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Afghanistan

The Irish representative on the United Nations Security Council condemned the overthrow of the democratically-elected Government of Afghanistan by the Taliban.

A reactionary back-bench Labour MP in Britain, who is a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Norman Stringer, said, in an interview on Sky News on August 13th:

“I don't think we should have been there for the last twenty years. It has been a disaster for the people of Afghanistan. It has been a disaster for the British troops—more than 400 died and many more have come back maimed mentally and physically. We went in there originally to catch Bin Laden. We didn't catch him. And there has been terrible mission creep. It has been stated that we went there to introduce democracy, stabilise the country, defeat the Taliban, give better education to women. And that's an indication that we really didn't know what we were doing. And we left after 20 years, coming out as quickly as possible—

Sky: But nevertheless we were there for 20 years... You're saying we should get out as quickly as possible, but getting out as quickly as possible is exactly what we're doing now, and exactly what is proving to be a complete dismal failure. The Taliban are making huge strides across the country.

Stringer: I think whenever we got out it was going to be fraught. The Government that's in place is corrupt, it's not supported in any sense by the military forces in Afghanistan, or by the people of Afghanistan. So there was always going to be chaos when we left. It would have been better had we left before. A quarter of a million lives have been lost. Staying in Afghanistan for 20 years just led from one crisis to another, and many people dying and being maimed. We're getting out now. It won't be pleasant getting out. But at least we are getting out.”

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Desmond Fennell

More Memories

Desmond Fennell was an interesting person, and Brendan Clifford's recollections (“*Remembering Desmond Fennell*”, *Irish Political Review*, August 2021) do him justice. I hope mine may be of some interest also. I met him in different circumstances, and I became interested in a somewhat different though related aspect of his thinking.

We met in the early 1990s in a wine bar called *La Cave* in South Anne Street in Dublin, where I was regularly involved in a Sunday night poetry session run by Christopher Daybell, William Kennedy and Kate O'Shea. Christopher, who had got the event going, was the leading street poet in Dublin. When in love, which was most of the time with short breaks, he could come out with some fine lines. Or when he imagined himself as some famous person of the past, say the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, campaigning by the Danube and writing his philosophical thoughts when the day's work was done:

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A Brief History of Irish Corporation Tax

Joseph Stalin believed that nationalism was the ideology of the emerging bourgeoisie. This new class needed the State to protect the domestic economy from foreign competition so that it could conquer the home market. If in his last days the Soviet leader had looked at Ireland (turning the tables on the *Skibbereen Eagle!*), he would have noticed that in the 1950s a national

bourgeoisie had failed to emerge.

There were a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, the impetus for the national revolution was political and cultural rather than economic?

Secondly, the existing Protestant bourgeoisie with its connections to Britain hindered the emergence of a new bourgeoisie.

Thirdly, the free movement of Labour

between the Republic and Britain meant that wages were higher than was warranted by the Republic's productive resources, making it difficult for native industry to develop.

The political Establishment must have thought that, if it could not create a native bourgeoisie, it might at least be possible to bring forth a proletariat. The necessary concomitant of capital would be attracted from abroad.

The attraction of foreign capital to the Republic meant the complete abandonment of protectionist policies. No foreign

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

War With Everybody

The Nation

Thomas Davis (back page)

identified as the priestcraft of the Roman Church. When Cromwell landed in Ireland, he told the Irish he would bring them freedom by abolishing the Mass. But now an English War Minister admits that there is no English Freedom lurking in other peoples and needing only a nudge from Britain to express itself. Those other peoples simply lack the potential to live in the English way. They can only be managed into compliance with it.

The liberal-democratic regime in Afghanistan, that has now disappeared like snow off a ditch at a touch of the sun, was a kind of Potemkin Village. Potemkin was Catherine the Great's Minister. When Catherine wanted to see the country that she governed as an Enlightened despot, he arranged for a series of villages filled with happy peasants to be constructed for her to see.

The NATO Occupation constructed a thin sliver of Western life in Afghanistan. It was never more than a border around the Occupation. It had no organic connection with the life of the country. The Taliban remained the major presence in three-quarters of the country, waiting for NATO to stop bombing so that normal life could be resumed.

The NATO project in Afghanistan was not to liberate the Afghan people. Liberation could only mean enabling them to live even more freely according to their own desires. In the mouth of NATO, "*the Afghan people*" was an imperialist ideological project. The way that the actual peoples of Afghanistan lived was unacceptable to NATO minds. It was scandalous. It was an intolerable affront to an orderly world.

For Britain, the war it took part in twenty years ago was the Fourth Afghan War. The First had been about a century and a half earlier. The Afghans had proved to be unimprovable. They wouldn't take a hint. So now a proper job was going to be done on them. The whole force of the Free World was going to be applied to them. They were going to be liberated from themselves and remade into the kind of people that they ought to be.

But once again they seem to have escaped back into themselves. And it is NATO that is taking on the appearance of being a Doll's House—a plaything of the United States.

Britain is disgruntled. The House of Commons assembled itself in the middle of what in better times was known as

We inquired about the '*democratically-elected Government*', mentioned by the Irish representative on the Security Council. It was elected by less than a twentieth of the adult population.

Government and Opposition between them polled about a million and a half votes in a population of about 20 million.

That was the extent of the democratic facade established by the NATO Occupation. It melted away when the Occupation Force decided to stop bombing the country and let the issue be decided by internal Afghan forces.

The British Defence Minister, Ben Wallace, made a remarkable statement on August 17th:

"I'm absolutely worried that failed states are breeding grounds for those type of people [i.e., the Taliban]. It's why I said I felt it was not the right time or decision to make, because of course Al Qaeda will probably come back... Failed states around the world lead to instability, lead to insecurity, a threat to us and our interests. We're very clear

about that. That's why the West has to learn that you don't fix problems; you manage problems. You have to go into a country, if that's what you're going to do, and you manage it. There's no such thing as an instant fix."

This is a tacit admission that the people of the world are not yearning to live life in the British way, and that all that needs to be done is set up British-type institutions for them and tell them to get on with it. It is a rejection of the assumption underlying British progressive ideology that the English way of life arises directly out of human nature, and that, if other peoples are not living life as the English do, it can only be because evil forces are oppressing them. Brush aside those evil forces, and the world will become English.

That is the Cromwellian view, given classical expression by Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Milton (the poet) in his *Address To Parliament* in 1641: "*Let not England forget her precedence of teaching nations how to live*".

In Milton's day the force of Evil was

the *Silly Season*—the season for grouse shooting, when politics was on ‘Hold’ and any nonsense could be uttered—in order to hold an Emergency Debate on the Afghan crisis. It found that it had nothing to say.

It knew that what it should be saying was that, with the USA reneging on its moral obligations, the moment had come for Britain to reassert itself as a Global Power in the business of civilising the uncivilised world. But nobody said it.

An article in *The Times* (August 16) said: “*Six decades after Suez, we remain impotent in the face of US policy*”. That Suez affair happened 65 years ago. Baathist Egypt, under Nasser, had taken State power from the British Ambassador. (The official British position had been that Egypt was an independent state, governed according to helpful advice from the British Ambassador.)

Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. Britain declared that act to be illegal, and described the Egyptian Government as Fascist. It made laborious preparations for War on Egypt, and entered into a secret war conspiracy with France and Israel.

The Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, had been an early anti-Fascist in the 1930s. He seemed to believe that the World War launched by Britain in 1939 was a war on Fascism. He made a pretty good case that a Fascist movement was in power in Egypt, and that, in making war on it, he was doing what should have been done with Germany in 1933. But the United States had not made war on Fascism at all in 1939. It had entered the European War a couple of years later for altogether different reasons.

For the second time in a generation, it had saved Britain from having to call off its war on Germany and make terms—which to the British mind would have been “*surrender*”—and enabled it, or forced it, to scramble back onto the Continent after three years’ absence, at a time when the Soviet Union was making huge advances against Hitler. But it was understood that America saved the British Empire only to dismantle it to its own advantage.

Freely-operating Capitalism in a democratic political medium was restored in Western Europe on foundations provided by the USA, after Fascist State power was broken by Communist Russia. This Anglo-European freedom was a dependency of the US. When Britain sought to reinforce its Empire with another war on Fascism in Egypt, the US brought it to heel by threatening to wreck its currency.

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A tale of two annexations - *Crimea and the Golan Heights*

The EU was silent for 28 years of Armenian occupation of Karabakh despite four 1993 UN Security Council Resolutions. Now, after Azerbaijan implemented international law through force, the EU is resurrecting the occupier through massive subventions to Armenia and Macron is making statements in favour of the erstwhile occupation.

Although the EU has made it clear it doesn’t support Israel’s presence in the Golan Heights, there have been no sanctions and no major condemnations. Yet, the second Russia had signed into law Crimea’s status as a federal subject, bureaucrats were dusting off their fountain pens and preparing to sign tough measures into law to punish Moscow.

Patrick Walsh

The Henry Kissinger Chair

The name Bew came up recently and many wondered, with some anxiety, if there could be yet another Bew. Unfortunately yes. He is John Bew, son of Baron Bew, a British historian, Professor of Irish politics and peer.

John Bew is a Professor of History and Foreign Policy at Kings College, London. From 2013-2014, he held the Henry A. Kissinger Chair at the John W. Kluge Centre at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. This Chair has to do with foreign policy and international relations. It is awarded annually. It claims to be non-partisan in its world outlook. But in reality it is part of the US policy of deciding what happens in the world, and that decision, in its most naked reality, is violence against nations that don’t agree with them.

Kissinger, as National Security Advisor, ran the covert *US Strategic Air Command* on tactical bombing, under its name of *Operation Menu*, from 18th March, 1969 – 26th May, 1970. It covered Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. In Cambodia 600,000—mostly civilians—lost their lives. As for Laos: more bombs fell on that small nation than the US dropped during the whole of WW2. Farmers were forced to tend their fields at night to avoid being targeted by the US bombers. Cooking also had to wait for night as a puff of smoke was liable to be answered by a cluster bomb.

Today scrap-metal dealers can still make a good living selling the bomb metal.

Twenty thousand people have died from unexploded ordnance since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Most of these are cluster bombs, which open in mid-air to release tens of hundred sub-munitions (bomblets). Many bomblets don’t explode and lie dormant until the present day. They look like toys to children, who pick them up, killing them. Farmers are also victims, as they clear the land.

One of the worse affected areas, in Laos, is the Plain of Jars—which has many villages and adjoining fields. Laos is said to be a country with the biggest number of people with lost limbs, in the whole of Asia. When asked why they didn’t clear up their unexploded munitions, the US reply was:

SUPERPOWERS DON’T DO DISHES.

Henry Kissinger received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 for arranging a ceasefire in Vietnam. A fellow recipient was Le Duc Tho, the communist General, diplomat and politician. He refused the Peace Prize on grounds that his opposite number had violated the Truce.

On the matter of tactical bombing, which Kissinger claimed was aimed at the communist guerrillas, and their running of the Ho Chi Ming Trail. That was an outrageous lie: the bombs did not differentiate! Mao Zedong once said the people were the water and the fish were the guerrillas. If that is so, said one US General, then the water must be poisoned.

Wilson John Haire, 20.7.2021

Fascism has never been a major concern of the USA. Its Capitalism has never been under any danger from Socialism. The methods by which it created itself are not easily distinguishable from the methods usually described as *Fascist*. And it had good reason for not signing the UN *Genocide Convention* after 1945.

Its concern was Communism—which Britain’s ideologically-confused and incompetently-conducted War brought to dominance in half of Europe. Fascism was the means by which Communism had been warded off in the chaotic situation brought about by Britain’s First World War. And, after 1945, the USA took up the anti-Communist crusade from Nazism, having no scruples about taking Nazi experts into its service.

