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and Northern Star incorporating *Workers' Weekly* Vol.35 No.10 ISSN 954-5891**West British Former Diplomats
and the President**

A letter recently published in the *Irish Times* from a former Ambassador to Lithuania, Belarus and Finland, Donal Denham, highlights a uniquely Irish phenomenon—a diplomatic corps fallen into confusion as to the State to which it owes allegiance. The phenomenon may have abated during the Brexit negotiations but the public statements of a number of former diplomats over the last decade testify to its existence.

Looking back over opinions publicly expressed by Denham and other former Ambassadors is a useful exercise for understanding the crazy notions that seem to have caught hold in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) from the 1970s onwards. Given the recent controversy over President Higgins' commendable decision not to attend a commemoration of the founding of Northern Ireland which put a spotlight on the DFA, such a review will serve to portray the double-term Presidency of Michael D Higgins in a useful context.

DONAL DENHAM

The subject of Denham's letter to the *Irish Times* was "*French diplomacy and Aukus deal*". 'Aukus' is the acronym for an agreement recently announced between Biden's United States, Australia and the UK. Two other Anglo countries declined participation: Canada and New Zealand.

Denham's letter reads:

"The French government's withdrawal of its ambassadors from Washington and London over the loss of a lucrative submarine-building contract with Australia shows a fit of pique which is both hypocritical and ill-judged.

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**The EU and its
'rule of law'**

The EU is forever claiming that is based on law or it is nothing. The mantra of pursuing and implementing '*the rule of law*' is one of its great missions.

This is a delusional attitude to have towards law. The EU idea seems to be that law is the glue that can hold, and help create, a political entity like the EU. Law does indeed present the appearance of such glue but it is only an appearance. And this is also a very dangerous concept for the EU because, if the '*rule of law*' shows any cracks, is broken or ignored, then it is discredited—and with it automatically the authority of the EU.

Law derives from political imperatives and not the other way round.

It should not be given a primary role in any political structure.

Law is inherently static, settled and conservative; politics is the opposite:

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Gardens of Remembrance

There are two major public Gardens in Dublin that serve the purpose of remembrance of war dead. Although they were established to remember different people and different events they do have a number of things in common. They were both constructed during the lifetime of the Irish State; they were both financed in full or in part by the Irish State; and they both commemorate those who died in the service

of a state.

But here the shared aspects of the two Gardens ends. The *Garden of Remembrance* in Parnell Square commemorates those who died while in the service of a State fighting an enemy located on its own soil, while the *Irish National War Memorial Gardens*, in Islandbridge on the outskirts of the city, commemorates those who died in the service of a State

fighting an enemy that was not located on its own soil but located hundreds and, in some cases, thousands, of miles from its own soil.

But, even more significant is the relationship between them: one Garden commemorates the dead of the armed forces of a State (the British one) that had as its object the obliteration of the army of the State (the Irish Republic) whose war dead are commemorated by the other Garden. An oddity, no doubt, but not unique in itself, as there are many memorials in coun-

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

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It is also *deja-vu*. Do they need to be reminded that it was France which abruptly withdrew its Atlantic and channel fleets from Nato command in June 1963 and whose president, Charles de Gaulle, also added insult to injury by announcing on 10th March 1966, that he intended to withdraw France from Nato and who demanded the removal of all Nato facilities on French soil?..." (Irish Times, 22 September 2021).

An uninformed observer might be excused from thinking that Ireland, the State once served at the highest level by Denham, was a member of NATO! Not only is that not true but, traditionally, the Irish State enjoyed cordial diplomatic relations with the French State. Immediately after resigning as French President in 1969, de Gaulle spent some weeks on what was more a pilgrimage than a holiday in Ireland. A highpoint of the visit was a meeting between de Gaulle and de Valera, two leaders with much in common who enjoyed close personal, as well as diplomatic, relations.

(In commenting on Denham's criticism of France, it is not my intention to defend the subsequent behaviour of the French Government. Deeply wounded by the abrupt and deceitful cancellation of a submarine contract by Australia, which transferred its custom to the USA, President Macron hit out at both countries. Unfortunately, however, following a phone call from Joe Biden, Emanuel Macron agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations with the US. Macron is not de Gaulle.)

A dislike of France seems to be a hobby horse with Denham, but it is more than an eccentricity. In an earlier letter, this time on Brexit, he wrote:

"We did not, as a country, make the supreme sacrifice, of going to war against Nazi tyranny and its allies for a second time in two generations, receiving little gratitude from the French in return" (IT letters, 10 April 2019).

The author of that sentence has clearly adopted the jingoistic British view of the

World Wars. Equating Hitler's ideology and international ambitions with the policies of the German State in the years before 1914 comes in at the lower end of propagandist falsification. Denham, a retired Irish diplomat, holds a view of European history that properly belongs with Colonel Blimp in the nether reaches of English Toryism.

In the strange world of Irish former Ambassadors, however, Denham isn't always wrong. In that 2019 letter he opens with the following sentence:

"I hold my former colleague and your occasional Brexit columnist Bobby McDonagh in high regard, having served with him in the Department of Foreign Affairs since the beginning of our European adventure some 45 years ago" (Ibid).

The rest of the letter is a critique of the position held by McDonagh and Fintan O'Toole, both of whom had been venting spleen against the English Brexiteers. Denham's final point is:

"But it is vital for our future, and that of the European Union, to extend the hand of friendship to all groups in the UK, not just to those with whom we may share a sympathy" (Ibid).

In other words, he is suggesting that Ireland should take a more neutral stance towards Brexiteers. It might be inferred from that letter that, while Denham was taking an extreme position in wishing Ireland and the EU to remain beholden to the British worldview, the viewpoint of Bobby McDonagh was more attuned to the diplomatic tradition of the Irish State. Unfortunately, however, McDonagh favoured, and favours, a close relationship with Britain every bit as much as his erstwhile colleague. The case he implicitly argued during the Brexit talks was that Ireland should conspire with the British opponents of Brexit to prevent it from happening. In fairness to Denham, his position had the merit of recognising that Brexit was a matter for the UK electorate.

BOBBY McDONAGH

According to Wikipedia, Bobby McDonagh served separate terms as Ambassador to Malaysia, the UK, and Italy, and was Director General of the EU division of the DFA from 2001 to 2005.

In his column for the *Irish Times* of 19th September ('*Protocol and politics intertwine for Higgins*'), he took up the furore over President Higgins declining an invitation to attend a Church Service marking the formation of Northern Ireland and seemed to moderate the controversy

by putting it down to a misunderstanding. He sought to defend both the religious organisers and the President on the grounds that they each acted in good faith. Within the mishmash of platitudes are the following two paragraphs:

“On the one hand, the President, as someone who has been and remains to the forefront in promoting reconciliation, could have decided to attend the event. He could have noted that the intention was to “mark” rather than to “celebrate” the controversial events of a hundred years ago.

He could have attended the religious service, in the spirit in which the church leaders who issued the invitation no doubt intended it, as a prayerful ceremony to reflect on past events that have led to a century of much pain and heartache on all sides.”

McDonagh then proceeds to put the alternative case, but his ‘*On the one hand*’ paragraphs have more conviction. He clearly deprecates the ‘*intense controversy*’ that has arisen over the issue and considers the episode ‘*unfortunate*’. The overall impression left on the reader by the article is unsympathetic to the President, notwithstanding its diplomatic mode of expression.

As the Irish Ambassador to the UK in 2011, McDonagh played a major role in organising the Queen of England’s much hyped visit to Ireland. Playing on the curiosity that many Irish people have regarding Britain’s royal soap opera, that event was orchestrated to be hugely symbolic. It was to have been a milestone in a process of reconciliation between Ireland and Britain, a highpoint in the Anglicisation that had been cultivated over previous decades. As things have turned out, the impact of the Queen’s visit has been wiped out by the Decade of Centenaries, which recalled some realities of how Ireland won its independence, and by Brexit.

Then the process of Anglicisation, on which the revisionists placed high hopes, was severely damaged: first by the forced cancellation of a commemoration of the Royal Irish Constabulary in early 2020, followed by the abandonment of the Glasnevin Memorial Wall—which placed the Irish dead of the revolutionary period on a par with the Imperial casualties—and, more recently, by the news that a service honouring Royal Irish Constabulary casualties would not, after all, be held in Ireland. Instead it is to take place in London (where it properly belongs). The decision of President Higgins not to attend

Women And Afghanistan

The NATO attempted subjugation of Afghanistan has been defended on Human Rights grounds:

“We will never know if Afghanistan’s “own version of modernity” might have emerged to include basic human rights for women, but we do know that Blair and Bush’s blundering resulted in an unprecedented ability for half of its inhabitants to live with some dignity, for two decades.

I would be willing to bet that this half of the population is happy that the country wasn’t “left to itself”...” (letter, Irish Times, 1.9.21)

However, there are two basic assumptions operating here that are extremely dangerous. Firstly, that the concept of “dignity” and how it is defined is exclusively the reserve of a western lifestyle. Secondly, that “half the population”—by which is implied Afghani women—welcomed the western invasion. How can this be known? The abject failure of the world imposed by US-NATO to take root after 20 years would indicate that the women who felt more “dignified” and free under that lifestyle were very much a minority.

The fact is that the lifestyle that provided such “dignity” and freedom to that minority of Afghani women was only sustained through the wholesale terrorising by bombing and killing of far more Afghani women, who had a different concept of “dignity” and freedom, doesn’t seem to be a thought worth considering by supporters of the invasion.

Eamon Dyas

the Armagh service has merely added to and compounded that trend.

in opinion polls (81% in *Daily Mail* poll, 88.2% in *thejournal.ie* poll).

In deciding to pursue a policy of Anglicisation, DFA officials like Bobby McDonagh chose to go against the grain of Irish history—effectively to pull up its Republican roots. It is reassuring to observe that Irish history can not be so easily jettisoned. Michael D. Higgins was immunised against that policy by a number of factors. Firstly, he is an Irish speaker, and language is a natural protector against cultural imperialism. As a Labour politician who fought many difficult elections, sometimes losing his seat, he knows how to read the public mood and has the sense not to go against it. And, like many people, he has family connections to the generation that achieved independence—his father, John Higgins, was the Intelligence Officer of the 3rd Battalion of the Cork No 4 Brigade under Sean Moylan. Another point in his favour is that, unlike his predecessor Cearbhaill O’Dalaigh, he fights back.

The President’s stance regarding the commemoration of Northern Ireland’s founding can only be viewed as unfortunate when seen from the ahistorical perspective of former officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs. From an anti-revisionist perspective, he is to be applauded and fully deserves the overwhelming support he has received

OTHER DFA RETIREES

Other retired diplomats who seem confused on the question of national allegiance are *Ray Basset*, former Ambassador to Canada, and *Niall Holohan*, former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Basset attracted a lot of attention in 2017 when he was the spearhead of a campaign to restore close relations between Ireland and Britain, after it had become clear that Dublin was siding with Brussels in the looming battle between the UK and the EU over Brexit. He has been associated with the I Brexit Campaign, declaring that “*there is room for an Irish Eurosceptic party because those concerned about the EU are not represented by mainstream parties*” (*Irish Times*, 8.9.18)

The surprising part of Basset’s campaign is that he seems to have genuinely believed that a majority of Irish public opinion sympathised with Britain. He wanted the Irish Government to threaten to follow Britain out of the Union, unless Brussels moderated its negotiating position regarding Brexit. That he held exaggerated notions about the extent of pro-British feeling in Ireland may have been caused by his years in the DFA and by his mistaking media support for public support.

An *Irish Times* article by Niall Holohan, published in 2015 after he had retired, provoked a number of replies in that paper's Letters Page. In the article, Holohan used a combination of historical generalisation and slippery language to support a thesis that responsibility for the "democratic failures and intermittent strife on the island over the past 100 years" rests on those who "instigated and launched the 1916 rebellion" (IT, 3 August 2015). In response, one of the letter-writers made the reasonable point that the instigators of the Rising could not be blamed for the course of events after 1916 for the reason that they were dead, having been executed.

Of course, it would be unfair to characterise an entire Department of State by the post-retirement activities of a handful of former diplomats. However, during the years when Charles Haughey was Taoiseach, he distrusted the DFA, preferring to conduct Anglo-Irish business through the Department of the Taoiseach. This is verified by a memo from the British side released under the 30-year rule in 2015.

"In a briefing document for the incoming Permanent Under-Secretary of the NIO, Sir John Belloch on February 19th, 1988, Peter Bell, a senior official, commented:

"Though the Department of Foreign Affairs is the lead department of Anglo-Irish relations, Mr Haughey distrusts it and, as under [his previous] administration, the Department of the Taoiseach occupies the prominent position"..." (IT, 31 December 2015).

In conclusion, the institutional culture of the Department of Foreign Affairs seems unduly influenced by a British view of the Irish State's history. That extraordinary state of affairs is evidenced by public statements and actions from a number of former diplomats, and by Charles Haughey's bypassing of the Department in the 1980s. The recent controversy over the Armagh service testifies to the existence of a damaging disconnect between the elite and the public. A major portion of the responsibility for that should rest with the DFA.

The present incumbent at Aras an Uachtaráin—though constricted by an ahistorical, West British mindset that holds sway in sections of the political system, the media, and the academic community, as well as in the Department of Foreign Affairs—is providing an invaluable service simply by remaining true to the legacy of Irish independence.

Dave Alvey

EU and Rule Of Law

continued

dynamic by its very nature, as it is dealing with issues that need to be resolved.

So law and politics inevitably clash.

For some time this clash is being highlighted by the EU insistence on applying what it calls 'the rule of law' against Poland and Hungary, even though its 'rule of law' is only a tenuous interpretation of words in the Lisbon Treaty.

In this situation of a conflict between Member States, the overarching political imperative of the EU should be consolidating and developing its political unity. But that is not the case here.

And, when push came to shove on this clash—as it did over the threat by these states to block the 750 billion Euro loan to rebuild the EU economies after Covid—the political imperative of the need for this loan won, and the 'rule of law' issue was kicked into the long legal grass. This discredited the EU's previous attitude to those states.

But the EU has not learned its lesson and is still pursuing these countries by insisting on the enforcement of its interpretation of 'the rule of law'. And, at the last Council meeting, a leading member, Rutte of the Netherlands, invited Hungary to leave the Union over the issue. And he was clearly reflecting the views of others. The Dutch Premier was not rebuked by any EU authority: which is ominous for the EU's very future.

PROTOCOL PANSIES!

On another issue, the EU was huffing and puffing for months about the NI Protocol, even threatening to invoke Article 16 of the Withdrawal Agreement, and to prosecute the UK. It then suddenly dropped the legal action it had initiated against the UK, and accepted the UK decision to waive regulations of the Protocol indefinitely. All without explanation or justification. This destroys a crucial aspect of law: consistency of interpretation, and explanation of decisions taken. This was another discrediting of its 'rule of law'.

The British saw the weakness of the EU's behaviour and pushed on to threaten it would permanently suspend the Protocol under Article 16, if the EU did not agree to its demands, demands which essentially amounted to scrapping the Protocol. (See

Frost's speech in the House of Lords on 13 September.)

And of course the Commission itself had lost all moral authority on this issue when it invoked Article 16 some months ago for no valid reason, and had to reverse the decision in a matter of hours, again out of political necessity.

And why did the EU change course on the Protocol this time? *The Guardian* reported:

"While Brussels withheld its formal agreement on the (UK) move, the EU will hold back from launching legal proceedings over the extension of the status quo, with a spokesman saying the European Commission is "not moving to the next stage of the infringement procedure launched in March 2021, and is not opening any new infringements for now". Sources said a number of key EU leaders felt there was little to gain from confronting Boris Johnson's government. The issue was raised during recent talks between France's president Emmanuel Macron and Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister. "The feeling is that the developments in Afghanistan showed how important it is to have a good relationship with the UK and the intention is to take the spice out of things", one diplomatic source said' (6.9.21).

The meaning of this is that the inner core of the EU is appalled by President Biden's withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, as agreed under a Treaty which President Trump made and which he endorsed. With the US now an unreliable ally as far as warmongering is concerned, the focus shifts to the UK. The Brexit trauma has suddenly healed, and there is to be special treatment in the face of British bullying.

So again a political imperative that this time had nothing to do with the EU itself took precedence over EU legalities: in effect the success of the Taliban decided the EU attitude to the NI Protocol! What status has its 'rule of law' after this?

I suggest that Ms Von der Leyen and her colleagues, before taking any more decisions on their beloved 'rule of law' mantra, listen to the old Jazz tune which has some political wisdom for them:

"Oh, 'tain't what you do, it's the way that you do it
'Tain't what you do, it's the way that you do it
'Tain't what you do, it's the way that you do it
That's what gets results."

A few days after the Protocol debacle, it was reported that:

"Barnier, the veteran French statesman who won widespread acclaim for preserving EU27 unity throughout the contentious Brexit process, is now a candidate to be the nominee of Les Républicains, his center-right conservative party, for president of France. And on Thursday, at a party event, Barnier set off a firestorm by saying France's "legal sovereignty" was being "threatened" by the EU, and calling for "a referendum on the question of immigration"/ Barnier had previewed his shift to the right on migration policy last July, but his assertion of France's sovereignty being impinged on by the Court of Justice of the EU was remarkably jarring, especially because it echoed a central argument made by Brexiteers in pushing for the U.K. to quit the EU" (<https://www.politico.eu/article/france-eu-uk-michel-barnier-election-president>).

Here was someone who had come to almost personify the EU questioning the very

legal basis of the EU, in querying the rights of the ECJ over national courts. But this should not have been a surprise to anyone familiar with the EU's history.

Barnier is a Gaullist and the issues associated with de Gaulle and the EU have not gone away as they focus on the fundamentals of what the whole project is about. Is it to be a Gaullist 'Europe of the nations' or something else? What can unify Europe beyond its nations? Christian Democracy set it in motion and guided it for a generation but that is now a spent force for such a task. A body of law and a Constitution—called the Lisbon Treaty—is not up to the task.

So maybe the Gaullist vision of the nations of Europe co-operating and acting independently of the other power blocs may be the answer. Back to the future?

Jack Lane

of the *Gardens* in the past is presented as evidence of the wider callous attitude towards the dead Irish of the British armed forces by the State, while the modern, repaired and cared for Memorial Gardens is evidence of the erosion of that past callousness and its replacement by a more 'mature' attitude in both Irish State and society.

THE POLITICS OF MEMORY AND FORGETFULNESS

How modern Ireland perceives the National War Memorial Gardens has been shaped by contemporary politics: and contemporary politics over the past generation has evolved along lines that required a certain re-alignment of the Irish people's relationship with their past.

Within that re-alignment the National War Memorial Gardens has become a symbolic statement bearing witness to where the Irish people were in the past and how their modern contemporary perspective came to evolve.

The force that provided the intellectual basis for this perspective, and continues to sustain it, is the outcome of the work of a number of well-placed and influential individuals who have exerted themselves untiringly and energetically for many years in the interests of creating an overall re-structuring of the country's history. Without such forces at the rudder of public, academic, and political opinion, the symbolic value of the *Irish National War Memorial Gardens* would have no purpose. It is within the environment created by such influential forces that the Memorial Gardens assumes its symbolic value.

That value is evidenced by the way in which the Gardens are understood and depicted in the most important popular contemporary online reference source—*Wikipedia*. This source offers the following description of the transition of the Gardens from the dark period of past neglect and callousness to the enlightened age of modern Ireland:

"A subsequent lack of financing from the Government to provision its up-keep and care allowed the site to fall into dilapidation and vandalism over the following decades, to the point that by the late 1970s it had become a site for caravans and animals of the Irish Traveller community, with the Dublin Corporation's refuse disposal office using it as a rubbish dump for the city's waste. In addition, fifty years of storms and the elements had left their mark, with structural damage unrepaired to parts of the Garden's ornamentation.

"In the mid-1980s economic and cultural shifts began to occur in Ireland which facilitated a regeneration of urban decay

Gardens of Remembrance

continued

tries on mainland Europe that commemorate the dead of the armies of an enemy state—in fact, given the prevalence of land borders in Europe and the way they have changed over the centuries, it would be strange if such things did not exist. But, in the case of the Dublin Gardens, the oddity assumes, quite literally, a bigger dimension.

Given that both Gardens came into existence during the lifetime of the current Irish State—a state that owes its existence to the civic, economic, and military sacrifices of its population—it would only be natural if the Garden dedicated to the British army dead was an inferior one to the Garden dedicated to the Irish republican dead.

