspondent, Kevin Connolly, who declared that *Lillibulero* was the signature tune of the Truth throughout the world (BBC Radio 4, February 13). It is the signature tune of the BBC’s *World Service*. It is an

anti-Catholic jingle that helped William of Orange to power in the *Glorious Revolution* coup of 1688, and is a regular feature in July 12th events in the North.

There is a very close overlap between Government and Judiciary in England, and in Ireland too. And, when Roosevelt found his New Deal obstructed by the Supreme Court, he took steps to change the composition of the Court.

And, as to academic life: Ireland is the only state in Western Europe which placed it under foreign hegemony. That was when it set about de-nationalising itself, under Jack Lynch, in the 1970s—when it was unable to cope in a national spirit with the insurrection in the North, over which its Constitution asserted a right of sovereignty.

Hungary and Poland,—when being reconstructed out of the wreckage of the Soviet system (which in turn had constructed them out of the wreckage of their own fascist past)—were lumbered with idealistic Constitutions which got in the way of national development.

They were quickly recruited into the EU as an anti-Russian measure. They tried to live according to the empty ideals projected onto them by the EU as an institution. The Western states of the EU lived in realistic national frameworks. All that Hungary and Poland have done in recent years is establish for themselves actual national frameworks of life, such as the other states had, and refuse to be disciplined for it. That is their ‘fascism’.

Because Hungary and Poland have a will to maintain national existence, and support each other against attempts to hold them in subordination to an impractical ideal, the EU is unable to discipline them. If by tolerating them the EU makes itself complicit in ‘fascism’, the only alternative is to get rid of them. If post-national Ireland had its way, that is what would be done. Ireland has led the assault on them. But fortunately there are others who live in the real world.

The hollowness of post-national Ireland was demonstrated in the recent debate between Minister of State for European Affairs Thomas Byrne and Hungarian Minister for Justice Judit Varga (see *What Is the EU’s Rule Of Law?*’ in this magazine). Byrne had a litany that he repeated: . Varga, a feminist of the Bowen kind, listened to what was said, thought about it, and gave a reasoned response to it. And she demonstrated that the case being made

against Hungary had nothing to do with law and everything to do with west European media fashions of the moment.

If Ireland had not taken Joyce's advice and brainwashed its history out of its mind, it would be well placed to make a positive contribution to EU development at this juncture. It ought in particular to be well-informed about Hungary.

Sinn Fein was founded under Hungarian inspiration. Hungary established itself on terms of parity with Austria in the Hapsburg Empire by refusing to attend the Imperial Parliament. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Beust, criticised the Home Rule Party for swearing a false oath of allegiance so it could attend the Imperial Parliament, though committed by party rules against participating in the governing of the Constitutional system to which it swore allegiance, instead of meeting as a Parliament at home.

The Dual Monarchy of Austrians and Hungarians seemed to be on the way towards establishing a third national component of the Hapsburg Monarchy, a Slav component, when Tsarist Russia, Republican France, and Imperial Britain launched the Great War on Germany and Turkey. Hungary was heavily punished in 1919 for being part of the Hapsburg State. Large tracts of territory and population were stripped from it and made part of the make-believe nation-state of Czechoslovakia.

The Home Rule MP, T.P. O'Connor, who became a thorough British Imperialist through the duplicity of Redmondite Oath-taking, resented only the success of "the Orangemen" in getting themselves excluded from the Irish settlement. But he found consolation by somehow imagining the Hungarians to be the Orangemen of Europe, and it gave him satisfaction to contemplate their humiliation by the 'Treaty' (Trianon, 1920) which destroyed the Hapsburg State. He wrote a Foreword to Major C.J.C. Street's *Hungary And Democracy* (1923).

Major Street was a high level propagandist of the Empire. He was based in Dublin Castle during the war on the 1919 Republic, and published a book on *the Administration Of Ireland, 1920*. Subsequently he published books against post-War French policy, and in defence of the Versailles settlement in Eastern Europe. O'Connor wrote in his *Foreword* to the book on Hungary:

"a large body of Magyars have been placed under the control of men of another race... 800,000 under the Rumanians, 636,000 under the Czechoslovakians,

and a 100,000 under the control of Yugoslavia.

"That such a transfer of allegiance should be bitter to a proud race like the Magyars is intelligible... But the answer to the complaint must be found in their own inexcusable and almost incredible persecutions of these other races, while they held omnipotent sway... The Magyar ascendancy had nothing like it in the modern world outside, perhaps, the Orange regime in the six counties of Ulster...

"It is a misfortune of these Magyar peoples who have been transferred that geography has so intermingled them with the majorities of the other races and new kingdoms that you could no more separate them from their present habitations than cut out the heart of a body and expect the body to live..."

There was in fact no Czechoslovakian race or nation. There was no Czechoslovakian heart to be torn out. The state was a combination of minorities under Czech ascendancy. Fifteen years after O'Connor wrote those words it fell apart at a touch, and a word from its creator, Britain. The German region was transferred itself to Germany, the Hungarians to Hungary, the Poles to Poland, and the Slovaks set up a government for themselves.

The 2nd World War grew out of the thoroughly bad re-arrangement of Europe made by Britain as the dominant Power in 1919. Ireland asserted its independence by refusing to participate in that War. It could now be playing a useful part in European affairs, if it had maintained the spirit of independence which motivated it in standing apart from the War, and stating facts as an independent observer.

## What is the EU's 'rule of law'?

continued

politics, they should not be given the name of rule of law issues, so blackmail could be used to change those positions. The EU Commission's report on the rule of law, published last September, was "invalid", as there was no treaty basis for its opinion to prevail on the matter, she claimed."

Ms Varga is quite right. Where is the Treaty authority that gives the EU, or other Member States, the competence to interfere with a Member State's judicial and legal systems? Mr. Byrne did not quote a Treaty source. It does not exist and the EU has shown recently it has quite enough on

### Major C.J.C. Street: **The Administration Of Ireland, 1920**

with a substantial extract from his *Ireland In 1921* and a review of his other writings on Britain's world role, and inter-war Europe. Introduction by *Dr. Pat Walsh*. Intelligence Officer Street produced this exceptionally informative justification of the Black and Tan War in Ireland, using the secret archives of Dublin Castle (with many captured IRA documents and official statistics of incidents).

192pp (9.5" x 6"). €18, £15 postfree

its plate dealing with the one issue it has competence on – Trade. But there are far more important things than trade which the EU does not have competence in: law making and the judiciary in Member States is one.

The Commission authority for its crusade comes from a document of the European Parliament of 2019 called "*The EU framework for enforcing the respect of the rule of law and the Union's fundamental principles and values*", which sought to justify their interpretation of what the EU's values are. As such it represents merely the *opinion* of the Parliament. It has not got the force of law. No Treaty can be actually quoted in support of that view – apart from a stretched interpretation of the word 'values' in the Lisbon Treaty. And interpretation of law is not the same as explicit law. 'You pays your money and you takes your choice' when it comes to legal interpretations. That's why there are no poor barristers.

That Lisbon Treaty in its opening Preamble says that it is:

"DRAWING INSPIRATION from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law..."

I am sure that Poles and Hungarians would consider themselves inheritors of those values as much as anybody else in Europe. Ms Varga emphasised the point by drawing Mr. Byrne's attention to the *Golden Bull of 1222*, which has been and remains the *Magna Carta* (1215) of Hungarian law. Mr. Byrne did not refute this assertion: he does not seem to have been briefed on the finer points of that document. That *Bull* had the very same

*raison d'être* as *Magna Carta*, the nobility trying to curtail the power of the monarch; and ironically the *Bull* was more successful than *Magna Carta*. The nobility did curtail the Monarch and thereby hindered the development of the Hungarian State, whereas in England the *Magna Carta* became simply an icon: and the Monarch and the English State thrived instead of the nobles. If Mr. Byrne could have risen to the occasion, there would have been a most interesting discussion.

This “*EU Framework*” deriving from the EU Parliament, which is the instrument being used to enforce its values, has a different source for its view of law. Its opening declaration on “**The Founding Values And Principles Of The European Union**” has its view on Rule of law summarised as “**government by laws not by men**”.

But this is NOT the source or founding values of European law, as outlined above in the Lisbon Treaty Preamble—and the authors knew it, because the source in support of their view is a US court ruling of 1803. Specifically that of Justice Marshall, *Marbury v. Madison*, The Supreme Court of the United States. So EU law is now US-based law! Justice Marshall – you hour has come!

This idea of US law, like its Constitution, was based on purely ideological, transcendental, concepts that had nothing whatever to do with anybody, except this small group of colonists who drew it up for themselves and nobody else. It had nothing to do with the vast majority of actual people on the continent of America at the time, natives and slaves. This Constitution and consequent laws now read like a sick joke when put in the actual context of human experience at the time.

Despite all the ideology behind it, US government and law was then most certainly laws made by men guided by their interests, and not by some abstraction called *Law*. Lynch-law being the most glaring exhibition of such law in practice.

There can be good laws, bad laws etc. but Europe was ‘*too long in the tooth*’ to ever consider that law was anything other than something made by men, for men, implemented, changed and judged by men in the context of their situations. No more and no less. Anything else was left to God and the Ten Commandments.

That is exactly what the Hungarians

and Poles are doing: tailoring their legal systems according to their needs. That was the point that Ms Varga was very ably trying to make Mr. Byrne understand, but to which he was oblivious in his parroting. But then parrots never engage.

Hungary has never disagreed with any Court ruling, she pointed out: so where is the issue with the rule of law? Mr. Byrne could not specify his “*concerns*”. She tried to make it as simple as possible for him by saying there can be different models of democracy. She might as well be ‘*talking to the wall*’. He had his *mantras* and that was it.

If Mr. Byrne, “*Minister of State with responsibility for EU affairs*”, represents the EU concept of government and law then the EU project will come to a crashing halt sooner or later and Ireland will have played its ignoble part in bringing that about.

Jack Lane

## The Irish Times And The Mother And Baby Home

continued

noted that in 1935 the Bethany institution moved to a new premises, which it bought from Joseph Walker. An independent analysis valued the property at £2,000, but, in an example of charity beginning at home, Walker demanded £3,000 for his property. The cash-strapped charity eventually paid £2,750 (*The Phoenix*, 29/1/21).

In an era before adoption was put on a statutory footing, Ralph Walker himself was involved in some very dubious contractual arrangements which were imposed on the natural mothers of the Bethany Home children (*The Phoenix*, 29/1/21).

In one of his ‘*agreements*’ in 1951 the natural mother, Emily Sheppy, was supposed to have stipulated that the adoptive parents bring up the child as a Protestant. And yet the Agreement—allegedly consented to by Ms Sheppy—allowed the adoptive parents to “*transfer the custody and management*” of the child to a third party. This would have allowed the modification of such children. It was perfectly legal at that time for children to be advertised for adoption.

The arrangement also meant that any money generated would go to the

“*adoptive parents*” rather than Bethany Home. The mother had no practical way of extracting herself from the ‘*agreement*’, since any change required her to pay the then substantial sum of £26 a year, plus “*all additional expenses*”. This would have been payable to Walker’s legal firm.

However, about three years after this Agreement, adoption legislation undermined the validity of such dubious arrangements by giving greater rights to the natural mother. But, in the specific case mentioned by *Phoenix* magazine, a lie was perpetrated to the effect that Emily Sheppy was uncontactable. The daughter, Joyce McSharry, was told that her mother had died of TB. She was devastated to learn that Emily Sheppy had died much later, in 1976. One of the few treasured possessions that the mother left was a photograph of Joyce as a baby.

Such was the documented involvement of the Walker family in Mother and Baby Homes, but does that represent the full extent of it?

Intriguingly, the Walkers’ family business was not unrelated to the subject of babies. In 1950 Walker’s Ltd was manufacturing 12,000 prams a year. A promotional piece in *The Irish Times* (29.1.1957) described a trade show in the Mansion House where the Walkers’ products were displayed. Their product range included: “*prams, pramettes, folders... and nursery furniture embracing cots, carry-cribs, high chairs and play-pens.*”

The newspaper piece is an advertisement for Walker’s Ltd but is presented as a news item. It is highly unlikely that the Walkers were ever required to pay for it because one hand washes the other. Ralph Walker and his brother Philip were Directors of *The Irish Times* and Ralph was also a Senior Partner in Hayes and Company, the legal advisers to the newspaper.

The Walkers were part of a group of four Protestant businessmen who wrested control of the paper from the Arnott family. The other two members of the group were Frank Lowe and his nephew George Hetherington. The Arnotts had held a majority stake since 1873, but in 1954 the bulk of the Arnott family shares were sold in equal proportions to Lowe, Hetherington, and the two Walker brothers.

A clause in the Articles of Association of the newspaper, which restricted the sale of ordinary shares to existing shareholders or purchasers approved by the Board,

enabled the 'gang of four' to buy up the remaining shares cheaply.

The new shareholders were all Freemasons. Frank Lowe was the “*Deputy Grand Master*” of the organisation in Ireland. They were also all associated with the long-established Protestant printing company, Hely’s Ltd, which as recently as 1970 had a clause in its *Articles of Association* preventing Catholics from becoming Directors.

Lowe and Hetherington had been managing directors of that company and it had a controlling interest in Walkers Ltd.

Following the death of Frank Lowe in 1959, his shares in *The Irish Times* were distributed equally to each of the Walker brothers and Hetherington. This gave the Walkers as a family a controlling interest in the newspaper. Ralph Walker succeeded Lowe as Chairman of the newspaper and retained that position until 1973.

Ralph was President of the Dublin battalion of the *Boys Brigade*, which seems to have been a militaristic version of Baden Powell’s Boy Scouts.

His brother Philip was a chartered accountant who served with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in Burma and succeeded his father Joseph as Managing Director of Walker’s Ltd.

While the Walkers were empire loyalists it seems that George Hetherington was loyal to the Republic. The political differences would only assume significance much later.

But in the 1950s the boys were mainly interested in making money. However, there is not much point in controlling a company if it’s on the verge of bankruptcy. In the late 1950s *The Irish Times* was at a low ebb following disastrous investments in the *Evening Mail* and the *Sunday Review*. Something dramatic needed to be done if the newspaper was to survive.

The Board decided to recruit Douglas Gageby in 1959 and Major Thomas McDowell in 1962. It is likely that Gageby was recruited by Hetherington and McDowell by the Walker brothers. Gageby had worked in the Intelligence department of the Irish army during the second world war, while McDowell worked for British Intelligence.

But the new recruits came at a price. The Walkers and Hetherington were non-executive directors with other business interests. Gageby and McDowell, by

contrast, were working full-time for *The Irish Times*. Therefore, the Executive Directors needed to be incentivised if they were going to turn the company around. The Walkers and Hetherington decided to dilute their ownership of the company.

By 1969 the five Directors – the Walkers, Hetherington, Gageby and McDowell – each owned 20% of the ordinary shares of the company.

There is no doubt the arrangement was a success. The company was profitable from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s. But there is more to life than making money!

In 1969, when war broke out in Northern Ireland, the Directors were forced to remember where their loyalties lay. Major McDowell had no doubts. He attempted to contact Prime Minister Harold Wilson in order to undermine Gageby’s editorial policy, which was sympathetic to Northern nationalists. Wilson arranged for McDowell to meet the British Ambassador to Ireland, Andrew Gilchrist. Gilchrist reported back to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that McDowell considered Gageby to be “*on Northern questions a renegade or white nigger*”.

At the meeting with Gilchrist, McDowell went on to say that a “*certain degree*

*of guidance, in respect of which lines were helpful and which unhelpful, might be acceptable to himself and one or two of his friends on the Board.*”

Since it is unlikely that Hetherington would have supported such influence from the British State, the “*one or two of his friends on the Board*” could only refer to the Walker brothers.

But notwithstanding the political differences at Board level, profits continued to soar.

The Owner-Directors would receive a last big windfall in 1974, when a restructuring financed by Bank of Ireland resulted in each of them receiving a tax free amount of £325,000 (about 5 million euro in today’s terms).

The Walkers were already wealthy following the purchase of Hely’s by the ‘Catholic’ company, Smurfits, four years earlier. They owned a substantial amount of land in South County Dublin as well as a beautiful island off the Kerry coast which is now owned by a Swiss billionaire.

They had come a long way from poor Emily Sheppy and Bethany Home.

**John Martin**

**Report of a debate:**

## **New Ireland, a warm house for all?**

I took part in an online debate, *New Ireland, A Warm House for all*, run by the civic nationalist group ‘*Ireland’s Future*’ on 11th February. The *Ireland’s Future* group (at [www.irelandsfuture.com](http://www.irelandsfuture.com)) was established to “*advocate for, and promote, debate and discussion about Ireland’s future, including the possibility and viability of new constitutional arrangements on the Island*”.

Other participants, drawn from those with a broadly Protestant or British background, included **Denzil McDaniel**, the former long-time Editor of Fermanagh’s *Impartial Reporter*; independent MLA and former Chair of the Alliance Party, **Trevor Lunn**; **Rev Karen Sethuraman**, a Baptist Minister in East Belfast who had addressed LGBT issues with people of faith; and **Glenn Bradley**, an ex-Army businessman and former Ulster Unionist Party officer. The event was chaired by ITV anchor, Andrea Catherwood.