Sixty years ago, academic propagandists of British civilisation liked to think that the Catholic Church was a major source of Nazism—when it was in fact a major source of resistance. In more recent times Islam has been a preferred source for demonization.

The Taliban are, of course, Islamic in general culture. But Taliban Islam is an interweaving with particular social cultures in Afghanistan, tribal and ethnic. And, if Fascism is a throwback to mediaevalism—a widely-held opinion—then tribal particularism is also an element of it.

(Europe may eventually apply itself to discovering from the investigation of circumstances why Fascism arose in it in the 1920s and 1930s, why it actually did become a New Order in Europe, and why Europe was ‘saved’ from Fascism by an external Power which it hates. There is no sign of that happening yet. But, unless it happens, how can Europe have anything coherent to say to the World?)

President Reagan admired the Taliban. He said “*These gentlemen are the moral equivalents of American Founding Fathers*”. Higher praise than that it is impossible to imagine in this American world.

The Founding Fathers were bands of religious fanatics who laid waste half a Continent, making the United States possible.

The Taliban do not deserve such praise. Their purpose is only to preserve the culture of the people from which they emerged. Their war was against alien intrusions. They have organised force to preserve a way of life which the progressive world is intent on destroying.

The progressive world is a world

caught in a process of continuous and rapid change in pursuit of ever-increasing power. It has no settled beliefs or customs. It discards today what it insisted on yesterday. Homosexual marriage is one of its basic human rights today, but it was not so twenty years ago when it invaded Afghanistan, and LGBT rights scarcely had then been heard of—but, if a Taliban does not include both of these things, it will be held to be in breach of Human Rights.

The virtue of the Taliban in President Reagan’s eyes was that it was what would now be called barbaric. A Communist Government, supported by the Soviet Union but independent of it, had come into being in Afghanistan. The United States found that the advanced liberal culture of the West did not make effective material for raising a subversive force against the Afghan Communist regime, so it turned to the force that was being curbed by the Communists—the force of religious fundamentalism.

It fostered a religious war against atheistic and liberal Communism in Kabul. It supported Islamist extremism as an effective cultural weapon. It modernised the spirit of the Mahdi and created the ideological ground from which ISIS developed. It launched Islamic terrorism against the Communist regime in Afghanistan. Moscow withdrew its support, but Afghan Communism continued for three years without it. When the Taliban came to power, it was as the terrorist instrument of the American war on Communism.

The USA then had to set about destroying what it had created. The *War on Terror* began. But it found that it was not easy to undo what it had done.

It would not have been easy, even if the task had been approached systematically and realistically, which it was not. Islam is not removable from the life of the world. There is a wide variety of opinion within it, giving it the flexibility required for dealing with different circumstances.

Tony Blair may read the *Koran*, and decide that he knows better than any Imam what the true doctrine is for each circumstance, but there is no Pope within Islam that he can turn to in order to get his opinion dogmatised.

The possibility of having an orderly presence of Islam in the world lay with the Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire. German foreign policy before 1914 was to consolidate the Ottoman Empire as a centre of Islamic affairs in the world. British policy was to destroy the Ottoman

Empire and seize as much as possible of it for its own Empire. The Ottoman Empire was destroyed and the Caliphate was abolished. Islam survived without State support, and it expanded. Its development was sometimes disorderly, but was on the way to re-establishing order. It was Christianity—still in the ascendant when it destroyed the Mahdi—that withered.

The net effect of American engagement in the matter has been, by its zig-zag approach, to increase the effectiveness of what it hoped to destroy.

*

Twenty years ago the USA demanded that Osama Bin Laden be handed over to it as he was the organiser of the attack on the three Twin Towers. Mullah Omar, founder of the Taliban, said he would like to see some evidence that Bin Laden was responsible before handing him over. President Bush treated the request as a piece of impudence and brushed it aside.

The USA, accompanied by Britain and the rag-bag of other states that is called NATO, went into Afghanistan to catch Bin Laden for itself. Ten years ago it caught him in Pakistan. It did not arrest him and put him on trial. As Hillary Clinton (then Secretary of State) put it, paraphrasing Caesar: “*We came, we saw, he died*”. The killing was filmed and was shown to the White House elite.

NATO stayed on in Afghanistan for a further ten years. It had established a puppet Government, given it an Army, got it ‘democratically elected’ by a miniscule electorate, and created around it a veneer of California-style social life which was entirely disconnected from the life of the country—as the Protestant Ascendancy Kingdom of Ireland was from the actual life of the Irish people. The idea was, presumably, that the Afghan people should be remade by the extension of the California veneer across the whole country. But the greater part of the country remained with the Taliban, and the Taliban observed and learned. And, in the moment of truth, the Occupation democracy proved to be no more than a Quisling facade, or a Potemkin village.

When ‘NATO’ took over Afghanistan, Russia had been brought to the brink of ruin by Yeltsin’s democracy of oligarchic capitalism, China was uncertain of itself, and the USA was the unchallenged Superpower of the world. Only Iran was independent of it, and hostile to it. But, instead of invading Iran and trying to bring it to order, it invaded Iraq—who power it had already broken in 1990.

with nuns; and it is true that, as he once wrote, he regarded monks and nuns as being productive contributors to a spiritual economy by their prayers, and in the right context he would have talked to nuns encouragingly. But the bohemian girls were better to drink wine with.

La Cave, no doubt, wasn't much compared to *The Stray Dog*, it'll never be famous. But I remember it affectionately. In my opinion, the community in *La Cave/Bewleys* had nothing in common with the horrible Dublin bohemia of the 1950s and 60s, described by Anthony Cronin in *Dead as Doornails*.

* * *

When I produced *The Christian Druids*, I thought up the name of a publisher: Sanas Press, inspired by the ancient book called *Sanas Chormaic*, "Cormac's Silence", which formally is a kind of dictionary or glossary but in reality was meant to stimulate the minds of poets.

Desmond at that time was running into problems finding publishers for his books, and he proposed one for Sanas. He wanted to pay me something for "the service", but I explained that there wouldn't be a service: I could offer him only a Post Office Box and an ISBN from a batch allotted to me by that mysterious agency in London.

As for distribution, there wasn't any: I had personally taken my *Christian Druids* from end to end of Ireland in a rucksack, from Derry to Skibbereen, from Belfast to Waterford and from Ballina to Killiney, offering them to bookshops sale-or-return. (I was happy later on when Philip O'Connor took on the practical duties of a re-edition, for his Howth Free Press.)

Desmond published two more books under the Sanas imprint, and one of the websites devoted to his writings says that Sanas was "his own publishing house". Well, strictly speaking it wasn't his, it was mine, but let's not be proprietorial. Anyhow, Desmond had three Sanas books, while I myself had two.

His first publication for Sanas was called *Dreams of Oranges*, impressions of the recent change of system in East Germany. He had travelled there, and what he wrote was a mixture of travel book and political analysis. The East German communist vision of basic wellbeing for all in some ways appealed to him. Nonetheless, he thought, the consumer society had things going for it: women were happier, for one... East Germany had been battling against the tide, and a moment came when it was swept away.

Battling against the tide: he knew that

feeling personally. Fennell saw himself as an Irish national thinker, following on from the 1916 men, Connolly included. Independent Irish culture, as he understood it, had three pillars: it was Gaelic, Catholic and Republican. He thought this formula was fine, and he wanted to develop and update it.

However, over time he discovered that the major part, or the hegemonic part, of the Irish elite, and the up-and-coming elite, saw things differently. They did not really see development and independence as compatible values. Without actually seeking to dissolve the state, they believed that Irish wellbeing from here on mainly required adapting to others and facilitating others, and copying others.

"What does it matter whether a cat is black or white, provided it catches mice?" That's what it boiled down to, I suppose; but arguably the Irish have interpreted that idea more radically than Deng Xiaoping ever did in China.

* * *

When Fennell was in his prime as a thinker, something occurred in Irish culture that had never occurred before, and which became his central concern.

"This book reveals a questioning Irishman who does not accept the death of God." That sentence, from a review by Bob Quinn of *About Being Normal* (Irish Times 06.05.2017), puts it all in a nutshell.

Fennell had known it could happen. In an article published in 1962 in the Dominican journal, *Doctrine and Life*, he wrote:

"There is no reason to suppose that the Irish Catholic people will continue indefinitely to be believing Christians. In Europe during the last one hundred and fifty years the majority of people have abandoned Christian belief and practice; there is no reason why the same should not happen here..."

A few years after he wrote this, the event was underway. I finished secondary boarding school in the Summer of 1968, and I know what was in the air. There was a sense of some mighty incoming wave that could sweep our complacent Catholic elites and their smug Catholic thinking away.

The Death of God is not an event that anyone could measure or register. It could even be argued that it was and is a delusion. Anyhow, there were full churches in many parts of Europe for decades after Nietzsche trumpeted it. Numerous people, including intellectuals, still accepted the Christian god as their supreme value. It was even possible, generations later, to have hegemonic Christian elites, as in postwar European Christian Democracy.

And yet, there was something that happened in late nineteenth century Europe that made large numbers of intellectuals, including working class intellectuals, reject Christianity as the overall framework of their thinking. This event was assimilated in some way in the various national cultures, but Nietzsche's name was associated with it particularly, so one can find books on his influence in the various nations: *Nietzsche en France*, *Nietzsche en España*, *Nietzsche en Italie*, any number of books on Nietzsche in Germany, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, and a substantial volume on Nietzsche in Russia.

And the Nietzsche in Ireland book? There isn't any. Simply because there wouldn't be anything to write about (though Yeats, Moore and Shaw get some space in Patrick Bridgewater's *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*). To the mainstream Irish culture, Nietzsche had nothing to say. *The Death of God* was not permitted to happen in Ireland. Until 1968. — Eugene Jordan, in an interesting recent book, suggests that the Catholic Church should have known how to stop it happening even then. But, for that to be possible, the wave of independent Irish culture would have had to be advancing, not receding.

Desmond Fennell responded to this gradual new development in Irish culture with hostility. And scorn, not least because it was all so derivative. If you want to be pagans, why must it all be copycat stuff? — he used to taunt his opponents. Why can't you come up with original modern paganism, like the Swedes?

To see how stale and derivative someone like Fintan O'Toole was wouldn't be hard. But it took a sharp intelligence to find the wavelength for Seamus Heaney. When Fennell produced his pamphlet *Whatever You Say, Say Nothing*, Heaney was already a tremendous career success, though he hadn't yet won the Nobel Prize. He was the Celtic Tiger in poetry. Fennell's attitude was that everyone would be glad to see him doing so well, but the quality of his poetry was another matter.

As his raw materials Heaney used Irish country life—the old country life, with immensely old roots, that I briefly knew myself, before an avalanche of mechanisation hit West Cork about 1960. But the outlook in the poems was, on the whole, subtly moving away from the culture that grew in and round that life, rather than developing from it or engaging with it. Heaney was adapting himself to visions seen elsewhere, specifically the liberal-atheistic vision of East Coast academia in

America. Fennell's pamphlet caused fury in the culture industry, but I have heard even people involved in that industry say quietly that he was absolutely right.

* * *

Fennell soon began to talk about a post-western civilisation, which was making a fundamental break with Euro-American culture and civilisation as known until now. I had my doubts about this, and I thought some of his supporting arguments were wrong. However, as the pace of cultural change speeds up, his argument is wearing well.

There's too much involved for me to deal with it here, in a short article. One or two brief notes must do.

Fennell pursued this topic incessantly in the last quarter century of his life, sometimes changing his terminology, viewing the problem from different angles and making different predictions ("*This will collapse in chaos/ This could work for a few decades more*"). One message of his was constant: a civilisation cannot exist unless it has generally accepted rules. The proponents of post-Christian civilisation in Ireland are introducing new rules piecemeal, which will cause chaos. They need to understand what they are about and take responsibility.