Yet—and herein is the uniqueness of the situation—the opposite is the case. For the Irish National War Memorial Gardens (the one that commemorates the dead of the British armed forces) occupies a site consisting of around 50 acres (including 26 acres of formal gardens and two acres of central lawn), while the Garden of Remembrance (the one that commemorates those who died in the service of the Irish Republic) occupies a site of a mere 300 by 100 yards (approximately) in Parnell Square.

Comparing the large, ornate and elaborate *Irish National War Memorial Gardens* at Islandbridge with the *Garden of Remembrance* at Parnell Square is like comparing a landed estate with a peasant small-holding.

To any neutral eye surveying this situation, it would surely indicate an unprecedented level of tolerance on the part of the Irish State towards the memory of the dead of an army that had done its utmost to strangle it at birth. And yet there persists a significant body of opinion in the Irish media and politics that would not have it otherwise. To those of that opinion, the Irish State has historically shown a callous disregard for the memory of those Irish men who happened to have served in the armed forces of its enemy and they believe that it is only lately, under pressure from what they call the emergence of a more mature and tolerant opinion, that the Irish State has been compelled to pay due regard to the Irish war dead who served in the British armed forces during the First World War.

But the size and magnitude of the comparable Gardens of Remembrance has always posed a challenge to the credibility of that narrative. To overcome that challenge it has been necessary to frame any understanding of the Irish National War Memorial Gardens in a way that takes it out of its context and distorts its history.

This framing has relied on the fluctuating physical condition of the *Irish National War Memorial Gardens* as an analogy for the general cultural and political evolution of the Irish State's attitude towards the Irish who served in the British armed forces.

In other words, the disrepair and neglect

in Dublin, and the beginning of a change in the public's view of its pre-Irish Revolution national history and identity, which led to a project of restoration work to renew the park and gardens to their former splendour being undertaken by the Office of Public Works, co-funded by the National War Memorial Committee."

Having some personal knowledge of the Memorial Gardens as a boy during the late 1950s-early 1960s, and as an adult in the 1970s, this description seemed to me to be a somewhat exaggerated account of the poor condition of the place at that time. Checking the basis for this *Wikipedia* description, it emerged that it had come from a work entitled "*Ireland's Great War*", by Kevin Myers. This is what Myers says in the Introduction to his book which was published in 2014:

"The first time I went looking for the Memorial Gardens for the Irish dead of the Great War, almost no-one in Kilmainham seemed to know where they were. The year was 1979, sixty years on from the Treaty of Versailles and after the meeting of the First Dáil, and the first shootings of the 'Anglo-Irish War' (in which both sides were of course Irish). In 1919 Europe had gone one way, and independent Ireland had gone another, the journey of the latter taking it to a condition of utter amnesia about the very war that was central to its foundation-myths. For without the Great War, there could have been no Easter Rising, and no gallant allies to support it. Yet it had nonetheless been completely forgotten, and so totally that not merely had people forgotten, but they'd forgotten that they'd forgotten. So complete was the eradication of any knowledge of Irish involvement in the war, that yards away from the great park to honour Ireland's war dead, no-one admitted to knowing of its existence.

"Or maybe they just didn't think of it as a park, because by that time it had been turned into an urban tip-head, with Dublin Corporation lorries disgorging the city's rubbish onto vast mounds of spoil. A score or more tinkers' caravans were parked on the edges of the park, and alongside them were the rusting hulks of scrapped cars. Piebald ponies grazed in the foot-high weeds, children scavenged through the waste, and Lutyens' great granite columns were covered in graffiti. In the muck, almost invisible, lay the two elegant granite obelisks meant to represent lapidary candles, now felled, and almost invisible" (Introduction to *Ireland's Great War*, by Kevin Myers).

Kevin Myers is among the many media personalities who have been working assiduously for decades to replace Ireland's sense of its own history with a version that is accommodating of a contemporary political desire for a more "mature" relationship with Britain. But, of course, gaining that objective requires a lot of cultural ground-laying. It is not a simple matter of providing an alter-

native version of history as some kind of consumer choice. A people's sense of their history is ingrained and woven into their understanding of where they came from, the place they live, and the memories they share. Such a thing cannot be removed by the crude process of offering up some pre-packaged alternative. It is rather a matter of laying the seeds for a new historical perspective through raking up the ground on which the existing perspective is based. Only then, is it possible for the new seeds to have any chance of taking root.

In the case of modern Ireland, that ground has been raked over in a way that has, in many ways, resulted in the cultural demoralisation of the people. It is through that process that the Irish people's sense of who they are has been degraded and made malleable for the introduction of the desired alternative.

In modern terms this process of demoralisation began through the pursuit of a liberal anti-Catholic agenda in the 1970s. Since then, it has been accompanied by a systematic campaign to disable the nation's cultural and political capacity to evolve within its sense of what it is. Central to this has been the ongoing effort to delegitimise the people's contact with the formative experiences of the Irish State.

This effort has taken many forms but by far the most effective is the one that dis-engages the people from their history through the conviction that the alternative being offered is not merely a displacement of the existing history but the means of re-engaging with an older, more legitimate history—a history that provides the people with the opportunity to re-discover who they really are. That is the task that Kevin Myers has set himself when it comes to the Irish people. He is providing the means by which they can redeem themselves of the past by 'helping' them to remember what they have 'forgotten that they've forgotten'. Rather than the crude purveyor of an alternative history, Myer presents himself as someone who is in the business of "*memory-retrieval*"—a kind of therapist for a people long suffering from a delusional relationship with its history.

As is the case with all such therapies, symbols play an important part in helping the patient to both identify the problem and assist in the road to recovery. And so it is with the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, which have come to be seen as a symbol that assists the Irish people to identify the problem and, in the process, frees them to find the required solution.

THE GARDENS OF CONTENTIOUS MEMORY

As I have said, my memories of the

Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge do not tally with what Kevin Myers describes. As a youngster, and afterwards as a young man, like many from the vicinity of Ballyfermot, I had visited and spent time in the Memorial Gardens between the late 1950s and early 1970s. In my memory of the place during that time there was certainly signs of dilapidation and lack of investment as well as graffiti and some neglect of the stonework. However, the overall condition was nowhere near as disastrous as that described by Myers. My memory is that, while there were occasionally some Travellers' horses in the area, the Travellers themselves had not used the Gardens as an encampment. As far as the refuse dump is concerned, my memory was that there was a refuse dump in the area but that it was not in the Park or in the Gardens but on a piece of separate ground in the general vicinity.

Anxious as I was to ensure that all this was not merely a symptom of my delusional relationship with my own past, and in order to confirm that I had not forgotten what I should have remembered (or "forgotten what I'd forgotten"), I consulted a couple of people who I knew who also hailed from Ballyfermot. They had witnessed the place around the same time as myself and they confirmed both the general accuracy of what I remembered and that the description provided by *Wikipedia* and Myers was wide of the mark.

But, could these memories of myself and those of my fellow Ballyfermot residents be mere manifestations of a shared hysteria? I assume that Kevin Myers might claim this to have been the case. However, those memories were (more or less) confirmed in a document called "*The Irish National War Memorial Gardens Conservation Management Plan*", which was published by the Board of Works in March 2016. This is a 119-page document that provides some detailed history of the Memorial Gardens.

Given that this was published after Myers' book (2014), and after the relevant extract from his book had been published in the *Irish Times* (9 January 2015), there is always the possibility that the history of the Gardens contained in the Conservation Management Plan was influenced to some extent by the account provided by Myers in his earlier book. However, that's something that's difficult to establish.

There is certainly some overlap but there are also significant divergences between the history in the Conservation Management Plan and what Myers offers in his book.

For instance, nowhere does that docu-

ment claim that there was ever a Traveller encampment near the Gardens (though it does state that some Traveller's horses had used the area for pasturing).

However, Myers's more serious accusation was his claim that implicated Dublin City Corporation in using the place as a dump for the disposal of the city's waste. Insofar as this incident is mentioned in the Conservation Management Plan, it does so in a way that implies that Myers' account is highly exaggerated, both in description and context. This is what the document says about the use of the area of the Gardens as a municipal dump:

"In 1955, the Memorial Committee received a letter from the Board of Works, who had been approached by Dublin Corporation. The Corporation wished to lease a small portion of the lands to the west of the park, for the purposes of a refuse dump. The Committee agreed to this, as long as grass was laid down over the dump, and no refuse was left uncovered. Little more thought was given to this small decision, which would have ramifications twenty years later.

"In 1974, the Corporation began the process of building new offices on Wood Quay. Great archaeological efforts were taken at the site, which proved to be an exceptionally important Viking settlement, filled with extraordinary complete discoveries of buildings, walls, interiors, and individual items. Under time pressure, however, not all of the earth removed by the building of the new offices was sifted through.

"As a last resort, the museum agreed to them taking the earth away to the Board of Works site where it could be set aside for examination later. At least it was preferable to having it all dumped in Dublin Bay" (*Irish Times*, Saturday 21 April, 1979. [Emphasis as in original –ED].

"The un-excavated earth was moved to Islandbridge, where in 1979 it remained unexamined by archaeologists. Thus it was at Islandbridge that a Viking sword was discovered by three local schoolboys in 1979, although the provenance of the sword was not of the immediate area. They turned it in to the museum, where it can still be seen today" (pp.37-38).

Such a situation is a long way from what Myers describes as Dublin Corporation's use of the place—the reason he also postulates for the local population not knowing of the existence of the Memorial Gardens "because by that time it had been turned into an urban tip-head".

What the "Memorial Gardens Conservation Management Plan" reveals is that there was an approach to the Memorial Committee by the Board of Works on behalf of Dublin Corporation in 1955. It refers to the possible lease of "a small portion of the lands to the west of the park, for the purposes

of a refuse dump". What it doesn't say is exactly what that "small portion of lands" was actually used for. It does say that the land in question was not in a central position where its existence would directly impact the Gardens or the main aspects of the surrounding parkland, but rather that it was on the western reaches of the boundary. Given the sheer size of the land surrounding the Gardens the "small portion of lands to the west of the park" could, and is more likely to mean that the area leased by the Dublin Corporation was part of a wider area which extended beyond the park as part of land allocated as a municipal dump. In such circumstances the land leased from the Gardens would more likely have been required for the purpose of gaining vehicle access to the area that constituted the actual municipal dump but was not in fact part of the dump site itself. Such an explanation would fit with my memory of there being indeed a refuse dump in the vicinity of the Memorial Park but that it wasn't in its actual grounds.

A friend of mine who lived in closer proximity to the Memorial Gardens than me during this period, and who would have spent more time there than I did, has a more vivid memory of the situation at this time. This is what he has to say about the refuse dump:

"The Dump nearby was in the Ranch, opposite the Sevenoaks on the CIE side of the Inchicore Road, which is all precisely at the start of lower Ballyfermot. I didn't know about the dumping of waste material from the Wood Quay site to the dump site in the Ranch dump. How can that be so. The Ranch dump was there in the 1950s, a place of daily scavenging by unemployed families in the 50s (an early style of reduce, reuse, recycle)... the smell when the wind blew from east to west up to Ballyfermot was of gagging proportions, akin to "Keefes the Knackers", skin and hide company in the Liberties. So the Viking excavations in Wood Quay were in the early 1970s, as I remember. The Ranch dump was no more by then" (Malachi Lawless, email, 17 July 2021).

This confirms what was being described in the Memorial Gardens consultation document. "The Ranch" consisted of a group of single-storey terraced houses that pre-date the building of the Dublin Corporation Ballyfermot housing scheme. It is located to the west of the Memorial Gardens; and the dump would have been located between the Gardens and the Ranch. In other words, to the west of the Gardens and to the east of "The Ranch". (See: Fourth Edition Six Inch Ordinance Survey Map.1935-38.)

The reference in the "Conservation Management Plan" to the same dump site being later re-used for the archeologically-

important excavated earth from the Wood Quay Viking site would also be consistent with the observations that by this time "The Ranch dump was no more by then".

None of this comes anywhere near the description supplied by Myers which conjured up images of fleets of trucks disgorging mounds of encroaching rubbish on a growing refuse tip that was in danger of eventually burying the Gardens themselves.

Aside from the highly charged language that implied that the Gardens were in danger of being swallowed by a municipal tip-head, the idea that there were more than 20 tinkers' caravans ("a score or more of them") parked on the edges of the park is also highly fanciful. In the early 1970s my friend and comrade, the late Denis Dennehy, and his wife Mary had a caravan on some waste ground near the railway bridge leading from Lower Ballyfermot to Inchicore. This was within a few hundred yards of the Memorial Gardens but on the opposite side of the road. On the several occasions I visited Denis around this time I don't recall ever seeing any significant Traveller presence. It should be pointed out that the number of Traveller families that camped out in the vicinity of Ballyfermot and Kilmainham at this time had significantly diminished as a result of the opening of the Labre Park halting facility off Kylemore Road in Ballyfermot in the late 1960s.

Of course this does not necessarily exclude that, for some reason, there was an upsurge of Travellers in the area by the late 1970s. But I would be very surprised, even if there was, that it was anything on the scale depicted by Myers. And, even if there were some Travellers camped on waste ground in the vicinity of the Memorial Gardens, surely they had, if not a legal, then a moral right to locate their caravans on whatever waste ground they found. But perhaps Kevin Myers believes they had no right to be there? It seems that the presence of such people even within the vicinity of the Gardens sullied the memory he was so keen to preserve. The sense of entitlement that surrounds Myers' account of the place is palpable.

There is also an implied conclusion that the neglect and damage to the Memorial Gardens at this time as being purely the result of a desire among Irish youths to damage the Memorial Gardens for the sole purpose of insulting those Irish who served in the British armed forces. But is it surprising that such a memorial could have been targeted in that way, given the time that was in it: the 1970s and the behaviour of the British Army in the North of Ireland? And

yet, aside from that admitted possibility, there is surely the other, and probably more culpable component that represented a more significant outcome when it came to the condition of the Gardens. That was the general malaise among a desultory youth of the time. This was not something unique to the youths of Ballyfermot. After all, there were several newspaper reports of British War Memorials being desecrated or damaged by British youths in places like Littleworth, Nuneaton, Inverness and Derby in the 1970s, and many complaints of the poor state of repair of such monuments. The antipathy of youth expressed in a disregard for these type of memorials was not peculiar to Irish youth. Yet, it is solely the presence of what Myers views as the wrong sense of history among Irish youth that is, by implication, solely blamed for such damage.

As to the claim that he could find “*almost no-one*” in Kilmainham who knew of the location of the Memorial Gardens, again this does not ring true from my experience. Of course, as with any request for directions, it depends on how the question is framed. But certainly, the majority of the people I grew up with in Upper Ballyfermot (located about a mile and a half from the place) were aware of it. Likewise, those I knew from other parts of Ballyfermot were also aware of its location as a place where the recreation time of boyhood and youth could be pleasantly spent—but perhaps without investing it with a reverence that is undoubtedly demanded by Myers.

In January and February of 1979 Kevin Myers wrote to several Irish newspapers in which he announced to the readers that he was “*working on a study of the motives, conditions and feelings of Irish soldiers during the First World War and the immediate post-war period*” (by which he probably meant the period of the Irish War of Independence). He framed this announcement with the claim that “*this important part of Irish history... has almost been banished from public memory*”. No doubt, he saw it as his responsibility to retrieve this important part of Irish history from what he saw as the banished state to which it had been cast.

For those of us who visited and played in the Memorial Gardens during the time of its supposed banishment, there was no doubt as to what it represented! Exposed as we all were to the cultural and political influences emanating from the other side of the Channel, it was almost impossible not to realise what it was that the Memorial Gardens stood for in our own history.

My own family, like many, had people back then who had served in the “Great War”. It was never something that was concealed. As children we heard stories of those relatives: tales though not framed in heroic or reverential terms, were certainly framed in human, and in many cases, affectionate terms. They were by no means presented as servants of the British enemy that should be banished, but rather as individuals who had been

mistaken and misled.

To the mind of Kevin Myers that may represent a form of banishment but, if that is the case, then what he is really talking about is not the individual human beings but the collective representation of the British military and all that it represented not only in Ireland but throughout the British Empire: and not only yesterday but also today.

Eamon Dyas

Lord Hutton Reduced The Public's Faith In Judicial Enquiries

For anybody sympathetic to the British Labour movement, and respecting its better traditions and its altruistic members, Andrew Rawnsley's *The End Of The Party*, covering the jettisoning of principles by the architects of *New Labour*, and the wrecking ball they took to any human values, makes sad reading.

The episode which most turned my stomach was the mutual fawning of Prime Minister Tony Blair and Lord Hutton' at the Enquiry which white washed Blair, his ministers and the "security services" for the false dossier, used as a pretext for launching a war in Iraq in 2,003, from which that country is still suffering. Hutton concluded that the Civil Servant David Kelly, who had been scurvily treated by Blair and his gang, had "probably" taken his own life. Which leaves the probability that a person or persons hostile to Kelly had taken his life. Blair and his chief Spin Doctor Alastair Campbell seized on Hutton's criticism of the BBC to wreak vengeance on it, forcing the immediate resignation of its Chairman and Director General.

The Times' Obituary, which is generally admiring of Hutton, concedes -

"The Prime Minister's obvious delight at the verdict soon waned, however, when a series of surveys revealed that the public had overwhelmingly rejected the Hutton report as a 'whitewash'. Hutton's conclusions served only to reduce the public's faith in Blair and his government and the integrity of judicial enquiries"

Lord Gifford QC published a pamphlet on Northern Ireland Courts in the 1980s. I reviewed it for *The Irish Democrat*. He faulted Hutton for his conduct at trials of two British soldiers in incidents where two unarmed youth had been killed. So the conduct of Lord Hutton, which "*reduced the public's faith in the integrity of judicial*

enquiries" did not come to me like a bolt from the blue.

As a Barrister, Hutton appeared for the British Army, before Lord Widgery's Inquiry into Bloody Sunday. Barristers are for hire, like taxis, and they take instructions from solicitors representing their clients. And there is no inherent dishonour there.

In the Judicial Inquiry into Bloody Sunday, Lord Widgery took instruction from Prime Minister Edward Heath, and Lord Chancellor Hailsham. And Widgery obediently produced a report which white-washed a murderous atrocity.

The Iraq War of 2003 was a murderous atrocity besides which Bloody Sunday was a vicarage tea party. I'm not saying that Hutton was similarly briefed by Blair.

The Times reckons Hutton had "*a well-earned reputation for unimpeachable integrity*". The paper goes on to tell us that he was "*a very religious man who would pray on his knees before bedtime and favoured grey three-piece-suits*".

For good measure, we are told that

"Lady Lowry, the wife of one of his colleagues at the Northern Ireland Bar, said 'Brian (Hutton) is a very kind man, and has a joie de vivre'."

In a statelet where army messes publicly celebrated the shooting of joy-riders?

When Lord Widgery died in 1981 *The Times* gave him a glowing Obituary.

When Lord Saville's Enquiry rubbished Widgery's report, 39 years later, *Times* Columnist Matthew Parris, a Tory and a former MP, had the integrity to remind readers of the lack of integrity of their Obituarist.

I don't always agree with Matthew Parris but his integrity commands respect.

Donal Kennedy

Not In The *Irish Times*

Manus O’Riordan R.I.P.

It is with great regret that this magazine learns of the sudden and unexpected death of Manus O’Riordan.

His immense knowledge and wide experience will be sorely missed. His contribution was invaluable, as was his comradely advice.

A regular contributor and supporter down the years, he also helped in the production of this magazine, by looking over the artwork for howlers and typos before we went to print.

Manus proposed that we establish a new feature, **Not In The *Irish Times***, in which unpublished letters to that page would be carried: we are therefore dedicating this page to him.

A personal friend as well as a comrade, Manus will be sorely missed.

The last article we received from Manus appears on page 16.

The *Editorial Team* invites readers to send us any appreciations, recollections and reminiscences about Manus, for inclusion in the November *Irish Political Review*.

Unpublished Letters To The *Irish Times*

The President and the Armagh event

As regards next month’s Northern Ireland centenary service, and with due respect to Bobby McDonagh’s reference to Archbishop Eamon Martin acknowledging that “the church leaders themselves knew it would be contentious” (Opinion, September 20th), you have headlined (report, September 20th) “Catholic Primate ‘hopeful’ that President Higgins would still be ‘able to attend’ event”.