The broad points of consensus in the debate were that the timing of a Border Poll needed to be sufficient for a detailed case for specific change to be proposed: that people (unlike in the UK Brexit referendum) needed to know what they were voting for. This would include areas of difference, such as the Health system (NHS in particular); the tax regime; and how services would work: particularly in pensions.

Denzil McDaniel noted that we need to get to the question to be asked, “*what are we voting for*”: and, if that is unclear, the capacity for “fall-out” in the aftermath could be significant.

The Republic of Ireland was viewed by most panellists, notably in the eyes of young people, as a freer, more convivial open society and relaxed place, with better prospects in work and life. That said, there was unanimity that the Government of the Republic had been “*hesitant*” about

change – bordering on a dereliction of duty — and held a default setting of keeping the North at arms-length.

Glenn Bradley encouraged the RoI Government to set out a formal “critical-paths plan”. Denzil McDaniel indicated that the Micheal Martin’s “Shared Island” Unit had taken a “softly, softly” approach, while Trevor Lunn said it “hadn’t been terribly active” and that the Dublin Government needed “to get out of its foxhole”.

I indicated that Brexit had forced the Republic to look after its own national interest, forced it to back the EU27 over Britain, and that “riding two horses” wasn’t any longer an option. I drew attention to the 500% increase in trade at the Rosslare Europort, and also growth at Ringaskiddy, Cork. I suggested that ‘direct to Europe’ infrastructure would grow significantly.

**Karen** favoured more debate in civic society and promoted the idea of Citizens Assemblies. She felt that the Governments should “get their heads out of the sand” and set out what “people need to know” about “what’s on the table” stressing that it will be “solved as we walk”.

**Trevor** placed an onus on both Dublin and civic society to develop an offer. He noted that the Republic was ‘on course’ to offer health care, free at the point of use. He also pointed out that life expectancy figures were better in the South, as were wages. He estimated that the numbers of floating or undecided voters in the North was higher than 20% and that, in both North and South, the people, or civic society, was ahead of politicians on the Border and other issues. In both North and South, the people were ahead on same-sex marriage, abortion and issues such as language rights: that political Unionism was incapable of reaching out in the same way.

**Glenn** felt that the NHS in Northern Ireland was the worst of the four UK jurisdictions, with high Waiting Lists. He added that living standards were measurably better in the South, with much higher levels of foreign direct investment. He urged the British to clarify the means by which a Border Poll would occur, what metrics a Secretary of State would use to decide on the timing.

**Denzil** noted that his County, Fermanagh, had moved from majority Protestant to majority Catholic and that community relations were generally good. He worried about the ability of Unionism to make an appeal to younger people in particular, thinking they were “incapable” of doing so.

I made the point that Northern Ireland had the status of an Indian reservation or South African Bantustan, that “Northern Ireland” was a bigger problem than partition, that a Border Poll would offer a “vote for a vote”, and opportunity for the first time in 100 years to be admitted to the Governmental franchise. Getting rid of the “cage” or Northern Ireland was the priority.

I noted Charles Haughey’s view that the RoI would have difficulty in absorbing a million Unionists, but less difficulty with a million Protestants, noting that “there are no Unionists” in Northern Ireland, “just Protestants”. In seeking access to the “franchise”, I warned against any post-Border-Poll “quarantine” or *Eire-Nua* arrangements. A better mitigation would be to significantly enhance and empower Local Government, and base it on the County unit. We all have a shared affinity we have with Counties. I made the point that there is a warm, open, embracing case to be made for the UK union, but that Protestant Unionism politics was incapable of making it.

There was discussion about the Protocol/Irish Sea Border issue and the capacity of Loyalism to generate a violent

backlash. Denzil thought that Loyalist violence was mainly directed at controlling communities, that we were long past the days when paramilitaries could bring thousands of masked men onto the streets and that Loyalist areas were amongst the most impoverished with poorer educational outcomes.

Trevor, whose Alliance Party office was bombed by Loyalists during the ‘flag protest’ some time ago, thought Loyalism was not limited simply to those who “ran drug operations and dominated their communities” – that some elements of Loyalism could participate in Citizens Assemblies. I thought that Loyalist paramilitaries were heavily infiltrated, and unlikely to want be ‘used’ to dig-out of a DUP-created hole, but that there was a likelihood of localised inchoate or nihilistic loyalist violence like during the flags protest.

Part of the debate looked at flags “culture” and emblems, perhaps the least interesting aspect of the debate.

Ultimately, it was an open debate the conclusion of which was to keep talking.

**Mark Langhammer**

The full debate is at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8DbxmPCQys](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8DbxmPCQys)

## International Criminal Court Asserts Jurisdiction In The Occupied Territories

On 5th February 2021, the International Criminal Court (ICC) decided that it had jurisdiction in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, namely Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. [1]

This is another step on a long road which began on 16th January 2015, when the ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, opened a preliminary examination into the “situation in Palestine”. Almost five years later, on 20th December 2019, the Prosecutor announced that this examination had determined that there was a reasonable basis to believe that war crimes had been committed in the occupied territories by:

personnel acting on behalf of the Israeli state, and  
by members of Hamas and other Palestinian groups. (See [2], paragraphs 94-100).

She therefore proposed to open a full investigation, which may eventually lead to the indictment of individuals suspected of war crimes committed in the occupied territories. However, before she proceeded

with this, she decided to seek confirmation from the Court that it would have jurisdiction to try them. The Court has now confirmed that — and the way is open for the full investigation to proceed.

### PURE ANTISEMITISM?

Denouncing the Court’s decision, Prime Minister Netanyahu said:

“When the ICC investigates Israel for fake war crimes – this is pure antisemitism.” [3]

That accusation might have some merit if the ICC’s preliminary investigation had confined itself to the examination of Israeli actions in the occupied territories. In fact, the ICC has also examined the actions of Palestinian groups.

The Prime Minister went on to complain about the ICC’s readiness to investigate Israeli actions while it “refuses to investigate brutal dictatorships like Iran and Syria”, which, he claimed, “commit horrific atrocities almost daily”.

Here, the Prime Minister is playing fast and loose with the truth. He knows fine well that



the ICC has never “*refused*” to investigate possible war crimes committed in Iran and Syria. There is simply no question of the ICC doing so — it lacks the authority to do so, since both states have opted out of joining the ICC and accepting its jurisdiction. The Prime Minister can hardly criticise Iran and Syria for doing that, since Israel itself has done the same.

#### RIGHT NOT TO BE SUBJECTED TO COURT’S JURISDICTION

The Israeli Foreign Minister, Gabi Ashkenazi, condemned the Court’s decision, saying:

“We call upon all nations that value the international legal system... to respect the sovereign rights of states not to be subjected to the Court’s jurisdiction.” [4]

This call to all nations by the Foreign Minister Ashkenazi is spurious. Like every other state in this world, Israel already has the right “*not to be subjected to the Court’s jurisdiction*”. Not only that, Israel has already exercised that right by choosing not to join the ICC. As a result, the ICC cannot acquire jurisdiction within Israel, that is to say, it cannot intervene on Israeli actions conducted within its internationally recognised boundaries west of the Green Line.

The problem with this for Foreign Minister Ashkenazi and Israel is that the ban on the ICC acquiring jurisdiction does not extend to the territories occupied illegally by Israel since 1967, which the international community stubbornly refuses to recognise as Israeli territory.

And, unfortunately for Israel, the Palestinians have managed to get the ICC to accept jurisdiction over these territories and made it possible for Israeli actions there to be investigated and prosecuted by the Court. The Palestinian Authority made its first attempt to do this in January 2009, with the objective of having Israelis prosecuted for actions against Gaza during *Operation Cast Lead* (its war on Gaza, launched on 27th December 2008).

It took the ICC Prosecutor over three years (until April 2012) to decide that the Court couldn’t accept the jurisdiction offered because Palestine wasn’t a state.

Prospects improved for ICC involvement when, in November 2012, Palestine was granted *observer rights* at the UN as a “*non-member*” state. This was achieved when the General Assembly passed *Resolution A/RES/67/19* by 138 votes to 9. This reaffirmed “*the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to independence in their State of Palestine on the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967*”, and accorded Palestine the status of “*non-member*” state at the UN.

On 2nd January 2015, Palestine deposited with the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon,

documents necessary for Palestine to become a party to the *Rome Statute* and *accept ICC jurisdiction*. On 6th January 2015, Ban Ki-moon, announced that the Rome Statute “*will enter into force for the State of Palestine on April 1, 2015*”, making Palestine the 123rd state party to the Rome Statute.

#### POPULATION TRANSFER IS A WAR CRIME

Responding to the ICC’s decision, Prime Minister Netanyahu accused it of “*outrageously claim[ing] that when Jews live in our homeland, this is a war crime*”.

There, he is referring to the Jews living in the settlements that successive Israeli Governments have built in the Occupied Territories. As the Prime Minister well knows, this colonisation of occupied territory is contrary to international law, in particular to Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the *Rome Statute*, which defines —

“the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”

to be a war crime.

It was no surprise then that, after completing her preliminary examination in December 2019, the Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, concluded that:

“There is a reasonable basis to believe that in the context of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, members of the Israeli authorities have committed war crimes under article 8(2)(b) (viii) in relation, inter alia, to the transfer of Israeli civilians into the West Bank since 13 June 2014”

(see [2], paragraphs 96).

In other words, there is a *prima facie* case that individuals responsible for Israel’s never-ending Settlement building project in the occupied territories are guilty of war crimes. Since this project is authorised at the highest level in the Israeli state, senior political figures may be guilty. And it may be that Americans, and others who have provided funds for the project, could be prosecuted for aiding and abetting war crimes.

#### OTHER POSSIBLE WAR CRIMES IDENTIFIED BY THE PROSECUTOR

In her preliminary examination, Fatou Bensouda identified other possible war crimes including :-

With respect to *Operation Protective Edge*, Israel’s military action against Gaza in July/August 2014, she concluded:

“There is a reasonable basis to believe that members of the Israel Defense Forces committed the war crimes of: intentionally launching disproportionate attacks in relation to at least three incidents which the Office has focussed on wilful killing and wilfully causing serious injury to body or health”.

On actions by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, she concluded:

“There is a reasonable basis to believe that members of Hamas and Palestinian armed groups committed the war crimes of: intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects using protected persons as shields”.

On the Israeli killing of Palestinian demonstrators at the Gaza border fence since March 2018, she concluded:

“The Prosecution further considers that the scope of the situation could encompass an investigation into crimes allegedly committed in relation to the use by members of the IDF of non-lethal and lethal means against persons participating in demonstrations beginning in March 2018 near the border fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel, which reportedly resulted in the killing of over 200 individuals, including over 40 children, and the wounding of thousands of others.”

(see [2], paragraphs 94-100)

Finally, Fatou Bensouda made it clear that the possible crimes she had identified in her preliminary examination are “*illustrative only*” and that the full investigation “*will not be limited only to the specific crimes that informed her assessment at the preliminary examination stage*”. She added: “*The situation in Palestine is one in which crimes allegedly continue to be committed*”.

#### US OBJECTS

The US has opposed the ICC decision. State Department spokesman, Ned Price, tweeted [5]:

“The United States objects to today’s International Criminal Court decision regarding the Palestinian situation. Israel is not a state party to the Rome Statute [of the ICC]. We will continue to uphold President Biden’s strong commitment to Israel and its security, including opposing actions that seek to target Israel unfairly.”

There, the US makes the absurd claim that the ICC has targeted Israel unfairly, by deciding that it has jurisdiction in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel. It is true, as Price says, that Israel is not a state party to the ICC. As a result, the ICC cannot acquire jurisdiction within Israel and prosecute individuals for crimes committed there. But Israelis are not immune from prosecution by the ICC for crimes committed elsewhere in the world where a state is a party to the ICC.

Palestine has granted the ICC jurisdiction in the occupied territories (and the ICC has now confirmed that it can exercise jurisdiction there). As a result, the ICC can prosecute Israelis or anybody else for crimes committed there.

Israel is in the same position as any other state that has opted out of becoming a party to the ICC, for instance, the US. Afghanistan is a party to the ICC and, at the moment, an ICC investigation is under way in Afghanistan, which may result in Americans (and others) being prosecuted for war crimes committed there. Because of this, the Trump administration imposed asset freezes and travel bans on Fatou Bensouda and other ICC staff involved in the investigation.

Of course, if the US and Israel kept their defence forces at home, they would be immune from ICC prosecution!

**David Morrison**

21 February 2021

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## Free World Democracy!

“*Acquitted But Guilty*”: that was the heading of the *Irish Times* editorial on the Trump Impeachment Trial in the US Senate, in the printed paper and the replica edition. In the website edition, the Editor was even more flamboyant and populist: “*Irish Times view on Trump impeachment trial: Acquitted but as guilty as hell*” (15.2.21).

Where does that leave the “*Rule Of Law*”, about which there is so much rhetoric these days? Doesn’t it suggest that the United States is a lawless place in which Trials, supposedly at law are, a mockery of justice?

Insofar as there is a world system of law, it exists as a dependency of the United States. If the US is rotten at the top, where does that leave the rest of the world.

Trump was charged by the Democratic Party with instigating an insurrection—that is, an attempt to overthrow the State. The Court that tried him consisted of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. It dismissed the charge. That is to say, the Republican Party did not support the accusation made against it by the Democrats.

Trump was “*impeached*”—sent for trial—by a simple Party vote in the House of Representatives, which represents Population. The trial was conducted by the Senate, which represents the States in the semi-federal system. A majority of two-thirds is required for conviction of an impeached President. If it could be done by simple majority, then Presidents could be overthrown when the other party happened to hold a majority in both the Representatives and the Senate.

It could not happen in a Parliamentary system, where the Legislative body appoints the Executive, that the two should be in conflict.

An attempt was made to bring about that situation in Britain last year, when the Labour Opposition and the Nationalist Parties were joined by diehard Tory ‘Remainers’ and held a majority in Parliament which prevented the Government from governing but was itself unable to agree on an alternative Government: and it passed a law to prevent the Government from calling an Election.

There was stalemate. Eventually the Scottish Nationalists gave way and allowed the Government to call an Election—which it won handsomely, largely because of the attempt by Parliament to prevent government.

In the American system, it frequently happens that the Executive and the Legislature are out of joint with each other. And party antagonism was systematically built into the system in the early 19th century. The only restriction on that antagonism at the highest level is the two-thirds majority required in the Senate to bring down a President.

If a form of law was established above the Party system with a power of judgment over it, Law and Democracy would be in potential conflict, which would almost certainly become actual conflict.

The United States is a democratic democracy—not a liberal democracy.

Liberalism comes from aristocracy, of which the United States knows nothing. It has been democratic from the start, founded on a blank slate that was wiped clean by comprehensive genocide. It made the systematic democracy of ‘let the best man win, and let the devil take the hindmost’ into something that works for itself, but is in its nature damaging for almost everyone else.

(The US is a democracy unlimited by

adjectives. This makes it barely comprehensible to media interviewers from cultures where democracy is taken to be *social democracy* and a substantial degree of State supervision of the process is taken for granted. Such interviewers are often shocked by the raw answers to sensitive questions that they get from the politicians who emerge from the unrestricted process of *laissez-faire* democracy. Plutocracy arises naturally within pure democracy, and is seen as part of it. It is in the nature of the thing that rivals for the Presidency should always be millionaires.)

Martin Mansergh comments:

“Who America’s leader is matters to people around the world. With President Joe Biden there is now a Christian gentleman in the White House, whose ambition after the recent turmoil will be to do what is right, working as much as possible with others at home and abroad” (*Irish Catholic*, 28.1.21).

How does the United States *work with others*? It tells them what to do, and it punishes them if they do not do it. It is “*the leader of the free world*”. Without it, the free world would not be free. It is therefore its moral duty to ensure the subordination of the world to *freedom*, beginning with the part of it that it created in 1945 and that has lived in willing subordination to it ever since: that is Europe.

The development of wayward freedom in parts of the subordinately free world cannot be tolerated. Britain made a bid for it in 1956, when it tried to suppress Egyptian national independence, in an effort to eke out the life of the Empire which Churchill in 1940 had imagined lasting a thousand years.

Washington brought it to heel by threatening to wreck its economy by means of financial sanctions. The position of Sterling as a Reserve Currency was threatened. No European state has tried anything like that since.

The American idea of freedom is the English idea of the 1832 Reform—the idea of John Bright and the Anti-Corn Law agitation of *laissez-faire* capitalism, and the vision of the replacement of Empire structure by a free and integral world market, sustained by trade under the hegemony of English manufactures and financial devices. That vision, which was bound up with the Evangelical vision of fundamentalist Biblicalism, emigrated to America in the 17th century, in flight from the Restorationist attempt to maintain a civilised mode of life in England by means of Monarchy and a State Church.

Cromwell failed dismally, and in the end he reneged on the views that motivated

him during his years of successful destructive activity. But America became a land of Cromwells.

There is nothing else in the world that bears any resemblance to the United States. It is not possible that there might be. American freedom is possible only in America. It does not set an example that the world could follow. America, as Obama said, is “*the exceptional nation*”, and “*the indispensable nation*”. If the world is to participate in American freedom, it can only be in subordination to America.