"It is a matter of understanding that everything in our society hangs together, or hangs separately, as we fashion a post Western, post liberal Ireland and of acting wisely on that understanding" (Irish Times, 8/7/1996).

The leading present-day champion of American technocracy (he lives in Israel, but that makes no difference) and prophet of post-everything, Yuval Harari, agrees that civilisations cannot exist without generally accepted rules. He even goes so far as to say: "*Without the guiding hand of some religion, it is impossible to maintain large-scale social orders*" (*Homo Deus*, 2017, p230). As Harari sees it, the leading Euro-American religion of the past 300 years has been Humanism, which pursues human power at the expense of Christian faith. In the 20th century there were three great humanist religions, Communism, Nazism and Liberal Democracy — which has emerged the winner from their three-sided contest.

Fennell would have rejected this notion of humanism. He would have said, I am a humanist myself, and humanism can perfectly well be, and has been, a dynamic element in a Christian framework of thinking. He might have accused Harari of having a frivolous notion of religion. But he would have agreed that there could be

an effective official binding culture which was godless: after all, the old Soviet Union had sustained one for decades.

In an article published in *Studies* ("*Can the Neo-liberal Regime Endure?*", Autumn 2015), Fennell quoted a long passage by Alexis de Tocqueville, the genius who imagined the eerie governing power that American democracy might one day produce:

"Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labors, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness... The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting..."

And Fennell reflected, maybe it has come to that already . . . And, if so, "*and the docility of the Ameropean peoples does suggest it*", then the new American power may last quite a while, or longer at least than its Soviet competitor.

I am not sure whether during the last year of his life he was in sufficiently good health to keep track of the COVID regime. Or whether he noticed Fintan O'Toole's article, "*New Ireland Anything is Possible*" (Irish Times 19.6.2021).

Has anything ever brought so much joy into Fintan's life as COVID? The pandemic has "*forced us to ask what path we want to be on*". He doesn't quite leap and gambol about on the page, but almost.

"As Ireland was going into its revolutionary period, WB Yeats said the country was like "soft wax"... Well, here we are a century on, marking a decade of centenarians. The shape the island took in the period we are now commemorating does not hold anymore. The wax is soft again and we have to decide what stamp to put on it for the next century."

Ireland as Madame Tussauds... Well, but the country has often come up with surprises. The said "revolutionary period" was a surprise. In any event, Desmond Fennell's challenging writings will be useful for all who like to try figuring out where we're going.

John Minahane

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Unpublished Letter To Irish Times The 1918 Election

If we are to believe Colum Kenny's contribution to an Irishman's Diary, today August 10th, headed "*Degradation Of The Irish Bench*", "*a century ago*" ... "*the British faced an insurgency in Ireland*".

In fact the Irish electorate, in a contest "*regarded on all sides as a plebiscite*" according to *The Times* THE TIMES had in December 1918 established a Republic. But London had no time for Irish plebs and ignored them and their democratically established Government.

In a series of municipal, county, borough and other local elections in 1920, the local electorates, while not then as plebeian as that which established Dail Eireann emphatically endorsed the Republic already established.

London's answer was to unleash a reign of terror on a virtually unarmed populace which, a populace which continued to support their republic and the pitifully armed citizens' defence force which struck back at their enemies.

In 1921 all constituencies which had elected Republicans in 1918 returned Republicans again in the Parliamentary elections. The British Government, unable to defend its record before the world or defeat the defiance of the Irish people offered a truce and adopted a less crude but more cruel strategy to confound Irish politics.

Would it be too cruel to describe Colum Kenny's contribution as a Degradation of Irish History And Journalism?

Donal Kennedy

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The O'Connor Column

Assessing Des O'Malley

The death of Des O'Malley produced many column inches of predictable media humbug. Two exceptions were a thoughtful article by his own son, Eoin O'Malley, now an academic in DCU and a columnist in the *Sunday Independent*, and a blistering analysis by the *Sunday Independent's* in-house left-winger, Gene Kerrigan, in the same paper, both on 25th July 2021.

At the personal level, Eoin O'Malley's piece, titled '*My father's life was longer and more turbulent than he expected*', was an affectionate and moving tribute to his father, but at another level didn't shirk a surprisingly candid assessment of O'Malley's political abilities. The Indo's strapline described O'Malley as a "Statesman", but the piece itself made no such claim. It stated: "*My father had regarded Haughey as pragmatic and sensible until the arms crisis. After that he shared the deep distrust most of the Fianna Fáil grandees had in Haughey... After George Colley's death, opposition to Haughey within the party centred on my father. He never appeared terribly comfortable with that mantle, and he lacked the political skills to challenge Haughey.*" Having been elevated to Minister for Justice by Lynch after the sacking of Haughey and Blaney, O'Malley was to disappoint even himself: "*What might have been his opportunity to liberalise laws and reform the court system gave way to more authoritarian laws because of the IRA threat*". He also states that, after his father returned to government in the Fianna Fáil/PD coalitions following the 1989 election, neither Haughey nor, after him, Reynolds, trusted him sufficiently to brief him on their major Northern Ireland initiative—the Reid/Adams talks and securing Hume as an intermediary to the IRA. In fact they kept this highly sensitive affair of state entirely and strictly secret from him, which is surely an extraordinary comment on his role as Tánaiste in both cabinets.

Arms Trial

The 1970 Arms Trial debacle was an issue which just never went away for Des O'Malley. Just over a month before he died, a piece by him titled '*The truth matters—except when it comes to RTÉ and the arms crisis*', was published by the *Sunday Independent* (13.06.21). It was an article marked by both an obsessive-ness with, and extreme defensiveness on, the issue. The context was the growing, relentless trickle of information emerging, clearly indicting Lynch for his dishonest behaviour at the time of the 1969-70 Arms Crisis. This began with Michael Heney's 2020 book, *The Arms Crisis of 1970, The Plot that Never Was*, which provided much new material revealing the shenanigans of the Lynch Government at the time, in its desperation to disengage from the North and seal the Republic from the crisis.

Heney built on and generously acknowledged the pioneering work of Angela Clifford in her 2009 forensic analysis, *The Arms Conspiracy Trial. Ireland, 1970: The Prosecution of Charles Haughey, Captain Kelly and Other*. Heney's evidence simply cannot be gainsaid, and this formed a key point of reference for an RTÉ documentary series, '*Gun Plot*', aired in early 2021. O'Malley, in his article condemning the RTÉ broadcast, railed in particular against suggestions that either he or his Department Secretary, Peter Berry, had any role in "*doctoring witness statements to benefit the prosecution*" during the trial.

Though carefully avoiding specifying the evidence he was referring to, it was in fact a Memo by head of Military Intelligence, Colonel Hefferon, establishing that Captain Kelly had indeed operated throughout 1969-70 in accordance with Government orders and with the full knowledge and approval of Lynch and his inner Cabinet. O'Malley, however, did qualify his denial somewhat:

"Over many months I dealt with that accusation. I pointed out that neither I nor any officials in the Department of Justice made any changes to witness statements. They were made in the Attorney-General's office because he was then Director of Public Prosecutions, and done so purely to comply with rules of evidence. An official government investigation supported me in my assertion. In fact, it found many of the elements excised from the statements would have been beneficial to the prosecution had they been left in."

So, Col. Hefferon's witness statement was doctored with Government agreement after all!

Kerrigan on Haughey

Gene Kerrigan in his column on O'Malley's death ('*But what else did Des O'Malley say?*', *Sunday Independent* 25.07.21) presents a travesty of Haughey:

[After being elected Taoiseach in 1980] "Haughey and his mates sat at a long table, smiling triumphantly in their tailored suits. Behind them

stood an army of grinning, sweaty men in off-the-peg specials. Not so much toxic masculinity as drooling ambition... For the next dozen years, until Haughey was driven from office, there was not a moment when his enemies didn't dream of shafting him... His enemies claimed there was a whiff of gunpowder about him. That whiff wasn't gunpowder, it was purloined money. Haughey was a chancer—full stop ... As soon as he had the job, his enforcers began strong-arming the banks, to which he owed a million pounds. The banks backed off. The money of the elite flew to Haughey, like iron filings rushing to a magnet. From then on, he swiped whatever wasn't nailed down. In the 1960s Haughey was an innovative minister. As Taoiseach he was an empty suit, but one exquisitely designed... Haughey was a crook..."

This florid language out-Tooled the *Irish Times's* Fintan O'Toole. In fact, the people who gave Haughey money to maintain his lifestyle were a very small circle, maybe half a dozen or so, and by no means the richest capitalists in Ireland, who at the time were mostly staunch Fine Gaelers. Despite endless journalistic investigations and a string of Statutory Tribunals, no evidence has ever been produced showing that Haughey did anything for the supports he received from friends, not a single example. For a forensic analysis of these matters, I would direct the reader to the masterful piece by John Martin in this journal in 2007

(https://www.atholbooks.org/archives/ipr/review_articles/haughey.php).

Those who worked with Haughey in government, without exception, including the best civil servants, business leaders, Trade Union leaders etc., concur in their judgement of him as the most brilliant politician of his time, head and shoulders above Lynch, FitzGerald and others, and that he led a series of governments which transformed the Irish economy. None ever recall a single incident of anything wayward or dodgy in what he did as Taoiseach between 1987 and 1992. Not a single one.

PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS

But there is truth in what Kerrigan writes about O'Malley as a Minister, and particularly his observation that everything he did after 1979 was motivated by an obsession with toppling Haughey as Fianna Fáil leader. Even founding the brashly "*neoliberal*" Progressive Democrats had little other purpose for him. O'Malley, however, was a politically indecisive figure, and bungled all the internal heaves against Haughey from 1982 to 1986. The decisive figure in founding the PDs in 1986 was not he, but Mary Harney who, after agreeing the tactic with her fellow conspirators, publicly announced the party's foundation without consulting O'Malley who had continued to dither on the issue. But, once the deed was done, he had little option but to give in to the conspirators' urgings and take the leader role. The new party initially attracted a near messianic following. Eoin O'Malley in his tribute recalled the

"monster meetings that attracted thousands of people depressed by the inertia of the Fine Gael/Labour government and troubled by Haughey's Fianna Fáil. As well as popular support, he briefly enjoyed the approval of the Dublin commentariat class."

Indeed, such was the hysteria that, by mid-1986, Haughey was badly trailing in the polls behind both FitzGerald and O'Malley as the "*public's*" preferred choice as Taoiseach (see T. Ryle Dwyer, *Haughey's Forty Years of Controversy*, 2005, p. 130). The same happened during the dramatic events leading to the formation of the 1989 Fianna Fáil/PD Coalition. When it quickly became clear that such a combination was the only one that the electoral arithmetic would allow, it was again Harney who 'let slip' to the media that they were going to talk with Fianna Fáil on forming a government. O'Malley, who was out of the country at the time, reacted with fury, his son recalling, "*he*

was apoplectic". But again he had no choice but to follow. Harney's move had been teed up beforehand between her and Charlie McCreevy, who Haughey valued as a conduit to the PDs of which he was an on/off co-founder. Haughey liked but never trusted McCreevy and would never give him even a minor role in government, not even as a Junior Minister, despite McCreevy's undoubted intelligence and ability and Haughey's well-known disdain of the mediocrity of the material he had to work with in forming cabinets.

NOT "THATCHERITES"?