With all due respect to Archbishop Martin, there is a world of difference between his position as Catholic Primate of All Ireland and that of the President of Ireland. The Catholic Hierarchy is not a democratic institution, elected by that Church’s adherents. “My mission is not democratic”, as the late Cornelius Lucey, Bishop of Cork from 1947 to 1980, put it in a memorable RTÉ interview. And not a single Catholic, North or South, has ever voted for the Primate of All Ireland.

The President of Ireland has twice been democratically elected by the citizens of this Republic, and his mission is undoubtedly democratic, both North and South. That includes respect for the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, adopted by majorities on both sides of the Border, and its provisions for parity of esteem. For the President to attend such an event, mark-

ing the centenary of the creation of the devolved Northern Ireland statelet, might well have earned our President the esteem of the Unionist community, but at the cost of earning the disdain of its Nationalist community.

Catholics in Northern Ireland, a minority for not very much longer, do not wish to mark the centenary of having been coerced into lying down. The elected representatives of Northern Nationalists - from the SDLP no less than from Sinn Féin - have rejected invitations to attend the Armagh event, and both Parties have commended and vindicated the President’s stand on the matter. If the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh is still hopeful that the President might attend that event, it means that he has not yet learned to listen to the elected representatives of his own flock.

Manus O’Riordan, 22.9.21

Shared Future?

The *Irish Times* view of the formation of Northern Ireland refers to an “occasion [for many] to celebrate but which many others recall as a moment of profound pain and hurt”. You hope that disagreement on the past “does not impede the search for agreement on a shared future” (editorial, 18th September).

Agreement on a shared future appears unlikely with unionist leaders, for whom success is based on not sharing or, indeed, caring.

That has something to do with how Northern Ireland came into being and how those who support it behave to the present day. From mid-1920 to mid-1922 nationalists, mainly Roman Catholics, were driven from jobs they worked at, homes they lived in and businesses they owned. This attempt at ethnic cleansing affected thousands and resulted in the death of 498 people. Victims also were “rotten prods”, mainly socialists and trade unionists. They opposed bigotry with a political purpose that unionist leaders and Protestant churches supported.

During those turbulent years, nothing of a comparable nature transpired south of the new six-county territory. And yet, for some decades Irish nationalists have been encouraged to gaze into their own navels, so as to ferret out imagined hurts inflicted on northern unionist neighbours. Introspection has never been the fashion among unionist leaders who, to this day, deny that that bigotry and systemic discrimination formed the lot of northern nationalists.

President Higgins, alongside the SDLP and Sinn Féin, was right to decline the invitation to attend the all-church event commemorating reactionary divisions between people. The Roman Catholic Church’s participation may stem from a long-held belief that a native government would undermine its institutional interests. Agreement with the DUP on abortion may also be a factor, in preserving restrictions on women’s right to self-determination.

Niall Meehan

Banville And Bowen

Amongst recently published Bowen books is:

'*Collected Stories*', Elizabeth Bowen, Everyman Library, Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, USA, 2019. Introduction by John Banville, 2019.

John Banville immediately situates his analysis of Elizabeth Bowen's writings to the 1977 published biography of her by Victoria Glendinning who stated back then that:

"...it was too soon to assess precisely [Bowen's] place among twentieth-century novelists", but, for Banville, whatever about the novels, "even then there could have been no question as to Bowen's greatness in the short-story form... [because] as a practitioner of the shorter form she was the supreme genius of her time".

But one of Banville's great weaknesses is showing off, and he hives away from the task at hand and off he goes to give a shout out to those names that shore up his massive learning:

"Joyce's 'The Dead', Chekhov's 'The Lady with the Little Dog', Kafka's 'The Metamorphosis', William H. Gass's 'In the Heart of the Heart of the Country'..."

and then he comes back to Bowen's short-stories which he declares are "*brought off beautifully*". Banville shudders at the "*foolhardy and certainly vulgar*" urge to choose 'favourites' but accepts:

"it seems incumbent on the introducer to mention instances in which Elizabeth Bowen outdid herself".

Then he goes in for the more usual of these stories '*Summer Night*', '*Mysterious Kor*', '*The Demon Lover*', '*Ivy Grippled the Steps*', '*The Happy Autumn Fields*'..... "*and the merely – merely! – marvellous, early tales, 'Daffodils' and 'The Parrot'*".

Quoting Glendinning, Banville restates that Bowen achieved "*a perfection and an unity that the sustained narrative and shifting emphasis of a novel do not attempt*". I need hardly state that many scholars would heartily debate that point of view as I would myself. Bowen, the novelist, is the one who has stuck, not so much the short-story writer.

It Is Time

And indeed this is what Banville realises as his next paragraph shows:

"At this point it is prudent to make a brief pause. In praising her mastery of the short story, it would be a grave error, and a graver injustice, to imply that Elizabeth Bowen was not a novelist of the subtlest talent and highest accomplishment."

What Banville goes on to write next had me shuddering and most explicitly not with delight. It is an outrage to say what he said and that is:

"It is tempting to think that, *had she been a man*, her reputation would be more substantial than it is but there are examples also of male Anglo-Irish writers unjustly neglected: Joyce Cary, born in Londonderry, is by now hardly read outside a small circle of enthusiasts, while that abundantly gifted Belfast-born poet Louis MacNeice seems doomed to languish forever in the shadow of Auden."

"As an artist it is not good, it seems, to have one's origins in one of the outposts of empire, even an outdoor that sits, or when Ireland was still united used to sit, practically in *the lap of the motherland*." (All italics – JH.)

John Banville seems **not** to recognise the considerable energies given by critics/scholars and even many literary periodicals to writers favouring women these days—due to gender studies and their centrality. Even without the hot debates nowadays about gendered issues, Banville seems curiously out of step. And his bit about "*the motherland*" left me absolutely fuming. His take here about "*outposts of empire*" and the use of Londonderry too left me stunned.

While the pyre of empire is everywhere being celebrated, it looks that the Dublin-centric Banville seems entirely unaware of the ongoing efforts of consciousness-raising by '*Black Lives Matter*' or, in the UK, by BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) people.

I presume that Banville mentioned Joyce Cary as he accepted he is not very

well known and so he threw him in there again showing off, but Cary is not an Anglo-Irish novelist by any means. Born in his grandparents' house over the Belfast Bank in Derry in 1888, his ancestors may have come from England as part of its conquering force but who didn't back then? Irish Murdoch tried to claim an Anglo-Irish past but her Ulster sensibilities eventually prevailed.

But to suggest that Louis MacNeice is somehow out of kilter with fashionable literary taste—and indeed it does change from time to time—is simply not true. On my shelves just right in front of me is a fine volume: '*Louis MacNeice: A biography by Jon Stallworthy*', a quite substantial work by any standards. And MacNeice's poem '*Neutrality*' is still hugely important because it showed that, as a BBC propagandist, he did what few others could bring themselves to do and that was use their art for war purposes.

Elizabeth Bowen was very strong on that aspect of her war-work; she drew a distinction between it and her life as an artist. MacNeice had no such compulsion and of course Nicholas Monsarrat's '*The Cruel Sea*' went all out to deploy his malign influence on the reputation of Ireland.

Banville races on to state that—

"Bowen's second and, some would contend, finest novel, '*The Last September*' [who would these contenders be? - JH] is a bravura demonstration of her early powers, a work rich in metaphor, sumptuous landscape painting and forensic, beady-eyed characterisation."

Indeed, John, why use one encomium when so many will do? Unfortunately, here is Banville taking a leaf out of Roy Foster's play-book: and how irritating it all is!

Then Banville takes up that old canard about Elizabeth Bowen "*being Anglo-Irish*": she "*always felt her true place was a point in the Irish Sea halfway between Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead*". This was an assertion by the painter Derek Hill in a letter to '*The Irish Times*'. Can we put an end to it once and for all by publishing the whole letter, that I finally turned up in my researches? On 18th September, 1997 under the heading:

"Irish and Anglo-Irish.

Sir,

With reference to your correspondence as to whether Elizabeth Bowen was English or Irish, soon after I first met her she said to me that the Anglo-Irish were only themselves exactly half-way between

Holyhead and Dun Laoghaire. This may interest your readers.

Yours etc,
(Dr) Derek Hill,
Churchill,
Co. Donegal."

I can accept that Bowen said many things to many people but, as this was published so many years after her death on 22nd February 1973, and as she was not there to dispute it, we can allow the good artist his memories, but that was what they were. They are not most definitely the truth of the matter!

And indeed Hill and Elizabeth Bowen had 'words' about his cavalier attitude as to what, or indeed who, the Anglo-Irish were. Bowen was left raging after Hill had written an article for Cyril Connolly's *'Horizon'* in 1946.

In *'Letter from Ireland...'*, there was a passage about the Anglo-Irish. Elizabeth Bowen was not going to let it rest and she wrote a letter to Derek Hill, part of which states:

"The Anglo-Irish are a study in themselves, and you haven't had time to get round to them, I should think: they take up a lot of time, and you're here {in Ireland, as he was at the time, 1946, painting in Achill—BA} to paint: so what you say seems much less perceptive, more superficial and less near the mark than everything else you say. Also, it is most awfully rude." (Italics – EB)

This is from Bruce Arnold's biography of Derek Hill in 2010, but only that excerpt from Bowen's letter is in the book: I really would love to see the full letter, which is presumably in the Public Records Office in Northern Ireland (PRONI)—though, when quoted, Arnold doesn't state the source.

Elizabeth Bowen didn't often get into arguments in letters to friends, so that tells me how enraged she was: for her to do so in such a fashion. Manners were being put on an uppity man, as she saw it: and doesn't that word "*rude*" echo with a patrician finality.

Banville then engages with her family history, *'Bowen's Court'*, and avows that it recorded "*her abiding love for County Cork ... a book that, though notable in its own right, might be considered the non-fiction counterpoint of 'The Last September'...*" This is pure nonsense; if there is one thing in evidence in *'Bowen's Court'*, it is her love of her race and the House itself. As for the locality, it is only mentioned if it is reflected in or through the Big House, the Ballyhoura Mountains, the surrounding trees, the lawns etc. This

is how John Banville sees it:

"A fine house it was, three-storeyed, many windowed, not ostentatious but solidly aware of its status as a bastion of bien-pensant Protestant folk long settled in the midst of a not entirely accepting Catholic majority—there is still a nationalist rump in that part of Cork which insists Elizabeth Bowen cannot be considered in any way an 'Irish' author. The name here that cannot be said is of course the 'Aubane Historical Society' that "nationalist rump" that sticks in the craw of every 'Irish Times/Big House' devotee."

How wrong was the former Literary Editor of *'The Irish Times'*, Terence de Vere White (1961-1977), a writer who didn't bow to any literary posturings or pretences when he warned those engaged in preserving Farahy Church to commemorate the writer, that Bowen herself—

"is hardly a name that will draw many pilgrims."

And Bowen herself would be appalled at Banville's casual dismissal of her Anglo-Irish "*race*", "*caste*", as being merely, as he sees them "*bien-pensant Protestant folk*". That phrase would have rightly galled her, but then Banville seems genuinely all at sea at his task here. His next musings take him on to the "famine", though now that term is rarely used when there was plenty food in the land but the British used 57 Regiments to make sure that all the food was sent abroad and not given to the starving Irish. He writes that the Bowens did their bit for those starving but:

"the poor wretches died trying to crawl up to the house, and were buried in a famine pit in a corner of the local" (Bowen) "churchyard."

Banville states that "*the house, like many such, was, in its earlier days at least, hardly conducive to gracious living*". Bowen could only afford to install bathrooms in the early fifties, with the success of *'The Heat of the Day'*, which was published in 1949. But every writer/critic acknowledges again and again that Bowen saw these Big Houses, but most especially Bowen's Court, as being emblematic of "*style*". Hermione Lee (1981) wrote:

"Elizabeth Bowen places as much emphasis on the idea of style as on the idea of power: indeed it is her contention that the 18th century builders of the Big Houses subsumed their drive for power into a concept of style, which might then contain them and restrict them, make them behave better. Hence her insistence on the self-validating, self-centered existence in the Big House, a form of egotism comparable to a literary device: 'Like Flaubert's

ideal book about nothing, it sustains itself by the inner force of its style'."

Lee also notes that, while Bowen is aware of the "*dangers of symbols*", she still describes "*Bowen's Court as a '1775 house, boldly letting in light and exultantly serious'*". Her 1940 essay called *'The Big House'* acknowledges that these Big Houses would be called "*country houses*" in England. But she is still insistent:

"The 'bigness' is not of size but of style: the houses were built for 'spacious living'. This wholly contradicts John Banville's analysis and leaves it dead in the water. Bowen however is playing up her class, because she states that after her Cromwellian ancestors had their fill of "greed, roughness and panic" they began to conceive of themselves as wanting "to feel, and exert, the European idea—to seek what was humanistic, classic and disciplined."

Cromwell's soldiers—after their massacres, confiscations and all-out-war on the native Irish—were certainly, as Lee puts it, "*bound to Ireland only by their passion for land*". That they understood a "*European idea of living*" is rich, coming from one of their descendants. But Bowen is not for turning on this issue. She ends by stating:

"It is something to subscribe to an idea, even if one cannot live up to it."

And Lee comments:

"The subject of Bowen's Court is, in essence, the loss of that idea; it is the story of what happens to a minority when they lose confidence, the sense of function which enabled them to build as they did in the 18th century. It is the account of a 'big', impersonal, dignified concept of living – 'traditional sanctity and loveliness' – going into retreat."

And Lee doesn't shrink from noting that the first Bowen "*was the son of the black-tempered Welsh Colonel Bowen*" (ap Owen as they were called in Wales), "*who was given the lands around Farahy by Cromwell in 1653*". Lee cannot bear the way Bowen "*wrote about her ancestors*", like "*John Bowen II*", "*the generations are distinguished from each other with apt effrontery, as though they were monarchs*". That is the scold of a true Englishwoman—the John Banville, *'Irish Times'*, milieu of this world lap up that sort of thing.

Amidst crippling debts over continual lawsuits nevertheless Bowen avows that Henry 111 built Bowen's Court. Lee describes it thus:

"Though the house, which was intended

as a square, could not be completed for lack of funds, though Henry died with his affairs in terrible confusion and with debts amounting to £40,000, and though he was evidently an inadequate father, many of whose children turned out badly, Elizabeth Bowen forgives him for all this in the interests of the impersonal vision, the grand idea, behind the building of the house."

And, when Lee comments that Bowen's grandfather, Robert, during the after-effects of the Famine, "had to work with fanatical, ruthless, discipline in order to make Bowen's Court pay", we know, if Lee can't bring herself to reveal the truth, it was the Irish poor who had to make the ultimate sacrifice. And surely there is some kind of justice to note that Robert, "this despotic figure" as Lee calls him, went mad, and had to be contained in a set of rooms upstairs in the Big House. When he died, Elizabeth's father, Henry, inherited—but, though practising Law in Dublin for the Land Commission, he too would give way to mental illness. Elizabeth and her mother were forced to flee to England, where there were many relations who looked after them.

"The combined effects of lost lands and the family conflicts left Elizabeth Bowen as a much burdened inheritor of Bowen's Court" (in 1930), states Lee—and yet Bowen partied and extravagantly hosted the great families of England and played the Big House hostess like it was going out of fashion. Lee sees that as: "exercising the Anglo-Irish talent for 'brave acting up'...". But how were the debts going to be paid—well, eventually—as Bowen knew only too well—she would have to sell Bowen's Court. She foresaw it all in her essay 'The Big House'.

"Many of these genial [really?—JH] builders died badly in debt and left their families saddled with mansions that they could ill afford. Then, decline set in almost at once. ... The big house people were handicapped... by their pride, by their indignation at their decline and by their divorce from the countryside in whose heart their struggle was carried out. ... They had begun as conquerors, and were not disposed to let that tradition lapse."

Truly, Bowen was letting us know – as if it could ever be doubted – that it would take a real fight to prise their hands off our lands.

The American scholar Vera Kreilkamp (1998) sees 'Bowen's Court', written between 1939 and 1941, as "an act of piety":

"In it Bowen conceives of her Irish home as a symbol of permanence and continuity ... She celebrates the survival of Bowen's Court in Ireland — "this country of ruin" and sees her Georgian house, built of native limestone by an alien power, as finally integral to — even harmonious with — the grey gleam of the Irish landscape.

Kreilkamp finds Bowen celebrating her ancestor for building the Big House, "Henry III as she audaciously names him to differentiate him from his predecessors and successors. Royal in vision if not position...." She also, like Lee, concedes that Bowen sees everything in terms of "style", and forgives all in its name — as long of course, she is not the one doing the paying. Kreilkamp likens her to that other "major twentieth-century elegist" for the Anglo-Irish, and in particular of Yeat's claims in 'Pardon, Old Fathers' that his Anglo-Irish predecessors were significant men of gentle birth:

"Merchant and scholar who have left me blood/that has not passed through any huckster's lion ..."

Thus was Yeats ever bigging-himself up, in today's language, when the opposite was true. But Bowen does not leave it all to Yeats and herself to produce such topsyturvy history. She also calls on Arthur Young's observation in 1776, the year Bowen's Court was officially occupied, "that the monumental building program occurring in Ireland could not fail to impress new ideas and a feeling of respect and love" onto a country changing "from licentious barbarity into civilised order". The Gaelic order was well and truly over and the period of Anglicisation was now established.

John Banville, in his introduction to Bowen's 'Collected Stories', finally edges towards Bowen's fading fortunes and what she could do with her Big House. He does not feel inclined to reveal how many people she sought out to take over the running of Bowen's Court. Her nephew Charles in Africa rejected outright her offer — encumbered and entailed as it was — as did Gilbert Butler, despite what Patricia Laurence wrote.

Bowen was frantically borrowing money and selling anything of value to Cork auctioneers, though there wasn't much and it really was of no great value. The well-to-do Charles Ritchie gave her \$100 — an appalling indictment of his character, though Bowen would never allow herself to think that of him.

I was startled to see that Laurence had

Bowen spree-spending in New York, her love for fine clothes and fine shoes were always a given after Alan Cameron's make-over. And yet, at the same time, she was touching A.L. Rowse for a few dollars. Was that the oft-quoted "style and good manners" of the Big House lady? Did she see herself as that entitled?

John Banville gets so much wrong about Elizabeth Bowen and the Anglo-Irish that I could go on forever, correcting him. But that is a futile exercise especially where he is concerned — after all, nearly all his novels are evocations of that same theme/motif. And, like others of his kind, their genuflections before these Big House people are real. He states, and with this I have to end this article:

"It is only fitting that the name of the house's nemesis [Bowen's Court] should be recorded: one Cornelius O'Keefe, whose only interest was the land and timber".

As the old Gaelic lament went:

"Cad a dheimíd feasta gan adhmaid
Tá deire na coillte ar lár ..."

Julianne Herlihy ©

* "What will we do now for lack of timber?
The last of the forests have been laid low."

[Metaphorically: the Jacobite gentry/leaders are finished, writes Pat Muldowney.]

Elections in Russia

Your editorial "Elections in Russia — A democracy in name only" (September 17th) contains the usual critical assessment of Russia and its politics.

This time we are presented with a biased "analysis" of parliamentary elections in Russia.

Even such a distorted point of view has a right to exist. °We are open to discuss, in a fair and civilised manner, any issues, including the pros and cons of political systems in our respective countries.

But to use the numbers of people with Covid-19 as an argument in judging the level of democracy in a country is a new low for The Irish Times in its attitude towards Russia.

Yuriy Filatov, Ambassador of the
Russian Federation to Ireland
Irish Times, 20.9.21

The EU Resolution On What Caused The Second World War

I have reproduced below in its entirety an EU Resolution passed on 19th September 2019, on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, in order that the reader can see its almost Svengali-like hypnotic construction, with its repetition of key words like totalitarian, regimes, and use of labels like the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact—repeated continually like a Buddhist mantra—that is claimed to have started WW2. The Resolution is followed by my comments.

It should be said that this Resolution could also pass for something to do with interrogation techniques, in which the suspect is asked the same question over and over again to their exhaustion and surrender.

Under its neo-liberalist cover is a veritable war plan for the surrounding and isolation of Russia, with NATO as the guardian angel of a democratic Europe.

Former East European countries are invited to scrap all Soviet memorials to the Soviet massive sacrifice during WW2. The Resolution looks forward to having Ukraine and Georgia as EU members.