Martin Mansergh continues:

“President Biden is only the second American Present of an Irish Catholic background. President John F. Kennedy gave a strong much-needed boost to national self-confidence when he visited Ireland in June 1963. President Biden has already done Ireland a great service when... he expressed strong opposition to the mooted breach of an international agreement, the Irish Protocol, designed to prevent a hard border following Brexit.”

The most memorable thing that Kennedy did—apart from getting shot—was to take the world to the brink of nuclear war, with the evident intention of going beyond the brink if the other side did not back down. What was at issue was the decision of the Soviet Union to place nuclear weapons in Cuba in response to the American placing of nuclear weapons in Turkey. The great American slogan at the time was “*Better dead than Red!*” It seemed to be meant in earnest. Obama’s assertion that America was the only indispensable nation expressed the same sentiment. If American freedom did not dominate the world, human life would not be worth carrying on with.

Mao Tse-tung, as I recall, disagreed with Soviet policy on two counts. He thought Moscow should not have tried to put nuclear weapons in Cuba, but that, since it had done so, it should not have backed down.

Nuclear world war has been on the cards ever since the leader of the Free World dropped nuclear bombs on two undefended Japanese cities far from the battlefield in 1945. American policy is driving towards World War. “Freedom” is integral and nobody can be free unless everyone is free. Russian independence of American freedom is irritating, and Chinese independence is galling. And China reckons on surviving nuclear war—at least Mao did, and he has not been repudiated. And Bernie Sanders has come around to the idea of precipitating nuclear war. (He told the *New York Times* that he would consider a pre-emptive strike against Iran or North Korea (see *New York Times* 14.2.20.)

Trump’s great crime was that he attempted to revoke “*manifest destiny*” and reduce the USA from the status of “*the only indispensable nation*” to that of a nation among the nations, tending to its own affairs in a world that consisted of itself and Others who would tend to their affairs. Perhaps that was an impossible undertaking, in view of the position the US took up in creating a viable capitalist European system out of the shambles brought about by Britain in its two, connected, Wars on Germany.

As to the Irish Protocol: it will rest on shaky ground if Ireland does not become European. Its 48 years in the EU *Anglicised* it, rather than *Europeanising* it—apart from the brief Haughey interlude. It escaped from itself, from its sovereignty claim on the North, into Europe, under British hegemony, therefore what Brexit meant for it culturally was parting company with Britain.

It did not feel it could keep company with Britain in leaving the EU—as Anthony Coughlan wanted—because of the extent to which its economic connection with Europe had grown, but its heart lay with Britain.

The Brussels perception of it as standing between Britain and the EU is not an illusion.

The Irish Protocol, which establishes an economic border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK has had the effect of intensifying the national antagonism within the North. This was an entirely predictable effect. Official nationalist ideology has always refused to look squarely at what exists socially in the North. It has insisted on seeing the Protestant body as being part of a common all-Ireland national body that was either led astray by Tory influence, or else was aggravated by excessive religious enthusiasm on the part of Catholics, and on believing—or affecting to believe—that all-Ireland unity would be restored if Tory influence diminished or the influence of the Catholic Church was undermined.

It knew very well, on the basis of experience, that this was not the case, and that the Protestants were a different people both in origin and in development over four centuries, but it did not allow itself to see, and to admit, what it knew to be the case: that unification would be subjugation unless it was approached in an altogether different spirit.

The EU, in order to punish Britain, has arranged for the economic border between the EU and the UK to be a border between Northern Ireland and Britain, and for the whole of Ireland to be an economic unit of the European Single Market. That is the Irish Protocol. It remains to be seen whether it can be sustained for a generation, to allow the presumed influence of the economy on cultural life to erode the will of the Ulster Protestant community to be part of Britain.

The title of Mansergh’s article is, “*Britain is stuck with Brexit and it won’t make their country great again anytime soon*”. Hopefully not! British greatness has always been destructive of Irish well-being.

But Britain has the most usable army amongst America’s allies/dependents. It exerted a disabling influence on the EU while it was part of it. It has now resumed its freedom of action against the EU, leaving the EU uncertain of itself. It has welcomed the defeat of Trump as restoring the project of establishing American freedom/dominance throughout the world. Biden deplored Brexit, but it is improbable that, if he ever has to choose between a purposeful Britain and an EU left incoherent by British departure from it, he will choose the EU. He would choose Britain, if only because it still has a usable Army.

I think it was in 1990 that the *London Times* reflected that Britain had been deprived of foreign policy direction by loss of Empire and the establishment of European unity. Circumstance obliged Britain to join Europe, which had become united because of British negligence in the post-War years, when it was preoccupied with the premature breaking up of the Empire.

Its basic foreign policy purpose over a few centuries was to ensure that Europe remained ‘free’ by preventing it from becoming united. It can now return to balance-of-power politics against Europe. The Irexiteer Anglo-philes are exultant that Britain has won the first round, and has regained its sense of national destiny.

Official Ireland made Oxford Professor Roy Foster its semi-official historian. He told it that national destiny was a delusion because it was not an economic fact. He seemed to be genuinely unaware, in his capacity as an English historian, that England lived in a strong sense of national destiny, and that what he was doing with Irish history was to subordinate it to the English sense of destiny.

But Foster cannot be held to be the cause of the collapse of the Irish sense of national purpose. His popularity was only a symptom of it. He was only a commercially sponsored Professor at Oxford. He did not have a Department of State with immense powers of patronage in his gift. He only supplied the Agitprop material.

The cause must lie with the ‘National’ Universities and the delusion of a “*post-national*” world—a merely economic world—with which they indoctrinated generations of students in ‘higher education’.

**Brendan Clifford**

## A Russo-German Surprise !

This Column occasionally turns its eyes to matters German, as the key factor in how the EU might next evolve. Germany is facing into Federal Elections in September and, with Angela Merkel officially retiring as both Federal Chancellor and leader of Germany's largest party and "*natural party of government*", the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), what happens in that party concerns us all. All imaginative departures in German political development since WW2, including on Europe, have tended to come from the CDU rather than other parties — such as its main contender, the Social Democrats (SPD) or, latterly, the Greens.

There is a noticeable unease in German Establishment circles at the election of Armin Laschet, Premier of Germany's largest state, North-Rhine-Westphalia, the centre of 'old industry', to succeed Merkel as leader of the CDU. The two candidates he narrowly beat represented more "right-wing" positions, particularly in their advocacy of a return to a more liberal/austere economic policy and a more unquestioningly "*trans-atlanticist*" foreign policy, i.e. a revived subservience to US global leadership.

In both areas, the Laschet victory is remarkable and surprising, and would probably not have occurred except for the widespread popular view that the pandemic has made a return to orthodox liberal market economics counter-intuitive. The media and economic Establishment certainly had not expected his success, and had predicted (or rather canvassed heavily for) a victory for one of his more economically liberal contenders. But the pandemic has changed the mood, even in the CDU, with a widespread consensus that economics for the foreseeable future will require more, not less, State economic direction and intervention. The foreign policy aspect of the choice of Laschet is no less intriguing.

We should enter a *caveat* here. Merkel has been an impressive leader, but has a tendency to promote people unlikely to outshine her, even in her retirement. It was she who backed Laschet for the CDU leadership role over his contenders, and similarly backed Ursula von der Leyen for the role of President of the EU Commission. It is also not certain that Laschet, though leader of the CDU, will necessarily be its candidate for the Chancellorship. The two roles are theoretically separate,

though never before (to the Column's knowledge) has it actually occurred. Nevertheless, the Establishment media is already pushing for a different candidate for the Chancellorship, with the head of the CDU's sister party in Bavaria, the CSU (Christian Social Union), the popular and "competent" Markus Söder, a strong contender, and currently allegedly the favourite even among CDU members. We will have to see.

The popular German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, has never really liked the CDU. It was a fierce opponent of Adenauer and portrayed the EEC in the 1960s as a French and Ultramontane-Catholic plot to trap and extract German wealth and productivity. It is social democratic in its sympathies, always a bit euro-sceptic, heavily trans-atlanticist, and relentlessly anti-Russian and anti-Chinese. A recent op-ed in the *Spiegel* described the German-Russian gas pipeline project, Northstream2 (which the Trump/Biden US opposes) as Germany's "*most embarrassing foreign policy*" issue. The magazine was also to the fore in the Navalny case, 'investigating' it in a joint undertaking with a dodgy internet source, *Bellingcat*, and 'revealing' an alleged Putin-ordered plot to assassinate that unlikely democratic hero.

In another recent issue (07.02.21) *Der Spiegel* profiled Armin Laschet in his foreign policy orientation, in an article cleverly titled "*Between coal mine and Putin*" (at least it sounds clever in German: "*Zwischen Pott und Putin*"). It was obviously intended to 'flush out' Armin Laschet by highlighting some of what it labels "*controversial*" stances he has taken.

The article nevertheless contains many interesting tidbits. It starts with a general

profile of Laschet, noting that many in the CDU are suspicious of him as a Rhineland "*Provincial*", with connotations of favouring that region's social-capitalist model and localist focus. Laschet comes from a coal mining area (his father was a mine engineer), and he has family relations in a similar region in Belgium. His (very well-to-do) wife has origins in the same industry.

Currently Premier of Northrhine-Westphalia, Laschet has associated with its traditional industries, and last year even opened a new coalmine, which is not something very 'cool' to do!

But it is his foreign policy orientation that has many in the CDU most worried, though *Spiegel* describes Laschet as a foreign policy "*conservative*" (= realist) "*in the Merkel tradition*". Despite the "provincial" tag, Laschet is, as the article stresses, internationally surprisingly well-connected. Though he has always claimed to be a "*trans-atlanticist*", he has "*poor English*" while speaking fluent French, and has many political friends in Paris especially, where he served a long term as Germany's "*Special Representative*". He was also for some time an MEP.

Laschet has described Europe's biggest "*challenges*" as its relations with China and Russia, and considers that the best way of conducting them is "*dialogue and diplomacy rather than confrontation or megaphones*". The article notes that, while Laschet has made many political trips abroad, he has rarely travelled since the Covid crisis began, the exception being a trip to Rome for an audience with the Pope.

What most worries some in the CDU, *Spiegel* tells us, is Laschet's reputa-

tion for being “*far too considerate of Russia*”. He has been attacked by the Green Party as “*infuriatingly soft on Putin*” and for not criticising “*Russian war crimes*” in the Ukraine and Crimea, or the treatment of Navalny, when he met Russian leaders. The Green Party says this makes him “*unsuitable to be a European leader*”.

In March 2014, when Russia re-incorporated the Crimea, Laschet criticised the “*fashionable anti-Putin populism*” of the German media. While he publicly questioned the legitimacy of the Crimea referendum, he noted that “*you have to understand where they (the Russians) are coming from*”, as well as the importance of maintaining good relations.

In 2018 he publicly questioned British claims about Skripol, saying “*if you want the solidarity of NATO states, you have to provide some credible evidence*”.

He has also said: “*You can think what you want about Russia, but when studying international law I learned that that’s not the main basis for how states relate to each other.*”

In 2014 he also criticised the West over Syria, saying “*the Russians were right from the start. Nearly everything they warned us about the opposition turned out to be true. They warned us about Jihadis from the start, but that was dismissed here as propaganda.*” In 2018 refused to denounce Assad, saying the situation in Syria “*is far more complex than people here like to think*”, pointing out that the biggest threat to a peaceful resolution at that time was not Assad but ISIS. People liked to think that the Syrian Opposition consisted of ‘Arab Spring’ liberals, but it was in fact composed of “*mainly jihadi factions*”.

Laschet has consistently stated his belief that good relations with Russia are essential to the future of both Germany and Europe. This is what irks his detractors. During the CDU leadership race, both of his competitors criticised the NordStream2 project and, after the Navalny “poisoning” incident, demanded that construction work on it be halted. Laschet opposed this demand, saying the two issues should not be linked.

While he has called on Russia to release Navalny and properly investigate the case, he still supports NordStream2 and refuses to link its completion with the Navalny case: “*they are entirely separate matters*”.

## The EU’s Political Brain

“*The EU momentarily turned off its political brain and turned on its legal brain*” was the form of words chosen by EU Ombudsman Emily O’Reilly in answering a question about how the Commission’s triggering of Article 16 of the Northern Ireland Protocol on the afternoon of Friday 29th of January, could have happened (*Morning Ireland*, RTE Radio, 9 February 2021).

There has already been too much unhelpful recrimination coming from Ireland about the blunder. At time of writing (21 February) it remains unclear how much damage has been done to the Protocol as Boris Johnson has replaced Michael Gove with the more hardline David Frost as his Brexit Minister, but that issue will be played out in the coming months and is impossible to predict.

At another level the blunder provides a strong cue for standing back and looking at the EU’s *political brain*. Traditionally the federalist lobby inside the EU elite, for whom the achievement of a federal Europe is akin to a religious mission, have regarded politics suspiciously. Going right back to Jean Monnet, the father of European integration by some accounts, there has been a belief in a ‘*rules-based order*’ in which the interference of politicians, weighed down as they are by national prejudice, is kept to a minimum.

The view that politics is a necessary evil is not just an assumption of European federalists; it tends to proliferate wherever the word *liberal* is used, although that word has different connotations. Weakening the power of the State in favour of market forces inevitably entails a diminution in the status of politics. The beginning of the neo-liberal era coincided with the lead-up to the *Maastricht Treaty* of 1992, and neo-liberal market fundamentalism made a good marriage with European federalism. That coupling in turn fitted well with the new world order based on US hegemony; hard-core European neo-liberals like to call themselves *Atlanticists*.

There are a number of contemporary thought disciplines well suited to such anti-political prejudices: economics primarily but also sociology and legal/constitutional studies; a turgid academic subject called *political science* also belongs in this

category but tends not to be taken as seriously as the others.

In contrast the approach to politics favoured in *Irish Political Review*, drawing from the study of history and to a lesser extent, political philosophy, is much less modern. Why this is relevant to a discussion at the present time on how the EU does politics is very straightforward: Brexit. The EU now faces a competitor across the English Channel where politics, frequently informed by historical understanding, has been developed to a fine art over many centuries. Despite the lowering of standards that occurred in the Thatcher era, the British tend to do politics well and have the benefit, as David Frost reminded an audience of Brussels officials at a highpoint of the Brexit negotiations, of having a consummate philosopher of politics—Edmund Burke—to draw inspiration from.

The purpose of this article is to examine some components of the EU’s *political brain*, to continue with that metaphor, but first it is necessary to look back on aspects of the Irish response to the Protocol blunder.

### IRISH RESPONSE TO PROTOCOL BLUNDER

According to reports in the *Irish Times* and the London *Financial Times*, there has been a definite cooling of relations between Dublin and Brussels since January 29th. Dublin wants flexibility and leniency in the operation of the Protocol, whereas “*certain circles in Brussels*”, according to Michael McDowell writing in the *Irish Times*, “*are resentful that Ireland seems to be acting as an intermediary rather than a fully fledged cheerleader for the hard-line rhetoric coming from the Berlaymont*” (17 February 2021).

McDowell, who writes about the EU from the viewpoint of a Thatcherite liberal, may be unaware that objections to an overly lenient response on the Northern Ireland Protocol have come primarily from democratically-elected Governments whose economies benefit from the Single Market.

Following the Protocol row, we have had sharp criticism of the Commission from some Irish journalists, with Fianna Fail MEP Billy Kelleher applying pressure on Ursula von der Layen in the Euro-

pean Parliament, Fianna Fail politicians venting against von der Layen at a Parliamentary Party meeting, and members of the Oireachtas Committee on the EU demanding that the Commission President be held to account. As they say in New York, *enough already!* The diplomacy of Commissioner Sevcofic is having the effect of moving the implementation of the Protocol back on track; this may be disrupted by the replacement of Michael Gove by Lord Frost, but Sevcofic, on behalf of the Commission, is doing the best that can be done in the circumstances. The end purpose behind Irish politicians continuing to heap pressure on the Commission President is difficult to see.

The other point that thankfully has been picked up in mainstream commentaries is that it was a statement from Micheal Martin, Leo Varadkar and Eamon Ryan, informed by data from Garda Commissioner Drew Harris (a loyal servant of the Crown for most of his career), that set in motion the clamour that led to the resignation of Phil Hogan.

Von der Layen has indicated that responsibility for triggering Article 16 lies with the Commissioner who replaced Hogan as head of the Trade DG (Directorate General), Valdis Dombrovskis. If Hogan had been allowed to continue as Trade Commissioner, it is most unlikely that the mistake would have happened. The stupidity of forcing from his post the highest ranked Commissioner that Ireland has ever had is the overriding lesson of the Protocol debacle in Ireland; who will be held to account for that?

#### FEDERICO FABBRINI'S BOOK

A recently published book from Oxford University Press, *"Brexit and the Future of the European Union"* by Federico Fabbrini is important because it is from an EU insider and because it reveals much about the stream of ideas feeding the EU's brain. Fabbrini has written numerous reports for the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament and in November 2019 was awarded the Charlemagne Prize for work on the *Conference on the Future of Europe*. He is currently a Professor of Law at Dublin City University and he founded the Brexit Institute there. The gist of his argument can be gleaned from the following summary of the book's introductory chapter.