It is baffling how Irish political scientists go to great lengths to deny that Irish political parties are in any way "*ideological*", i.e. are serious about their programmes. It is commonplace, ever since Maurice Manning's 1970s whitewash of the movement, to hold that the Irish '*Blueshirts*' were "*not really fascist*", and in much the same way it is now commonplace to deny that the PDs were "*ever really Thatcherites*". In both cases only pure and moral motivations either to "*protect free speech*" or "*clean up Irish politics*" were involved! In his tribute to his father, Eoin O'Malley wrote that "*though Des was often charged with the lazy label of 'neoliberal' he was no ideologue*". The reality of course is that just as the Blueshirts, and much of Fine Gael, were indeed serious fascists, for a couple of years at least, so too were the PDs seriously intent on a Thatcherite makeover of the Irish economy and politics in the 1980s. Their original documents were crafted by a handful of very ideological people inspired by what Thatcher was "*achieving*" in Britain at the time, notably Mary Harney, Michael McDowell and Charles McCreevy. Some of the founding documents written by these were reprinted by Stephen Collins in his eulogistic and admiring portrait of the party published in 2005—*Breaking the Mould. How the PDs changed Ireland*—when neo-liberalism, light-touch regulation, tax-cutting and the 'laws' of market economics were at the zenith of their hegemony.

The PDs' success in securing 14 seats—nearly twice those of the Labour Party—at their first electoral outing in 1987 occurred on a wave of public and media enthusiasm for their "*tough*" Thatcher-like programme. But, as Haughey had an alternative social-democratic model, combining the monetary adjustment required by the new global capitalist dispensation with an industrial growth strategy and an incomes and social policy programme agreed with Unions and Employers, and this was proving successful, the Thatch-

erite wave receded.

Haughey called a surprise election in 1989 in the hope of securing a majority to escape the veto held by Fine Gael/PD over his then minority Government. While the Fine Gael/PD combination agreed to support his monetary policies cutting public expenditure and reducing taxes, they did not extend that "*Tallaght Strategy*" to his other industrial and incomes policies. They rejected in particular his Social Partnership approach. But, by 1989, the Haughey strategy was obviously coming right, and he was achieving well over 40 per cent in the polls. He therefore decided on a "*Social Partnership election*", presenting his programme as the viable alternative to a Thatcherite course.

All parties, including the "Left", proposed alternative economic systems, any of which if implemented would have collapsed the system actually established in 1987. Haughey faced a blisteringly hostile media focused on irrelevancies and on his person, which obscured the core economic policy issue. The election nevertheless showed that the Thatcherism proposed by the Fine Gael/PD axis had declined in appeal, now that the alternative and non-socially divisive approach was seeming to work. Both Thatcherite parties lost heavily, the PDs falling to just six seats and Fine Gael also further contracting. The "Left" Labour/Workers Party axis did better. The PDs' Thatcherism had proved both very real but would now also prove highly negotiable.

As Eoin O'Malley put it, his father, on examining the election outcome, "*eventually decided that all the alternatives were worse, including another election in which the PDs, already damaged, could be wiped out*". Once talks started, the press marvelled at the ease and speed with which a joint Programme was agreed.

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.

Another paragraph which Haughey insisted on that flew in the face of another PD "core value" was that on State Companies. Privatisation had been a key PD principle, which its leaders regularly shouted from the rooftops to great applause from the economists of the "Doherty and Nesbitts School". On 7th April 1987, just days after the minority Haughey Government had been formed, O'Malley moved a motion in the Dáil, supported by Fine Gael, demanding the sell-off of all but "strategic" State Companies. Haughey's Industries Minister, Albert Reynolds, though himself an industrialist, rejected O'Malley's motion, declaring that, while privatisation had become "very fashionable", Fianna Fáil had no "doctrinaire view" on its benefits, and the motion was defeated by the joint votes of Fianna Fáil, Labour and the Workers' Party.

In 1989 the *Programme for Government* committed, again *verbatim* from Haughey's *Election Manifesto*, which must have been galling for PD ideologues, to maintain a "viable and profitable commercial semi-state sector" with any changes to the "ownership structures" of any such company to be subject to "consultation with the social partners". It should be noted that, despite the twisting of the fact by Left ideologues, the Haughey Governments did not privatise anything of note, and indeed that privatisation only became an unstoppable wave under the saintly "left wing" Rainbow Coalition in 1996!

So, what did the PDs get in the 1989 coalition deal? A tightening of tax reform commitments (which were already in the Social Partnership Agreement), an environment policy, and . . . eh . . . eh . . . Nothing else, except possibly what they were really concerned about—a few

seats at Cabinet. As all those involved attest in their memoirs and elsewhere, that was the issue that took up most of "negotiations".

O'MALLEY'S REVENGE

As mentioned, when Haughey had decided on an election for June 1989, everything had appeared to be coming right. In January 1989 the Industrial Development Authority had reported that, while foreign investment had declined in the 1980s to "a trickle", it was now facing a "potential surge" of "great significance". The International Financial Services Centre—which Bruton of Fine Gael and Harney of the PDs had dismissed as a "white elephant", and Spring—ironically given his own involvement in financial services after his retirement from politics—had decried as a "capitalist Holy Grail" on 26 acres of "derelict dockland" "for yuppies and financial services", had suddenly taken off after the initial formula was remodelled to one focussed on managed funds. Following two years of very little traction, by May 1989, the Government had secured a range of "big players" from among the world's leading banks, including the largest Japanese bank which Haughey personally had travelled to Japan to secure just a month previously.

A month before the election, the IDA also secured its largest ever industrial investment, with Intel agreeing to locate in Ireland, with the promise of 2,500 high-quality jobs in microprocessor wafer manufacture. In March Haughey had also secured a massive investment commitment through his alliance with Jacques Delors in the EC Commission, which he deployed in the novel institution of a five-year infrastructure plan he christened the "National Development Plan", and which he described as being the Programme for National Recovery, with which it was integrated, "taken to a higher plain".

Even that *Sorgenkind* of the Irish economy—indigenous industry—was taking off spectacularly. While the beef sector was experiencing difficulties with its archaic structures and collapsing markets in the Middle East, due to an Anglo-American strategic change of direction in that region, others, such as the newly incorporated dairy co-ops, Kerry Group and others, were achieving spectacular success in their first year, and small industry start-ups were experiencing a take-off.

Both the OECD and the EC Commission hailed the success as due to the concerted planning and Social Partnership system, which had restored market confidence and pouring investment into Irish industry.

Des O'Malley and the PDs now had little to do. As Eoin O'Malley put it: "He and Haughey worked well together. Haughey understood power and respected my father. They may not have been close, or even trusted each other, but they managed that government well. He was able to work on industrial and competition policy, for once without constant crisis." But O'Malley had had to swallow Social Partnership and a policy on State industry that was anathema to the PD agenda. He would now wait in the long grass for an opportunity to try to reverse both concessions to Haughey.

The problem with the new Irish economic model, which was transforming the very basis of the economy, both industrially and financially, was that the jobs dividend was as yet small. While the PNR's modest annual 20,000 "new jobs" target was being met each year, these new quality jobs could not offset the continued attrition in older industries, demographic expansion and the effect of restructuring to modernise sectors, which invariably involved further 'job shedding'. In November 1989 Haughey, Reynolds (now Finance Minister), O'Malley (Industry and Commerce) and Ahern (Labour) met the ICTU on the jobs crisis.

Among various initiatives the unions sought—and to all of which Haughey agreed—was a proposal for a root-and-branch review of industrial policy on the scale of the Telesis study and NESC review which Haughey himself had initiated in a previous Government of 1980-82, which had led to a fundamental re-assessment of investment and industrial supports policies. This was agreed, with Reynolds even pleading with the ICTU to hold with the Programme and agree to discuss a follow-on one: "this success must not [be] thrown away". Haughey also undertook to support the proposal for a European Social Charter at the EC Council, a proposal then being heatedly rejected by Britain, which he then did.

The industrial policy review has a curious history. John Travers, an industrial policy expert who had been part of the economic planning staff established by Haughey at the Department of the Taoiseach under Pádraig Ó hUiginn, was given charge of the project in O'Malley's Department. But O'Malley held back any publication of its work or proposals to government on it. It was only finally in the negotiation of a successor programme to the PNR—called the "Programme for Economic and Social Progress" ("PESP")—that the issue arose again. On ICTU insis-

tence, the PESP, in very curious wording, agreed that the Minister for Industry and Commerce, i.e. O'Malley, would, "*in the light of developments since the NESCI Telesis examination of industrial policy in the early 1980s*", consider "*whether a further comprehensive re-appraisal of policy should be carried out.*"

Before returning to the issue of this industrial policy review, which O'Malley was seeking to pursue without involving Social Partnership, he participated in what a later generation would castigate as the policy of a "*rogue state*" (thus Fintan O'Toole). This was a foreign investment strategy to ensure major operators stayed in Ireland after the Soviet collapse seemed to indicate a new El Dorado in the East for multinational companies. In mid-1990, Apple, a prize computer company brought in by the IDA a decade previously, let it be known that it was going to relocate to the East. Government rushed to prevent this, and the catastrophic follow-on consequences it could have. In a key meeting with Apple in July 1990, Haughey, O'Malley and senior IDA executives proposed a package exploiting Ireland's network of double-taxation agreements with the US and others.

They suggested to Apple that it could quite legitimately combine the benefits of these double-taxation arrangements with the assigning of intellectual property rights in its products to a "*parent company*" in an off-shore jurisdiction to which profits could be "*repatriated*", thus avoiding further taxation in the US, and with the added bonus of IP royalties and R&D investment being discountable against an already low Corporation Tax rate in Ireland. The 'deal', engineered in the presence of O'Malley, whose reputation rested on high standards of "*probity*", would prove a turning point, with Apple remaining and the computer sector growing exponentially thereafter.

This was all revealed years later, such as by Cliff Taylor and Ian Kehoe in an article in the *Sunday Business Post* (26.05.2013), '*Apple got tax deal in 1990*'.

The Industrial Policy Review agreed in the PESP finally got underway in March 1991 under Travers. Terms of Reference were produced in May, but still O'Malley hesitated. Then in a bolt from the blue, ITV, a British TV channel, broadcast a bombshell documentary by talented Irish journalist Susan O'Keefe on malpractices in a beef company, the Goodman Group, clearly insinuating some malevolent sweetheart deal between Haughey and

Goodman as its source. In fact much that was revealed dated to the period of the previous Fine Gael-Labour Coalition, which had also agreed favourable treatment of the company in the hope of boosting Irish beef exports. But Haughey was immediately put on the defensive and his authority weakened as the PDs demanded a Tribunal into the industry. It was at this moment that O'Malley, on 27th June, finally launched the Industrial Policy Review in the form of the "*most fundamental examination*" since Telesis, to report within six months and "*chart a course for the next decade*". The Review Group would be chaired by Jim Culleton, head of Unidare and former CEO of CRH, and consisted of just eight people, all, apart from Peter Cassells of the ICTU, figures from the internationally active business sector. Only one economist was involved, Sean Barrett of TCD, regarded as close to PD thinking.

O'Malley said he had "*deliberately chosen a group primarily of industrialists who have proven business success*". Apart from Cassells, the group was entirely separate from the Partnership system, a fact underlined by O'Malley announcing it just hours after the monthly Social Partnership meeting at which his officials made no mention of it. While the ever-critical Pat Rabbitte would claim that "*more task forces and more reviews*" was "*the last thing we need*", the review, which in reality combined much already agreed at the policy level of Social Partnership at the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), would prove a decisive event in Ireland's industrial turnaround. The NESC was appalled at its exclusion and the pilfering of many of its policies. But O'Malley had had his revenge in effectively and successfully extracting the key area of industrial policy strategy from the Partnership system.

O'MALLEY'S FAILED THATCHERITE BUDGET COUP

The messy end of Haughey's PD coalition followed the O'Keefe revelations, with a spate of 1982-style "*scandals*" following in Autumn 1991, regarding matters which also had little or nothing to do with him. These included an undoubted case of insider trading in the sale of a section of the new food company established from Irish Sugar, Greencore, the sale of land connected with Telecom Eireann, a deal for the sale to UCD of Carysfort College (which became the Smurfit Business School), and some other incidents.