Seventeen points expanding the meaning of the Resolution are given. No. 15—

"Points out the crimes committed by the totalitarian regime of the USSR cannot be excused or exonerated by its contribution to the defeat of the Nazi regime, stresses at the same time that it is unacceptable for the Russian Federation to adopt legislation penalising anybody who tries to analyse the events of the Second World War from a new point of view."

Apparently, with the Red Army entering Berlin and being within spitting distance of Hitler's bunker, that was just a "contribution". Likewise losing 26 million of its peoples in the War is a mere contribution?

At times this Resolution, overall, is like some sermon from the pulpit of the old Calvinist Church on Good and Evil. Your sins can never be expiated in this life. The only thing you can do is die. But, even when the Soviet Union died, its new generation was offered an equally heavy cross to carry. Soviet communism is set as a bedfellow with Nazism. The Soviet Federation is being invited to either forget its history or to rewrite it in order to satisfy neo-liberalism.

Yet nothing said about what modern Europe has been up to.

The EU's warrior hero, NATO, destroyed Gaddafi's socially-enhanced Libya

At least 22 of its Member States have contributed to the occupation of Afghanistan, with Germany sending the most troops at 1,300, to Britain's 750, at a time.

Here is the EU Resolution on What Caused The Second World War:

"MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council and the Commission pursuant to Rule 132 (2) of the rules of Procedure on 80th the anniversary of the start of the Second World War and the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe.

[There follow over 20, mostly Polish, names, along with advice to also see joint motions for a resolution, with many more, also mostly, Polish names of the sponsors.]

"THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260 (III) A of 9 December 1948 on genocide, having regard to its resolution of 12 May 2005 on the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe on 8 May 1945,

having regard to Resolution 1481 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 25 January 2006 on the need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes adopted by a number of national parliaments,

having regard to its declarations of 23 September 2008 on the proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for victims of Stalinism and Nazism,

having regard to the Prague Declaration of European Conscience and Communism adopted on 3 June 2008,

having regard to the resolution of 2 April 2009 of European conscience and totalitarianism,

having regard to the joint statement of 23 August 2018 of the government representatives of the EU Member States to commemorate the victims of communism,

having regard to the Commission report of 22 December 2010 on the memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe (COM(2010) 0763)

having regard to the Warsaw Declaration of 23 August 2011 on the occasion of the European Day of remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes,

having regard to the joint statement by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania on the occasion of 80 years since the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact,

having regard to Rule 132 (2) of the Rules of Procedure,

whereas 80 years ago on 23 August 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a Treaty on Non-Aggression, known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and its secret protocols, dividing Europe and the territories of independent states between the two totalitarian regimes and grouping them into spheres of interest which paved the way for the outbreak of the Second World War,

whereas this year marks the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War which led to unprecedented levels of human suffering and doomed half of Europe to decades of misery and occupation,

whereas as a direct consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, followed by the Nazi-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of 28 September 1939, the Polish Republic was invaded first by Hitler and two weeks later by Stalin – which stripped the country of its independence and was an unprecedented tragedy for the Polish people – the communist Soviet Union started an aggressive war against Finland on 30 November 1939 and June 1940 it occupied and annexed parts of Romania – territories that were never returned – and annexed the independent republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia,

whereas the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact directly violated a number of international norms, treaties and agreements – including the 1928 Paris Treaty, the 1932 Non-Aggression Treaty between Poland and the USSR, and the 1934 Declaration of Non-Aggression between Poland and Germany – and condemned the international peace treaty established by the Versailles Treaty to failure;

whereas the consequences of this treaty between two of the most brutal dictators in modern history demonstrates the importance of historical e, as was vents for contemporary politics;

whereas the West's desire to appease totalitarian regimes meant that decisions were taken without consulting the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as was the case in Locarno and Munich, which demonstrated the weakness, of the West in the face of these regimes;

whereas this paved the way for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which in turn led to the outbreak of the Second World War; whereas Nazi German and the Soviet Union cooperated politically, economically and militarily with the common goal of conquering Europe and dividing it into spheres of influence, as envisaged in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact;

whereas after the defeat of the Nazi regime at the end of the Second World War some European countries were able to rebuild and embark on a process of reconciliation while other European countries, as a direct consequence of the Yalta Treaty remained under Soviet occupation and communist dictatorships for half a century and continued to be deprived of freedom, sovereignty, dignity, human rights

and socio economic development;

whereas although the crimes of the Nazi regime and the end of the Second World War were evaluated and punished by means of the Nuremberg trials, there is still an urgent need to raise awareness and carry out moral and legal assessments of the crimes of communist dictatorships;

whereas the crimes on a scale never before seen in history against millions of human beings by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, which saw many people enslaved and denied their basic and inalienable rights, qualify and as war crimes and crimes against humanity;

whereas Europe must not forget its own history;

whereas a comprehensive understanding of Europe's history needs to be facilitated and is paramount to preventing the rise of totalitarian regimes;

whereas in some Member States, communist and Nazi ideologies are prohibited by law;

whereas the international community must stand together against totalitarianism;

whereas for the European countries that suffered under Soviet occupation and communist dictatorships, the enlargement of NATO after 1999 and those of the EU since 2004 signify the return to the family of Western democratic states to which they belong;

whereas 20th Century European history is primarily written and portrayed from a Western from a Western point of view and therefore certain historical events and related experiences of people in Eastern Europe remain underreported;

whereas ignorance and unconscious bias in the historical memory of European may create room for extremism on both the far right and the far left;

whereas there is need for effective opposition to the falsification of history;

whereas remembering the victims of totalitarian regimes and recognising and raising awareness of the shared European legacy of crimes committed by communist, Nazi and other dictatorships is of vital importance for the unity of Europe and its people and the building of European resilience to modern external threats;

whereas it is also of the utmost importance to celebrate the testimony and steadfast attitude of the many people who opposed this oppression, such as Rotamaster Witold Pilecki, who actively fought against both totalitarian regimes, voluntarily entering the Nazi German death camp in Auschwitz only to be executed by the Soviets in 1948;

whereas in the historic resolution on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania adopted on 13 January 1983 in reaction to the 'Baltic Appeal' from 45 nationals from these countries, the European Parliament condemned the fact that these formerly independent and neutral states had been occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop

Pact and were not liberated until many years later;

whereas 30 ago, on 30 August 1989, the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was marked and the victims of totalitarian regimes remembered during the Baltic Way, an unprecedented demonstration by two million Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians who joined hands to form a living chain spanning from Vilnius to Tallinn through Riga;

whereas despite the fact that on 24 December 1989, the Congress of People Deputies of the USSR condemned the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in addition to other agreements made with Nazi Germany the Russian authorities denied responsibility for this agreement and in its consequences in August 2019 and are currently promoting the view that Poland, the Baltic States and the West are the true instigators of WWII;

whereas the Government of Russia is now not only not condemning the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, but is actively re-establishing it as a means of defending the nation against aggression, and is thus by extension rewriting history and exonerating the perpetrators of the associated crimes;

whereas it has become commonplace for Russia to deny responsibility and blame hostilities on the West in its official rhetoric, creating a reliable propaganda base upon which it can rely to justify its disregard of international law and continue its aggression against Eastern Partnership countries;

1, Stresses that the Second World War, the most devastating war in Europe's history, was caused by the notorious Nazi-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression of 23 August 1939, also called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and its secret protocols, which allowed two totalitarian regimes that shared the goal of world conquest to divide Europe into two zones of influence;

2, Recalls that the Nazi and communist regimes carried out mass murder, genocide and deportations that caused an unprecedented loss of life and freedom, and recalls the horrific crimes of the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazi regime;

3, Regrets that genocide such as the Holocaust, massive crimes against humanity and large-scale violations of human rights such as deportations from the Baltic States, Poland and other countries, mass executions such as the Katyn Forest massacre of Polish officers and the massacre of Latvian army officers in Litene, the creation and operation of concentration camps and the Gulag, the man-made famine in Ukraine, the denial of the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, speech and movement, and the many other crimes committed under totalitarian communism have been neither properly investigated nor internationally assessed.;

4, Expresses its deep respect for each victim of these totalitarian regimes and calls on all EU institutions and actors to do their utmost to insure that horrific totalitarian crimes against humanity and systematic gross human rights violations are remembered and brought before the courts of law, and to guarantee that such crimes will never be repeated and that the pain and injustice felt by the victims will never be forgotten;

5, Considers that remembering and commemorating past horrors gives us the knowledge and strength to stand up to those who seek to revive these ideologies and those who seek to exonerate these ideological groups of their crimes and culpability; believe that remembering victims compels us to promote historical justice by continuing research into and raising public awareness of the totalitarian legacy of the European continent,

6, Calls upon the governments of all European countries to provide both moral and material support to the ongoing historical investigation into totalitarian regimes, as only by acting in a concerted manner can we more effectively counter disinformation campaigns and attempts to manipulate historical facts;

7, Condemns in the strongest terms the acts of aggression, crimes against humanity and mass human rights violations perpetrated by the totalitarian Nazi and communist regimes;

8, Expresses concern over the rise of extremist far-right and far-left movements in the EU Member States;

9, Reminds all Member States to commemorate 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism at both EU and national level, and to raise the younger generation's awareness of these issues by including the history and analysis of the consequences of totalitarian regimes in the curricula and textbooks of the schools of the EU;

10, Calls, furthermore, for 25 May (the anniversary of the execution of the Auschwitz hero Rotamaster Witold Pilecki) to be established as International Day of heroes of the Fight against Totalitarianism, which will be an expression of respect and a tribute to all those who, by fighting tyranny, demonstrated their heroism and true love for mankind, and will also provide future generations with a clear example of the correct attitude to take in the face of the threat of totalitarian enslavement;

11, Calls on the Commission to provide effective support for projects of historic memory and remembrance in the Member States and for the activities of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, and to allocate adequate financial resources under the 'Europe for Citizens' programme to support commemoration and remembrance of the victims of totalitarianism; stresses that future generations should have access to factual education materials which emphasises the dire consequences

of passivity in the face of serious violations of international laws and norms;

12, Points out that while the Eastern and Central European countries returned to the European family of free democratic countries with their accession to the EU and NATO, the European peace and integration project will not be complete until all European countries that have chosen the path of European reforms, such as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, become full members of the EU: only then will Europe be whole, free, united and at peace;

13, Is deeply concerned about the efforts of the current Russian leadership to distort historical facts and whitewash crimes committed by the Soviet totalitarian regime and considers them a dangerous component of the information war waged against democratic Europe that aims to divide Europe, and therefore calls on the Commission to decisively counteract these efforts;

14, Draw attention to the continued use of symbols of the Soviet Regime in the public sphere and for commercial purposes and recalls that a number of European countries have banned the use of both Nazi and communist symbols;

15, Points out the crimes committed by the totalitarian regime of the USSR cannot be excused or exonerated by its contribution to the defeat of the Nazi regime; stresses at the same time that it is unacceptable for the Russian Federation to adopt legislation penalising anybody who tries to analyse the events of the Second World War from a new point of view;

16, Notes that the continued existence in public spaces in some Member States of monuments and memorials (parks, squares, streets etc) glorifying the Soviet Army, which occupied these countries, paves the way for the distortion of historical facts about the causes, course and consequences of the Second World War;

17, Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Russian Duma and the parliaments of the Eastern Partnership countries."

SOME COMMENTS

I would like to draw readers' attention to John Wear's, *Why Germany Invaded History*, (published January, 2019 in *inconvenient history.com*. This article can also be read in *Irish Foreign Affairs*, Volume 14, Number 3, September, 2021.) John Wear is a lot more convincing than the EU's empty idea that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23rd August 1939 caused World War Two.

It all started with the German City of Danzig with its majority German 365,000 inhabitants, less 3% Polish.

The Treaty of Versailles converted Dan-

zig from a German provincial capital into a League of Nations protectorate subject to various strictures established for the benefit of Poland. The great preponderance of the citizens of Danzig had never wanted to leave Germany, and they were eager to return to Germany in 1939. Their eagerness to return to Germany was exacerbated by the fact that Germany's economy was healthy while Poland's economy was still mired in depression.

Germany presented a proposal for the a comprehensive settlement of the Danzig question with Poland on October 24, 1938. Hitler's plan would allow Germany to annex Danzig and construct a superhighway and a railroad to East Prussia.

In return Poland would be granted a permanent free port in Danzig and the right to build her own highway and railroad to the port. The whole of Danzig would become a permanent free market for Polish goods on which no German customs would be levied. Germany would take the unprecedented step of recognising and guaranteeing the existing German Polish frontier, including the boundary of Upper Silesia established in 1922.

This later provision was extremely important since the Versailles Treaty had given Poland much additional territory which Germany proposed to renounce. Hitler's offer to guarantee Poland's frontiers also carried with it a degree of military security that no other non-Communist nation could match.

Germany's proposed settlement with Poland was far less favourable to Germany than the Thirteenth Point of Wilson's programme at Versailles. The Versailles Treaty gave Poland large slices of territory in regions such as West Prussia and Western Posen which was overwhelming German. The richest industrial section of Upper Silesia was later given to Poland despite the fact Poland had lost the plebiscite there.

Germany was willing to renounce these territories in the interest of German Polish cooperation. The concession of Hitler's was more than adequate to compensate for German annexation of Danzig and construction of a superhighway and a railroad in the Corridor. The Polish diplomats themselves believed that Germany's proposal was a sincere and realistic basis for a permanent agreement.

On 26th March 1939, the Polish Ambassador to Berlin, Joseph Lipski, formally rejected Germany's settlement proposals. The Poles had waited over five months to reject Germany's proposals, and they re-

fuse to countenance any change in existing conditions. Lipski state to German Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop that "it was his painful duty to draw attention to the fact that any further pursuance of these German plans, especially where the return of Danzig to the Reich was concerned, meant war with Poland.

Polish Foreign Minister Jozef Beck accepted an offer from Great Britain on March 30, 1939, to give an unconditional guarantee of Poland's independence. The British Empire agreed to go to war as an ally of Poland if the Poles decided that war was necessary. In words drafted by British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, Chamberlain spoke in the House of Commons on March 31, 1939:

"I have to inform the House... that in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to that effect."

Numerous British historians and diplomats have criticised Britain's unilateral guarantee of Poland. For example, British diplomat Roy Denman called the war guarantee to Poland the most reckless undertaking ever given by a British government. It placed the decision on peace or war in Europe in the hands of a reckless, intransigent, swashbuckling military dictatorship.

No British military help to Poland was forthcoming when Germany invaded. There is thinking that Britain merely wanted the German Army on the Soviet borders.

More than 1 million ethnic Germans resided in Poland at the time of Beck's speech, and these Germans were the principal victims of the German-Polish crisis in the coming weeks. The Germans in Poland were subjected to increasing doses of violence from the dominant Poles. The British public was told repeatedly that the grievances of the German minority in Poland were largely imaginary. The average British citizen was completely unaware of the terror and fear of death that stalked these Germans in Poland. ultimately, many thousands of Germans died in Poland as a consequence of the crisis. They were among the first victims

Continues page 16

Garret The (NOT SO) Good!

Garret FitzGerald was a person with whom I maintained warm friendly relations for over 40 years, while continuing to be severely critical of his politics down through the decades. In the Irish Examiner this past 3rd July, its political columnist Daniel McConnell penned an evaluation under the heading of "Garret FitzGerald's positive impact is one worth recalling a decade after his death". I had originally intended writing just a single article, to dispute McConnell's contention that "FitzGerald's major achievement in office was undoubtedly the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, which was the forerunner of the Downing Street Declaration of 1993 and subsequent ceasefires in the North". But that must wait until Part Two, where I will reproduce two letters FitzGerald sent me 50 years ago, which I had misplaced down through the decades, but found again earlier this year.

One point where I did agree with McConnell was his statement:

"Failure on the economy: It is impossible to ignore his great failure on the

economy while as Taoiseach between 1982 and 1987."

I myself have repeatedly described the impact of how he handled economic and social policy as resulting in what I called "the dismal 1980s". I was content to leave it at that until I read the following section of the excellent "Des O'Malley Assessed" article by Philip O'Connor in the September issue of this magazine, where he dealt with the formation of the Fianna Fáil / Progressive Democrats Coalition Government in 1989:

"Haughey, the PDs and Social Partnership: All accounts of the formation of that government declare that the PDs dictated its Programme. This is very wide of the mark for Haughey had several red lines, all of which O'Malley conceded and, other than that, the PDs got their baubles. The Programme combined elements of both parties' election manifestos, but few of the PDs' more strident demands were included, apart from setting targets on tax reductions and eliminating budget deficits, goals to which Haughey himself was already long committed. Eoin O'Malley admits that his father had

been 'sceptical of social partnership, but when he saw it helped the country, he supported it.' But the evidence indicates he never came to terms with it. The PDs vociferously opposed partnership from the start and in 1987 denounced the first agreement, the 'Programme for National Recovery' (PNR), as a 'capitulation' to 'interest groups'. The 1989 Programme for Government, as insisted on by Haughey, opened its very first page with an unequivocal commitment not only to 'fully honour' the PNR and even to work for a successor agreement when it expired at the end of 1990, but to 'build social consensus (i.e. social partnership – ed.) into a permanent way of managing our affairs.' This was verbatim from Fianna Fáil's election manifesto. Social Partnership was thus to be maintained to steer Ireland's industrial and social recovery and development into the future."

That convinced me that it was not sufficient to bluntly proclaim FitzGerald's "Failure on the economy", it was also necessary to address the ideological blinkers that resulted in that failure. On 18th February 1999, as Head of Research with the Services Industrial Professional & Technical Union – SIPTU, I had delivered a paper entitled "Economic Management in Ireland Post-EMU: A Trade Union Perspective" to a Symposium held by the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland. I said, *inter alia*:

"The end of the 1990s has seen the Irish economy exposed as never before. But the 1990s has also seen the Irish economy grow as never before. Clearly the challenges of openness can only be met and confronted if the circumstances which created the possibilities for such growth are not just replicated but are further refined and more firmly rooted. It should also be recognised that to ensure such an outcome is as much a socio-political challenge as it is an economic one... To return to what the series of four successive National Programmes have achieved from 1988 onwards, we must first recognise what went before. The earlier part of the 1980s was an era when Irish growth rates were below OECD levels, and while rates of pay increase were just about staying ahead of high rates of inflation, an ever-increasing tax burden resulted in real living standards for the average worker actually declining by 5 percent in the 1980-87 period. At the same time, with employment itself spiralling downwards, the unemployment problem was turned into a crisis of mass proportions. And adding to the general malaise, the public finances were out of control to the extent of a general government deficit of 9 percent of GDP and a Debt/GDP ratio of 120 percent."

"In the years that followed, Ireland was fortunate that government and employers came to an agreement with

European Parliament

continued

of British Foreign Secretary Halifax's war policy against Germany."

John Wear, author of *Why Germany invaded Poland* catalogues the many crimes against the German minority in Poland, as it reverberated through Danzig, Lodz, and other Polish cities, and in the towns and villages. There were forced marches of the German minority, of men, women and children, into central Poland with many shot on the way when they fell through exhaustion.

Yet Germany remained patient and continually asked for negotiations.

Polish Ambassador Jerzy Potocki unsuccessfully attempted to persuade Jozef Beck to seek an agreement with Germany. Potocki later succinctly explained the situation in Poland by stating "Poland prefers Danzig to peace".

"President Roosevelt knew that Poland had caused the crisis which began in Danzig, and he was worried that the American public might learn the truth about the situation. This could be a decisive factor in discouraging Roosevelt's plan for American military intervention in Europe. Roosevelt instructed US Ambassador Biddle to urge the Poles to be more careful in making it appear that German moves were responsible for any inevitable explosion at Danzig. Biddle reported to Roosevelt on August 11, 1939, that Beck (Polish Foreign Minister. WJH) expressed no interest in engaging in a series of elaborate but empty manoeuvres designed to deceive the American public. Beck stated that at the moment he was content to have full British support for his policy."

On 1st September 1939, the German Blitzkrieg hit Poland. The Polish people were to pay a terrible price because of their thoroughly inept Polish Government. Six million Poles were to die, a fifth of the population.