Brexit has unsettled the narrative about European integration, and is not to be minimised as the outcome of British idiosyncrasy. Immediately after the Brit-

ish Referendum in 2016 a debate began about the future of the EU. It became clear that the Union requires a new constitutional settlement, as a result of the disunity that marked the sovereign debt, and the migration and rule of law crises, as much as Brexit. The debate on the need for a fundamental rethink culminated in Macron's proposal, in March 2019, for a Conference on the future of Europe, a proposal subsequently endorsed by all of the EU institutions.

The issues to be addressed in the Conference should include treaty change. In so far as the unanimity requirement is holding back progress, alternative methods for reforming the Union must be considered, including intergovernmental agreements outside of the EU legal order, as were used by the countries of the Eurozone during the financial crisis.

In addition to the unanimity requirement, the development of ever more diverse conceptions of the EU is a problem. These conceptions might be summarised as: a polity based on a communion of effort towards a shared destiny; a market aimed at the generation of increased wealth but with little re-distribution; and a vehicle to advance state autocracy based on national identity and sovereignty. A clear choice must be made between these paths and this could be done through a Political Compact. The alternative to a Union based on such a Compact is continued paralysis. Despite some successes, like the solidarity shown between the EU27 during the Brexit negotiations, the overall state of the EU remains weak.

From this authoritative statement of the future plans of EU federalists, it can be seen that little has been learned from the days of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's *Convention on Europe*. Intergovernmental agreements are to be used to circumvent the volatilities of national politics; a debate will be shepherded towards a pre-ordained outcome: the polity with a shared destiny; and the entire project will be steered back in line with the vision of the founders.

Fabbrini's text is welcome as a clear re-statement of the federalist position, but it underestimates the capacity of Europe's leadership to overcome political problems, and, even allowing that its perspective is legal/constitutional, it has little to say about the politics of either Brexit or the EU.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF COMMON EU DEBT

At the July 2020 summit of the European Council, agreement was reached to use mutualised EU debt for the first time.

Arising from close cooperation between France and Germany, the agreement represents a significant step in the direction of closer European integration. The deal was sold on the grounds that the scale of debt facing those countries hardest hit by the pandemic threatened the existence of the Eurozone. It entails the EU borrowing 750 billion euro on a long-term basis, to be paid out as non-repayable grants to countries like Italy and probably Ireland, and repaid by the EU as a whole.

That the EU-27 has agreed to use EU debt to drive the recovery, whenever the pandemic recedes, signifies the facing down of a problem that many observers had written off as intractable: bridging the chasm of mutual distrust between Northern and Southern Europe. The critical move in the deal was a shift in position, not just by Angela Merkel, but by a large part of the German political system.

Reaching agreement on mutualised debt is a different matter to using it on the ground as a driver of economic recovery; in that sense it is early days. The acid test will be the extent to which the grants are used productively by their recipients and how the nitty-gritty administrative details are managed.

#### CREATING AN EU STATE

Besides mutualised debt there are other areas where the EU is taking the initiative against threats to the welfare of its citizens, essentially making itself into a State. Allowing that the vaccination programme has run into problems, the basic strategy of coordinating the purchase of vaccines at EU level was, and remains, sound. That the EU has the disadvantage of being half-formed can be seen in the size of the staff employed by the European Medicines Agency, compared to the corresponding agency in the US: the former has a few hundred, the latter ten thousand. However, developing a competence at EU level in dealing with threats to public health is necessary to the fight against the current pandemic, and has long-term value as a preparation against future epidemics.

The same is true of the involvement of the Commission in the drive to decarbonise the European economy. Two weeks after the installation of the von der Layen Commission in December 2019, a new European Green Deal, aimed at accelerating the reduction of carbon emissions across fifty policy areas, was launched. Again, the success of that initiative depends on the administrative competence with which it is implemented in the real economy.

But the most impressive recent initiative arising from EU environmental policy is not directly associated with the Green Deal but with a change in industrial policy that led to the creation of the *European Battery Alliance* in 2017. That initiative, spearheaded by the EU's current representative on the committee for implementing Brexit—the then Energy Commissioner—Maros Sevcofic, entailed the European Commission using its convening power to create a “*strategic value chain*” for the manufacture of electronic vehicle batteries. The following extracts from a *Financial Times* article published in December 2019, “*Europe First: how Brussels is retooling industrial policy*”, fills in the ideological context:

“To its proponents, the combination of industrial collaboration, publicly funded research, transitory subsidies and global standard setting to encourage a large-scale European value chain is an intelligent reinterpretation of an old-fashioned industrial policy of state-directed investment.

... A few years ago, this approach was out of fashion in Europe. While France and some other states have always advocated an active role for government in supporting industry, the EU was more concerned with building open, competitive markets with strict controls on public subsidies. But US technological supremacy and Chinese advances have forced a rethink.

... The French and German governments are pouring taxpayers' money into two EU battery consortiums. The first, a French-led effort involving seven EU member states and 17 companies, is seeking Brussels's approval for €1bn of state aid. A second, German-led venture will follow. Both are being organised as Important Projects of Common European Interest, an EU-sanctioned regime that allows exemptions from normal EU state aid and competition rules for multinational projects deemed strategically import.

Brussels adopted a similar policy for microelectronics and connected devices last year, approving €1.75 of state aid. It has an older scheme for high-performing computing. After batteries, the commission is looking to adopt the same approach to a host of other technologies, including hydrogen technology, decarbonising heavy industry, autonomous cars, smart health and cyber security” (FT, 2 December 2019).

The point regarding all these programmes and practical initiatives is that they each exemplify the EU in the process of making itself into a State. More than Professor Fabbrini's case for constitutional reform, they show the EU's political brain in action. They show it as

an organ that functions through interaction between the Commission and Member Governments, usually represented in the European Council. At this early stage in the evolution of the Union, the European Parliament, the body that commissioned Professor Fabbrini's reports, contributes little to the process.

Regarding the *Conference on the Future of Europe*, would it not be politic to defer that proposal until the various initiatives referred to above, initiatives that are not being held back by constitutional obstacles, have been successfully implemented? The lack of constitutional obstacles is the critical point. Ways are being found around the divisions that were paralysing the Union during the sovereign debt crisis. And, if similar levels of political skill are exercised, it is likely that ways will be found around the migration and rule of law crises.

#### IDEA STREAMS TO THE EU'S BRAIN

To say that the EU's political brain is functioning normally is not the same as saying that the idea streams and ideological precepts feeding that brain are conducive to political competence. All political entities, from tribal leaderships to federal republics, need to have a sense of the historical events that have shaped them; they need a historical orientation through which to measure the challenges of current politics. The following clause, clause G, from “*European Parliament resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe*” (2019), encapsulates a large element of the EU's historical orientation:

“whereas European integration has, from the start, been a response to the suffering inflicted by two world wars and by the Nazi tyranny that led to the Holocaust, and to the expansion of totalitarian and undemocratic communist regimes in central and eastern Europe, and a way to overcome deep divisions and hostility in Europe by cooperation and integration and to end war and secure democracy in Europe; whereas for the European countries that suffered under Soviet occupation and communist dictatorships, the enlargement of the EU, beginning in 2004, signifies their return to the European family to which they belong...”

The *Remembrance Resolution* is the culmination of a body of similar Resolutions and Declarations passed by the European Parliament between 2006 and 2011 and was, in 2019, supported by the Christian Democratic, Social Democratic, Liberal, and Conservative groupings in the Parliament. According to Wikipedia

it is considered part of the emergence of an anti-communist political culture in the European Union.

Another ideological precept often referenced by doctrinaire EU federalists is a statement of Francois Mitterrand made during a speech to the European Parliament in January 1995: “*nationalism means war*”. Not so well remembered from the same speech is his view regarding the role of the EU in Eastern Europe: “*rather than eradicating national cultural identity, we are strengthening it*” (*Mitterrand's valedictory takes broad view*, Independent, 23 October 2011). An up-to-date expression of the anti-nationalism of the federalists is a summary of a third conception of the EU, referred to above from Fabbrini's book: “*and a third which instead sees the EU as a vehicle to entrench state autocracy, based on national identity and sovereignty*” (Fabbrini, p. 4). So, in the Professor's view, strengthening national cultural identity leads to an entrenching of *state autocracy*.

On the off-chance that this article is being read by subscribers to orthodox EU federalism, they might wish to stop reading at this point, rather than commit a thought crime. An alternative historical orientation for the EU might run along the following lines.

#### ROGER CASEMENT AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The suffering inflicted on the peoples of Europe by two World Wars was indeed a driving force behind the coming together of states that eventually became the EU, but the critical event in the chain of causation—the source from which flowed most of the disasters of European history in the twentieth century—was World War I. In understanding why the EU came into being, and why it needs to remain in being, it would be politic for Europeans to understand the main factor that caused that four year conflagration.

In a series of essays published in the US in 1915, *The Crime Against Europe*, Roger Casement stated the definite view that British foreign policy was the cause of the 1914-18 War. Casement, a high ranking consular official in the British Foreign Office for much of his working life, was horrified when he learned of the strategic imperative animating London's diplomacy in the decade before 1914. He discovered that imperative to be the fomenting of a European war aimed at the destruction of Germany, Britain's main trade rival at the time.

In his essays Casement identified the issue of control of the world's oceans as the crucial issue in the relations then obtaining between the Great Powers. He counterposed two models of world power: an Imperial model in which the British Empire through its naval power acted as "keeper of the seas"; and an equitable model in which access to the seas was open to all trading nations. He saw German victory in the War as the only way that the "freedom of the seas" could be realised. As he expressed it:

"British interests are first the control of all the seas of all the world in full military and commercial control. If this be not challenged peace is permitted; to dispute it seriously means war" (*The Crime Against Europe*, Athol Books, p. 99)

Casement was critical of the concept used to summarise British foreign policy in Europe—preserving the *balance of power*—he saw the scales of the balance loaded against Europe. That nice-sounding phrase actually entailed the instigation of war alliances and the prosecution of wars against any European Power that looked as if it might rival Britain, at one time it was France, at another, Russia, and ultimately, Germany. The 1914-18 War was a Balance of Power war, in British terms.

Because he was a key figure in the relationships between the Irish independence movement and its allies in Europe and America, and because he was maligned by the British before his execution in London in August 1916, Casement's reputation has been defended by contributors to the *Irish Political Review* for over thirty years. But Casement should also be recognised as an important opponent of the militaristic intrigues that plunged Europe into war in 1914, the source event in a chain of calamities that led to the formation of supranational institution in the 1950s; he should be an important figure in European as well as Irish history.

In drawing attention to Casement's viewpoint, the intention is not to encourage a childish resentment against Britain. The advantage to the EU of anchoring its basic political outlook in a solidly-based historical orientation relates to the conduct of contemporary politics. The message of twentieth century European history is that the Continent should not allow its internal development to be controlled or unduly influenced by outside Powers. This has implications in diverse areas including publishing, media production and the world of ideas generally. Europe's intellectual subservience to the Anglosphere

is a weakness and a barrier to political development.

#### CONCLUSION

In the twelve years since the financial crisis broke, the pressure of events has been the main educator in EU politics. It is too early to assess the educational benefits of the latest events, Brexit and the pandemic, but all the indications are positive. Yet the flows and counter-flows of ideas through the Brussels institutions, and the quality of political thought there, remain abysmal. Drumming up an anti-Communist political culture may appease a section of opinion in the ex-Communist states, but it has no discernible relevance to the development of the Union. Conceiving European

integration as a crusade against national culture and the nation-state is likewise a defiance of reality: the Union is a pooling of self-confident national sovereignties, a development on top of national development in which the members are constructing a co-operative superstate.

Hopefully, the right lessons will be learned from the Protocol blunder. The main one should be that senior officials not clued in to the primacy of politics need enlightenment, or maybe the heave-ho. The EU's legal brain should be cognisant of, and subservient to, its political brain, and that organ should be well-informed and open to new thinking.

Dave Alvey

## Angela's Ashes In Its Context: Poverty And Abuse Here And There

I never did think one family in poverty, one drunk as head of the household, one abuser of children, one husband beating his wife represented a country. People in Ireland, North and South, have been sensitive to such stories. What will the neighbours (England) think of such an author misrepresenting our country?

Now the neighbour is spreading the story (English and US publishers recommending literary prizes), and everyone in the world is going to get to know about it: and get the idea that this was the norm.

In a TV play I wrote for the BBC some years ago, I have, as a character, a schoolteacher, a stern woman with little humanity (from my own experience at an elementary school) mistreating her pupils. A figure no less than the head of drama made it known he wanted to speak to me. I got to his office and found about six other TV executives there. What he wanted to tell me was that I was misrepresenting schoolteachers.

I wasn't in Ireland, North or South, but at BBC TV Headquarters in London, and I was talking to an upper-class Englishman, while his cronies nodded in agreement. It later turned out his wife had been a schoolteacher, and so was one of his daughters. I was asked to alter her image before the recording went out on air. I refused, so the director sneaked in on a Sunday with some actors and re-recorded some of it.

More recently, I watched a film on TV

called *Precious*. It is about a dysfunctional black family in Harlem, New York. Part of a family anyway, because the father is never around. The daughter is pregnant again at 16. It is incest by her father for the second time, encouraged by her mother who has been intimidated to such an extent that her own boyfriend makes the condition there will be no touching or sex if the daughter (their daughter) isn't part of the game.

The girl is expelled from school because of her pregnancy and is now in a special school where her story unravels eventually but with great difficulty as her self-worth is nil. Not only that, but the girl is huge and very black. You learn that there is discrimination within the black community over shades of skin: "In a black church if you're black you sit at the back".

Or when she innocently asks another girl in the class with a lighter skin: "What kind of black are you?" She reveals also how her mother is physically violent towards her out of jealousy that her boyfriend has been in an incest relationship with her.

On top of this you learn about the welfare system in New York and the hell to go through to get it. The film was released in 2009. On TV here it was shown in the am hours. I don't know what the reaction of the US black community was to the film but I would guess some of the black middle-class weren't going to like it at all. I didn't think this film represented the black



population in the least. I admired it for its honesty. it strengthened my respect for the black community. I thought I was beyond being shocked but I'm not. It took quite a few hours to recover emotionally.

The film is based on a novel of the same name, *Precious*, by a black woman writer called by one name only: Sapphire.

The girl in the film doesn't go on to greater glory in her revelations but has the courage to leave her mother, never to speak to her again, despite her pleas, and to take her two children to a flat provided by social housing in what looks like a dilapidated block. But it's a sort of freedom, independence and the renewal of self-worth, and you know it's the beginning of something good.

So why all the fuss about the autobiographical novel, *Angela's Ashes*, by the Irish-American Frank McCourt. It was published in 1997 to acclaim and now it's come back from the dead, unlike its author. The *Dublin Review of Books* reviews it, with Alan Titley, Emeritus Professor of Modern Irish at University College Cork doing the honours. He is reported to have written plays, poetry and novels. I often think about the renowned and learned experts on the Gaelic society of the past, their dedication to the Irish language and history, and how little knowledge there is of this great past civilisation around the world—while something like *Angela's Ashes* gets the Pulitzer Prize and other literary awards, making it resound around the world.

Alan Titley, of course, thinks *Angela's Ashes* misrepresents Ireland's image—should it be portrayed as a land of milk and honey?

The novel focuses primarily on Frank McCourt's life in Limerick and that includes his father's alcoholism and the struggle with the poverty that causes.

Socialist nations have suppressed personal stories of grief in the societies under their tutelage. The old Soviet Union did it with their glossy magazines aimed at the West, and internally you could read Gorky and his experience of Tsarist Russia but nothing of dysfunctional families within

the USSR. Cuba does it today, in suppressing the truth about the rotten elements in its society—elements that can put your life in danger. They don't say: Be careful in Guantanamo City of the Haitian drug gangs who were given refuge and are now showing their gratefulness. No, a tourist who has had a bad experience there whispers it to you. Who advises you not to walk down the Malecon, Havana's waterfront, because that is mugger's alley? No Street Defence Committee will come to your aid for, as a tourist, you are hated for the privileges the State gives you in order to bring in hard currency. Don't even mention prostitution near, and in, the hotels, another source of hard currency.

Nothing about discouraging your wife, a practising Catholic, visiting so many churches in Havana and giving the priests soap and biro pens (always in short supply there), and thus incurring the security forces to put surveillance on you. But, despite all this, you feel: *'What a brave little nation, what a revolutionary history! Long may it reign'*.

As for Ireland, the Ireland of guts, the Ireland of revolutionary wars against the aggressor: What a history to be proud of! And it's not finished yet.

It can bear the odd novel of family dysfunction.

Titley claims the novel is all about rain in Limerick, with no sunny days. He goes on to mention a number of countries where dysfunction also happens. I'm sure it does, but that would depend on your social position if you were to be affected by it.

My mother came from the Tyrone middle-class and married my father, a Belfast shipyard worker. Her sisters married men who could keep up their life-styles.