Haughey by this stage was a Taoiseach on sufferance, but he persuaded Ahern to

allow him to remain and introduce one final Budget, after which he would resign. Reynolds was in revolt and backed a motion, which failed, to topple Haughey in November 1991. But there was also substance in Reynolds's position. Sensing red meat as Haughey's authority crumbled, the PDs demanded a radical renegotiation of the *Programme for Government*, including swingeing tax cuts to be introduced in 1992, cuts which would have destroyed the careful arithmetic of the incremental tax/welfare reform programme as the core aspect of the incomes management policy of Social Partnership. Haughey felt he had no option but to concede the PDs' Thatcherite demands if the Coalition was to survive, which he held was essential to his economic strategy, given the political alternatives. Reynolds walked out specifically because the deal with the PDs would destroy the agreed budget strategy.

But Reynolds needn't have worried, as Haughey had no intention of sacrificing Social Partnership. As yet another crisis emerged in global capitalism in the wake of the Anglo-American "Gulf War" and the descent of Eastern Europe—which had been intended to blossom as a market utopia—into economic anarchy, Haughey and Ahern used the opportunity to force through a budget, deferring the radical tax cuts agreed with the PDs. These, they said, would have to wait another year or so! The memoirs of neither Ahern, nor O'Malley nor Reynolds make much mention of that 1992 Budget, though O'Malley does concede that his greatest regret was that he never achieved his tax goals when in Office! The tightened budget conditions led to Ahern renegotiating the pay terms of the PESP to defer increases above a certain level (i.e. to higher-paid public servants) until 1993, when recovery would enable their payment with full retrospection. The Budget delivered pay increases for most workers and especially the lower-paid, ring-fenced welfare, and met some other ICTU demands, such as further strengthening the tax enforcement powers of Revenue. The EC Commission praised the Government for its budget success in "*reducing inflation and putting the public finances on a sound basis*".

O'MALLEY IN THE REYNOLDS GOVERNMENT

Haughey, having achieved his aim of a final "*Social Partnership budget*", retired from politics in February 1992, quoting Othello that he had "*done the State some service*". Reynolds assumed the role of Taoiseach and continued the PD Coalition. Despite PD demands to

amend the Programme along the lines it had previously sought, in almost his first act as Taoiseach Reynolds instead met the Social Partner body, the “Central Review Committee”, where he “re-affirmed the full commitment of the Government to the consensus approach enshrined in the PESP”, which he described as the basis of the economic success since 1987, and committed to implement, “without dilution”, all recommendations of the Committee’s Task Force on Employment as well as of the Culleton Report. O’Malley, however, remained truculent in resisting any Social Partner input to the Task Force he now established to implement Culleton, stating he would not “re-open debate” on that strategy and even withholding its first report from cabinet itself for several months. This was because his relationship with Reynolds was already collapsing. The cabinet was effectively in dissolution by the time that Task Force’s first report was published in September. It had been even less connected with social partnership than the Culleton Review itself, refusing even to discuss proposals the NESC advanced to it. The Committee of Ministers Reynolds intended to push through Culleton was never established.

During these last months of the Reynolds-PD coalition, O’Malley’s Department of Industry and Commerce became a source of continued conflict. When asked by Ó hUiginn for inputs to strategy being developed by the Central Review Committee on unemployment measures, the Department Secretary, Seán Dorgan, decried the approach being taken: “Subsidies or public expenditure”, he opined, “do not of themselves create sustainable jobs” and the only real policy was to develop new markets for industry by implementing Carleton’s proposals, which must not be “frustrated” by other concerns. In another dispute, and despite the PESP agreeing that—before Ministers moved any proposals for disposing of shares in State Companies—to “inform and as appropriate consult” with the Semi-State Boards concerned and the Social Partners, O’Malley unilaterally sought to secure Cabinet agreement to privatise the former Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC). When this emerged, both the ICTU and the dairy farmers’ association, ICMSA, strenuously objected at the absence of consultation. Ahern as Minister for Finance, finally offered discussions in early November, but by then the Government was in collapse. When the ICTU persisted, Ahern ensured the proposal was dropped. ACC would remain in public ownership for another ten years

O’MALLEY: THE “LIBERAL” MYTH

Gene Kerrigan’s piece on O’Malley (*‘But what else did Des O’Malley say?’*, *Sunday Independent* 25.07.21) is best in its demolition of the myth of his “liberalism”, as allegedly epitomised by his ‘Stand by the Republic’ speech. That speech in fact embodied little beyond his fixation on ‘getting’ at Haughey by any means possible.

You could go further than Kerrigan. The 1973 Magee Case had forced the Government to legislate the provision of contraception, at that time still banned in Ireland. The then Cosgrave Coalition introduced a Bill in 1974 to do just that, but Cosgrave himself, along with many other Coalition members, couldn’t support it for social conservative reasons, reflecting the very deep divide in the public about the issue and the utopian character of such a sweeping Bill. It finally failed when Cosgrave and others voted against it or abstained. In opposition O’Malley

and Haughey spoke on it. Haughey said reform was needed but blanket liberalisation would only dangerously divide society. He, he said, would “handle it differently”, which he did when back as a Minister he introduced his “Irish solution” in his 1978 bill legalising contraception for “bona fide family reasons” and with a doctor’s prescription.

Kerrigan is right that that seems absurd now. But at the time it was the limit of reform that society would accept and in fact kick-started the process of full legalisation that would follow. It should be added that, at the time, the country was hardly starved of contraceptives, which were certainly no more difficult for the determined to obtain than ecstasy or cocaine pills today! But O’Malley’s opposition to Cosgrave’s Bill was very different in kind to Haughey’s, warning in the Dáil on 4th July 1974 of the threat it contained of unleashing a wave of “fornication” engulfing Ireland!

The Murder Of Patrice Lumumba

As I write this (on Saturday January 16) BBC 2 is screening *The Nun's Story*, starring Audrey Hepburn, made in 1959. I remember seeing queues of women in O’Connell Street waiting to watch it in the Metropole. It was set in the Belgian Congo, where over 50 years earlier Roger Casement had travelled and reported on the crimes of King Leopold’s agents.

Within a year of watching those queues, I watched the funeral of the soldiers of our own Army in O’Connell St. killed in that ‘newly liberated’ Republic, while serving as a Peace-Keeping force with the United Nations. Handel’s *Dead March*, echoing off the buildings, made an impression on me that I have never forgotten.

On 17th January 1961 the Premier of the Congo, Patrice, was murdered by Belgians, working in collusion with America’s CIA in the last days of the Eisenhower Presidency.

The Irish Troops had been airlifted from Dublin to the Congo by the US Air Force.

So today is the 60th Anniversary of Lumumba’s murder.

Belgian Police Commissioner Gerard Soele in 1999 claimed that he had helped exhume Lumumba’s body shortly after the murder, cut it up with hacksaws, and dissolved it in acid. He had kept a bullet and two of Lumumba’s (gold) teeth as souvenirs.

Late last year the King of the Belgians apologised for the crimes of King Leopold, but not the crimes of his successors. Perhaps he might do so now.

And in the last days of the Trump Presidency or the first days of Joe Biden’s one, may we expect an American apology for American crimes in the Congo?????????

Donal Kennedy

The Saxon Shilling.

**“Irish hearts! Why should you bleed
To swell the tide of British glory –
Aiding despots in their need,
Who’ve changed our green so oft to gory!
None, save those who wish to see
The noblest killed, the meanest killing,
And true hearts severed from the free,
Will take again the Saxon Shilling!**

Kevin T. Buggy. 1817-’43.

Gill’s Irish Reciter, Ed. by *JJ. O’Kelly*,
MH. Gill & Son. Ltd. Dublin. 1907.

“At the same time, life had its idyllic side. People who think of Victorian family life as being all repression, superstition and fear, as being a foetid nursery of complexes, overlook something – that sweet august illusion to which, in their own ways, everybody subscribed. Loves and hopes and habits had a romantic depth they have lost now. Family life at Bowen’s Court, in the eighteen sixties and eighteen seventies, had its idyllic side.”

Bowen’s Court. Elizabeth Bowen.
Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd. London. 1942.
(Italics – EB).

Elizabeth Bowen.

A Review of Patricia Laurence’s biography.

Part 16.

After Bowen’s death, there were efforts made to erect a memorial to her memory at the little church in Farahy where she and the preceding Bowens had worshipped. As Patricia Laurence explained, the main mover seemed to be Rev. Robert McCarthy who spoke of his –

“passionate effort to save the church”, as it was “the last physical reminder of the Bowens in Ireland.”

MacCarthy accepted that there was now a “reservoir of feeling in Eire about her espionage activities at the beginning of the war, as well as the social position of her Anglo-Irish family”. According to Patricia Laurence, Rev. McCarthy “proposed the transfer of Farahy Church to commemorate the life and work of Elizabeth Bowen”. It was noted that the Bishop of Cork wasn’t quite as enthusiastic about this move as he could have been. So MacCarthy “wrote to the diocesan secretary in Cork” with the promise –

“that the Church should be left very much as it is since it positively exudes that austere quality of Irish Anglicanism

that Elizabeth Bowen so well conveyed in Bowen’s Court.”

All this activity was centred around 1976, as the authorised biography by Victoria Glendinning was due for release in 1977 – four years after Bowen’s death in London in 1973.

Trying to fundraise, MacCarthy wrote dire warnings about the almost imminent collapse of the church roof to those people who had money and were friends of Bowen in her lifetime. He wrote to Derek Hill (the painter and, as Bruce Arnold put it, “friend of the Queen Mother and Prince Charles”) and complained:

“I was horrified to find holes in the roof, window panes broken and a general air of post-atomic bomb about the place.”

“Would there be about 50 people”, he queried, “who would be prepared to subscribe to the project at £25 each?”

The short answer to that was glaringly obvious – there were not!

Laurence outlines those who did not come up with the cash:

“Bowen’s family executor, Gilbert Butler, the Bishop of Cork, Cork citizens, and the “trendy” Arts Council (which eventually donated). Gilbert Butler was in conflict with Hubert Butler” (his brother) “and the preservation committee, which staunchly supported the proposal, and the diocese had complications about transferring the ownership of the unused church. According to Rev. MacCarthy, Gilbert protested MacCarthy’s daring to erect a memorial plaque in the church with “Mrs Cameron” inscribed on it when they had just “had an official biography done” of Bowen.” (Presumably, Gilbert Butler had commissioned Victoria Glendinning’s biography.)”

The money was needed to repair the roof and MacCarthy was still awaiting funds, including –

“Hill’s promised £300 contribution, and others: Ritchie, £100 plus an earlier gift; the Esme Mitchell Trust in Belfast, £500, the Arts Council, £100 (one third of what was initially committed), and contributions from Southern Tourism, Georgian Society members and friends such as the Blacks and the Vernons.”

“The church was financially preserved, mainly by Bowen’s friends in Anglo-Irish circles.”

Patricia Laurence does not make clear where she got that last titbit of information, so it is hard to know who is making the claim. The general consensus is that Elizabeth Bowen was the last of the Anglo-Irish, but of course there was the odd one here and there – as there still is.

Going back to the ‘cancel culture’ (a most detestable movement), there is Rev. MacCarthy going down to see how the repairs were coming on in 1978 and he was able to say that the repairs were progressing, finding:

“the one remaining protestant farmer engaged in mending holes in the church roof.”

That is so typical: MacCarthy cancelling out the efforts that the Irish State put in to make sure all types of heritage projects were ongoing. *AnCo*, the industrial training authority, which was formed in 1967, did all the work on the roof of the Farahy Church and the interior work too.