Wilson John Haire,
6.9.2021

the trade union movement on addressing these problems through consensus. Competitiveness was enhanced through moderate pay increases which, however, were augmented by tax reductions so as to boost take-home pay and living standards. A decade-long process of controlling the public finances was set in motion that not alone avoided being deflationary, but saw our economic growth averaging 6.5 percent per year, or almost twice the EU average. More significantly, employment began to grow again. Equally noteworthy in the three year period of the Programme for National Recovery, 1988 - 1990, was the outcome whereby the real living standards of the average worker improved by 5 percent, reversing the pre-Programme losses. Even against the background of an unfavourable international economic environment in the early years of this present decade, the successor Programme for Economic and Social Progress, covering 1991 - 1993 inclusive, saw living standards increase by a further 5.5 percent. The downside, was however, that the unemployment crisis once again became acute, as the modest employment gains during these years could not keep pace with the requirements of a rapidly expanding labour force."

"The next three year period of the Programme for Competitiveness and Work (PCW), 1994 - 1996 inclusive, at last saw the emergence of the boom that has too simplistically led to the description 'Celtic Tiger'. The average annual rate of growth in GDP, at 8.6 percent, was more than three times the EU average. And the net jobs gain was the highly significant amount of 145,000. On the other hand, the growth in living standards at 6 percent, was felt by workers to be far too inadequate a reward for their contribution to such high rates of growth. Moreover, the new jobs were primarily being filled by new entrants to the labour market, so that a significant problem of long-term unemployment remained a still all-too-real legacy of the devastation of the early 1980s...."

"James Larkin Junior once argued in 1958: 'If we are to live in a free economy; if the highest ideal of the State is private enterprise; if we are to look up to the man who sets out to make high profits; and if the highest honour we can pay to a man today is to say he is a successful industrialist and has a large bank balance; then these values must of necessity be applied by workers in their own industrial lives. If the only relationship between the workers and the employer is the wage packet and the salary cheque, then the workers through their trade unions must seek to make that pay packet and that salary cheque as good as possible.'"

"But Larkin Junior also went on to broaden the trade union movement's own agenda in his presidential address to the ICTU in 1960 when

he asked: 'What should in broad terms be the social aim of trade unions today? Not just higher wages and shorter hours — they are limited industrial demands ... Could we for example say that our aim is to secure a steady rising standard of living, based upon the intelligent use of the country's resources and in a manner which will prevent any social group or class acquiring an unequal and unjustifiable share and thereby creating or maintaining a privileged social position?'"

"Larkin Junior, the 30th anniversary of whose death occurs today, was as great a trade union leader for his era as his father had been before him. He was, moreover, a founding participant in the NESC's precursor, the National Industrial and Economic Council. But he also recognised that it took two to tango."

In 1995 the Irish Labour History Society and SIPTU had jointly published a pamphlet of mine entitled, *The Voice of a Thinking Intelligent Movement — James Larkin and the Ideological Modernisation of Irish Trade Unionism*. In a Foreword, the then General Secretary of SIPTU, William A. Attley, maintained:

"Young Jim's call for a 'thinking, intelligent' movement was never more valid. As SIPTU and the movement as a whole, through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, endeavours to steer our ship through waters, deeply disturbed by a pace of change, technological and organisational, and an international context that, while he insightfully recognised it was coming, would have amazed Young Jim, Larkin's thoughtful and informed thinking is still relevant and the Union is proud to bring this pamphlet to the SIPTU membership of today."

In his Foreword to the pamphlet's second edition in 2001, the then SIPTU General President, Des Geraghty, further argued:

"Larkin, identifying Labour's political weakness, set about constructing an Irish path to social justice - if not socialism. In our time, and in similar fashion, SIPTU has been in the vanguard of the imaginative use of the trade union and labour movement's power. Since the crisis of 1987, when the country was bust and there were strident calls not only for the marginalisation of our movement but for its destruction, the Union has led the thinking on how best to utilise our strength to maximum benefit. Commentators agree that a key ingredient of the transformation of Irish economic and social well-being has been the series of programmes initiated with the Programme For National Recovery (PNR) and currently maintained with the Programme For Prosperity And Fairness."

In compiling that pamphlet, I had

asked former Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald for any memories he might have had of Young Jim Larkin. In a letter to me dated 11th May 1995, FitzGerald recalled his changing view of Larkin during the course of the 1960s:

"I got to know Jim Larkin through the CIO (Committee on Industrial Organisation) and the NIEC (National Industrial and Economic Council) and, like everybody else in those organisations, was enormously impressed by him. He rationed his interventions which enhanced the attention given to him when he spoke. But it was the fine judgement and close argument that he deployed that made him such an impressive member of these bodies, listened to with attention by everybody and treated with enormous respect. I found this all the more remarkable in view of the extent to which he had been so bitterly attacked by opponents like Seán MacEntee in earlier years. In honesty, I have to add that I myself regarded him as a sinister figure during the anti-Communist phase of my youth—which happily I outgrew during the 1960s!"

A fine tribute indeed! The problem was that, when FitzGerald became Taoiseach, he proved incapable of learning the lessons from such past engagements that should have informed his own approach to economic planning.

In 1976, in my capacity as ITGWU Head of Research, I was one of the speakers at an ICTU Summer School devoted to the theme of economic planning. "*Economic and Social Planning: Two approaches*" was the title of my own paper. I argued that the era of narrow National Wage Agreements needed to be superseded by, and widened out to, tripartite economic and social planning, whereby the collective bargaining strength of the Trade Union movement should be deployed to negotiate, not only on wages but also on Government budgetary taxation, social and job creation policies.

Real wages were, after all, affected not only by Pay Agreements in isolation, but also by taxation measures and success or failure in tacking inflation. Planning required agreement on resource allocation, including wages and public expenditure, with unions needing to "*prioritise the state expenditure ... crucial to meet employment targets*" and agree managed wage growth compatible with these targets. The NESC (National Economic and Social Council) should be the institution charged with establishing the framework for such planning and the parameters for tripartite negotiations for a new type of National Agreement.

I came under fire from two significant

participants at that Summer School. The first of such reactions came from T.K. Whitaker (1916-2017), Governor of the Central Bank, formerly Secretary of the Department of Finance, and the man who, in 2002, would be named—by an adjudicating panel that included Editors of national newspapers, provincial press and broadcast media—as the "*Greatest Living Irish Person at the ESB/Rehab People of the Year Awards*" (Irish Times, 18 November 2002).

In his January 2020 doctoral thesis, *A Very Political Project: Charles Haughey, Social Partnership and the pursuit of an "Irish economic miracle", 1969-92*, Philip O'Connor has summed up the views expressed by TKW at that Summer School:

"He (Whitaker) set out his views on planning and tripartitism at the same 1976 ICTU conference at which O'Riordan had presented the union case for a partnership system. Whitaker argued that planning was the prerogative solely of government, not 'social partners'. It should propose a plan and then elicit comments through 'consultation', with budgets serving as a 'rolling' process of review and adjustment. Plan targets could not be pre-agreed and should involve 'indicative' rather than 'prescriptive' goals. 'Democratic principles are not fully served by consulting only the major organised interests' which were 'not necessarily coincident with the general community interest'. Wage regulation was essential to investment planning but to ensure restraint 'rather than link[ing] bargaining about pay rounds with the annual budget'. As regards 'the consensus issue', while consensus was useful for any plan, 'the theory that people are always reasonable .. is not always valid'."

How Patrician of that "*Greatest Living Irish Person*"! Readers can download from the Athol Books website the December 2019 issue of *Irish Political Review*, where I gave a detailed assessment of Whitaker, which ended:

"If Lemass, with Dev's blessing, is to be applauded for recognising what were Whitaker's talents in 1958 and for giving TKW his head at that juncture, surely Lemass should also be applauded for, in his last couple of months as Taoiseach, recognising TKW's blind-spots and knowing when to cut him loose by giving Minister for Education Donogh O'Malley that 1966 victory over him. (Whitaker, as Secretary of the Department of Finance, had opposed O'Malley's Free Secondary Education announcement.) 'Beyond Our Ken' was the name of a BBC radio comedy programme (1958-1964), and TKW's stubborn refusal to recognise the urgency of O'Malley's revolution in education underscored what was indeed

a case of 'Beyond Our Ken'. Lemass in the Age of de Valera grew into the Age of Lemass himself, one who recognised the education prerequisites for further economic progress, and thus—to borrow the language deployed by TKW to dismiss Dev—the need for him to render 'Whitaker passé' by taking the strategic decision to back O'Malley in 1966."

The far more serious shot across the bows of my 1976 paper came in the response from Ruaidhrí Roberts (1917-1986), General Secretary of the Irish TUC from 1945 to 1959, and of the reunited Irish Congress of Trade Unions from 1959 to 1981.

Roberts' ideal was what he called *the Swedish model*, where the LO (the Swedish TUC) engaged in centralised bargaining with the Swedish employers, and then separately lobbied the Swedish Government on budgetary and economic and social policy. Roberts expressed vehement opposition to my call for tripartite negotiations. The ICTU should never allow negotiations to take place with the Government in respect of wage increases in the wider economy. Such negotiations should remain exclusively in the province of the Employer/Labour Conference, with the Government only present as an employer in its own right of public servants. ICTU would continue to separately lobby Governments on taxation, social welfare and employment policies.

But the situations in Sweden and Ireland were not at all comparable. Well might the LO have separately lobbied Swedish Governments with significant success. The LO was allied to the Social Democratic Party, which dominated Swedish politics during the Roberts years. From the mid-1930s to the 1980s, the Swedish Social Democratic Party always won more than 40 percent of the vote, and from 1932 to 1976 it was continuously in government.

Ireland during the Roberts years saw Labour as junior partners in three Fine Gael led Governments—1948-51, 1954-57 and 1973-77—with the Labour share of the vote amounting to no more than 13 percent during each period of office.

Time was, however, running out for Roberts' obstinacy. In September 1976 an ICTU Special Delegate Conference did indeed approve another NWA, but with the ITGWU voting for the first time against such an Agreement, not least because of the lack of "*a co-ordinated policy approach over the whole field of socio-economic issues*". A further NWA followed in March 1977. But the next NWA was carried by only a handful of votes at the ICTU Con-

ference in March 1978, with the ITGWU leading the opposition. And, at a Special Delegate Conference in November 1978, the ITGWU was finally successful in ensuring that the Conference denied the ICTU authorisation to enter negotiations for yet another wages-only NWA.

At last, Roberts was forced to embark on the strategy that he had so vehemently opposed in 1976. In February 1979 the ICTU Executive adopted a comprehensive policy document on pay and related economic matters, linking up the pay issues with objectives in the areas of taxation, social welfare and employment, and in March the ITGWU agreed to ICTU entering into tripartite negotiations on that basis.

But the backdrop was that Fianna Fáil Taoiseach Jack Lynch's Minister for Finance, George Colley, having introduced a limited tax on farm incomes in his January Budget, dropped it in February, outraging the Republic's very heavily taxed workers *en masse*. The ITGWU backed a national work stoppage on 20th March, involving 700,000 workers, and with 250,000 also marching in street protests throughout the State. Further stoppages and protests followed on May Day, although not as extensive, and with ICTU General Secretary Ruaidhrí Roberts speaking out against both Days of Action.

A National Understanding was negotiated later in May, branching out to embrace significant non-pay elements. But, with inadequate pay increases for the lower paid, the ITGWU led the way for its rejection by ICTU by month's end. A redrafted *National Understanding*, with improved wage increases for the lower paid, was finally agreed in July 1979, while retaining the non-pay provisions previously agreed. And a second tripartite *National Understanding* was negotiated in September 1980, this time with Charlie Haughey as the Fianna Fáil Taoiseach.

In August 1981 the Economic and Social Research Institute published a study of National Wage Agreements, authored by James F. O'Brien, who had undertaken the field work as an ESRI Research Officer before then becoming Director of the Federated Union of Employers' Research and Information Division. He had this to say of the first *National Understanding* that had been ratified in July 1979:

"The change from NWAs [National Wage Agreements] to National Understandings in 1979 signalled the introduction of a major new 'non-pay' part to national level agreements. Thus, entirely new sections on employment, taxation,

industrial relations, aspects (other than pay), industrial democracy, education and training, health and social welfare were brought into the agreed text for the first time."

And, of the second National Understanding, ratified in September 1980, he wrote:

"The section on non-pay items which had been introduced in 1979 was retained and expanded in 1980. There were subsections on such matters as employment, industrial relations, maternity leave, hours of work, industrial democracy, disclosure of information, child care for working parents, services for handicapped persons, taxation, social welfare, health services, education, training, trade union education and advisory services, paid educational leave and housing. This was by far the most comprehensive range of items ever covered in a national level agreement."

In the hope of increasing his Dáil majority, Haughey called a General Election for May 1981, but lost. In June, Garret FitzGerald headed up a minority Fine Gael / Labour Government, dependent on the votes of Independent TDs. While formally committed to upholding the National Understanding, he let it run into the ground.

Moreover, both FitzGerald and his Minister for Finance, John Bruton, had myopic vision when it came to understanding working class concerns. Adults' clothes and shoes were already subject to Value Added Tax. But now, in his January 1982 Budget, Bruton proposed to also tax children's clothes and shoes, provoking the ire of working class families in such straitened times. They were doubly offended when FitzGerald argued that the measure was necessary because otherwise tax dodging was possible on the part of adult females with small feet buying older female children's shoes that they could fit into!

The Government fell by just one vote, that of the Limerick Socialist TD Jim Kemmy, notwithstanding the fact that, as he lined up to vote, FitzGerald was down on one knee, attempting to persuade him to enter the 'Yes' rather than the 'No' lobby.

Following the February 1982 General Election, Haughey formed a minority Fianna Fáil Government that depended on the votes of Independent TDs, including, not only Dublin Socialist Tony Gregory, who negotiated a very significant deal on behalf of his working class constituents, but also on the more fickle Workers' Party TDs—who negotiated nothing at all, and

who chose to vote Haughey's Government out of Office in November 1982.

The resulting General Election saw Garret FitzGerald returned for the second time as Taoiseach of a Fine Gael / Coalition Government, but this time with a combined overall majority. Ironically, the Workers' Party TDs, whose votes were not at all needed, nonetheless voted for the Budget now introduced by the Fine Gael Minister for Finance Alan Dukes, whose taxation measures placed a more onerous burden on lower paid workers than the Budget they had just voted against, bringing down the Fianna Fáil Government in the process!

While the Coalition Government's Programme nominally promised to "honour" the National Understanding, FitzGerald allowed it run into the ground. FitzGerald, along with his successive Ministers for Finance, Dukes and Bruton, had a shared antipathy towards Tripartite bargaining on economic policy. Their approach was to be implicitly criticised by ESRI Director General Kieran Kennedy. In a 1984 paper on "*Labour Market Policies and Employment Growth*", Kennedy argued that the economic problems of that year could not just be put down to yet another world depression, and he continued:

"By the end of this year close to 17 per cent of the labour force will be registered as unemployed. This is an exceptionally high level, whether viewed in relation to our own past experience, or the current experience of other OECD countries... (Some) commentators seem to take the view that the unfettered operation of the market constitutes the best recipe for successful economic development in Ireland. Surely there is a case for toning down a bit the rhetoric of the free market... The ESRI study takes the view that pay restraint could best be achieved through a broadly-based negotiated incomes policy... Given the prospective situation in the world economy, nobody has yet been able to establish convincingly that the market sector in Ireland, no matter how much primed by incentives, grants etc., will itself provide enough jobs to bring down unemployment."

Here, Kennedy was also arguing for a voluntary incomes policy, negotiated with the Trade Union movement, but he opposed statutory wage controls. In contrast, Whitaker had a profound distaste for any Government partnership with the Trade Union movement. Central Bank Governor Whitaker had privately lectured Cosgrave's Fine Gael / Labour Coalition Government in 1974 on how NOT to engage with the Trade Union movement, arguing against "*allowing the unions to set the tone of the negotiations*".

Whitaker's outlook was shared by the Fine Gael leadership a decade later, resulting in the dismal economic results of the 1982-87 Government that I had described in my 1999 paper for the *Statistical and Social Inquiry Society*, and which was brought down when the Labour Party could no longer support yet another reactionary Bruton Budget.

As Philip O'Connor has pointed out, Haughey locked the PDs into *Social Partnership*, which continued under both the Fianna Fáil / PD and the Fianna Fáil / Labour Coalition Governments, headed up by Haughey's successor Albert Reynolds. In December 1994 Labour leader Dick Spring pulled the plug on the latter Government for no good reason and, egged on by the *Irish Times*, refused to engage with the new leader of Fianna Fáil, Bertie Ahern. The result was the Rainbow Coalition Government of Fine Gael / Labour / Democratic Left, headed up by John Bruton, which derailed the Peace Process until Bertie Ahern replaced Bruton as Taoiseach in December 1997.

If the self-described Redmondite, John Bruton, was such a disaster with his Northern policy, this was not the case in respect of economic policy. He had learned the lessons of the dreadful economic policies pursued by Fine Gael in the 1980s. Not only did Bruton adhere to the Partnership Agreement he had inherited on assuming the Office of Taoiseach, but yet another was negotiated before he left it.

On 4th July 1995, John Bruton became the first Taoiseach to address a Delegate Conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. In next day's *Irish Times*, Pdraig Yeates reported from Bruton's script on how he had declared:

"My experience of social partnership started out as one of scepticism. It has worked. It has worked for everyone, for the competitiveness of the economy, for the short-term needs of people and for the long-term needs of the country."

Yeates added he "*went on to pay tribute to the ICTU for its contribution to making it work*". But Yeates omitted the more dramatic sentence uttered by Bruton, when he departed from script and adlibbed. Admitting to having become a late convert to the merits of Social Partnership, he did indeed say: "*My experience of social partnership started out as one of scepticism*". But then he departed from his script as he gesticulated widely with his arms and we heard him confess: "*I was wrong!*"

Bruton effectively wrote off the policies he had pursued with Garret FitzGerald. A later Fine Gael leader and Taoiseach would put it less kindly. As Daniel McConnell recorded in the *Irish Examiner* this past 3rd July:

"It is impossible to ignore his great failure on the economy while as Taoiseach between 1982 and 1987. Indeed, current Fine Gael leader Leo Varadkar compared then taoiseach Brian Cowen to FitzGerald in the Dáil 11 years ago. During a Dáil debate, Varadkar told Cowen he was no Seán Lemass, no Jack Lynch but was like Dr FitzGerald, who he contended had tripled the national debt and had effectively destroyed the country. He also suggested to Cowen that he should "enjoy writing boring articles in the 'Irish Times' in a few years' time", a reference to FitzGerald's weekly column in the newspaper at the time."

But Varadkar, the venomous viper, was quite mistaken. FitzGerald's articles were far from boring. As a teenager of the 1960s, it was his weekly column that I found so stimulating that it led me to study economics. At UCD I was lectured by FitzGerald on economic statistical

sources from 1967 to 1969. He was the only academic I knew at that University to invite all his students for an evening in his home and to meet various luminaries, and where, at the age of 19, I first met T.K. Whitaker, with whom I would later clash in 1976.

After that evening, lasting long past the last bus, and knowing we could not afford taxi fares, we took turns in being bundled in groups of five into Garret's car and being driven by him to our respective homes.

The problem with FitzGerald is that he could not translate theory into practice. It is a pity he did not remain in academia. For, going into politics led to even more detrimental and deadly results when it came to the North.

Manus O'Riordan

(To be continued)

[Editorial Note: Sadly, unless Manus left Part Two of his article on his computer and it is sent to us by his family, we will never know what Manus had to tell us about Garret Fitzgerald's deadly Northern

simple as it involved creating and placing an amended reel of microfilm in the NLI which, after removal of the Ottoman 'Nameless One' poem, now included the fake, Casementesque, homosexual one. This new version also required the writing and insertion of fake NYPL side-notes and then going to New York to install the fake 'original' manuscript of the poem and remove the Ottoman one. This is not credible.

Jack Lane asks about Casement's shift to a strong separatist stance in 1904. It was swift but explicable, coming after writing his Congo report when he nearly resigned from the Foreign Office about the proposed format for publication. He then abandoned the plum Lisbon posting which he had long sought. He had become political and at a high level although had always been an ardent Irish nationalist.

During a visit to Co. Cork, while on leave, to see his friend Lord Ennismore, he first met two women who strongly influenced him over the Irish language and culture, one being Ada McNeill. Then came meetings with Africa radicals, E.D. Morel and Alice Stopford Green, which moved him away from support for the English Empire. The first Glens Feis in 1904 followed. (Séamas O Síocháin's Casement biography goes into great detail on the significant events that year.)

On Casement's politics being enabled by his sexual nature, the German writer W.G. Sebald said in 1998,

"It was precisely Casement's homosexuality that sensitised him to the continuing oppression, exploitation, enslavement and destruction, across the borders of social class and race, of those who were furthest from the centres of power" (*The Rings of Saturn*, p. 134).