We lived just off the working-class Donegall Road, Belfast, while an aunt lived in a fine house near the Botanical Gardens. In the hungry unemployed 1930s, her sister's family, that included three children, were taking their holidays in Skerries and Bundoran, while my family, also of three children at the time, couldn't even make it to the seaside town of Bangor for the day. There had been what was called Outdoor Relief which meant working in road repair for food tokens.

While on holiday my aunt and husband employed my father to fix the electrical systems in the house, for which he was paid. It was 1937, I was five years old

and he brought me along. Even at that age, I was aware how different their lives were as I ran through the five bedrooms, lounge, large kitchen, and into the manicured back garden. And what a beautiful smell it all gave off, until the smell of my street kicked in.

My aunt and my three cousins visited us once, and only once, in coming to Kilburn Street, off the Donegall Road. We were never invited to her house.

That day near the Botanical Gardens is difficult to remember: whether it was a sunny day, a rainy day, whether it was Winter, Summer or Spring; difficult to remember because the chimneys in the street where I came from had a constant stink from burning old rubber shoes, potato peeling, tightly rolled newspaper and rags, just to try and cook a meal when there was no money for gas. It was a memory you carried around with you. It was like having an immovable back-pack. The down-draught from the chimneys got into your nostrils, and into your brain forever. Those are memories of poverty: and poverty causes depression, even in children. In later life the poverty has gone but rarely will the smell of it go away.

Luckily, my father wasn't an alcoholic or smoker. There are always people worse off than you, no matter how low you get. And then there are people ten times better off, a hundred times better off. During this period the race courses were packed with what my father called the idle rich. New cars filled with jolly young chaps and their girlfriends rode around flaunting their couldn't-care-less/ignorant attitudes. You see them in the TV repeats of 1930s cinema newsreels.

Yet, there were those from the upper classes who saw what was happening and couldn't abide it. The socialist converts of the 1930s, from the top universities, they who would join MI5, they who raged against the men in the butterfly collars who ran the countries that were the UK and its enclave. Now they are forever condemned for doing their human duty.

**Wilson John Haire 7.2.21**

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### Little Black Rose

"Róisín, have no sorrow for all that has happened you:  
the Friars are out on the brine, they are travelling the sea,  
your pardon from the Pope will come, from Rome in the East,  
and we won't spare the Spanish wine for my Róisín Dubh.

...

The Erne will be strong in flood, the hills be torn,  
the ocean be all red waves, the sky all blood,  
every mountain valley and bog in Ireland will shake  
one day, before she shall perish, my Róisín Dubh."

"*Róisín Dubh* (Little Black Rose) is one of Ireland's most famous political songs. It is based on an older love-lyric in which the title referred to the poet's beloved rather than, as here, being a pseudonym for Ireland. The intimate tone of the original carries over into the political song."

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

"Symbolically (though also matter-of-factly) the doors of the big houses stand open all day; it is only regretfully that they are barred up at night. The stranger is welcome, just as much as the friend—the stranger, in fact, *is* the friend if he does not show himself otherwise. But who ever walks in? Is it suspicion, hostility, irony that keep so much of Ireland away from the big house door? If this lasts, we impoverish life all round. Or is it the fear that, if one goes into the big house, one will have to be 'polite'? Well, why not *be* polite—are not human manners the crown of being human at all? Politeness is not constriction; it is a grace: it is really no worse than an exercise of the imagination on other people's behalf. And are we to cut grace out of life?"

*The Big House, The Bell.* 1940.

*The Mulberry Tree.* Writings of Elizabeth, Selected and Introduced by Hermione Lee. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, San Diego, New York, London. 1986. Orlando, Florida, USA.

## Elizabeth Bowen.

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

#### Part 10.

Writers in this magazine, the *Irish Political Review*, sometimes decry the lack of a truly national Irish history and, just by way of sidelining my main subject for a few minutes, I was going through *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*, Declan Kiberd (Jonathan Cape, London, 1995). This colossal book, by a Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature in University College Dublin, which was immediately put on all school and university curricula, should have that fateful word '*Modern*' noted by all, because that is where things come a right cropper, in my opinion.

Kiberd likes to think that he is Ireland's

Frantz Fanon or Edward Said but we in Aubane also came to his attention on RTE Radio 1, as was written about not too long ago in this review. (He only saw sense, as I noted, because of the threat of legal sanction— JH.)

Probably what threw me the most about the book's contents was not just the chapter on *Elizabeth Bowen—The Dandy in Revolt*. And indeed the latter did cause me much revulsion; but the latter part of the chapter, where he compared Bowen to one of Ireland's greatest poets, *Aogán O Rathaille* himself, is beyond all parody and belief.

Kiberd draws from Elizabeth Bowen's

1929 novel *The Last September* an almost ridiculous parallel with her heroine:

"Lois", Kiberd asserts, is "a true dandy", who "remains suspended between codes and worlds. Like her creator, who remained a wanderer to the end. Elizabeth Bowen saw herself as a being without final context, and she understood the desperation behind the attempt to build a world on nothing but an illusion of style. This had been the complex fate of the Anglo-Irish from the outset, but it was the last ones like herself who lived it most fully:

" *Tradition is broken. Temperament, occupation, success or failure, marriage, or active nervous hostility to an original milieu have made nomads of us. The rules we learnt in childhood are as useless, as impossible to take with us, as the immutable furniture of the family home'...*"

The above is not sourced and could be written in a particular novel, *The Last September*. It was published in 1929. Bowen was coming into her own as a writer. But the most important point that I make is that, in the following year, Elizabeth Bowen inherited Bowen's Court at the age of 30—the first female heir. She had become the new *châtelaine* of the Big House and **was not**, as Kiberd asserts, coming to the end of her life as owner of Bowen's Court.

And Bowen never became *that wanderer!* I would ask of Kiberd where/how Bowen ever presented herself as being '*without final context*'? And to assert that the '*complex fate of the Anglo-Irish*' resided in living on '*an illusion of style*' is just plain ignorance. These Cromwellian/Elizabethan genocidal planters and their '*clearances*' made the native Irish literally disappear from the landscape by dispossession, murder and killings, on an industrial scale never witnessed before for the former's barbarity.

Elizabeth Bowen was just starting her 'Big House life', and by goodness she was going to enjoy herself and invite the world and his wife to party as long as they knew how to behave! She was going to have '*grace, manners, and style*' like it was going out of fashion and all she asked in return was that people were '*polite*' and if they could not manage that—then at least they could '*act*' the part.

But, looking up the footnotes for the above quotations, Kiberd kept referring to a *Kenny*, one of Bowen's biographers. I was quite thrown and thought I could name Bowen's biographers off pat. But the name did needle me and eventually I stumbled upon the book in the back of our book-room. A more insubstantial biography it would be hard to get. And I laughed when I noted that, in a previous

life, it functioned as a library book from of all places—the University of Waterloo!

'*Elizabeth Bowen*', Edwin J. Kenny, Jr., Associated University Presses Inc. New Jersey, 1975 (it was apparently part of an *Irish Writers* series) was Kiberd's source and I wondered, did his use of it as such arise out of a realisation about how little known it was? Kenny had this to say about *The Last September*:

"... 'The Last September' (1929), Miss Bowen's first important novel, she deals directly with the crisis of being Anglo-Irish at a time of national crisis, called the Troubles."

And truly Edwin Kenny is right in his assessment here, because to the Lady of the Big House—in this book, she is titled *Lady Naylor of Danielstown*—the Irish War of Independence is at a remove and so he uses the term 'Troubles': because what else could the denizens of a Big House call what was going on at the time? (And, also, literary academic Americans like Kenny really should know better the history of other countries which they write about in their supposedly scholarly books!)

As Patricia Craig wrote in her biography of Elizabeth Bowen (1986) the reality for those of Bowen's class was:

"Country-house and garrison dances and tennis parties abounded at the time, and drew all the eager young Anglo-Irish girls from miles around. The influx of young officers, detailed to suppress revolt, made for an increase in gaiety..."

Kenny rightly notes that Bowen wanted very much "*not to drag up the past but to help lay it*", a ritual of forgetting, if ever there was one, but of course it simply couldn't be done, try as one might.

But, going through Kenny's biography, that quotation that I suspected came from *The Last September* didn't—it was dated by Kenny as having being said in 1937. And that date resonates with me, because that was the year she became a member of *The Irish Academy of Letters*, having been put forward by Sean O'Faolain. Kenny maddingly states:

"In 1937, speaking of her whole generation, she remarked that their lives had changed inconceivably since childhood. Tradition is broken..."

But he does not write where the fuller quotation in Kiberd's book is from, with the latter only giving Kenny as *his* source! But the quotation does have that feel of a speech, and certainly one that would be in keeping with establishing a *milieu* that would enable Bowen to begin trading on her *Irish antecedents* now that war-talk was everywhere.

And, make no mistake, Elizabeth Bowen was trying on a new identity, as her fictional characters often did, because she had work to do and she needed the cover for her war-work—her spying in effect.

From going through some of my now-considerable Bowen archives over the last few months, I see now that, in giving 1939 as her start-date in her Irish spy-work, from reading that famously-quoted letter to Virginia Woolf—lover of Vita Sackville-West, whose husband and father of their two sons and very close ally was Harold Nicolson, Bowen's initial contact in the Ministry of Information—I was following well-laid out crumbs that led innocent readers to fateful conclusions. And aren't we all innocents until the facts kick us in the unwary face?

But, before that can be dealt with, I have to go back to Professor Declan Kiberd and his assertions and blagardism relating to Bowen and Aogán O Rathaille. Because, from that quotation, which Kiberd uses sourcing Kenny, we can go back to the former's analysis and this is his account:

"Yet, in that very disavowal of a native background or identity, she" (Bowen) "becomes a voice for all those uprooted, dispossessed Irish, from the Gaelic earls who fled in 1607, through the rapparees and exiled Fenians of later centuries, down to the Joyce and Beckett who had to put themselves at a distance from Ireland in order to convince themselves that the place had ever existed..."

Where Kiberd uses Bowen in this long piece of writing, he goes back to Victoria Glendinning's biography (*Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer*, 1977, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London) and her letters to Charles Ritchie, the Canadian Diplomat who was her lover, where they sometimes wrote fancifully to each other—so, taking these private musings seriously is a mistake, but then, whatever serves Kiberd and his ridiculous posturings! So we come to this:

"That such a description applies as much to Gaelic as to Anglo-Irish writers and leaders may well be what makes Bowen the Aogán O Rathaille of her time and class. The great Gaelic poet who refused to call abjectly for help had his counterpart in the woman who, when she drove from Bowen's Court for the last time, refused to look back. The old order left her stranded as any of her characters, and the new offered no place, so she was left with no choice but to invent herself."

He quotes her saying:

"I think we are curiously self-made creatures, carrying our personal worlds around with us like snails their shells, and at the same time adapting to wherever we are (!) cagey, recalcitrant, on the run, bristling with reser-

vations and arrogances that don't show..." (Though the letter is undated, I would suspect this is a letter to Charles Ritchie written some-time around 1942 or thereabouts.)

The fuller quotation, from which Kiberd leaves out a line reads thus:

"In a queer way I am strongly and idiosyncratically Irish in the same way that you are Canadian".

Spies and diplomats—where does the one end and the other begin? At one stage the Halifax, Nova Scotia-born, Ritchie was called back to Ottawa because Prime Minister Mackenzie King began to have his doubts about the loyalties of his London-based Under-Secretary. It was all a storm in a tea-cup but nevertheless he knew his cards had been marked more as a rebuke than anything else.

So the great Gaelic bard, O Rathaille, who was born not that far from my own townland, is to be placed alongside a descendent of the savage Cromwellians who dispossessed and massacred our people!

No, not only that, but Cromwell's churls and supplanters have been, according to Professor Kiberd, O Rathaille's counterpart, as epitomised in the lady of the Big House—Elizabeth Bowen. (There is no use saying that it was Bowen's lavish lifestyle and her own debts that finally drove her from her estate.)

The fancy romantic tale that, as she drove off in her ("filthy", as she happily accepted herself") car, she never looked back was to be resurrected much later when the Irish intelligentsia/academia came to their *true devotional pilgrimage sites of the likes of Bowen's Court etc.*

But doesn't it say a lot about our elite today that we have arrived at this stage? In *An Duanaire: 1600-1900*, there is this analysis about *our* Aogán O Rathaille:

"His poetry, the best of which has a heroic desolation and grandeur, is in many ways a result of this effort to come to terms with the chaos in which he and his people found themselves."

And who brought that chaos to the people of O Rathaille?

Elizabeth Bowen wrote about her ancestor: how he changed sides from that of his (losing) King (even then that should give you an idea about what kind of people they were) and put his sword to the side of Cromwell and his army—and was amply rewarded for his service by his huge estate of land in Farahy, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork from which we Irish were dispossessed.

**Julianne Herlihy ©**

**To be continued**

## A Definitive Political, Military And Cultural History Of Irish International Brigaders

*In Spanish Trenches: The Minds and Deeds of the Irish Who Fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War*, published this past December, is co-authored by Barry McLoughlin and Emmet O'Connor, and dedicated "In memory of our fathers: Captain James Joseph McLoughlin, Cavalry Corps, Irish Army; Sergeant Peter O'Connor, Abraham Lincoln Battalion, 15th International Brigade".

Drawing on Irish, British, German, Russian and Spanish archival sources, they sum up:

"Two hundred and forty-seven Irish-born men fought in the International Brigades. Only 62 went directly from Ireland and 134 went from Britain. The Irish contingent among the Canadian volunteers (31) is surprisingly high and the number travelling from the United States (12) relatively low."

And, indeed, their impressive use of Canadian records has brought many previously unrecorded Irish volunteers to light. The authors challenge the manner in which Irish academic historians have hitherto addressed, or not addressed, their subject matter:

"There was no escaping the Spanish question in Ireland between July 1936 and the summer of 1937. For decades the level of Irish engagement with Spain was a puzzle for Irish historians also. The conventional wisdom, and one happily endorsed by liberal elites, was that nationalism had condemned Ireland to centuries of isolation before the arrival of the European (Economic Community) enlightenment in 1973. Interest in the war was regarded as a relic of the ideological clash over the Anglo-Irish treaty, the only thing that seemed to explain the politics of Independent Ireland. In 1971 F.S.L. Lyons wrote of Blueshirts and republicans reprising the Irish Civil War in 'the will-o'-the-wisp of the Spanish Civil War... that had nothing to do with any of them'. (Ireland Since the Famine). Eighteen years later the most acclaimed study of twentieth century Ireland (J.J. Lee, Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society) made not a single mention of the Spanish situation. In reality... the contemporary Irish were more European than succeeding generations. Certainly, they were less American."

Europeans they most certainly were.

(see the June 2020 issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs* where I reviewed the 2019 book by Tim Fanning, *The Salamanca Diaries: Father McCabe and the Spanish Civil War*. The anti-Republican and pro-Franco Father Alexander McCabe, Rector of the Irish College in Spain, was an incessant diarist and an acute social observer. He was actually on holiday in Ireland when Franco commenced his revolt in July 1936, and did not return to Spain until that November.

In an October 1936 diary entry, McCabe provided sharp insights into some differences between Irish and Spanish society. On the eve of the Consecration of Mullingar Cathedral, he had overheard a conversation where one young man "said to another, 'The Spanish workers are putting up a great fight'. I heard a man repairing the road make a similar remark. But the workmen in Mullingar were all staunch Catholics. They were all talking about 'the big day tomorrow, the Consecration'." He ruminated that this showed a "spirit of compromise between religious and political views" sorely lacking in Spain.

McLoughlin and O'Connor write of how *The Enigma of Frank Ryan*, the 2012 Queen's University Belfast film made by Des Bell in collaboration with Fearghal McGarry, his fellow Queen's academic and author of *Frank Ryan* (2002), adopted an approach that sought to juxtapose and emphasise a contradiction between Socialism and Republicanism:

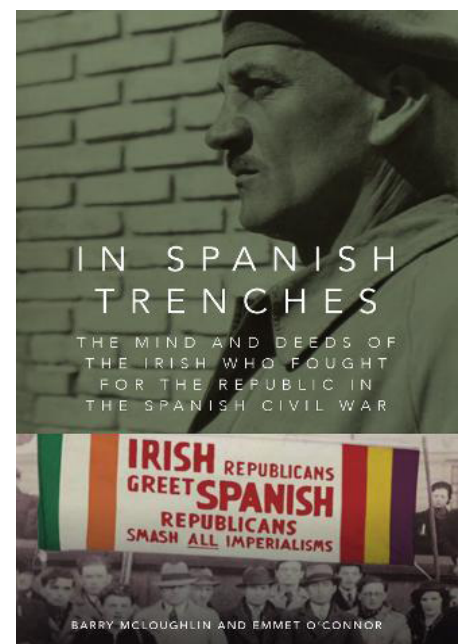
"Bell emphasised the Ryan who went to Nazi Germany after Spain... Publicity for the film included a lot of swastikas. It's a favourite criticism of anti-republicans. Republicanism's claim to be internationalist and socialist was a fraud, and Ryan exposed that in his decision to go with the Nazis. A popular twist on the theme is found in the novel and film *The Eagle Has Landed*, which features broth [sic] of a boy 'Liam Devlin', an IRA veteran captured by Spanish Falangists, who agrees to join a Nazi plot to kidnap Winston Churchill. The swastika will always stick to Ryan for the same reason that Adolf Hitler is rarely off our television screens and the Wehrmacht marches through our living rooms every evening. But Spain was a logical conclusion to the evolution of

left republicanism, and the Connolly Column saw it as an extension of battles in Ireland rather than a new departure. Ryan and Peadar O'Donnell (whose 1937 book, *SALUD! An Irishman in Spain* was reviewed in this magazine's February issue, M. O'R.) had led the development of left republicanism since the 1920s."