There was no room for sectarianism here but, by God, the Rev. was going to have his say as he wrote in a letter to Derek Hill:

“the collection of funds for such a modest memorial ‘in any environment other than that of Southern Ireland ... would be likely to present no insuperable obstacles.’”

In England, there was a letter-writing exercise to ‘*The Times*’ from Spencer Curtis Brown (Bowen’s literary executor), along with “*Rosamond Lehmann, and*

Raymond Mortimer". But it was *'The Irish Times'* reaction that amazed me the most. Their literary editor, Terence de Vere White" (husband of Virginia Glendinning) "*thinking the project impractical*", and Bowen, no moral model, warned that "*hers is hardly a name that will draw many pilgrims*".

MacCarthy had no answer to that claim and so wrote another letter to Derek Hill:

"knowing the scene as you do" that he (Hill) understood the hostility toward the Bowens, symbolic of Anglo-Irish exploitation in Ireland, and Bowen, the literary daughter, who, from their perspective, took sides against the Irish, *investigating their 'neutrality'* [All italics—JH]. MacCarthy also could not let pass an opportunity to kick Gilbert Butler writing to Hill: "Heaven preserve us from the Protestant death-wish", implying that Gilbert Butler's resistance to this kind of memorial for Bowen would have ensured the disappearance of the memory of her and her ancestors in Farahy".

"MacCarthy prevailed... with the Preservation Committee and those who sustain it, Jane and Patrick Annesley. In October, 18th 1979, in the repaired St. Colman's Church, a Bowen memorial plaque was unveiled by Gilbert Butler, along with memorial photos of Bowen's Court in the vestry."

The painting of the Big House was done by Derek Hill (when the roof was off but he painted it, as it was when Elizabeth Bowen occupied it) and Hill gave her the painting as a gift.

It is now in possession of the Colleys in Dublin, the side of her family to whom she remained so close all her life.

The reason Gilbert Butler features so large in this saga is that he had the ultimate control, because of Bowen's Will: and he got this from having married Noreen Colley, Bowen's first cousin—but they really acted throughout their life as if they were sisters.

Patricia Laurence assesses how Bowen would feel about the plaque which was erected, of which she has a photo in her book. This is her take:

"Bowen, one imagines, would have appreciated this memorial in her beloved Church, but would turn a gimlet eye upon the moniker, "wife of Alan Cameron". "

But throughout her life she only ever answered to *'Mrs Cameron'*, and would get furious with anyone who called her Ms. Bowen. A former Lord Mayor of Cork,

one of its most illustrious citizens, met Bowen at a dinner party in the Vernons' house in Kinsale. Having read all her books, he made a beeline and started to talk to her but he got no further than Ms Bowen when she cut him off and coldly stated her name was Mrs. Cameron, and she then turned her back on him.

He was left raging. And, when someone eventually told her how august this man was, she tried to make amends: but this time, he turned his back on her. When my husband and I were invited to his house, he told us this story and then showed us all the hard-back copies of Elizabeth Bowen's books – which must have cost quite a lot of money – but, after her terribly *faux pas* in Kinsale, they were now on shelves elsewhere in the back in his home.

She was quite famous for this cutting coldness and shunning even of good friends whom she had decided were of no further interest to her. Even poor Rose Macaulay, who started her on her writing career, giving her not just good advice, but introductions to literary people who could be of help, was just dropped one day by a now well-established Bowen.

Macaulay miserably sought out people to question Bowen for such behaviour but the latter was not for turning. As Glendinning said, it was not a nice trait to say the least and the people dropped seemed always to be in a lower status than Bowen herself – she didn't try such stuff on with the Lord David Cecils of this world.

Summing up Patricia Laurence's biography, one would have to conclude she did what she stated in her introduction. She went to the sources and used them with precision. Certainly, things got lost in translation, especially that which had to do with the Irish Government and its various institutions which are named in Gaelic.

Yet, in the end, she pulled her punches. This was a dismaying exercise but probably one that she needed to do, to keep her academic career on track. Elizabeth Bowen, Laurence affirmed was a "*spy*" and she had the Aubane Reports to support her on this thesis. But in the end she pulled back and wrote:

"...from the Irish point of view, Bowen betrayed the trust of the Irish people in working undercover for the British."

But Patricia – what about the American point of view? After all, that is why you wrote this book? What – in the end – did you think? Did the evidence stack up or didn't it – it really is that simple.

Julianne Herlihy ©

Irish Corporation Tax

continued

company would have set up an operation here if the country had tariffs, since such policies provoke corresponding tariffs by other countries, restricting the potential for exports.

There is no doubt that this policy adversely affected the existing capitalists, but they were few in number and had little political influence. It could be said that the failure of the old policy ensured there was little resistance to the new.

There were various measures to attract foreign capital but a key element was taxation. Profits from exports were exempt from corporation tax. Since foreign businesses sold very little to the home market this was a very attractive incentive.

From the State's point of view, it was felt that these businesses would not be providing employment in Ireland if it were not for the tax incentives. Also, they were not competing against native capitalists. And finally the State was able to generate a substantial amount of revenue from the payroll taxes of the employees of these multinationals.

So, it was a win-win situation, or so it seemed.

But, as an economy evolves, the demands on the State increase. Also, the presence of multinationals had increased the general wage level and public sector wages tended to exceed the wages of the private sector. The State had become more expensive, but the revenue it generated had not kept pace.

In 1977 domestic rates were abolished. Also, there were many loopholes in the tax system that enabled the self-employed to avoid paying tax. The burden of taxation increasingly fell on the PAYE sector.

By the early 1980s the top rate of tax was at 65%. On top of this there was PRSI, which brought the effective marginal rate of tax close to three-quarters of marginal income. These high rates of tax kicked in at very modest levels of income.

Despite the penal rates of taxes, the State's finances were in crisis. The narrow tax base was not sustainable.

But the Fine Gael/Labour coalition of the early 1980s was content to return to the same well. They did not increase the tax allowances or tax bands, so inflation did the work of increasing the tax revenue from PAYE workers.

It was not until a Fianna Fáil-led Government was elected in 1987 that there was a shift in policy. Social Partnership resulted in a reduction in taxes and a closing of tax loopholes. In exchange the Unions promised wage restraint and industrial peace.

The Government was also helped unwittingly by pressure from the EU, which deemed that our zero-rate tax for exports was State Aid and therefore against competition law.

The abolition of the zero-rate tax was replaced by a 10% tax rate for manufacturers, regardless of whether they exported or not. All other corporate profits were taxed at the 50% rate.

From the Irish State's point of view this was not a bad outcome. For the first time the multi-national sector was brought within the Irish tax net and the State could reasonably claim to the multinationals that the measure was forced upon it by the EU.

By the early 1990s the economy was reviving and the State's finances were improving. Also, net subsidies from the EU amounted to about 7% of GDP. The EU was no longer prepared to accept our two-tiered corporate tax system. The 10% tax was seen as, in effect, State Aid to the multinational sector. Accordingly, the EU insisted that Ireland have a single Corporation Tax rate.

If the EU thought that the convergence of the 50% and 10% rate would lead to a single rate somewhere near the middle (e.g. 30%), it was sadly mistaken. The rate that was finally arrived at in 2003 was 12.5%.

But even a uniform low rate of Corporation Tax benefits large foreign-owned companies more than small Irish-owned companies. A foreign company can pay dividends to companies resident in various tax havens. But dividends paid to Irish residents are subject to the normal rates of income tax.

There is no doubt that the Irish Corporation Tax system has been a very successful tool of industrial policy. According to tax expert Suzanne Kelly, 80% of Corporation Tax is paid by the multinationals, along with 50% of PAYE and VAT, and 92% of Customs and Excise (*Journal*, ie, 9/9/16).

These figures are remarkable when it is considered that "only" 22% of those engaged in the business economy are employed by foreign firms, suggesting the enormous level of productivity in this sector.

The policy has helped the development

of a native bourgeoisie. The presence of the multi-nationals has exposed the country to an array of the most modern business techniques.

In recent times Ireland has been accused of being a tax haven. But it depends on how the term *tax haven* is defined. Certainly, Ireland cannot be put in the same category as Bermuda, the Cayman Islands etc. The presence of multi-nationals in Ireland goes far beyond 'brass plates'. There is economic substance. Companies such as Apple, Google and Microsoft each employ thousands of workers.

It is true that Ireland has a low corporate tax rate. But the Irish Government argues that corporate tax revenue as a percentage of GDP in Ireland is about the OECD average, proving that other countries have much lower effective rates than their headline corporate tax rates.

However, in recent years Ireland has been implicated in some aggressive tax planning schemes. Most notably, Apple routed billions of Euros worth of business through an Irish-registered company. But the Irish tax authorities deemed that this entity had nothing to do with the Irish economy because management and control was exercised elsewhere. Accordingly, the Irish-registered entity was not liable for Irish tax. This would not have been controversial, if it were not for the fact that the entity was not liable for American tax either, because American law deems that tax residency is determined by where the company is registered, regardless of whether the company has any substantial economic connection with that country.

This gave rise to a company that was "stateless" for tax purposes and therefore not liable for tax. But the question arises: *which country is the tax haven the USA or Ireland?*

It is likely that America's rather lax tax laws are designed to encourage a global reach for her corporations. But it is difficult to see how Ireland can be blamed for unintended consequences.

Nevertheless, the EU's Competition Commissioner, Margrethe Vestager, decided that Ireland should have taxed Apple to the tune of 13 billion euro for these Irish-registered companies. Accompanying this decision was propaganda to the effect that Apple paid only a fraction of one per cent of its profits in Corporation Taxes to Ireland. But, if you include profits that are not Irish in your figure, of course you are going to get an artificially low percentage.

Perhaps Vestager hoped that this nonsense would undermine the Irish political

consensus on corporate taxes. But both the Irish State and Apple appealed the decision and it was no surprise that they were successful.

Another scam that Ireland was implicated in was the accounting of patent income.

There is no doubt that Irish subsidiaries of multinationals are liable for the use of the intellectual property that is owned by the parent company (usually in the USA). Nor is it controversial that the cost of using such property is deductible from the company's taxable profits.

The controversial aspect involves the receipt of the patent income. Normally, Ireland would impose a *withholding tax* on such payments abroad, except where it has a tax treaty — which is the case for other EU countries. So, the payments to the Netherlands were made without deduction of tax. These payments to the Netherlands then went to Bermuda. But the Netherlands, unlike Ireland, does not impose a withholding tax.

The element that caused outrage in this scheme, known quaintly as the "*Dutch sandwich*", was that, while the payment from Ireland was tax deductible, the receipt in Bermuda was tax free.

But where is the tax haven? Is it in Ireland, the Netherlands, Bermuda or the USA where the ownership of the intellectual property resides?

These tax avoidance measures are being phased out and their cessation will have no impact on the Irish economy.

Another measure that the OECD has proposed is that all countries should have a minimum Corporation Tax of 15%. Ireland has opposed this, as it will mean the abandonment of our 12.5% rate.

The 12.5% rate has been a useful selling tool for the IDA. While other countries have lower rates, Ireland can claim that its rate has remained unchanged for 20 years. Increasing the rate, even by a small amount, will undermine the sense of permanence.

Nevertheless, while it is no harm for the Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe, to give the appearance of opposition to the OECD proposal, its impact will at worst be negligible and at best may be positive.

If the 15% is imposed on all countries, it will make it more difficult for any country to undercut Ireland's taxation policies.

But taxation policy is not as important as it was for Ireland. In the last forty years ecosystems have evolved in various sectors such as Internet Technology and Pharmaceuticals. The Labour skills, supply chains and general infrastructure cannot be easily replicated in another country.

Ireland has come a long way from the 1950s!