I concur, especially as Casement plainly sought partners from every race and nationality. There are numerous examples of gay men and lesbians being prominent in 20th century progressive movements (and espionage), and disproportionately so.

Jeff Dudgeon

Paul Hyde replies:

Mr. Dudgeon speculates that Hayes sent a copy of the contested poem to MacDermot. But he does not explain why MacDermot concealed this purported source. Nor does he explain why Hayes never referred to this poem, not even when in 1965 he gave his own opinion about authenticity.

However, it is verified that MacDermot

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Some Casement Questions

Paul Hyde rightly corrects me ('The Nameless One', *Irish Political Review* September 2021). He did not say that Frank MacDermot copied the contended Casement poem in New York. He actually wrote he "did not obtain his text from either the microfilm or the ms now in NYPL", adding however he "knew the NY manuscript was another copy of the same Ottoman poem held in NLI". He then asks "Where MacDermot obtained his text remains a matter of speculation". But if, as is asserted, he was in 1957 involved in the British Intelligence poem forging and microfilm manipulation, then it has to have been passed to him at the time. Mystery surely solved.

The real mystery to me is how MacDermot knew the item was in the NLI and, assuming he viewed the microfilm there, why did he miss the handwritten NYPL side-notes which repeated Casement's words on the back of the poem? ("Lines written in Very Great Dejection at Genoa. November 15 1900").

Perhaps, and I speculate, Richard Hayes who was the NLI Director from 1940 to 1967 (and a codebreaker with Military

Intelligence), not only told him about the poem but sent him a copy.

Hyde in his reply to me provided the needed clue when he wrote of Hayes's 1965 remarks about material confirming Casement's homosexuality being in the NLI. Hayes was seriously interested in the subject, having purchased a copy of the Scotland Yard typescript of the diaries from Peter Singleton-Gates in London around 1957, while promising to keep them under wraps for a decade. They too are on NLI microfilm.

Dr. Hayes, as part of a major project from 1945, acquired microfilm of Irish material from archives and libraries throughout the world, and thereby obtained the three NYPL reels. They are not however the whole set of *Maloney Irish Historical Papers* (IHP), only the four boxes relating to Casement. (The IHP catalogue is very high level. All it says in respect of 'The Nameless One' is "Poetry, 1898-1900, 1906, 1916, n.d.")

Hyde also suggests it was a "simple switching of documents" which had to be done in Dublin in 1957 when "the microfilm was manipulated to include the forged side-notes and the forged version of *The Nameless One*".

That however would have been far from

promised the *nameless "homosexual poem"* some weeks before he posted the text on 13th April to his former colleague at the *Sunday Times*. If Hayes informed him of the poem weeks earlier, he did not cite the title of the poem. Or, if Hayes sent him the text weeks earlier, then MacDermot knew the title but concealed it. Mr. Dudgeon's speculation merely leads to more inexplicable concealment. He has still not told us where MacDermot obtained the text which he believes is genuine. The mystery remains.

I have not read W.G. Sebald, whose utterly vacuous proclamation Mr. Dudgeon cites. I fail to understand why he thinks that Sebald's musings on Casement are relevant, save that they support Mr. Dudgeon's own musings. That he resorts to the fallacy of *argumentum ad verecundiam* [argument from authority, Ed.] indicates that he is losing 'traction'. Certainly he is losing grammatical traction, since he describes my assertion "*Where MacDermot obtained his text remains a matter of speculation*" as a question.

Hayes did not "*make remarks about material confirming Casement's homosexuality*", as asserted by Mr. Dudgeon. On 12th March 1965, Hugh McCann of the DFA met Hayes and on 15th McCann made a secret report of their conversation stating "...there are one or two references in this material which are not inconsistent with the charges against Casement". The negative locution is not a confirmation. McCann added that, by references Hayes meant only that he had not found written evidence that Casement was attracted to women. This 'reasoning' sufficed the brilliant cryptologist, who was in fact simply another victim of cognitive bias. What he had not found became "*invisible evidence*". The codebreaker was blind to the bias encoded in his own brain. To consolidate this folly, McCann added "*Dr. Hayes had, during the last war...sounded out some of his contacts in M.I.5 in Britain and these had expressed a clear opinion that the diaries were genuine*". Are we to take this seriously?

In paragraphs 5 and 6 of his letter, Mr. Dudgeon seems again to be losing traction. In NYPL the planting of the forged poem was a simple operation done in seconds. There was no 'going to New York' since the false manuscript would be sent to an agent in NY for planting. The NLI operation was much more complex and required preparation, subterfuge and several visits. That is what *intelligence* services are for.

I feel that Mr. Dudgeon has lost so much traction that it would be unkind and futile to continue this correspondence.

Jack Lane replies:

Jeff answers questions I never asked him and brings in red herrings to hide the fact. It might be useful therefore to remind readers of the question that I asked him, following his claim that "*His (Casement's) change of heart over the Ottomans and Armenia is of course significant but Casement's sexual nature undoubtedly contributed to his political outlook*" (Irish Political Review, Sept. 21). I asked: "*I hope Jeff elaborates on this thesis as to how exactly his 'sexual nature' contributed to his political transformation*" (ibid).

Casement had fundamentally changed his view of the British Empire when WWI was launched by Britain. He changed his view based on almost a lifetime's work for, and experience of, the Empire; committed treason on the basis of this change; and was hanged.

If his "*sexual nature undoubtedly contributed to his political outlook*", and it remained the same throughout his life, which Jeff's life-work claims, then a question goes begging. How did this political transformation occur to which his 'sexual nature' was indifferent?

In the above letter he goes further and writes of "*Casement's politics being enabled by his sexual nature*". So his 'sexual nature' 'enabled' him to be both a staunch Imperialist and staunch anti-Imperialist! But Jeff does not answer the question posed and distorts history in the process.

However, he answers a question I did not ask: "*Jack Lane asks about Casement's shift to a strong separatist stance in 1904*". That would be an absurd question because he was no such thing in 1904. Jeff seems to equate an interest in cultural nationalism or 'ardent nationalism' with 'separatism'. That is not the case, as a rudimentary knowledge of Irish history would show. The dominant form of nationalism in 1904 was Redmondism, which was allied to Liberal Imperialism and specifically to the Liberal Party in parliament. The aim of Home Rulers was to confirm Ireland as a better member of the British Empire. They could be ardent nationalists in this, as proved by the fact that they fought and died in their tens of thousands for it in WWI. By contrast the human cost of separatism was miniscule.

Casement was then, in 1904, a paid up member of that nationalism and remained so for some time, as shown by the fact that he graciously accepted a knighthood in 1911, which is hardly the mark of someone having a "*strong separatist stance since 1904*".

He became a separatist on the outbreak of war, as it confirmed the conclusions he had come to in the years immediately preceding the War about the British Empire's destructive role in world politics. He spelt this out very clearly in his only book, "*The Crime against Europe*" (1914), and it as clear as daylight in that book that Ireland was not the basis of his change of view. (Available from Athol Books or downloadable at The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Crime Against Europe*, by Roger Casement - Bing).

What was distinctive about Casement amongst the fellow Liberals who appeared to have come to a similar view, such as George Bernard Shaw, was that Casement acted on the basis of his views whereas GBS *et al* became spoofing cynics. Irish separatism he now saw as one factor that could help facilitate the ending of the British Empire and one where he could give some practical assistance. Supporting Germany was another. And he had the moral and physical courage to follow through on his beliefs.

The British Empire was a fact made and maintained by actions and Casement well knew that only actions would end it. And he acted to the best of his ability to do so. That was the nature of the man and made him what he was/is. He did not become an Irish separatist because of some innate virtue in it, as many nationalists believe. Irish separatism was an adjunct to his new world view and not the other way round. Again, this is bluntly obvious in his writings. Most nationalists want to reduce him to being just another nationalist and Jeff concurs. Odd bedfellows—to coin a phrase.

In his last paragraph Jeff resorts to quoting another writer who believes the same as him, as if that was proof of anything. He then says that "*There are numerous examples of gay men and lesbians being prominent in 20th century progressive movements (and espionage), and disproportionately so*". But what does that mean in the case at hand, Casement? As a great believer in the lifelong homosexual Casement, Jeff should have told us when he was progressive—as a British Imperialist or as an Irish separatist?

I suggest that Jeff has created an inexplicable Casement and will never be able to explain him as he cannot but see him through the prism of an alleged 'sexual nature' and it is a waste of time for him trying to do so. I will not ask him to try again.

Jack Lane

Pat Walsh replies to an earlier letter from Jeff Dudgeon, which appeared in the September issue of *Irish Political Review*:

In his letter (*Irish Political Review*, September 2021), Jeff Dudgeon challenges my theory that Casement's Ottoman poem was probably written in response to the visit of the Kaiser to Istanbul and Palestine in October. He states:

"Indeed there is an earlier draft of the Ottoman poem in the NLI dated September 1898, before the Kaiser's visit to Turkey in mid-October. That suggests it was not the prompt for Casement's rage as Pat Walsh proposes."

But, whilst what the Kaiser did and said in Istanbul may not have initially prompted Casement to suddenly write a poem about the Armenian massacres—that occurred years earlier—that does not rule out the visit as the cause of his ire. Preparations for the Kaiser's much-publicised visit were published in US newspapers almost four months before the trip, and a detailed program of the Palestine part was published by the *New York Times* of 26th June 1898, for instance. It was in the four months preceding the visit, from June until September, that the Armenians were suddenly remembered in the anti-Turk Anglosphere and given extensive press coverage, surely directing Casement's attention to the subject. The poem was then completed at the time of the visit.

Mr. Dudgeon creates a transition problem that does not really exist with regard to Casement, if one understands that he was a consistent English Liberal. He did not transition from Imperialism to Irish nationalism as two binary and unconnected phenomena. Liberalism and Irish nationalism were increasingly bound up during this period and many notable and diverse figures like John Redmond and Erskine Childers went back and forth between the two. There was a point at which they were seen as complementary and the future of things in Liberal Imperialist and Irish nationalist circles, although Irish Unionism did its best to subvert such a future, and successfully. But it was the Great War, which Casement predicted and understood the nature of, as an insider, which shifted the ground on which he stood and forced him to choose the path he took.

Professor Ferriter On Casement And The Border

Desmond Ferriter, History Professor at the National University, writes about Casement in the *Irish Times* of September 17th. He quotes from the *Casement* entry in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (produced by Cambridge University and the Royal Irish Academy):

"The diaries have provoked understandable controversy, but cannot obscure Casement's importance. He was a humanitarian who fought... against the enslavement of indigenous peoples in the Congo and Amazon. He was the principal organiser of the Howth gun-running, without which the Easter Rising might not have taken place. Despite his attempts to prevent what he believed would be a doomed insurrection, he was the last victim of the Easter Rising, and thereby became a nationalist martyr".

Ferriter then continues in his own voice:

"Casement was more than just a 1916 martyr. His descent from consular service and knighthood to traitor and quicklime in Pentonville captivated creative writers, including George Bernard Shaw... and influenced Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*... He was also eventually claimed by gay rights groups, as he became, in the words of Lucy MacDermid

"an object lesson in the many forms of patriotism for the new, revisionist Ireland..."

"The unveiling of the new statue is an important reminder of the motivations, mentalities and labyrinthine inner worlds of those who in Casement's words 'went a road I know must lead to the dock.'"

The only thing that is labyrinthine about Casement is the argumentation about a set of Diaries put in the British Public Record Office forty-three years after he was killed, which were said to be his Diaries, but which nobody had seen in 1916, when some typescripts alleged to have been copied from them were used to blackmail eminent people out of signing a petition for his reprieve.

And, during most of those 43 years the Government did not admit to have any such manuscript in its possession.

Casement's published writings are not obscure, nor are his motivations.

He was a British Liberal Imperialist of the generation which assumed that the world was going its way, and that its business was to clear the path for it. That assumption proved to be a very great delusion. It was a bubble that burst on

Casement: Editorial Note

The case for the authenticity of the Diary in the PRO seems to have come to depend on a poem called *The Namless One*, whose provenance is in dispute. It is taken to be the poem of a homosexual who is suppressing his urges—a condition which hardly applies to the rampant homosexual/paedophile represented in the alleged Diary.

If the poem is read without preconceptions, it is not evident that it is about homosexuality at all. Read it:

The Nam(e)less One

No human hand to steal to mine
No human Eye to answering shine,
Earth's cruel heart of dust alone
To give me breadth and strength to groan

I look beyond the stricken sky
Where Sunset paints its hopeless lie-
That way the flaming Angel went
Who sought by pride Love's battlement

I sought by love alone to go
Where God had writ an awful No:-
Pride gave a guilty God to Hell-
I had no pride by love I fell

Love took me by the heart at birth
And wrought from out its common
Earth,
With soul at his own skill aghast
A furnace my own breadth should blast

Why this was done I cannot tell:
The mystery lives inscrutable-
I only know I pay the cost-
With heart and soul and honour lost

I only know 'tis Death to give
My love, yet loveless can I live?
I only know I cannot die
And leave this love, God made, not I

God made this love—there let it rest:
Perchance it needs a riven breast
To heavenly Eyes the scheme to show
A broke heart must never know.

4th August 1914, and nothing like it has been seen in the world since then.

Casement saw, a few years before the event—which he called *The Crime Against Europe*—, that an inner group in the Cabinet was directing international affairs towards that event. He recoiled from it. He published an account of it before it happened. And when it happened he joined the victim.

His *Reports* on the Congo and Amazonia had very little effect. It seems that the Foreign Office used the Congo Report to get Belgium to agree to offer military resistance when a German Army marched through it, when it was caught in a war with the French and Russian Empires. Belgium was not a sovereign state, and was not entitled to make such an agreement. The Germans claimed that they found evidence in Brussels of secret negotiations with Britain, but British historians naturally have not dwelt on that aspect of things.

Belgium was rewarded with some German territory in 1919, and it acquired sovereign status. It exploited the Congo for a further half century, and left it a mess.

Casement's gun-running activities for the Volunteers in early 1914 were not in any way treasonable. There was no operative British Constitution in 1912-14. That Constitution is no more than a consensus between the two parties which dominate Parliament. Those two parties had fallen out with regard to Irish affairs, and the question of treason did not arise when each did its own thing. That is a singular feature of British representative Government by parties, in which there is no authority above Parliament.

In effect, Casement ran guns for the Liberal Party in Government, against the Unionist Party in Opposition.

The Constitution was restored on 4th August 1914, when the opportunity arose to put the preparations for War on Germany into effect.

Casement then supported Germany. He did not merely try, as an Irish nationalist, to raise an Irish Brigade from Irish POWs in Germany. He argued Germany's case in the War.

His "*descent into treason*" may have "*captivated creative writers*", but G.B. Shaw was not a creative writer in this matter. Shaw was a political writer as well as a creative writer, and in my opinion a very much better one. In the Fall of 1914 he published a pamphlet on the War which went directly against the grain of the War

Propaganda. He was in no doubt that Britain had cornered Germany into a war against vastly superior forces. And that, of course, was Casement's view.

And it was the view of the major Liberal papers during the week or ten days before the Declaration of War, as the Editors came to realise that the inner Cabinet was intent on making war on Germany. Some of their editorials could be published under Casement's title, *The Crime Against Europe*. (Some of these have been reproduced in **The Moral Collapse Of The British Liberal Party Press In 1914**. *Brendan Clifford* (ed.), *Problems of Capitalism & Socialism*, Nos. 58. €6, £5. Available from Athol Books.)

The only difference was that Shaw supported the War, even though he knew very well what it was, while Casement opposed it in earnest, joining the enemy to help it defend itself.

The famous Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, C.P. Scott, published editorials against War on Germany up to the last moment of peace. But he said that, once the State declared War, his paper would support it, though he could not bring himself to write the War editorials.

Who did the right thing? What was the right thing? Was the only operative principle that of *My Country Right Or Wrong*? Casement didn't think so. But, as far as Ferriter is concerned, the question doesn't arise: Casement was the humanitarian, the Republican gun-runner, and the secret homosexual paedophile who was a forerunner of the new revisionist Ireland.

(With regard to pederasty, it seemed forty years ago that it was about to be decriminalised, but then opinion, and the law, went to the other extreme. With regard to Casement's sexual inclinations, there is no evidence that they were homosexual other than a Diary which was presented to the world 43 years too late to be evidence.)

One of the people to whom a typescript was shown, and who took it on trust and encouraged the hanging, expected authentication would follow before long. Decades passed without any original being shown, and the Government did not admit to having an original. He concluded, reasonably enough, that a fraud had been practiced on him as part of a campaign to deter important people from signing a petition of reprieve for Casement. He wrote a book about it. Those who believed

without having seen dismissed him as a "*denialist*". He died before the Casement material was put in the National Archive—as was almost everybody who had been shown an alleged extract in 1916.

Only one person, who had been shown manuscript pages in 1916, as distinct from a typescript, was alive when the Government put the alleged Diary into the Public Record Office. He was an American newspaper correspondent, Ben Allen of the Associated Press. He had wanted to confront Casement, in prison, with it, and judge by his reaction, but the Government would not allow it. (It seems that the Government kept Casement in ignorance of what it was saying about him.) The newspaper man had made a detailed note of what he was shown in 1916. He said it did not resemble what was put on show in 1959, and he left a detailed Affidavit to confirm this.

The bits of manuscript pornography used by the Government in 1916 to deter influential people from signing a Petition for reprieve were only *shown*, as with Allen. Nobody was allowed possession of them. They were effective because of the influence of homophobia on the rising Puritan middle class in its campaign against what it saw as the decadence of the gentry. The law against homosexual practice was a recently established Liberal law.

The *prima facie* case against the authenticity of the 1959 documents is strong. Argument for authenticity, in order to be persuasive, should begin with an acceptance that the circumstances of the case give ample grounds for skepticism. That is not what has been done. Belief in the authenticity of the 1959 document is *a priori*—resting apparently on the further belief that the British State in wartime would not, or could not, perpetrate a fraud to destroy the reputation of one of its own who had joined the enemy against it.

It appears that many of those who asserted authenticity were connected with British Intelligence, while many of those who questioned it most acutely disagreed entirely with Casement's view of the War, and some of the most acute of them had little time for Irish Republicanism, and were therefore "*disinterested*" inquirers, in the old-fashioned use of the term.

"UNIONIST PHILOSOPHY"

Professor Ferriter has recently published books on Partition and on the Treaty War. In the former, called *The Border*,

he comments:

“As a political philosophy unionism did not mature, adapt or evolve beyond a defensive reaction to both Irish nationalism and the belief that they were threatened both within (the Catholic minority) and without (the southern state). Unionists also chose to call elections at times of perceived threat, enabling them to campaign precisely on the border question and stoke reliable embers.

“But that southern state was hardly blameless, given its hostility to unionism, its excessive Catholicism (the census of 1926 revealed a southern Irish population that was 92.6 per cent Catholic, which rose to a peak of 94.9 per cent in 1961) and its theoretically provocative and coarse aspiration to get rid of the border...” (p35).

Were these banal sentences really worth even the slight effort it took to write them?

The only real value in them is use of the word “*blameless*”. It reveals that Professor Ferriter is a moraliser. “*Blame*” is a moral idea. But the Six Co./Northern Ireland situation is one in which no general morality is functional, because the parties to it live in different moral worlds. Each contributed its bit to causing the War, but in the outcome of the War none dominates the situation, and therefore the situation remains without even the semblance of a general morality.

William King, the great Protestant Archbishop of Dublin during the event which was known for centuries afterwards as *The Revolution* (i.e., William of Orange’s *coup d’etat*), wrote a big book on *The Problem Of Evil*. He concluded that Evil was what obstructed the will. To put it another way: whatever obstructed the will was experienced as Evil.

If the Anglo-Irish are to be regarded as Irish (as Professor Ferriter thinks that they are), then that idea was the high point of Irish philosophy. It was an insight into the way of the world, and was much more useful than the famous Bishop Berkeley conjuring trick which made *matter* seem to disappear.

In 1921 two great bodies of people, which were in intense conflict with each other in the Six Counties, were corralled into a subordinate political entity which was certainly not a State, but at the same time was not merely a form of Local Government. There was nothing for them to do within the corral but continue their antagonism. The will of each was obstructed by the will of the other, and therefore each saw the other as Evil.