*In Spanish Trenches* leaves it until the Epilogue for the authors to offer their own antidote to Bell and McGarry. Over the course of its 400 pages, this comprehensive history provides a warts and all narrative. The authors wear their ideological biases on their sleeves, but this does not impede their presentation of the facts of International Brigades history.

It is particularly welcome that an issue with a 2014 book by Barry McLoughlin, *Fighting for Republican Spain 1936-38*, has now been resolved. In my January 2015 review for the magazine of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, I objected to the charge that the August 1938 execution of Maurice Emmett Ryan by British Battalion commander Sam Wild, for drunkenly firing his machine gun in the direction of his own side, was an example of "sinister assassination" and "a semi-judicial murder". This book by McLoughlin and O'Connor makes no such charge of "murder", and the authors provide a balanced presentation:

"Emmett Ryan could hardly plead extenuating circumstances, before officers he had provoked time and again, and it seems certain that he was blind drunk during the action, either asleep or firing the Maxim inaccurately, possibly in the wrong direction. In any case, as a sergeant, he was in charge of the gun. The incident happened during the assaults on Hill 481."



The authors add:

"If a soldier, drunk on duty, fired on his comrades, there is every likelihood that he would have been shot out of hand by an officer in the Allied armies in both world wars. Swift retribution to 'steady the troops' had to be seen to be done."

*In Spanish Trenches* not only deals with the military and political aspects of Irish involvement in the International Brigades, but also the cultural backdrop of solidarity, primarily driven by a radical Irish Republicanism, inclusive of its communist component. Peadar O'Donnell's *SALUD!* is, of course, cited and quoted. But particular light is also shone on the work of Leslie Daiken:

"A fine example of the uniquely Irish combination of republicanism and the popular front spirit is Good-Bye, Twilight: Songs of Struggle in Ireland, compiled by Leslie Daiken in 1936 and illustrated with woodcuts by Harry Kernoff, a fellow Dublin Jew and member of Friends of Soviet Russia... Daiken, or 'Yod' to his friends, was born Yodaiken in Dublin's 'Little Jerusalem' in 1912, and joined the CPI in 1934... Daiken sourced Twilight in James Connolly's recognition of Fenian ballads as weapons of revolution... Revolutionary art was emerging from the bourgeois self-indulgence of the Celtic twilight and the Yeatsian cynicism that followed. Daiken's introduction defied the trajectory of the intellectuals he had known at Trinity and UCD and anticipated the caricature of the 1930s by future liberals. Attributing 'almost every anomaly in recent Irish social events... to the betrayal of the national aspirations by the Treaty of 1921 [his emphasis]', he delineated two main tendencies in Irish poetry: 'modernist' and 'traditionalist'... Daiken saw himself and his fellow republicans as 'authenticists'. In other words, he was rejecting the idea that Irish culture was backward and needed cosmopolitanism, and arguing that the key to revolution in Ireland was to be found in its republican heritage."

Daiken denounced several leading Irish writers for retreating into modernism:

"Futility, or more often an inconsequential groping in the dark for a new bourgeois aesthetic, drove the more sensitive poets away from 'politics' (i.e. Ireland: and all its problems) to Paris, where the soul of Joyce ever presides as a source of inspiration to all thorough-going isolationists. Thither, with Thomas MacGreevy as a vanguard, trekked younger men like Samuel Beckett, Denis Devlin and Brian Coffey; driven by the psychology of escape, then become a cult, across the wastelands of interiorisation, and technical experiment, they eventually found a mecca in a sort of essentially-celtic surrealism — as far from Ireland as they could get, in art. 'For I prefer a grand-piano to a harp!'"

Daiken himself would also emigrate. But, in Daiken's case, it was for reasons that were both economic—to find employment as a journalist—and political, to immerse himself in the work of the London branch of the Irish Republican Congress. His fellow poet and Republican Congress comrade, Charlie Donnelly, would later follow suit.

It is not widely realised that the second book from internationally acclaimed novelist Joseph O'Connor was not a novel, but a 1992 biography, *Even the Olives are Bleeding: The Life and Times of Charles Donnelly*. O'Connor related how, disowned by his family, and after a month of extreme isolation while imprisoned in Mountjoy Gaol, having been convicted on a charge of illegal picketing during an industrial dispute, Donnelly left for London in February 1935:

"It is perhaps important to point out that he did not leave for the reasons that have led countless Irish writers into exile. He did not discover, like Joyce, that the shortest way to Tara was via Holyhead. All Holyhead offered to Charles Donnelly is what it offers to most people. A train to a place where they can survive. He could not afford the luxury of the exiled artist's pose."

In London, Donnelly immediately plunged into political activity. Beginning with the March 1935 issue, Daiken and Donnelly co-edited 23 issues of *Irish Front* as the voice of the Republican Congress's London branch. Their October 1936 editorial, "*They Did Not Pass*", rejoiced in the victory over the British Union of Fascists in the battle of Cable Street:

"On Sunday, October 4th, the London working class dealt a blow to the aspirations of Fascism. Thousands of Jewish, Irish and English workers in the East End of London came together and by their united efforts prevented Sir Oswald Mosley and his Fascist army from staging a provocative march through the Jewish quarters" (file://localhost/x-apple-data-detectors/::0On Sunday, October 4file://localhost/x-apple-data-detectors/::0th).

Indeed, in his autobiography, *Our Flag Stays Red*, Phil Piratin — who would be Communist MP for Stepney (Mile End) from 1945 to 1950 — described a scene where bearded Orthodox Jews linked arms with Irish Catholic dockers in order to prevent Fascism's march through the East End.

"*Long Live the Spanish Revolution!*" was the heading of the *Irish Front* editorial for January 1937. It is therefore fitting that the imaginative cover of *In Spanish Trenches* features both a photo of Frank

Ryan as an International Brigade officer imprisoned by the Fascists in San Pedro concentration camp, and a photo of Leslie Daiken, standing second from right, on a Republican Congress demonstration he had organised in London, with its banner boldly proclaiming

IRISH REPUBLICANS GREET  
SPANISH REPUBLICANS.  
SMASH ALL IMPERIALISMS.

Manus O'Riordan

(To be continued)

For more on related topics, see the Facebook pages of "*The International Brigades Remembered*", "*International Brigade Memorial Trust*" and "FFALB" FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE, as well as posts on the Facebook Page of Manus O'Riordan himself.

See also [www.international-brigades.org.uk/](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/) where, in the News section, a January 19 Blog has reposted his review of *The International Brigades* by Giles Tremlett carried in this January's *Irish Political Review*.

## The Document Signed in London in December 1921

It was not a Treaty.

It was not "*ratified*" by Dail Eireann, the elected Parliament of Ireland.

It was discussed by the *rum* "Parliament" of "Southern Ireland" in January 1922 at its only meeting.

It was earlier discussed in Dail Eireann (a body unqualified to ratify it by *British Law*) and the first *Teachta Dala* called on to consent to it was the TD from Armagh.

When the *rum* Parliament met, there were no "*Members of Parliament*" from Armagh, Antrim, Down, Fermanagh, "Londonderry" or Tyrone present.

But the *Teachta Dala* for Armagh had also been elected TD for a Cork Constituency. So, under the guise of an MP in the Parliament of Southern Ireland, he went through the charade of "*Ratifying*" the "*Treaty*".

Griffith's Biographer, Pdraig Colum, wrote that there was more Irish on that one quorate meeting of that 'Parliament' as on any day In Dail Eireann.

Perhaps you've seen John Ford's *Quiet Man* and remember Mary Kate

Danaher's shame when confessing why her bridegroom had to sleep in a "*mala codlata*" rather than the marital bed. She was unwilling to tell the story in the more widely understood *Sacs-Beurla* than in the Gaelic. Ireland, like her Bridegroom, was not *getting her whole entitlement!* Read *Saorstát Éireann* for *Mala Codlata* and *Irish Republic* for Marital Rights.

The unreconstructed Republican, Ernie O'Malley, was an advisor to John Ford. I wonder if he had anything to do with that brilliant scene.

I believe Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins were heroic men.

Griffith was fooled by Lloyd George into writing a compromising promise, and that promise was used by Lloyd George to force him to sign the *Articles of Agreement*. Griffith would never go back on his word.

Collins recognised that Lloyd George, Birkenhead and Churchill were crooked as a ram's horn and flattered himself that he could out-cheat them if necessary, but he was like a babe in the woods in Downing Street.

The January edition of *The Irish Political Review* carries an *Address* on the Centenary of the Kilmichael Ambush given by Jack Lane. He noted that, in the hundred and two years since the Irish electorate created a Republic, not one book had been written devoted to the election.

*The Times*, no supporter of Irish nationalism in any of its guises recorded that the 1918 General Election was regarded on all sides as a plebiscite. Standing on a Republican platform, with many, if not most of its candidates in British Gaols, Sinn Fein won 73 of Ireland's Parliamentary Seats. The party led by John Dillon was left with 6 Irish seats, some through an arrangement with Sinn Fein, and the Unionists retained 26.

In 1920 the Municipal, County Council, and other local elections were even more emphatically supportive of the Republic, and most elected bodies declared allegiance to the Republic, flew the Tricolour over their premises and got on with their business in a responsible manner.

Not all the Republican Councillors were Sinn Feiners. Many were Irish Labour Party Men. Within the Councils Unionists generally got along in amity with the Republicans.

Republicans and Nationalists generally were nearly totally unarmed. Facing them in most of Ireland were the armed Royal Irish Constabulary, and tens of thousands of British Troops and equipped with rifles,

machine-guns, artillery, armoured cars and tanks- lumbering monsters to inspire shock and horror as they paraded the city streets. In addition the British had many aircraft which they were to long use to 'police' the unfortunate peoples of Iraq and other territories.

Early in 1920 the British Government directed a reign of terror arresting, imprisoning, torturing and murdering particularly local Councillors, Trade Unionists, teachers of the Irish Language. Town Halls, Libraries, Factories, Creameries were incinerated. In addition to this men, women and children were deliberately murdered. And the all-powerful British Navy, kept such a watch on the Irish coast that they

could, and did, prevent the Irish-born Archbishop of Melbourne from visiting his sick mother.

That was the context of the *Kilmicheal Ambush* of 28th November 1920 and the execution, on the authority of Ireland's Minister of Defence, Cathal Brugha, of British spies and assassins in Dublin on 21st November 1920.

In this context it is right that not only Irish people but democrats of all countries should commemorate and honour "*The Boys of Kilmichael*" and the heroes of any communities who took on and vanquished the strutting, swaggering tyrants who tried to enslave them.

**Donal Kennedy**

## Decoding Inglis

In the Summer of 1959, the British Home Secretary finally ended the decades of official silence about the diaries attributed to Roger Casement; the five bound volumes were given restricted release to selected persons in the Public Records Office.

But, although this event was certainly important, there are reasons for considering the year 1973 as being of greater importance. The publication in that year of a new biography by Brian Inglis had consequences which still resonate today. The Inglis book set out a new and convincing template for the interpretation of Casement's life and career. His study rapidly became the standard biography upon which later generations of readers and authors formed their 'understanding' of Casement and the diaries controversy. It has seldom been out of print and there have been at least six editions. In the English-speaking world, Inglis remains the dominant authority on Casement.

The Inglis template was convincing, detailed, clever and false. It remains unsurpassed for the subtlety of its deceptions. The absence of any source notes helps to conceal those deceptions by obliging unconvinced readers to travel to Dublin to check the notes in The National Library of Ireland, as that is where the source notes are deposited. No other serious Casement study is without source notes. Reid's biography only three years later, from a smaller press, contains over 1,100 source notes occupying 24 pages. Indeed, it is difficult to find any historical biography without source notes.

At the centre of the web of deception spun out by Inglis we find his portrayal of Christensen who becomes a key figure in the new template. Foreign Office documents released in 1967 were available to Inglis and these reveal the role played by British Minister Findlay in Oslo in the period from October 1914 to Spring 1915, often referred to as *The Findlay Affair*. The documented facts in those files do not support the Inglis portrayal of Christensen as a treacherous villain plotting to betray Casement. On the contrary, the Foreign Office documents show that Christensen followed Casement's instructions faithfully in misleading Findlay with false information about Casement's plans, a strategy which finally produced Findlay's handwritten promise of a £5,000 reward. (1)

Many of Inglis' subtle deceits are revealed in Chapter 6 of my *Anatomy Of A Lie*. But not all of them are revealed. In recent months yet another has been discovered. On page 404 of the 1974 paperback edition Inglis cites the second stanza of a poem entitled *Quo Vadis*, which he attributes to Casement. No source for this poem is given, but the original version of that stanza differs significantly from the version published by Inglis. Casement's handwritten *Quo Vadis* can be found in NLI, and is dated 10th February 1906. This original was published by Mackey in 1958. In brief, Inglis altered the original text of that stanza so as to present it as evidence of forbidden desire, a meaning consistent with his overall plan to verify the scandal allegations of 1916. Tens of thousands of

trusting readers have been deceived for almost half a century.

Original version published by Mackey:

Is it never to cease the anguish? – is it  
never to end the toil  
Of a heart that is filled with longing, and  
maketh the soul its spoil  
Of a hunger of things unholy we loathe  
while we still prefer –  
For the gods of good die slowly, and dying,  
they still demur.

Inglis version:

Is it never to cease, the anguish? Is it never  
to end, the toil  
Of a heart that is filled with longing and  
maketh the soul its spoil?  
Of a hunger for things unholy, we loathe  
while we still prefer?  
For the gods of good die slowly, and dying,  
they still demur.

Inglis altered the punctuation and a crucial preposition in line 3. The poem is certainly mediocre and its meaning unclear and perhaps incomprehensible. Casement did not consider himself to be a poet; like many others in Ireland and elsewhere he was a versifier of his thoughts and sentiments. A first edition of a number of his verses was published in 1918 by his loyal cousin, Gertrude Parry; it did not contain *Quo Vadis*. However, another Casement document in NLI might contribute to an interpretation of the poem. This is a seven-page handwritten essay also entitled *Quo Vadis* found in the Bulmer Hobson collection Ms 13,159. The document is undated but it almost certainly was composed in 1906 or 1907 when Casement was in regular contact with Hobson. This essay deals entirely with the political situation in Ireland.

The 'authority' of Inglis remained unchallenged not only by trusting readers but even by other historians and the fateful false line from *Quo Vadis* re-appeared in a Casement article by Robert Kee published to coincide with the open release of the diaries in 1994:

"...the diaries did indeed confirm what Casement, in his own tortured words on the subject, described in a verse as his 'hunger for things unholy'..." (2)

Another example of Inglis tampering with original texts to alter their meaning can be found on page 290 of his 1974 edition. Referring to the 3pm meeting on 30th October between Christensen and Findlay in the legation at Christiania, Inglis writes:

"But he [Findlay] transmitted Christen-

sen's information to Whitehall, enclosing the material Christensen had handed over. It included a letter in which Casement described his servant. 'I am glad I brought him, indeed—he is a treasure'..."

In these lines there are four deceptions.

- 1 - Christensen did not hand over any material.
- 2 - Findlay did not take possession of any letter from Christensen.
- 3 - The letter mentioned had not yet been written.
- 4 - The letter mentioned does not state 'he is a treasure'.

The letter in question was written in Berlin in November, some days—if not weeks—after it was allegedly handed over to Findlay on 30th October. This letter is also cited by MacColl (3) as being written later in Berlin. Doerries also cites it in *Prelude to the Easter Rising* (2000) and gives the date as 2nd November.(4)

Internal evidence demonstrates that the letter was written later in November and was one of the 'fake letters' prepared by Casement for Christensen to show Findlay to mislead him. This ruse is explicitly confirmed by Casement's Berlin Diary entries for 17th and 24th November. (5)

Ostensibly Christensen was to post these letters from Christiania. The letter states: "*I will send this tonight by the man, who returns as I have said to visit his people*".

Christensen left Berlin for Norway on 22nd November and not on 2nd November.

Further internal evidence in the letter demonstrates that it was not written on Casement's second day in Berlin, 2nd November.

Although Inglis was certainly aware of the correct citation from the letter, published by MacColl in 1956, this did not deter him from altering Casement's original text to obtain an innuendo that has deceived many thousands of readers for decades. Nonetheless, Inglis claims that Christensen handed the letter over to Findlay before it existed.