John Martin

2021 Casement Wreath Laying

The 2021 commemoration of the execution of Roger Casement on August 3rd was as well attended as last year with about 70 people present. As has been customary in recent years the event took place outside the house, marked with a plaque, where Casement spent his childhood on Sandycove Road, Dun Laoghaire. The strong attendance may have reflected the groundswell of support for the patriot's memory that has been growing in the area in anticipation of the statue which is to be unveiled next year.

The format was that long time Dun Laoghaire activist Margaret Brown officiated and introduced the musician and speakers. First up was the piper whose atmospheric playing was roundly applauded. Councillor Lottie McCarthy (Labour Party), current Cathaoirleach of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council spoke on Casement's human rights campaigns in

Africa and South America and his contribution to the national cause. She conveyed the pride with which the statue project is being prepared by the Council.

Next was a reading by myself of the Ash Tree of Uisneach, a poem by Alice Milligan about Casement. Before reading the poem, I made the following explanatory remarks.

Roger Casement noticed Alice Milligan in the courtroom during his trial and conveyed to her a wish that she "write a poem about it all". When first published in 1917 it was heavily censored. The full version was published in the Irish Press on August 3 1933. It has not received much attention since then and has been retrieved by Angus Mitchell.

The poem is addressed to Alice Stopford Green, Casement's friend who acted with George Gavan Duffy to prevent Casement from being executed without trial. It tells

the story of the trial. His "accuser" who "feigns to sleep" refers to the prosecutor, Lord Birkenhead, who had been actively involved in unionist resistance to Home Rule. Birkenhead pretended to sleep when Casement gave his speech from the dock. "Their old pretender" is, I believe, King Billy.

Following the reading the piper played a few more tunes, a minute's silence was held and wreaths were laid. The wreaths were from the Roger Casement Summer School, the 1916 Relatives Association, Casement supporters in Belfast and Fianna Fail. Among the audience were Cormac Devlin TD and Councillor Michael Clarke who laid the wreath on behalf of Fianna Fail. Former Labour Party Minister, Niamh Breathnach was also in attendance, as were members of 1916 Relatives Association and Mairead Toibin of the Aontu Party.

The poetry reading was phone-videoed and posted on Manus O'Riordan's facebook page. It received a number of views on YouTube. The expectation is that the statue will be in place before next year's commemoration which, hopefully, will be where it takes place.

Dave Alvey

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR · LETTERS TO THE EDITOR · LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Namless One

The poem *The Namless One* (see: [Naming 'the nameless one'](#), *Irish Political Review*, August 2021) is of special interest given how it is shrouded in dubiousness and mystery and is archived in New York Public Library, an ocean away from the better known Casement 'diary' material.

Strange indeed the assumption of authenticity proponents that Dr. W.J. Maloney, author of *The Forged Casement Diaries* (1936), would, nonchalantly and without protest or demur, have donated the said poem to the library in 1940, having spent a number of years of the previous decade working to disprove, by research and writing, the very insinuations the verses promote.

Plausible is the notion that the poem of the same name with the theme of events in Armenia in 1898 is what Maloney donated—the original poem later being replaced by an unknown hand, just as *Naming 'the nameless one'* proposes.

In an article in *The Sunday Press* of 4th August 1957 an Englishman, C.H. Norman, challenging the idea of Casement as author, claimed the poem had been in circulation over 50 years before and that it was generally thought to have been the

work of John Addington Symonds, a gay activist and poet.

In *The Truth about the Forged Diaries* (1966) Dr. H.O. Mackey alleged the poem had come from a 1902 anthology of the poetry of Addington Symonds who, incidentally, died in 1893. There was indeed an anthology of poems authored by Addington Symonds and published in 1902. The title was *Fragilia Labilia*. The book was reproduced by an Indian publisher, Pranava Books, some years ago. I got hold of a copy a while ago. The *Nameless One* does not appear in the collection, nor anything resembling it in content and style.

Would Intelligence professionals contrive a deception which was vulnerable to being unravelled by the mere discovery of some long-forgotten poetry collection? Such forces know how to cover up their tracks. The Addington Symonds notion must be considered a canard.

An interesting matter is the style of the penmanship as revealed in the poem manuscript and its dedication on the reverse side of the paper. The dedication appears in rather typical Casement handwriting. The verses themselves appear in a handwriting style similar but not quite the same. Could there have been two penmen involved?

Copies of the poem and dedication, as

reproduced in Lucy McDiarmid's *Irish Art of Controversy* (2005), are below.

Tim O'Sullivan

The Namless 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

'The Nameless One'

Paul Hyde has done Roger Casement studies some service by discovering that a copy of his poem *The Nameless One* does exist in the NLI (*Naming 'the nameless one', Irish Political Review*, August 2021). The item certainly eluded me. I wrote that it was suspicious the document had disappeared, despite being mentioned by Montgomery Hyde in his 1957 *Sunday Times* article on the Casement diaries. He was a Unionist MP from 1950 to 1959 and an almost unique advocate in the House of Commons for homosexual decriminalisation. Paul credits Philip O'Connor with noticing that the NLI had a microfilm set of the New York Public Library (NYPL) *Maloney Irish Historical Papers* which were apparently sent to Dublin in 1946. They had been donated by Dr. Maloney in December 1940.

The recently digitised Hayes 'Sources' catalogue references the NYPL collection and adds that the NLI "holds a microfilm copy (n.432-4, p.738-740)". This I missed although I was not using the later electronic catalogue when researching, rather the hardcopy volumes. Hayes gave that reference but did not specify it was microfilm or that the NLI had a copy.

Paul also reveals that Herbert Mackey, the Casement author and early diary forgery theorist, was aware of the fact that the poem was "on one of the microfilms in the National Library", having been told by the Editor of *The Times* on 3 May 1957.

That did not stop Mackey, disingenuously and regularly, saying that John Addington Symonds, not Casement, wrote the poem, while never revealing he knew it existed in the NYPL papers copied to the NLI. One occasion was after *Time Magazine's* reference to it on 6th March 1965, when reporting the reburial of Casement's remains. Mackey responded by writing to a number of Irish newspapers denying Casement's authorship. Yet all along he knew it existed in New York in a manuscript in Casement's hand, and in the NLI on microfilm.

Now there's an element of concealment and conspiracy that Paul does not remark on.

It seems unlikely Montgomery Hyde saw the microfilm version of the poem in Dublin in 1957, rather he was told by Frank MacDermot of its existence there, as Paul suggests. Either way, M. Hyde did not say he saw it, just that he did go to Dublin to look at Casement material. He never

stated he saw what form it was in, although used the term 'manuscript' to describe it. He therefore did not deceive. He apparently knew that MacDermot had supplied the text of the poem for the *Sunday Times* articles. All this Paul Hyde accepts.

Of course, Paul Hyde makes much of the word 'manuscript', calling M. Hyde's use of it a 'false claim', but the word long ago lost its absolute connection to a handwritten, original item.

Paul then quotes M. Hyde writing, "There is in the National Library of Ireland the manuscript of a poem by Casement, entitled 'The Nameless One.' In my view it betrays strong homosexual feelings in its author. Those who may read it below can judge for themselves of this." Paul Hyde adds, "The published poem consists of seven quatrains and does bear the interpretation indicated by M. Hyde."

So it is a homosexual poem.

The question that arises, and is addressed by him with another assertion about British Intelligence manipulation, this time in New York, last time over Adler Christensen and German Foreign Office papers in the NLI (see *Irish Political Review*, March 2021) is how to explain away the offending poem. Then, Paul suggested something similar, although some forty years on. That was with a document written in Germany by Casement, supposedly missing from the NLI, as "someone removed the original volume containing the letter and replaced it with a manipulated volume at some time after the publication of Doerries's book in 1999".

A more general question also arises: how did these early Casement papers get into the NYPL Maloney collection? I can only surmise that, with recent correspondence received before he went to the US in July 1914, Casement brought over older papers. We know a box or trunk that he intended to bring to America failed to meet his boat in Glasgow. The contents of this trunk may well have been what was sorted through (and presumably in large part destroyed) by George Gavan Duffy in 1915, according to his Bureau of Military History Statement.

It does seem no paper copy, original or otherwise, was ever in the NLI. That Frank MacDermot, a former TD and Senator, had copied it years earlier when living in New York is not the likeliest option, despite what Paul avers. He has usefully tracked the work of MacDermot in this matter who seems to have proposed and initiated the Montgomery Hyde articles.

He also informs us and asserts:

"The mss on the microfilm are accompanied by anonymous handwritten notes which purport to authenticate the calligraphy as Casement's hand... Staff in NYPL have verified that none of these side-notes purporting to authenticate the mss can be found today in NYPL.

"There is, therefore, no evidence today that the side-notes existed in 1946 when the microfilms were made. Library staff today have never seen them. Readers must decide if they find it credible that curators of the Casement papers in NYPL were authorised to destroy documents which purport to authenticate the poem mss entrusted to their care. If a credible motive for this extraordinary destruction cannot be found, it follows that the side-notes were not destroyed and could not be destroyed because there were no side-notes in NYPL. This leaves only one explanation for their existence today on the NLI microfilm.

"In 1957 the microfilm was manipulated to include the forged side-notes and the forged version of *The Nameless One*. Some readers will understandably find this exposition challenging and perhaps confusing."

The NYPL poem's title on the front of its hand-written copy is indeed misspelt 'Nameless' but on the verso is correctly 'Nameless'. However the other words on the back did not appear in the *Sunday Times* article. They are on the NLI microfilm within the accompanying NYPL notes, but only in part.

So the back of the document is not present in Dublin. It read, "Lines written in Very Great Dejection at Genoa. November 15 1900 before sailing on "Sirio" for Barcelona". As the NYPL note writer left out the six words 'before sailing on Sirio for Barcelona', it suggests he was not a British forger or an accomplished manipulator.

Examination of Casement's movements in 1900 indicate he went twice to Italy that year, while fitting in two days of talks with King Leopold of Belgium on 10th and 11th October. In his report, sent direct to the Marquess of Salisbury (TNA FO 2/336), he wrote of lengthy discussions about raising revenue from natives by use of the hut tax and various boundary disputes with Germany and France. Earlier on 6th February, in post in Lourenco Marques, he wrote to the Foreign Office about foreign Boer recruits and poor Portuguese passport control, later urging that Boer prisoners be severely dealt with. In Naples by 3rd September he was seeing Casaldo, was back in London the same month, in Brussels in October and in Italy again in November.

Casement indeed was in Barcelona some five days after 15th November 1900, when, in a letter (NLI MS 36199/1) to his great friend Dick Morten he described a bullfight he regretted attending. (The *Sirio* famously sank with great loss of life off the coast of

Spain in 1906, *en route* from Genoa via Barcelona to Cadiz.)

This verso phrasing is a classic Casement annotation, very like charged words written a little earlier. In this instance, which again had an Italian connection, the note is on an early draft of a poem titled *The Unforgotten* (NLI 13082/2i/9):

“Casaldo’s friend R.C.
Naples, 3 September 1900
Written going to lunch at Naval & Military
on Saturday, Sept. 22 / 1900.
Oh Sad! Oh! grief stricken.”

The poem in final form ends with another *cri de coeur* about discontinued or unrequited love:

I would not loveless hold my life a day
Yet never may thy willing hand seek mine
Yet never may the tumult of my heart
Beat to a rhythm caught from pressing thine
O thou art everywhere save in my arms.

The unmentioned verso words strongly suggests that MacDermot neither saw the poem in New York nor read the NYPL’s notes in Dublin, only the poem itself. Had he seen it there, he would surely have quoted the text on the back, and quoted it in full.

Hyde goes on to say that British Intelligence not only manipulated the microfilm to insert these typed notes, but faked the poem itself, then switched the fake for (another) Casement poem of the same title. That other poem, written in 1898, concerns the Armenian Massacres. Hyde calls it the Ottoman poem, although it is actually and embarrassingly anti-Ottoman.