The corral was the work of the State—the one and only State: the British one. During the Northern War, the Government of the State summoned up all the disgusting images they could think of to describe the evil of Republicanism. Of course, they usually made a token distinction between the IRA and the “*ordinary decent citizens*” [ODC] of the Catholic community who were allegedly appalled by what was being done in their name. But these ODCs were hard to find anywhere outside Opinion Polls. There were, of course, many who wished that things were otherwise, but there were few who, things being as they were, saw the IRA as Evil.

The Irish State influenced the situation by asserting a right of Sovereignty over the Six County part of the British state, but even more by making arrangements with Catholic Defence Committees in 1969—and reneging on them in 1970.

But, as it was itself in a condition of moral collapse, by reason of the War within the region over which it asserted sovereignty, its will was indefinite and of no real account—just like its History Professors!

“*As a political philosophy unionism did not matter*”! What Unionist philosophy?

What the Ulster Protestants wanted, when they formed themselves into a Unionist movement after 1886, was to remain as they were.

The Anglican Irish, who had ruled Ireland for a century with monopoly powers, had existential problems when their Parliament was abolished in 1800, and existential problems generate philosophy. The Ulster Protestants had lived their own lives for two centuries, by their own resourcefulness, without monopoly privileges and with only mild Penal restrictions imposed on them. They lost nothing when the Protestant Parliament in Dublin was abolished in 1800. They immediately settled down within the unified British state, and they jogged along politically for three generations as Whigs and Tories. Their only political ambition was to continue jogging along.

British party-political divisions are both superficial and all-consuming. Within the system they generate fierce political energy and absorb it all. Looked at analytically from the outside, the differences seem superficial and opportunist. In the Winter of 1885/6, when Parnell was negotiating with the Whig and Tory leaders for a

Home Rule Bill, the Ulster Liberals and Tories had reason to see their party differences in perspective. Neither wanted to be transferred from the routine security of the British state to the confusion of an Irish state-in-the-making.

Parnell had an understanding with the Tories, and had urged the nationalist Irish in England to vote Tory in the 1885 Election, but, after the Election, the Liberals began to bid for his support—he being the kingmaker—as neither Party had gained a majority.

The Ulster branches of the two Parties discussed the situation while the negotiations were going on and agreed that, in the face of a Home Rule Bill, they would set aside their differences and unite against the Bill alongside the Party that opposed it.

Gladstone outbid the Tories for Parnell’s support. And that is how the Liberal/Tory Unionists in Ulster came to be aligned with the Tories rather than the Liberals. That was “*unionist political philosophy*” at the start, and it never changed. It expressed a consensus across the political spectrum that it was good to be part of the British state. It had been content in 1801 to be freed from the aristocratic, Anglican Irish Parliament, even though it was a Protestant Parliament. And it was determined in 1886 not to be brought under a restored Irish Parliament, which would be a Catholic Parliament by virtue of being democratically-based.

“EXCESSIVE CATHOLICISM”

Professor Ferriter holds the South—“*the southern state*”—partly to blame for Partition because of “*its excessive Catholicism*”. By ‘excessive Catholicism’ he means that too many of them were Catholic: 92% in 1926.

If the implication is that it is bad for a state to have such a high percentage of its population having the same religion, that surely is an argument against Partition. Without Partition, there would have been substantial religious diversity. A quarter of the population would have been anti-Catholic, subscribing in one way or another to the belief that the Pope was the Anti-Christ.

What does Professor Ferriter suggest the Catholics might have done to prevent themselves being so numerous? At least four million of them, and probably five or six millions, had been got rid of seventy years earlier by the Providential Famine, and yet they made up 92% of the popula-

tion of the territory designated by Britain to be an Irish state!

There is a delicate aspect to the demographics of the situation. The Catholic population was halved by the Providential scythe during a few years in the 1840s. The remnant then stabilised and organised itself for purposeful political action with the object of freeing itself from the agent of Providence which had wrought such havoc with it.

(It is reasonable to describe Ireland as having been ruled theocratically during the century of the Penal Laws and the Irish Parliament, and for a considerable period after the Act of Union. It was subjected to authoritarian government in the service of Christian Truth, purged by Luther, Calvin and Henry the Eighth of the pagan and idolatrous admixture introduced by Rome. Its propagandists of a later century may say that, behind the appearance of things, in 'reality', it was something altogether different. But it was within the appearances presented as reality at the time in question that people actually lived. And in these appearances Britain depicted itself as the agent of Providence.)

The Catholic population suffered a drastic collapse in its number but that did not prove to be catastrophic to its social existence, as the *Times*, the ruling class paper, expected. The reduced population proved to be more purposeful and energetic than the larger population before 1847 had been.

The survival and development of the Catholic population was an anti-Protestant act. Subjective motivations had nothing to do with this. Catholic survival was anti-Protestant under the terms set by the Protestant state.

The State Protestants—the members of the State Church—were the ruling class (or the ruling caste: there were various classes within it), set in place, with monopoly rights, to rule Ireland on the foundation of the Williamite Conquest of 1690. They had failed to make a go of it. After they had wantonly provoked rebellions in 1798, the Government obliged them, by one means and another, to give up their Parliament and their independent legislative power, and join the homeland Parliament.

(The Government had always been the British Government. The Irish Parliament, though it asserted its complete independence of the British Parliament in 1782, had never formed its own Government. It had maintained throughout the

18th century a relationship of complete alienation between itself and the Catholic population, and it had therefore relied on British power to keep it in place.)

After it was persuaded to give up its Parliament, it eked out its existence by means of the monopoly Protestant institutions of civil society which its Parliament had established. That monopoly was gradually overcome by relentless pressure by the excluded Catholics, in the course of the 19th century. And, as these institutions fell to the Catholic democracy, the Protestant population declined.

The Protestants were not driven out: they left. Ireland was no longer their country. They had ruled it as civilised members of the true religion, but it was falling into the hands of the uncouth masses of Roman idolators and it was galling for them to carry on living on the site of their abysmal failure as a ruling caste.

*

In 1910 the Liberal Government lost two General Elections. It was pledged to legislate for Irish Home Rule. It had won the 1906 Election but had nothing about Home Rule. For the second 1910 Election it made a bargain with the Irish Party. If Redmond would put it in government, and enable it to carry a contentious Budget against the (British) Unionist Opposition, it would introduce and carry through a Home Rule Bill.

Redmond put it in government, and enabled it to carry its Budget, and to reduce the power of the House of Lords, but refused to form a Coalition with it. In return, he got his Home Rule Bill. The Unionist Party held that it was unconstitutional to carry out a major alteration of the Constitution without a Constitutional majority, at the behest of a Party that refused to take part in the Constitutional business of governing the state and whose reason for being in politics was to dismantle the state. It encouraged the formation of a military movement in Ulster to resist the enforcement of a Home Rule Act on the region, but said it would allow the Act to go through if the Liberals called an Election and won it.

“BLATANT REBELLION” IN BRITAIN!

Ferriter, without stating what the Unionist case was, comments:

“This was blatant rebellion, and it was tolerated by British authorities in a manner that did not extend to Irish nationalists pledged through their own

Irish Volunteer organisation to fight for home rule’s imposition...” (p4).

Can a State commit rebellion against itself? That would be a question to keep in mind when considering the Irish ‘Civil’ War.

There was no rebellion in the British state in 1914, even though the Opposition raised a private army and supported the Curragh Mutiny. The Mutiny was defended in Parliament as an act in defence of the Constitution, and a private army was raised in Ulster. Measures to defend the State were not put on a par with measures to break it up.

What excited Britain in the first seven months of 1914 was a serious political disagreement at the highest level of the State. Government and Opposition were evenly balanced within Britain at the start of the dispute over the Home Rule Bill, and the Opposition gained on the Government as the dispute proceeded. There was no lawful authority above Parliament, which could have ruled that the Opposition was in rebellion, and the Government did not dare to move against the Opposition on the strength of Irish nationalist votes.

Two centuries earlier, in 1714, the Whigs (precursors of the Liberals) had enacted a *coup d’etat* against the Tories at the moment of the installing of the new Monarchy, and had carried out some Treason Trials. That was before Parliamentary Sovereignty based on the two-party system was established. If the Liberal Government had tried such a thing in 1914, a possible result would have been civil war.

The Government backed down in the face of the Mutiny. The Army could be needed at any moment for the War against Germany in alliance with France that had been secretly in preparation for about eight years.

The opportunity to launch that War came up about four months later, and was seized upon avidly. But, because of the way the Mutiny had been appeased, the Government was without a War Minister at the critical moment. It was a very sensitive post. There was no immediate replacement from the very limited number of politicians who were in-the-know. The Prime Minister took on the Office himself as a stop gap. The absence of a War Minister, when things began to happen quickly, possibly led to a very different kind of war being fought than what had

been intended—the first war in which Britain militarised its entire population, and destroyed the enemy State, instead of making terms with it.

The British rebellion of 1914 exists only in Ferriter’s imagination.

Professor Ferriter gives no account of how The Border was established through the device of setting up Northern Ireland.

Having ignored Northern Ireland and its implications, he criticises the actions of the Civil Rights Association when the thing was breaking up half a century later:

“The NICRA lashed out at Willie Whitelaw, secretary of state for northern Ireland [after the abolition of Stormont in 1972], for trying to make the border an issue in politics when the real issue should have been democratic rights...” (p85).

The real issue within Northern Ireland could not have been *democratic rights* because democratic rights are viable only within the democratic life of a state, and Northern Ireland was excluded from the political life of the state which held it. The parties of the state did not organise in it or contest elections in it. Its political atmosphere therefore could not be that of a democracy. It was not itself a State. The services of State were supplied to it from Britain, leaving it with nothing to dispute over but the Border.

Whitelaw did a remarkable job, as a Tory aristocrat with an Imperial talent for handling natives, in bringing the SDLP and one of the Unionist Parties, along with the Alliance Party, together to form a kind of weighted-majority power-sharing system under Whitehall supervision. It was wrecked when the Tories lost the 1974 Election and a Labour Party without Imperial skills took over.

Without a restraining hand, the SDLP went wild. The Ulster Workers’ Council was formed and threatened a General Strike if chicanery was not brought to order. The Strike was effective. Both the Labour Government and the devolved Government refused to negotiate. Whitehall then scrapped the Sunningdale system.

That is when the War became the medium of politics. Twenty-four years later, an interim settlement was made between the State and the IRA.

Ferriter makes no mention of the UWC Strike.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Professor Ferriter leaves Northern Ire-

land out of his centenary account of the Border. It appears that, by doing so, he did what prevailing opinion in the South wants. It does not want to think about the mischievous political entity that produced a War out of itself.

There was no need of to set up Northern Ireland in order to enact Partition.

Partition was inevitable, in the sense that all-Ireland government could not have been established without war. But Northern Ireland was not asked for by any party in the North. What the Protestant majority wanted was just to remain part of the British state. If Britain had simply excluded the Six Counties from its *Government of Ireland Act*, the region would have remained within the democracy of the state. The Protestant community would not have had to govern the Catholic community in an isolated political arrangement in order to remain within the state, in a kind of semi-detached set-up.

It was the conflicts and aggravations of the Northern Ireland set-up that brought about the conditions which led to war.

The setting up of Northern Ireland is something to be deplored. Nothing can be said in its favour, either from a democratic or a liberal view. But Ferriter just ignores it. The President dealt with it.

THE PRESIDENT

President Higgins has refused to go North to take part in a religious event celebrating the setting up of Northern Ireland. He is attacked for this by Eilis O’Hanlon, who left the North many years ago, and made a career as an anti-Republican journalist on the *Sunday Independent*. She says that his refusal to celebrate the setting up of a system of undemocratic government that led to war is “*a slap in the face for the Belfast Agreement*” (Sept. 19).

What that Agreement did was acknowledge that Northern Ireland was not a democratic system, and could not be made into one. It abolished the purely formal democracy put in place in 1921, and replaced it with structures which enabled two hostile communities to get on together by keeping each other at a distance, and prevented the majority from dominating by giving a veto to the minority. It is a system which legitimises, and gives orderly expression to “traditional dividing lines”.

The blurb on the article says: “*Diplomacy is about reaching out across traditional dividing lines*”. Diplomacy is actually the art of negotiation between

States, and States are presumed to have conflicting interests.

The event in which President Higgins declined to participate is a celebration in a foreign state of the setting up by that foreign State of a thoroughly bad system of government in its Irish region.

O’Hanlon appears to have a particular *animus* against Northern Republicanism, but, in this instance, her animosity would be more meaningfully directed at the very moderate and conciliatory SDLP, which also refused to take part in commemorating an event whose purpose is to legitimise the establishment of a sectarian sub-state.

She throws in this strange comment:

“Higgins was born in 1941. The country of his birth has never been partitioned. Indeed, there are only a handful of people still alive in Ireland who can claim “their” country was partitioned. The rest grew up on an island that was always divided. And, even if that wasn’t the case, should Palestinians never even acknowledge the existence of Israel.”

Does it really help her case to bring in the Jews, who claimed that Palestine belonged to them, even though they were absent from it for 2,000 years? And it would be problematical for the Palestinians to recognise Israel because it is an ongoing process of colonisation and refuses to define its borders.

President Higgins should be assured by this incoherent rant against him that he did the right thing!

Brendan Clifford

A review of Ferriter’s book on the ‘Civil War’ has had to be held over to next month. Ed.

On-line sales of books,
pamphlets and magazines:

<https://www.athol-books-sales.org>

Trade As A Weapon

From long-standing penalties imposed on Russia, Syria, and Zimbabwe to more recent punishments meted out to Myanmar, Nicaragua, and Saudi Arabia, economic sanctions, according to Daniel Drezner, have become the United States' "go-to solution for nearly every foreign policy problem" (*The United States of Sanctions*).

My own view is that, as a practical matter, free trade is actually a coercive weapon central to US foreign policy. There is an economic theory of Free Trade (Ricardo and all of that), but that is not what free trade in reality is at all about. It is about foreign policy, currently US policy and central to the policy is the use of the embargo (as in the cases of Cuba and Iran, for example, and also against individuals in Russia).

The global standing of the greenback, including as a settlement and reserve currency, greatly empowers the US policy through the control it can exercise on commercial banks and Central Banks around the world. Governments and their Central Banks go along with this—as is most evident in the case of the EU and its Central Bank, the ECB, along with its currency, the euro: Significantly, Europe has refused to make that currency a reserve or settlement currency globally. The Brits have the Old Lady and Sterling, which continue to play a minor role—but under American license and the Brits know it. They have not forgotten the Suez Crisis, during which that bit of adventurism by Britain, France and Israel was swiftly halted by the American threat to facilitate a run on the pound, to bring about a full-blown Sterling Crisis.

Double Taxation

It turns out there is quite an amount about the wheeze, if one wants to call it that, including that the Irish authorities closed down the structure some years ago (2018 to be precise). Here are a few selected links on the subject—one could compile forever:

<https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=9c83aecd-b9ce-4a93-9151-224cc5a2f8fa>

<https://transferpricingnews.com/ireland-malta-close-single-malt-tax-avoidance-structure/>

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/business/economy/arid-40698218.html>

<https://www.thejournal.ie/single-malt-tax-evasion-3698512-Nov2017/>

Essentially it seems the structure is like all of these arrangements. You (the Multi-National Corporation, MNC) split and separate out and domicile your operations to fit the project of paying the lowest profit tax possible in the aggregate, but also facilitating dividends. The Irish tax rate helps but, as I have always emphasised, it is the maze of Double Taxation agreements that the Irish have negotiated with tax authorities throughout the world and the scope of these agreements that really matters.

In the case of the 'single malt', the corporate split its Irish subsidiary entity into two vehicles, one operational (in Ireland) and the other 'management' (making all the key financial decisions) and incorporated in Malta. (It is doubtful whether it even had a bodily existence in Malta.) This seems to have allowed the operating Irish subsidiary (in a low tax jurisdiction) to book its accounting profits to its 'management' 'owner' in no-tax Malta and, given the existence of the Irish/Malta double taxation treaty, 'bob's your uncle' as they say. This was shut down allegedly, in 2018, but Abbott (and how many others!) have found a way around the closed door and within the law. That is as I understand it.

I make two points (or maybe three): the Irish double taxation maze is central to how the MNCs house, domicile, book and conduit their incomes and costs (and not simply their profits).

Second, there is to my mind no way around this—within the global corporate system combined with competing governments and international tax treaties. It is simply a capitalist Great Game.

And third, it is not simply about profit and tax, maximising the former and minimising the latter. It is about avoiding and evading any corporate responsibility at all—at all. James Hardy is a gigantic Australian corporation. Since the 1930s (maybe even the '20s), it has dodged every duty and responsibility as regards the raw material it used (and uses), the products it made (and makes), and the consequences for their workers and their health and the users and end-users of their ranges of products. Hardy effectively invented asbestos mining and products for the building industry, for use in the

home and in commercial and industrial buildings. Hardy has been faced with walls and torrents of litigation everywhere relating to its products and materials. In order to protect itself and its shareholders and wealth (accumulation), it has in recent decades pursued a policy of splitting itself into various entities (operating companies, management companies and parents) domiciled around the world. All of this activity is not to dodge tax but to try and escape liabilities (but you might argue that's much the same thing in essence).

My point is that there is not a shade of difference between the Hardy shuffle and the Irish malt. Hardy has moved its 'parent' entity around the world—and guess where it is now for the moment domiciled restfully (again for the moment). Well, Ireland!

Big business everywhere has governments in its grasp. The current OECD political shunting is a stunt, intended to be nothing other than optical and an illusion aimed at deluding punters. Usually aimed at deluding voters are the machinations of governments—as in 'shutting down' tax manipulation, the domiciling of income and costs, the splitting of entities and the creation of fictions such as intellectual property.

The Irish are pretty much open about all of this - if also adventurous and aggressive in pursuing double taxation treaties and combining this with a very aggressive pursuit of FDI aimed at a particular segment of global corporates. The Irish are relatively clean but lots of others (the French, Brits, Dutch and so on) are from mildly to utterly, corrupt.

Feargus O Roghallaigh

Working For A Multi-national !

A CSO analysis shows that, while 250,000 people work for foreign multi-nationals in Ireland, globally over 1.2m people abroad work for Irish-based multinationals or their subsidiaries. A very significant statistic. Biggest holdings are in the UK and US, but these are also scattered across Europe, China etc.

Sunday Business Post: <https://www.businesspost.ie/almost-12m-people-working-for-irish-multinationals-abroad-9c54ccc8>

Contributed by **Philip O'Connor**

The Atom Bomb

The Japanese scientist would know that, especially in time of war, that other Powers would be developing the bomb.

When the two bombs dropped on Japan, the country was, more or less, already defeated. The Red Army was in the Kuril Islands, Northern Japan (which they still hold today). The Soviets had already defeated the Japanese in Manchuria without any remarkable loss of life. While the US claimed they dropped the bombs to save thousands of US lives, the fact is that it was taking no prisoners, except a few for the cameras and that made the Japanese Army fight to the end. They had nothing to lose. The Japanese were then labelled fanatical. Civilians threw themselves off cliffs in some of the islands because of the fear of the coming massacres.

The Soviets, on the other hand, converted their Japanese prisoners en-masse to Communism. Watching news reel films in 1946, I remember the ship-loads of prisoners returning to Japan with them giving the clenched-fist salute. There was alarm in US-controlled Japan and a lot of haste to mirror Communism in Japanese society—jobs for life was one, with the companies paying the health bills of its employees.

When the Soviet Union was given away by naive Gorbachev, this mirror was smashed, and mass redundancies occurred, with no health or social welfare to fall back on.

The dropping of the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki stills stands as a war crime against the civilian population. The US claim at the time was that these two cities were chosen because of their large Catholic populations, that they were showing the world they had no racist prejudices, by not dropping them on Shinto/Buddhist cities. The US has come up with more justifications since: saying these two cities were military targets. Their excuse was that they were militarised, but all cities in time of war have certain characteristics, like air-raid defences and barracks.

You could have atom-bombed Belfast on those grounds.

Wilson John Haire

Casement: A Reply To Professor Ferriter

The following letter to the *Irish Times* was not published

Professor Ferriter's article on Casement (17 September) calls for some corrections so that your readers are not misinformed.

Casement's 'descent from consular service and knighthood to traitor...' had no effect on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* which was first published in 1899, seventeen years before Casement was arrested & tried.

The locution 'rubber plantation workers' is wholly misleading since the natives were unpaid forced labour therefore slaves; there were no cultivated plantations - simply rubber trees growing wild.

'His petition for clemency' - Casement made no such petition. Others did on his behalf.