On page two of Findlay's 26th November account to Nicolson (6) of his meeting with Christensen on that day, Findlay refers to this letter as a postscript to one of three letters shown to him by Christensen at that meeting on 26th November (FO 95/776038). Findlay writes "*Informer arrived from Berlin today with letters from Casement to be posted here. I have obtained copies.*" Since he confirms that he made copies, it follows he did not take possession of the letters. On 4th December

Findlay sent his own copies of the fake letters to Nicolson at the Foreign Office. Findlay did not claim that material was "*handed over*", and did not mention the phrase "*he is a treasure*".

The phrase went unnoticed by Findlay but not by Inglis, who noted its potential for innuendo. By changing the verb tense from past to present, Inglis shifted the meaning from simple appreciation towards an innuendo of endearment. The version cited by both MacColl and Doerries differs significantly from Inglis: "*I am glad I brought him indeed—he has been a treasure*". The shift in meaning is so subtle as to escape most readers but it did not escape Inglis, who changed the text for the purpose of manipulating his readers' understanding.

Further proof of Inglis' duplicity is that the relevant Foreign Office file does not contain the letter allegedly '*handed over*' and enclosed.

The Inglis portrayal of Christensen as a double-dealing betrayer is now *de rigueur* for most academics. The Inglis version is related faithfully by Lucy McDiarmid in *The Irish Art of Controversy*, including the false details of Christensen handing over documents to Findlay and of his alleged implying "*unnatural relations*". (7) This invention by Inglis is not supported by Findlay's extensive correspondence with the Foreign Office.

While Inglis' deeper motives for these deceptions cannot be determined, it is not credible that they can be explained by the argument from honest belief. In that case, a statement is made in good faith but is nonetheless false. But the systematic pattern of deception—including the alteration of documents, selective framing, omissions and distortions—indicate a calculated intent to mislead. It follows that Inglis knew that the diaries were not authentic, otherwise he had no need to resort to so many deceptions in order to convince readers that they were genuine.

There are, therefore, solid grounds for describing Inglis as a negationist historian since he deployed all the standard techniques of negationism. These are explained in a Wikipedia article as follows:

"Historical negationism applies the techniques of research, quotation, and presentation for deception of the reader and denial of the historical record. In support of the 'revised history' perspective, the negationist historian uses false documents as genuine sources... The revision techniques of historical negationism operate in the intellectual space of

public debate for the advancement of a given interpretation of history and the cultural perspective of the 'revised history'. As a document, the revised history is used to negate the validity of the factual, documentary record, and so reframe explanations and perceptions of the discussed historical event, in order to deceive the reader, the listener, and the viewer; therefore, historical negationism functions as a technique of propaganda. Rather than submit their works for peer review, negationist historians rewrite history and use logical fallacies to construct arguments that will obtain the desired results, a 'revised history' that supports an agenda – political, ideological, religious, etc."

In the practice of historiography, the British historian Richard J. Evans describes the technical differences, between professional historians and negationist historians:

"Reputable and professional historians do not suppress parts of quotations from documents that go against their own case, but take them into account, and, if necessary, amend their own case, accordingly. They do not present, as genuine, documents which they know to be forged, just because these forgeries happen to back up what they are saying. They do not invent ingenious, but implausible, and utterly unsupported reasons for distrusting genuine documents, because these documents run counter to their arguments; again, they amend their arguments, if this is the case, or, indeed, abandon them altogether. They do not consciously attribute their own conclusions to books and other sources, which, in fact, on closer inspection, actually say the opposite... They do not willfully invent words, phrases, quotations, incidents and events, for which there is no historical evidence, in order to make their arguments more plausible". (8)

Almost all of these crimes of intellectual dishonesty can be found in the Inglis study. Honest historians and biographers do not present as true sources those documents which are disputed, or which have suspect provenance; and they do not rely on documents which have not been proven to be authentic. Rather than base his 1910 account on Casement's extensive handwritten *Amazon Journal* in the NLI, Inglis admitted using the disputed *Black Diaries* as sources for his chapters covering the years 1903, 1910 and 1911. Thus he ignored an authentic source in favour of a disputed source and by so doing he eliminated even the benefit of the doubt which makes Casement the victim of his biography rather than his subject.

Inglis' book has conditioned the discourse for almost half a century and is a remarkable example of how low-level propaganda masquerading as impartial

biography can accomplish long-term results. No-one should underestimate the achievement of Inglis which can best be measured by the number of distinguished Irish academics—mostly historians—who have fallen under the spell of his deceptive template: Paul Bew, Roy Foster, Patrick Geoghegan, Michael Laffan, W.J. McCormack, Sean McConville, Séamas Ó Síocháin, Mary Daly, Eunan O'Halpin, Lucy McDiarmid and David Norris. (9)

The only dissenting voice among Irish academics appears to be that of historian Owen Dudley Edwards, while the most articulate dissenting voice in Ireland is that of historian Angus Mitchell.

#### §

It is not surprising to find that leading journalists and broadcasters and other opinion makers in politics, law and the arts have also fallen under the spell cast by the Inglis study. There is no reason for them to contest the judgment of the academic elite, none of whom have challenged the Inglis template of 1973. The result is a consolidated consensus in Ireland that the 'Black' Diaries are genuinely the work of Casement. Any residual reservations were dispelled by the 2002 Giles investigation. For those many whose opinions are media-conditioned it seems that authenticity has received what amounts to an *imprimatur*.

Thus the question of the diaries has taken on essential features which are difficult to distinguish from those of dogma. Those features are a refusal to engage impartially with the evidence and a contemptuous dismissal of non-believers as recalcitrant, irrational and refractory. Dogma by definition contains an anti-rational component in which reason is replaced by authority; in this case the authority is simply majority opinion. But closer inspection reveals that the academic elite have not only failed to question the Inglis template but they have declined to scrutinise it closely. The evidence of this is revealed in their persistent repetition of the same factual errors about events in 1916 and since. These errors derive directly from Inglis, who is frequently quoted as a source. In the authoritative *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, the Casement entry contains gross errors of fact several of which derive from Inglis.

We read that "*British officials circulated portions of diaries ...*" This is untrue; only police typescripts were shown. We read of people "... *who were shown the diaries ...*", and this is untrue since there is no evidence of the bound diaries being shown to anyone at that time. We read that "*Smith offered them to Casement's*

*counsel for inspection ...*". and this is also untrue. Smith offered the police typescripts only. We read that the Giles investigation was "*scientific*", although comparative handwriting analysis is far from scientific since its results cannot be tested and verified. Such analysis is merely the expert opinion of one person and is unreliable as demonstrated in the case of the Hitler 'Diaries'.

Yet these errors appear almost insignificant beside those published on the *Decade of Centenaries* website where not a single basic fact was reported correctly. That this garbled misinformation was authorised on a State website remains to be explained. (10)

It seems that the climate created by Inglis has made reading his book unnecessary; it is sufficient now to inhale the dogma of majority opinion. Besides multiple factual errors, there were extraordinary convolutions of disturbed reasoning such as: "*a repudiation of the diaries does not mean that Roger Casement was not gay; if they are forged it is perhaps because there was knowledge of his homosexuality...*" Readers might hear in this an echo of Stalin's Show Trials when innocence and guilt were so perfectly compounded that accused persons confessed to imaginary crimes invented for them by the prosecution.

This recent example of disturbed reasoning has a notable precedent in the Inglis study. While in Germany Casement sporadically kept a diary which was later published in Germany and the USA and more recently in Ireland. This document is totally free from sexual references of any kind. This absence presented an anomaly to Inglis, which he sought to explain as follows:

"Of the other two surviving diaries, one was written while he was in Germany, under constant police surveillance, he would have been unwise to include any compromising material" (p. 439, Appendix 3, Inglis 1974).

From this 'explanation' we understand that Casement's prudence prevented him from recording compromising activity which the police had failed to detect. Here too there is an echo of the Soviet psychology of guilt. Here too the absence of evidence is transformed into evidence of guilt. Casement is guilty whether or not he records his experience in a diary. Both these cases of tortured reasoning are based on 'knowledge' without evidence, a device which eliminates the age-old vital concept of presumption of innocence.



# Political Economy

There are some things the state is good at.

It has been reported that NAMA has generated €47 billion for the public purse since it was set up in 2009.

It was set up in order to clear up the mess made by the Irish component of the Anglo American banking system. To do that, it had to acquire non-performing loans which threatened to sink the Irish banking system. To that end, it acquired 11,500 land and development and associated loans from the five financial institutions. This was followed by intensive engagement with the debtors whose loans were acquired in order to gain a detailed understanding of their businesses and to begin formulating a strategy for debt repayment. Finally, over the subsequent decade, a series of debt reduction milestones culminated in full repayment of NAMA borrowings by 2020. NAMA is now in a position to deliver billions to the State!

This final phase also includes the delivery of new housing units and facilitating the development of new commercial and residential space in the Dublin Docklands. It is reported that, so far:

“The number of housing units delivered directly by Nama’s residential delivery programme since 2014 totalled 12,450 by end 2020.... This indicates that 750 homes were delivered last year.

A further 6,550 units have been delivered on former Nama-secured sites, which benefited from Nama asset management or funding. That is 1,450 more units than

outlined in the previous annual review (Irish Times, 10.2.21).

Prior to the establishment of NAMA, the developer loans were spread between a number of banks. This meant the developer could play one bank against the next. Another advantage of the initiative was that it saved on legal costs because, in effect, there was one creditor (NAMA).

Also, by consolidating the loans, NAMA could take a broader view of the development land that the loans related to.

But the Left was against NAMA from the start and focussed on alleged corruption—a theme also pursued in many newspapers, particularly the *Sunday Independent*. It was almost as though this type of coverage was representing the views of developers: after all, they were having their assets stripped from them by the State!

The other tack pursued by the Left was that NAMA was somehow set up for the benefit of developers, even though the developers opposed it every step of the way. The argument was that NAMA had paid too much for the loans. At the time there was a website set up by a group of economists called “*NAMA wine lake*”: that was in the days when the EU acted as the ultimate purchaser for food surpluses, which were then stored till required. (This initiative to even out market fluctuations

was part of the ‘old’ EU which British Governments made it their business to ‘reform’!) The ‘*Wine Lake*’ was the “go to” site for journalists/politicians wanting to have a pop at NAMA.

But the site closed down after about a year with its owners admitting that NAMA seemed to be doing a good job.

It’s a pity that NAMA couldn’t have developed into something more: a housing development agency. But the left didn’t have the imagination. Having a large State Housing development agency would have brought enormous economies of scale in the purchase of materials, organisation of labour, and design of developments.

At the time when NAMA was established, it was fully expected that it would incur a loss by bailing out the banks. The media was full of stories slating the Government for ‘bailing out’ developers. But, as it turns out, there has been a substantial profit: one that has not impinged on the outraged public consciousness!

And there has been no rehabilitation of the then Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan, who brought the institution into being and was slated at the time for the initiative. There is no praise in retrospect for his acumen and devotion to duty. Dying of cancer, he set up a camp bed in his office to see the State through the consequences of a financial crisis made in Wall Street and the City of London.

**John Martin**

## Decoding Inglis

continued from page 24

Most of the academic elite in Ireland found the Inglis paradigm unobjectionable because it appeared to offer an exit from the rigid mindset of old-guard nationalist Ireland which was by then perceived as intolerant, bigoted and backward. Anxious to align themselves with progressive, modern tolerant attitudes, the Inglis biography was generally well received by the intelligentsia.

The eruption of violence in the North, with its roots in partition and sectarianism, was a powerful incentive for their further detachment from the troubled past and present. It became progressively possible for intellectuals to agree with Inglis that the patriot-martyr of 1916 was also the author

of the diaries. That possibility progressed until it became the present widely-accepted consensus which, unquestioned, atrophied into dogma defined simply as that which is believed to be true by most people and therefore should be accepted.

But the fact remains that this dogma rests on demonstrated deception and falsity rather than on scrupulously impartial historical research. It rests on the work of one dishonest author whose writings continue to exert a baleful influence over historians and readers, directly and indirectly. When closely scrutinised, Inglis’ book fails to comply with accepted standards of historical scholarship because it is systematically and cunningly mendacious.

Inglis was a respected even popular figure in British public life, a prolific author,

journalist and television presenter; his skill in verbal legerdemain allowed him to cover the traces of his deceptions which in turn made it difficult for many to suspect him. It is true that later authors have contributed to the consensus, notably Reid and Sawyer, but their works are conspicuously faithful to the Inglis blueprint in respect of the diaries as authentic sources.

The cumulative evidence of systematic deceit will not, however, close the controversy. The fact-based evidence is resisted by misinformed opinion which refuses to engage impartially with the evidence. When reason is replaced by the illusory authority of misinformed opinion, history becomes the narcotic of dogma—a temporary refuge for those afraid of the evidence.

## NOTES

- 1 - Readers are referred to Chapter 11 of Anatomy of a lie for a detailed treatment of the issues.
- 2 - The Times, p.18. 26.3. 1994.
- 3 - Roger Casement: A New Judgment, René MacColl, p. 149. 1956.
- 4 - In his Prelude to the Easter Rising (2000) Professor Doerries states that a photocopy of this letter is held in the NLI with reference MS 14,914, Volume 1. Doerries published the full text of this letter in his book. However, the photocopy of the letter is now missing from that file in the NLI and it is not listed on the contents page of Volume 1. It appears, therefore, that someone removed the original volume containing the letter and replaced it with a manipulated volume at some time after the publication of Doerries' book. Paradoxically, Inglis himself refers to this NLI file on page 420 of his first edition as being copy material from German archives; this strongly indicates that he had seen the letter when researching in the NLI.
- 5 - 17 November, 1914. "Today I sent Adler out to buy various things ... and arranged all details of his return to Moss ... With two faked letters and some pages of my 'Diary' he has 'stolen' ...". 24 November, 1914. "... I found Adler still here, but prepared to go back to Norway on the morrow — with sham letters I had written for Mr. de C. Findlay's benefit." "On Sunday I saw Adler off at 11.18 to Sassnitz with two faked letters and two 'stolen' pages of 'my Diary' giving hints of impending invasion of Ireland ... it should make Findlay's hair ... rise up and bless him ..." One Bold Deed of Open Treason, 2016. Ed. Angus Mitchell. Merrion Press.
- 6 - Arthur Nicolson, senior official in the Foreign Office to whom Findlay reported.
- 7 - The Irish Art of Controversy, 2005. Lucy McDiarmid. Cornell University Press.
- 8 - Extract cited from Wikipedia article.
- 9 - Unlike Inglis, these scholars can legitimately plead honest belief since they trusted Inglis and did not suspect deception. They were simply misled.
- 10 - Following representations made concerning the errors, the article was withdrawn.

**Paul Hyde**

## Mother And Baby Homes

Aoife Moore is partially right that the mother and baby homes "*were never about sin at all*" (*Where are the men?* Irish Examiner, January 16). It would be revisionist to claim that, at the time, there wasn't a widespread view — largely absent today — that sex outside marriage was sinful and shameful.

However, telling us it all boils down to patriarchy is equally reductionist and simplistic. Certainly, the fathers had broken social rules, or "sinned", too, but the women's pregnancies and resulting children were the most visible, incontrovertible evidence; and it was this evidence that the society wished to hide.

The fathers were often able to evade the consequences of their actions; in those days before DNA tests, it would have been harder to identify them. No doubt there were men who were roughed up by the girls' families, or who went into voluntary exile.

Equally critical to understanding that time is the impact of the 19th century and Victorian society. A socially climbing, lower middle class arose from the industrial revolution and craved respectability and conformity.

W.B. Yeats described this well in his poem *September 1913*.

The Mother and Baby Homes, Industrial Schools, and Workhouses were not an invention of the Catholic Church, from the time of the Free State, as many journalists seem to be claiming now, but a product of this Victorian drive for "social reform".

All of them have their roots in early 19th century Protestant British rule here, along with the National Schools, which were begun in 1832. Such institutions existed across the rest of Britain, along the same lines and for much the same reasons.

The Free State inherited them in 1922, just as it inherited much of Britain's judicial and administrative machinery.

There was a punitive element to all of these institutions, founded on a Protestant notion of "*prosperity gospel*", the idea that material success is a sign of God's favour (notwithstanding Jesus Christ's own dire poverty).

In Protestant Victorian society, social misfortune was interpreted as the consequence of personal sin. Therefore, unmarried mothers, alcoholics, the poor, homeless, and jobless needed to be "*reformed*" and "*saved from themselves*", through punitive measures and hard work.

But this was principally to prevent them being a burden on the rest of a society that had scraped its way up by the bootstraps and made it, materially.

It is sometimes said that the most conservative minds are those that have just enough, materially, to lose.

That mean-spirited sentiment is still widespread in our society, and while the religious dimension has fallen out of favour, it manifests in other ways.

So, instead of promoting conspiracy theories about "*the patriarchy*", if we wish to understand how the Mother-and-Baby homes came about, we only need look at ourselves, today. Aoife Moore ends by saying, "It's about time men spoke up". I agree, and I hope I have done my bit.

**Nick Folley**

*Irish Examiner* 19.1.21

## Drug Trials

Senator Victor Boylan (Independent) has revealed that he was subject to drug trials while growing up in an institution. He said that it—

"wasn't always the priest".

"I am Church of Ireland by birth, by heritage and by choice, so it wasn't always the Catholic Church and it wasn't always the priest and it wasn't always the nun. "*I think that's really really important to say*" (*Irish Independent*, 2.2.21).

Contributed by **Manus O'Riordan**

# Does It Stack Up

## Stack ?

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A new National Development Plan is presently being drawn up by the State and so we have an opportunity for some new thinking on how the Irish people of the future will improve their environment and their incomes.

When I first studied economics, it annoyed me that Ireland had no low-tax nor no-tax areas. England had Jersey, Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Barbados. Portugal had the Azores. Spain had Madeira. So why didn't Ireland declare its own offshore islands as tax havens?

I spoke about it and wrote about it—but the reaction was that we'd be getting above ourselves and that we didn't have any millionaires anyway.

But someone was listening because later Ireland created the *Shannon Free Airport Area* and later still the *Dublin Financial Services Centre* was created by Dermot Desmond and Charles J. Haughey when the latter was Taoiseach.

Now, in 2021, we need some new ideas and I propose a good one.

If you examine the maps of every country in Europe you will see that almost all countries have their Tourist/Holiday areas in their capital cities and on their South Coasts. Even Switzerland, which has no sea-coast, has most of its tourist locations in the southern part of that country. Portugal has 'The Algarve': a continuous stretch of tourist places all along Portugal's South Coast. Spain's South Coast is the same and also France. Norway and Sweden have nearly all their tourism and holiday locations on their South Coasts and approximately 750 kilometres of England's South Coast is mostly holiday and tourist destinations.

But not in Ireland. The tourist business in Ireland is mainly concentrated in Dublin. The rest of the tourist and holiday business is more or less evenly distributed around the country. So there is a huge *lacuna* to be filled, which provides Ireland with a

big opportunity: That is to encourage and greatly expand the facilities for tourists and holiday-makers on Ireland's South Coast.

This can be done without any cost to the taxpayer by using local Planning Laws to prioritise the granting of Planning Permission for tourist-related facilities all along the sea-front of the South Coast of Ireland. Care for the natural environment should be basic to the Planning Permission, as also should control over the size and scale of developments. The aims should be that every building should be an architectural gem. No flat roofs should be allowed. Thatched roofs should be encouraged. Irish vernacular architecture should be desired.

If such a scheme as this is introduced, it could provide Ireland with a whole new tourist industry which would tie in very well with ecological protection plans because, basically, tourists want to experience a good eco-friendly environment.

The results of this sort of scheme would last for generations to come.

Ireland needs something new and maybe this South Coast idea is appropriate also, in these years of *staycations*.

### PUBLIC SERVANTS – A CLASS APART

So far in the COVID Lockdown there is no news of lay-offs of public servants: neither in Local Government nor in Central Government. And yet there is a huge reduction in the work being done. The staff are said to be "*working from home*". But the thing is, the staff who normally had dealt with the tax-paying public are not available to the public except, in very occasional circumstances, by appointment.

Some who are "*working from home*" are conscientiously working as much as they can, but the work simply is not there to be done.

Many public servants have nothing to do and they have not been put on COVID payments but continue on full salary, which is somewhat weird when so many in the non-public sector are in financial crisis. Everybody, including the Public Sector, is asking how long will the money last? Enormous damage is being done to the Irish Economy by the total lockdown. Is there no other way? The present way does not stack up!

### SECRETARY-GENERAL SALARIES

The affair of the re-assignment of Robert Watt from the Departure of Public

Expenditure to the Department of Health appears to show truly awful incompetence—or else favouritism at Ministerial level. To increase his salary by €81,000 to €292,000 shows an extraordinary degree of insensitivity at this time when those tax-payers for whom Mr. Watt works are in such dire economic circumstances due to COVID -19.

No reasonable explanation was given for such a huge salary. One possible explanation is that the salaries of Ministers and TDs are tied to Public Service rates of pay, so it may be self-interest all round. We get the Government we deserve and the COVID Lockdown seems to have reduced our ability to be outraged. It does not stack up and the public *ennui* is pathetic.

### CAMDEN FORT MEAGHER

Some time ago, a controversy began about the English names on Irish streets here in Cork, such as Albert Street and Victoria Road. People in Ireland whose minds are still colonised by England, do not want to really be Irish – it seems. Another example of this attitude is the names on the two major forts built by the English to defend Cork Harbour against the French and Spanish. These were called Fort Camden and Fort Carlisle. Cork County Council tried to change them to Fort Meagher and Fort Davis in memory of two of our greatest Irish patriots.

Fort Meagher/Camden is next to the sailing village of Crosshaven in which is located 'The Royal Cork Yacht Club' (RCYC). The people of Crosshaven rose up and mutinied. They wanted to hold onto Camden.

A compromise was reached and the name of the huge Fort is now *Camden Fort Meagher!*

Camden was a murderer of Irish people on a grand scale, when he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland by the English in 1795. He was sent to Ireland to specially put down the Presbyterian Fenians who were planning a rebellion against the English in Ireland. Camden's Chief Secretary for Ireland was the Earl of Chichester, but Camden felt Chichester was too weak and brought in his nephew, Robert Stewart—a Loyalist Presbyterian from Newtownards—to do the dirty work. Robert's father, also Robert Stewart, was made Baron Londonderry: so the son got the "courtesy" title of Lord Castlereagh. Castlereagh believed in bribery and he paid big money. (It was either English money, or money seized from the native Irish after all, and not his.)

He paid his informers well and, within a short time, he got information that a meeting of United Irishmen was to be held at Oliver Bond's house in Dublin. He caused the meeting to be raided successfully and captured all the leaders of the movement.

Camden gave Castlereagh a free hand and all the funding he needed. He passed this terrible power on to his men and they, with impunity, carried out a reign of terror: torturings, floggings, half-hangings, pitch cappings – whatever it took to get information on the United Irishmen. He overdid it so much that many outside the movement revolted against English rule.

But Castlereagh, with his informers and torturers, was able to bloodily put down the rebellion in 1798. And this served its purpose well because Camden and Castlereagh then proceeded to buy Ireland by bribing the colonial parliament in Dublin to vote itself out of Office by passing the Act of Union, purporting to make Ireland part of the United Kingdom (UK) from

1st January 1801. The average price for each vote was £15,000 plus English peerage titles.

The English poet who sympathised with the cause of freedom for Ireland was Percy Bysshe Shelley and he wrote a poem against Camden and Castlereagh. The verse on Castlereagh is memorable.

“I met Murder along the way,  
It wore a mask like Castlereagh,  
Very smooth he looked, yet Grim,  
Seven bloodhounds followed him.”

The people of Crosshaven should have known the history of Lord Camden and his terrible nephew Lord Castlereagh. But maybe they do know and want to cling to the remnants of the British Empire – after all, the Royal Cork Yacht Club was apparently founded by British naval aristocracy 300 years ago.

(Three years earlier another yacht club had been founded in St. Petersburg in 1717 . . . by Peter the Great of Russia.)

Michael Stack ©

## What Is History? continued

freely and effectively if they had chosen to do so.

The writing of history in Ireland has during the past half century or so, become almost entirely academic, and most of the publishing is done as a career requirement. This sort of academic history is also done in England, but there it is only a fringe on what is the most valuable sort of historical publishing, which is the publishing of the writings through which the society developed. In England, anybody can go straight to Milton or Cromwell or Clarendon or Locke etc., etc., etc. But virtually nothing of this sort is available in Ireland.

For example, neither the History of the Confederation by Richard Bellings (who was its Secretary of State), nor the Papal Nuncio's Reports to Rome, have been published in the last century or so, yet the conflict between these two lies at the source of modern Ireland, and is now reviving in a new form.

The writings of Canon Sheehan and William O'Brien, who inspired a movement against the Redmondite establishment of Catholic Ascendancy in the Home Rule movement before the Third Home Rule Bill, 1913, are not available.

Catholic-nationalism dominated the intellectual as well as the social life of the 20th century Ireland. But since Vatican II, the chief writings of the Catholic-nationalist history have been put out of print.

Ireland is bereft of history today. (Academic texts are at best no substitute for the real materials of history, and in any case Irish academics veer away from thorny issues.) The result is that the people who are trying to think have been deprived of the materials of thought.

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**\* An updated version of an article  
which appeared in  
Irish Political Review, July, 1990.**

**\*\* Articles 2 & 3 dropped:  
Nineteenth Amendment which  
became effective 2 December 1999.**

### Drishanebeg Train Ambush

#### Centenary Commemoration Address by Jack Lane

[https://youtu.be/VOLt18ZzF\\_0](https://youtu.be/VOLt18ZzF_0)

" The Drishanebeg Train Ambush took place on 11 February 1921. This centenary talk by Jack Lane places the event in the context of the 1918 General Election which established a democratic mandate for Irish independence. It also provided a retrospective mandate to the Declaration of a Provisional Irish government in 1916. The full text of Jack's talk can be read here:

<http://www.millstreet.ie/blog/2021/02/11/the-drishanebeg-ambush-centenary-commemoration-address-by-jack-lane#more-179305>



Above: The train afterwards, 3rd class 6-wheel carriage No. 663 at Tralee Bay platform, blood-stained and with bullet holes, Saturday 12 February 1921. The platform side of the coach with substantial window damage. (Photo: Museum of the Royal Fusiliers, HM Tower of London)

[https://youtu.be/VOLt18ZzF\\_0](https://youtu.be/VOLt18ZzF_0)

A commemorative book "Worth the Wait" is available in Wordsworth Books, Millstreet.

Related Aubane Historical Society publications at <https://aubanehistoricalsociety.org/> "

[The Drishanebeg Ambush Centenary Commemoration Address by Jack Lane – Millstreet.ie](#)

# What Is History ?

## (And Where is Irish History!) \*

HISTORY is the series of events and circumstances through which the present state of affairs was caused.

In the writing of history the process by which the present state of affairs came about must be described. The sequence of causation between some previous state of affairs and what currently exists must be shown.

Over the last four decades Ireland has undergone extensive rapid change. It used to be said that the state rested on four major pillars: the Catholic Church, Fianna Fail, the Farmers, and the GAA. The first two of these no longer perform that structural function, whilst the farmers no longer have a decisive position in social life. The GAA alone remains standing. It provides social cement throughout the country.

Whether these social changes have come about as a result of, or in parallel to, the economic transformation of the country, it is hard to say. But there can be little doubt that Ireland now has a dual economy, with old-style capitalist enterprise sitting beside the institutions of finance capitalism and international corporations. Even some of the old-style farmers' co-operatives have evolved into world enterprises.

There can be little doubt that membership of the European Union has facilitated these changes.

Prior to these developments, the economies of Northern Ireland (as part of the British market) and of Southern Ireland could be said to have had very different profiles, with Unionism regarding itself as participating in an 'advanced' economy, and viewing Nationalism as being both socially and economically backward. Such a difference remains: however now it is the North of Ireland that is viewed by the South as having the 'backward' social and economic structures. And certainly the South has higher living standards and social provision, except for the crucial area of health—in which private provision obstructs a truly *national* health service. And the South is the area with the ultra-modern ideology—embracing politically-correct 'rights': rights which jar in the more traditionally-minded North.

As far as political structures are concerned, Northern Ireland underwent a transformation as a result of the forty-year campaign fought by the IRA. It took four decades for Britain to accept that majority rule is inappropriate in a nationally-divided regional society which is cut off from the democratic political life of the state of which it forms a part.

Northern Ireland continues to be under the sovereignty of, but not forming a part of, the political system of the United Kingdom. There is a limited measure of Home Rule based on a subvention from Westminster, which continues to collect taxes and administer the essential services of the area.

Power-sharing between Unionism and Nationalism has transformed public life. There has been a loss of power in the 'Protestant'-Irish nation, accompanied by a gain in governing participation by the Northern section of the 'Catholic'-Irish nation. (The terms *Protestant* and *Catholic* are secular rather than religious in this context.)

Whether Northern Ireland will remain as tightly-connected to the rest of the UK, after the latter's break with the European Union, remains to be seen. The arrangements made for its continued full participation in the European market are likely to weaken the organic link with the British market.

Whilst the Republic no longer claims sovereignty over Northern Ireland \*\*, the new arrangements are likely to enhance North/South relations—which are in fact North/EU relations—and weaken North/GB links.

An adequate History of Ireland would show how this stage of affairs came about, taking some previous state of affairs as a starting point.

The best starting point is in the 17th century: the Confederation of Kilkenny (1642). There is sufficient connection between the Ireland of the Confederation and present-day Ireland to show the present being formed by the conflicts of the 1640s and by developments and

disruptions since then. Ample literary material was produced in each phase since then to make that phase intelligible today simply by being put in print. And the peoples who are in conflict in Ireland today were present in Ireland then, and were in conflict then.

Between 16th century Ireland and the present day there is little human continuity in society, in literature, or in philosophical outlook. Its conflicts are not ours. The framework of present-day Ireland begins with the reconstruction conducted by James I after the suppression of O'Neill's rebellion (1593–1603).

That framework had made sufficient impact to enable an Irish state to be formed in the 1640s when England collapsed into rebellion.

The Williamite aristocracy was added to Ireland after 1691, but it never took root, although it had a monopoly of political power and of land ownership.

The chief gaps in Irish historical publishing — which are so extensive that "gaps" is hardly the word for them — are: the Confederation of Kilkenny, continuing through the Irish remonstrance, when enlightened Catholic gentry and clergy attempted to make Ireland a functional nation by making space for heresy in its life and were thwarted by the Counter-Reformation of the Papal Nuncio and other Roman agents; Jacobite and post-Jacobite Ireland, from 1691 to 1807, when the life of Catholic Ireland was guided by an enlightened gentry and clergy with extensive Continental connections; the development of Protestant Ulster in the same period; an account of the Williamite settlement (from Molyneux to Grattan) as a mere state apparatus lacking organic life; an account of the undermining of the Ascendancy in consequence of the Act of Union, and of the formation of a modern structure of state, beginning with the Poor Law; an account of the formation of the Catholic-Nationalist movement early in the 19th century, the reconstruction of the Irish Hierarchy on illiberal lines, and the steady growth of Catholic-nationalism into the mid-20th century, despite a number of challenges at the start of the 20th century by movements attempting to develop a national movement in which the Protestant populations might have participated

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**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## Public Service Pay Agreement

**“The prospect of the proposed new public service pay agreement [“Building Momentum”] being ratified has received a boost after members of two of the largest unions in the State sector backed the deal in ballots”**

*(Irish Times, 12.2.2021)*

SIPTU, which represents about 60,000 public service personnel, said its members voted in favour of the proposed accord by 91% to 9%.

Primary school teachers, who are members of the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation, supported the proposed agreement by more than 80%.

SIPTU said that, apart from general pay rises, the new deal also contained a commitment to reduce working hours as well as protections on public service outsourcing and the restoration of overtime rates and twilight premiums for workers in the health service. *(Irish Times, 12.2.2021)*

The Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland had voted to reject the latest Public Service Pay Agreement because it does not restore full pay equality for staff recruited since 2011.

Members rejected the new deal by a margin of 79% to 21%.

Asked whether a 28% turnout was sufficient to warrant rejection of the deal that could give members a 3% pay rise over two years, Ms Ann Piggott, the ASTI President, said that was the outcome, and everyone had had a chance to vote.

“Asked whether there was a possibility that the ASTI would adopt a unilateral position, Ms. Piggott said that would be up to the executive” *(The Journal, 9.1.2021)*

So far, only three Unions have recommended rejection of the proposed deal.

Both the ASTI and the Teachers Union of Ireland urged members to vote *No* because the deal did not restore pay equality for post-primary teachers—though their primary school colleagues in the INTO have backed a Yes vote.

The Medical Laboratory Scientists Association, which represents around 1,800 scientists, also recommended rejection because a long-running pay inequality grievance has not been resolved.

Public sector unions have been carrying out online and postal ballots of their members to determine if new two-year pact will be accepted.

The proposed new agreement provides for a 1% pay rise in October 2021 and a further 1% rise in October 2022.

There is also another pool of money, equivalent to a further 1% pay increase, being set aside to deal with issues, pay claims or outstanding awards in particular parts of the public service.

The Department of Public Expenditure

has confirmed that the 2% pay rise for public servants in the new pay deal will also apply to their allowances.

Public sector workers will get a 2% rise in their allowances as well as their basic wages if they approve the new public sector pay deal this month.

There are up to 1,100 pay allowances across the public sector which cost €1.5 billion per year, according to the last official estimate.

In Budget 2011, the Government reduced the pay of new entrants to the public service by 10%.

The two-year successor to the Public Service Stability Agreement covers around 350,000 civil and public servants, and will add around €900m per year to the public service pay bill when fully implemented.

There will also be a process leading to the rolling back of unpopular additional unpaid hours imposed on State employees in the 2013 *Haddington Road Agreement*, and the restoration of pre-austerity rates of overtime and premium payments.

A decision on whether to ratify the Agreement will be made later this month by the Public Services Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions based on aggregate results of the ballots of affiliated organisations. As part of this process, the Unions representing larger numbers of members are given a greater weighting.

The outcome of the public service union ballots will emerge over the coming days, and the deal is expected to be formally ratified at a meeting of the Public Service Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on 23rd February 2021.

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