The wholly unverified assertion 'The discovery after his arrest of his Black Diaries ...' is seriously misleading. This alleged 'discovery' is what has been disputed for so long. It is a documented fact that British officials recorded seven conflicting versions of the diaries' provenance. How can Professor Ferriter assert this 'discovery after his arrest'?

The 2002 Giles Report is described as 'forensic' which means it was prepared to court standards. But it was not and was not intended for presentation in court. It was no more than the opinion of one expert instructed privately to carry out a comparative handwriting examination. Two US experts were very critical of its shortcomings.

Professor Ferriter cites Vargas Llosa as an authority on the diaries; 'Writing what he hadn't experienced in order to pretend he had.' This delusional behaviour would indicate mental illness which somehow went undetected by friends and colleagues over many years. Llosa was convinced of the diaries' authenticity on the grounds that forgery could not have been done in the short time between their alleged 'discovery' on 25th April and early May when he believes the diaries were shown. However the diaries were not shown in May because they were not discovered in April or at any other time.

Professional historians are obliged to keep up to date with recent research if only to avoid recycling past errors and misinformation. On this topic, Professor Ferriter is not up to date.

Paul R. Hyde

**The following letter to the *Irish Times* was published
on 22nd September**

Roger Casement

In his article ("Casement's good reputation has so far weathered the era of cancellation", September 17th) Diarmaid Ferriter omitted a significant aspect of the Casement story; his active dissent, both before and during the first World War, against British foreign policy in relation to Germany.

In this he was at one with his old comrade from the campaign to expose the enslavement, with attendant atrocities, of native peoples in the Congo. This was the man who along with Casement founded the Congo Reform Association; the journalist ED Morel.

The *Crime against Europe* (1915) by Casement and *Truth and the War* (1916) by Morel are two books with a similar overall view; by way of secret diplomatic agreements Britain had destabilised the relationships between the European powers making war an imminent possibility.

Could Casement's dissident stance at such a crucial point in history have contributed to a need in certain quarters for his legacy and reputation to be undermined?

Tim O'Sullivan,

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

Sustainability and Digitalisation

These are the buzz-words among journalists and article-writers as we come out of the lockdown era. Some Eurocrats are saying austerity was a mistake and some are saying the lockdowns were not necessary and have caused too much damage to EU economies. And now, to get things going again, we must aim for sustainability and digitalisation. One financial magazine has devoted almost a whole issue to these two new goals, which we must all be directed towards, as if we are a flock of sheep to be herded.

One of the articles in the magazine is, entitled '*Sustainability Taxation in 2021*', and it is based on an unsubstantiated statement:

"The speed of climate change is due to the reliance of humans on fossil fuels which emit vast amounts of carbon into the atmosphere as well as activities such as agriculture and deforestation which enhance the detrimental impact of such carbon emissions."

There is no scientific evidence that any human activity causes climate change. Environmental damage, yes. Climate change, no!

There is solid scientific evidence from geological samples covering hundreds of thousands of years that climate change is a force of nature, which is constantly happening to our world. There is no mystery about it. It has always happened, without human intervention, and there is nothing we can do to stop it. So there is no point in getting upset about it.

We can do something for ourselves and that is to stop building cities and towns at sea level. If people believe in climate change, and they should, then they should build their homes higher up on the hills. Simple! Building cities near sea-level is just asking for trouble in the future.

Incidentally, just how little our activities affect the climate is exemplified by all the grey clouds over us for the past two

or three months. These are mostly the result of wildfires in Oregon and Idaho in the USA, which are putting enormous amounts of CO₂ into our atmosphere. This results in a huge growth in Ireland of trees, bushes, grass and other green plants, which are thriving on the CO₂.

All the buses, trucks and cars in the world could not produce so much CO₂ so quickly. Also, there are always volcanoes around the world spewing up CO₂ and other gases and there is nothing we can do about it. The EU cannot cap a volcano!

The EU can do something about the environment and can influence national governments to do something substantial.

One substantial thing is to get rid of, or greatly reduce, corruption in the planning and development of new buildings, so that Planning Permission is not given for buildings in areas where services are not yet available.

The recent bacterial poisoning cases in Gorey, Co. Wexford, and in Dublin, were caused by new buildings being given Planning Permission and being connected up to the Sewerage Treatment System. However, the Treatment System was not big enough to deal with the extra sewerage. The Planners knew this and granted the Planning Permission anyway. This sort of conduct has to be stopped if we are to get anywhere in protecting the environment and protecting ourselves.

There is much talk about building more houses, but such talk is futile until government devotes substantially more money to building much more waste water treatment works. If these services are built, the houses will follow and that would be sustainable development.

Digitalisation

The amazing thing, to me, about computers is the way they can turn Disciples, who use the computers, into Apostles who actively promote the use of computers for every possible purpose — even where pre-computer systems are quite adequate.

The Apostles are preaching digitalisation as the answer to every problem. And these Apostles are quite intolerant of any views different from their gospel. You don't dare to suggest that maybe, just maybe, they are going down the wrong road. They speak in savage terms, such as: are you a disrupter or a disrupted? Being a *disrupter* is supposed by them to be the height of ambition. And, if you allow yourself to be one of the *disrupted*, you are

an object of scorn and derision and you will be cancelled — not being worthy of any further attention from them. Their arrogant attitude is their most prominent characteristic and "*by this shall you know them*".

In fact, apostolic computer people are the worst enemies of our environment today. By far worse than any other group of humans. They frequently change their equipment, nothing but the very latest computer and computerised gadgets will do. Not for them a washing machine which washes the clothes. Oh no, they have to have the latest computerised washing machine, which is connected to the *Internet of Things*. It must have micro chips and a multiplicity of programmes — most of which they will never use.

The big environmental problem is that these devices cause enormous waste of valuable resources — in their manufacture, in their operations and in their eventual demise.

Microchips use minerals for which thousands of people have died — in Afghanistan, just to mention one place.

Also the mining of minerals, such as cobalt for microchips, in the Democratic Republic of Congo is operated in inhuman conditions which Roger Casement would recognise.

The seams of cobalt are so narrow that they can only be mined by young children in appalling conditions.

Then there is all the plastic. All the plastic!

Plastic is mainly made from chemical products of coal and mineral oil. Not green by any stretch of the imagination.

And *The Cloud*! Whoever thought up this Orwellian name for warehouses packed full of hot (as in hot!) computers was a marketing genius, but he or she did no service to the environment. The warehouses are enormous consumers of electric power and this is not green power because most of Ireland's electricity is generated from coal, gas and oil.

The Government of Ireland just like Governments everywhere is allowing and even encouraging, a crisis to build up. The consumption of electricity by cloud computing warehouses plus electric cars and buses is peaking so much this coming winter that there is real danger of electricity outages — the generation capacity cannot cope.

It does not stack up! When will someone in government shout STOP!

Michael Stack ©

LABOUR continued

it. And perhaps even Mr. de Valera will take steps to purify Fianna Fail by interesting himself in Mr. MacEntee's record—which, as far as 1916 is concerned, is well known to the people of Dundalk.

R. J. CONNOLLY.

(On Wednesday, 4th February, 1948, the General Election returns resulted thus: Fianna Fail: 68 seats; Fine Gael: 31; Labour: 14; National Labour: 5; Clann na Poblachta: 10; Clann na Talmhan: 7; Independents and others: 12 seats. The 147 newly elected members of the 13th Dáil assembled on 18th February when the First Inter-Party Government in the history of the Irish state was appointed, following 16 years of Fianna Fail power.

Sean MacEntee took the second seat of three in Dublin South-East for Fianna Fail. Roddy Connolly took the third and final seat in Louth for Labour.

Of the five candidates singled out in Sean MacEntee's letter, four were elected TDs.

• Robert (Bob) Day (c.1879-1949) Born Kilgarvan, Co. Kerry. He came to Cork at an early age. Worked for a laundry company and following the death at Ballykinlar Internment Camp in Co. Down, of Tadhg Barry, Bob Day became Branch Secretary of the ITGWU in 1921. In the same year, as an Alderman of Cork Corporation, he led the 'take-over' of the Cork Harbour Board—an episode which secured a minimum wage for dock workers.

He stood as a Labour candidate in the General Election of 1922 and topped the poll for the four-seat Cork city constituency, with 6,836 first preferences. The following year, he lost the seat, polling 1,431 first preferences, his running mate, dock worker William (Bill) Kenneally, polled 1,358 first preferences.

Bob Day was crippled by arthritis: he was a complete invalid before the age of 40. He died on May Day, 1949.

“Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland”

“Connolly's campaign, however, was soon to be ambushed by a Red scare,

courtesy Sean MacEntee. In a secret government memo MacEntee had earlier described Connolly as a 'Marxian materialist' and a 'God hater'. Now, with polling day near and Fianna Fail concerned that it might be about to lose power, he decided on a more public attack. Along with fellow Labour candidates, young Jim Larkin, Sean Dunne, George Pollock and Clann na Poblachta hopeful Peadar Cowan, Connolly's communist past was laid in minute detail. For good measure, MacEntee threw in a spurious claim that Connolly in 1940 had tried to set up a 'militant labour organisation known as the Irish Citizen Army', the better to indicate that he was still involved in such subversive activity. The inclusion of Cowan in the MacEntee hit list was undoubtedly due to the fears felt in Fianna Fail circles about the possibility of a Labour/Clann na Poblachta alliance. MacEntee concluded by describing that planned alliance as one that was influenced by Communist policy, asking was it simply by chance that it had been Connolly who had devised it.

“Connolly in his reply outlined some of his involvements with republicans during 1919-23 [See Above Letter], ... inspired by his father's lifework, which was to 'unite the forces of Labour and Republicanism', and had not been directed by an 'external source'.

“The business become more scurrilous, however, when the [Catholic] Standard intervened. Along with several others, Connolly was asked in the form of an open letter if he had ever been a member or an officer of the CPI, and if the answer was yes, was he now prepared to repudiate communism. Connolly dismissed the questions as 'daft' but did say he was not a communist, before concluding with the rather strange comment that 'MacEntee as a formentor of public disorder bears all the hall-marks of one'.

“Connolly also took some revenge on MacEntee in a letter that went unpublished by the Irish Press but which was later printed in the Irish People. In it he effectively accused MacEntee of cowardice following the Rising in 1916. Connolly quoted a paragraph from the 17 June 1917 edition of the Dundalk Examiner. This carried a statement from MacEntee apparently pleading in court that he had only discovered after the Rising that the activity he had been involved in was a rebellion against the Crown; he had not been aware beforehand of any of the plans 'for the late unfortunate insurrection'. MacEntee maintained that there had been

no desire on his behalf to 'assist the enemy' because England in recent years 'had done much to improve my country'. He also pointed out that he had applied for a commission in the British army but 'owing to the difficulty of getting to Mallow, the application fell through'. (*Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland*, Charlie McGuire, Cork University Press, 2008, pp197-199.)

(MacENTEE, Sean (1889-1984).

Born in Belfast, qualified as an electrical engineer. His initial political involvement was with James Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party. He was condemned to death for his part in the 1916 Rising but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, released in the general amnesty in 1917. Member in the First Dail, fought on the anti-Treaty side. A founder of Fianna Fail. He was Minister for Finance 1932-1943, again 1951. “He was a very tough political fighter much feared by opponents. His early radicalism rapidly disappeared and he was one of the most conservative F.F. ministers, especially on economic and welfare issues” (*Modern Irish Lives, Dictionary of 20th-century Biography*, Louis McRedmond, 1998). “His Poems (1918) showed genuine poetic quality”: Henry Boylan.

(CONNOLLY, Roddy (1901-1980).

Took part in the 1916 Rising. Imprisoned for a short time. Member of the Socialist Party of Ireland (1917-1921). Helped form the first Communist Party in Ireland (1921-1924), and was Editor of the party journal. Sent to Russia to affiliate the party to the Communist International. Met Lenin and Zinoviev. 1926 helped form the Workers' Party of Ireland. In 1934, he participated in the Republican Congress. Joined the Labour Party in 1927. TD for Louth 1943-44 and 1948-51, Senator 1975-77; Chairman Labour Party 1971-78.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“One senior foreign affairs source claimed that, when it came to Ms. Zapone's UN post, "there was absolutely no enthusiasm for this appointment".

“The last thing senior diplomats wanted 'was some LGBT version of Angela Lansbury in Murder She Wrote wandering around with a badge poking her nose in'.”

“ 'Why would they need someone who needed an introduction to Samantha Power?' ” (*Daily Mail*, Dublin edition, 20.9.2021).

LABOUR continued

Workers, an organisation which in 1946, was founded by Mr. Norton's party and for which Mr. Norton in Dail Eireann accepted full responsibility.

Not alone was Mr. J. Larkin, Junior, its first President, but Mr. Pollock was its first organiser.

This Federation, as is well known, was most active in promoting unrest and discontent among workers engaged on the production of commodities essential to the life of the people in a time of national emergency.

It fomented strikes of agricultural labourers during the critical harvest of 1946 and was responsible also for the 1946 strike in Sugar Factories, which endangered the country's sugar supply, and for the strikes in the turf camps in 1947. The Federation, in fact, represents the practical application here of the policy dictated by the Communist International in the letter brought to this country by the Federation's first President, Mr. J. Larkin, Jun., in 1930, that:

"...the question of work among the agricultural labourers and poor peasants is extremely important for the revolutionary proletariat movement in such a country as Ireland, and requires the closest attention from the Communists..."

"For the time being it is necessary to attain the organisational forms which were already developed in the selection of delegates to the European Peasant Conference..."

The European Peasant movement had an Irish Section the "Irish Working Farmers", whose successor was Mr. MacBride's "Saor Eire", so that Mr. Pollock has had good company in the field of attempted Bolshevisation in Irish rural workers.

Mr. Donal MacGregor, Organising Secretary of the Dublin Executive of Mr. Norton's Party, has also a political history of interest to Mr. Norton in his present mood:

1936—Chairman of the Young Communist League in Dublin.

1936—Mr. MacGregor was sent to England by the Secretariat of the Communist Party of Ireland to study the methods of the British Young Communist League.

1947—Member of the Dublin Constituencies Council of Mr. Norton's Party, in company with Mr. Larkin and others of note.

1948—Election agent for Mr. Norton's candidates, Messrs Deasey and Heery, in Dublin South (West).

When is Mr. Norton going to use his Samsonic strength to bring down these Communistic pillars of his Party?—

Yours.

SEAN MacENTEE.

28th January, 1948.

To the Editor, *The Irish Press.*

Dear Sir,—That man, MacEntee again! Had he not ample time, and scope, during the elections of 1943 and 1944, to direct to me his accusations or, in the language of Mr. MacEntee understands better, his mud-slinging? Why betray the Irish people for five years at concealing the truth for so long?

Without files for reference as to exact dates, I can state positively that some twenty-five years ago I resigned from a small Communist group in Dublin with which Mr. MacEntee and other noble names had associations. At that time its paper, "Workers' Republic", was the only anti-treaty organ before "An Poblacht" was issued. One issue of this Communist organ carried a full page reprint of the Proclamation of 1916, with the heading "is this another scrap of paper", or words to that effect. Mr. MacEntee paid me cash for that issue, and had it distributed outside Earlsfort Terrace during the treaty debates. He circulated the Communist organ, which act evidently, which according to his "splurge" tactics damns him as a Communist fellow-traveller, or forerunner.

If Mr. MacEntee looks up my service record on the files of the Department of Defence, he will involve some of his Fianna Fail colleagues in the mess that he is busily stirring up as an outcome of his lack of faith in fair play as a means of winning for his side.

In Berlin, a colleague of Mr. MacEntee and myself co-operated with several prominent I.R.A. officers on business of national importance.

Going back further, I co-operated with Dr. P. MacCartan in Moscow. We did what we considered the best way to establish Irish Republicanism at one phase of our history and of defeating the iniquitous Treaty at the other.

In the Civil War, I collaborated with Erskine Childers in the Wood Printing Works when he was getting out "An Poblacht", and I was issuing the "Workers' Republic". On orders from Liam Mellows, I reported to Findlaters, and fought under Oscar Traynor. I don't remember him questioning a son of James Connolly on where he stood in the struggle for an Irish Republic.

Nor did Sean T. O'Kelly, or Austin Stack ask for my bona-fides when they sent me to Cork to get the late Deputy Day (without records to hand, I can't be certain of the name) [See Below] to assist in the setting up of a Council of State with Comdt.-Gen. Liam Lynch, and to bring a well-known Communist Sean McLoughlin, over specially from England to assist the Republican forces in the field.

And de Valera, with his gun strapped to his thigh, when he was O/C Operations on Seamus Robinson's staff, as I saw him in Clonmel, didn't seem to mind the "Communists" of those days helping him to carry on a Civil War, sent the then so-called Communist, Roddy Connolly, to organise the Kildare constituency for Tom Harris, T.D., and Domhnal O Buachalla, the first Fianna Fail Governor-General.

If I was good enough for Sinn Fein then, I'm good enough for Labour now. I'm too busy to go into further details. Let me say that it is a lie to state that I lectured in Great Strand Street in 1935. I am not aware of any attempt to start the I.C.A. in 1940, and I certainly did not work with any members of the Central Branch to this end. This is another damnable lie. The records of the Department of Justice should prove it and perhaps Gerry Boland will be fair enough to tell MacEntee so publicly.

As for my campaign for a combination of Labour and the two Clanns, to form a progressive People's Government, the idea originated in my mind without suggestion from any external source and its only inspiration lay in my father's life work, consecrated by his death, to unite the forces of Labour and Republicanism in Ireland as the only motive force for progress in this country.

Finally, for a positive statement. Since its formation I have been a member of the Labour Party and no other party. I am not a Communist. This may not please Mr. MacEntee, but that doesn't worry me.

If Mr. Norton [Leader of the Labour Party] thinks my statements are satisfactory, I will continue fighting for Labour. If not, I'll resign from the party to "purify"

continued on page



LABOUR

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The 1948 Dail Election

Letters to the Editor:

The Irish Press, 29th January, 1948

*(General Election:
February 4, 1948)*

LABOUR PARTY AND COMMUNISM

To the Editor,
The Irish Press.

Sir—Both the “Irish Independent” and *The Irish Press* published last Friday, the following statement by Mr. Norton:

“The Irish Labour Party will use all its strength to ensure that Communism will not stain the political and religious life of the Irish people.”

At the moment I’m concerned only with the political aspect of Mr. Norton’s statement and in that regard I wrote a letter, published in to-day’s issue of your paper, which gave Mr. Norton an opportunity of developing his theme and showing how in fact his party would deal with the Communist menace. I may say that the “*Irish Independent*” deliberately refused to publish a similar letter.

May I ask Mr. Norton, through your columns, to say how he will apply this new attitude of his to the following further problem, which sits on his doorstep.

Mr. George Pollock, once I understand, known as George McLay, is National Organiser of Mr. Norton’s Party, Correspondence Secretary of the Dublin Executive of that Party, and member of no less than three of its branches.

He is also a candidate for Mr. Norton’s Party in Monaghan. Mr. Pollock’s political history in this country should, to put it mildly, disturb one who is as anxious as Mr. Norton professes to be to check Communism’s advance in our “political and religious life”.

1921—Editor of “Workers’ Republic,” official organ of the Communist Party of Ireland, which had just then been formed.

1922—Mr. Pollock went with Mr. R. J. Connolly (also of Mr. Norton’s Party) to Moscow to represent the Communist Party

of Ireland at the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International.

1923—Member for Education on the Executive of the Communist Party of Ireland.

1926-1927—Mr. Pollock with Mr. R. J. Connolly, founded the Communist “Workers’ Party of Ireland”, becoming Chairman of its Provisional Executive Committee. I showed in my previous letter how this organisation’s application to the Communist International was rejected on what might be called technical grounds, and how “Comrade R. J. Connolly” resigned rather than give even the impression of disobedience to the International. Mr. Pollock (who is described in the “Workers’ Republic” account of the proceedings as “Comrade George McLay”) took a different course from Mr. Connolly on that occasion, but he made it clear that:

“He wished to contradict the statement that the Communist International resolution had not been accepted” (“*Workers’ Republic*,” 2nd April, 1927).

Some of Mr. Pollock’s subsequent history has been touched on in letters from other correspondents, particularly those who broke from Mr. Norton’s Party and the “Red” dominated Unions in order to preserve the independence of the real Irish Labour movement.

One of the most significant features of his recent history, to my mind, is his association with the Federation of Rural

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