He adds “*It is simply not credible far less probable that Casement wrote two poems with radically different themes and gave them the same title*”.

In fact he did. Actually he wrote three poems with the same *Nameless* title. The third is to be found in a notebook (NLI 12114), along with certain items dated 1882-3 when Casement was a teenager. Initially a school exercise book, it was also used for writing poetry over a decade. This third poem resembles that in the NYPL. Indeed it could be described as an adolescent precursor, dealing with dark deeds and flagrant sins so drastic as to shake the author’s faith in God. Two memorable lines read—

“And tell how love in his bosom lighted
A hopeless passion that dried his blood.”

And Casement also duplicated titles with his poem *Quo Vadis*, to which Hyde refers in his *Irish Political Review* article of March 2021. This alleges manipulation by the Casement author, Brian Inglis. Paul says that Inglis had deliberately “*altered the original text... so as to present it as evidence of forbidden desire*”, by chang-

ing the word ‘*of*’ to ‘*for*’.

The line in question originally read, “Of a hunger of things unholy we loathe while we still prefer”, as opposed to “*Of a hunger for things unholy we loathe while we still prefer*”.

I see the sense as the same, although the latter, Inglis version, reads better. The meaning certainly does not “*significantly differ*”.

The two same-titled poems are in NLI 13082/2ii/3 and 13082/2v/9, respectively, although Hyde mixes up the date. The former is entirely political and dated “*Sat. Feb. 10/06*”. It opens after this comment, “*The task of Liberal Statesmanship must be to reconcile Ireland to the Empire*”: Extract from speech of member of the new Liberal Ministry’:

“England — I spoke to her in burning tones of pillage
And showed her where the fields of plunder lay.”

The other, republished by Inglis, is not dated. It opens:

“I look at myself and wonder if the million’d stars have peace
If the cry of a soul in anguish is anywhere heard to cease
Is it never to cease the anguish? — is it never to end the toil
Of a heart that is filled with longing, and maketh the soul its spoil?”

It is another personal poem bemoaning the difficulty of being homosexual and has no connection to Liberal Imperialism.

Readers may indeed, as Paul wrote, be “*challenged*” by this exposition, since no evidence is provided for that 1950s sabotage, nor is it explained how it could even have been brought about. It would have to have involved considerable collusion by staff in the NYPL and NLI, who, oddly —not being sub-agents of the British— kept mum about it.

To my ear, there are perhaps half a dozen poems in the Casement *oeuvre* that display similarity to the sentiments in the homosexual ‘*Nameless One*’, so it was not a unique giveaway requiring rapid and drastic action. Why British Intelligence was so desperate to pin a homosexual accusation poetically on Casement, decades on from the diaries being discovered, with their evidence of extensive gay activity, goes unanswered. Such collusive behaviour amongst Archive staff of course carries a huge risk of them revealing what has supposedly happened.

Hyde then explains the swap:

“It was necessary to give the false poem

the name of a ms already listed in the NY Casement file so that it would appear to be part of the original Maloney donation. The Ottoman ms entitled *The Nameless One* seemed appropriate and this ms was removed and the forged *Nameless One* was inserted where it remains today.”

As MacDermot did not *have* “*the literary skills and experience required to compose a well-made poem*”, it needed British Intelligence with its “*ingenuity, experience and modus operandi*”.

As with all Hyde’s assertive theories, there is no back-up evidence, just subjective deduction. He operates a lawyering technique of finding absences and contradiction in the evidence, but all historians know that written evidence is riddled with such confusions, as not necessarily much survives and what does was not originally recorded for the purposes of a forensic investigation forty or more years later. Much of a correspondence, for example, is implied as the writer rarely repeats key details knowing the recipient is already aware of them.

Co-incidentally, although linked, Pat Walsh in *Irish Foreign Affairs* (June 2021) reprints and analyses the ‘*Ottoman*’ poem. Casement’s typical note on the manuscript read, “*Written on 29-30th. Nov. 1898 Outside Lagos bar on “Gretchen Bohlen” on way to Loanda*”. In an interesting article, he wrote:

“It is a poem largely about the massacre of Armenians by the forces of the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid, known widely as “*Abdul the Damned*” in England. It is a vicious poem, couched in biblical/classical language, but its message is clear: the Sultan and his Empire is a product of Hell and should be consigned back to its place of origin. It was written when Casement was a fervent Imperialist going to assist the destruction of the independent Boer Republics and incorporating them in the British Empire.” (‘*Abdul the Damned*’ was indeed Casement’s subtitle for the poem.)

The question of why and when Casement abandoned his support for English Imperialism has perplexed many. In my book, I reminded readers that his Irish nationalism was present in his teenage years. It may have been put to one side during his colonial career but it never diminished nor did his antipathy to Ulster Protestants, especially those of Scottish origin. Going to school in Ballymena plainly did not help in that department.

Writing to his cousin Gertrude Bannister in September 1898, Casement declared,

“Belfast no doubt thinks the North Down election or the Revd. McQuinzy

Drivelbag's last Orange harangue of far greater interest and importance than the breaking up of empires or the repartition of continents. Belfast is really I think a very stupid ill-bred town and although I have not (fortunately) been in it for seven years until this visit I hope it may be fourteen before I come to it again. I've been cheering all through breakfast over the London news."

That news was the capture of Omdurman and the Khalifa's defeat, which may be the background to his writing of the Ottoman poem. Despite views like these, Casement still lacked the necessary *animus* against the Empire to be an Irish separatist. However, his anti-unionist position was set in stone. Within five years, and dramatically in 1904, he had become an enthusiastic separatist, explaining how his radicalism had developed with one issue interacting on the other: "*It was only because I was an Irishman that I could understand fully I think their whole scheme of wrongdoing at work in the Congo*".

Pat Walsh ends on the matter of the second poem:

"Finally, it should be noted that "The Nameless One" is not the only poem of that name attributed to Roger Casement. Mysteriously, another called "The Nameless One" first appeared in 1957 in the Sunday Times by Harford Montgomery Hyde of British Intelligence, Unionist MP for North Belfast and a proud self confessed forger (see The Catholic Herald, 25 February, 1966) who claimed it was based on a manuscript in the National Library which did not exist. Hyde, and then many others, used it to promote the Black Diaries story that the British used to secure the hanging of Casement. Unlike the poem dealt with above the provenance of this latter poem is unclear—and provenance is crucial in all matters relating to the Black Diaries and associated issues.

"It is most peculiar that Casement would have written two poems within a couple of years of each other with the same name but on utterly different subjects... More curiously, Hyde did not give it as his source in the Sunday Times or in any of his extensive writings on Casement before or after its publication by him. How puzzling! But such questions have not stopped many promoting this other poem, "The Nameless One," as something of greater importance than the real and fully authenticated above poem and is considered by them to be the clincher in the debate about the Black Diaries.

Well, Imperialism's work is never done, it seems."

As indicated above, two poems with the same title was not unusual for Casement. 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. His change of heart over the Ottomans and Armenia is of course significant but Casement's sexual nature undoubtedly contributed to his political outlook. The disputes over his diaries and poetry also reveal how official Ireland changes in one respect and not in another.

Provenance is indeed crucial, but often contested, requiring interpretation. Textual analysis, however, is more convincing than mere assertion.

Jeffrey Dudgeon

7 August 2021

jeffreydudgeon@hotmail.com

Paul Hyde replies:

I must thank Mr. Dudgeon for his letter drawing more attention to my article 'Naming the nameless one'. I confess that I find his letter somewhat unfocussed but I assume he wishes to defend "*the homosexual poem*" published by M. Hyde as being the work of Casement, and not as I argue composed by an unknown person. I will deal with only a few points.

I was unaware that the term '*manuscript*' no longer refers to handwritten documents. Presumably M. Hyde himself, barrister and author, was equally unaware of this in 1957 when he published his unambiguous assertion about a manuscript in NLI. My point remains; the provenance of the poem text sent by MacDermot to the *Sunday Times* Editor remains unknown. Mr. Dudgeon does not know how and where MacDermot obtained the text because MacDermot did not give a source for the published text. M. Hyde did give a source and allowed his readers to *infer* that he had seen a manuscript which he had not seen and which did not exist.

Mr. Dudgeon writes "*That Frank MacDermot, a former TD and Senator, had copied it years earlier when living in New York is not the likeliest option despite what Paul avers.*" But I do not aver any such thing in my article. Indeed I present evidence to show that the NYPL manuscript of that poem did not exist before 1957.

Mr. Dudgeon also writes "*It would have to have involved considerable collusion by staff in the NYPL and NLI*", in referring to my explanation that manipulation took place. But no such collusion was necessary. Today in NLI there is little security and in 1957 there would have been none at all. Of course I cannot know about NYPL security in 1957 but the simple switching of documents could certainly have been done.

It is recorded that NLI Director Hayes in

1965 gave his personal opinion that the diaries were authentic on the tenuous basis that "*There is in the National Library much Casement material and there are one or two references in this material which are not inconsistent with the charges against Casement.*" Hayes certainly had seen the poem published by M. Hyde in 1957 but he does not refer to this prize exhibit allegedly held as a manuscript in his own library and which is *totally consistent* with the diary allegations. Nor does he mention the microfilm with its photograph of the NYPL manuscript. While he knew there was no such manuscript in his library, that he failed to mention "*the homosexual poem*" leads one to conclude he had not seen it on the microfilm in 1946 or later. If Hayes had seen the microfilm manuscript he would have cited it rather than refer vaguely to "*one or two references*".

To close: Mr. Dudgeon really must state how MacDermot obtained the text of the published poem.

Paul R. Hyde

Jack Lane replies:

I was intrigued by a reference Jeff Dudgeon made in his comments on Pat Walsh's analysis of Casement's poem, *The Nameless One*, (IPR September 2021). Pat pointed out that the poem is a most striking illustration of the difference between Casement as a thoroughgoing Liberal Imperialist in the 1890s who wanted the Ottoman Empire totally destroyed and Casement in 1914 who wanted it preserved against British Imperialism. Jeff feels obliged to explain this change and comments: "The question of why and when Casement abandoned his support for English imperialism has perplexed many. In my book, I reminded readers that his Irish nationalism was present in his teenage years." In other words he changed his views on the world because of some youthful Irish nationalism. But as Jeff must have read everything that Casement wrote, and did, he knows this hardly explains the complete change. Moreover, Casement became a serious nationalist after he changed his views on the world and British Imperialism. And Jeff suggests another explanation: "His change of heart over the Ottomans and Armenia is of course significant but Casement's sexual nature undoubtedly contributed to his political outlook." I hope Jeff elaborates on this thesis as to how exactly his 'sexual nature' contributed to his political transformation.

Jack Lane

Afghanistan

I sometimes wonder if 'Afghanistan' is an imagined space, invented by the English in the nineteenth century with their own agendas to the forefront, including centrally, the invention of imperial 'India', another imagined English space in the world, part of the project of globalising British capital.

As I understand it there is not even an agreed border or frontier between 'Afghanistan' and modern (West) Pakistan, another disaster legacy from the chaotic British withdrawal from 'India', now being replayed on a somewhat smaller stage (but equally ignominiously and for locals cruelly and murderously) by America's defeat in 'Afghanistan'.

Ameranglia's excursions since roughly the eighteenth century into Asia in support of the project of globalising an underconsumptionist and highly exploitative and impoverishing capitalist accumulative model at home (imperialism as growth, which is to say accumulation) have proved folly, for both the Ameranglian machine and also the Russians and Germans and others who mimicked the capitalism-as-imperialism model of accumulation.

The orient, however defined, has however proved to be a (resource-draining) bog for Western military misadventures but has also a now proven capacity on the part of 'oriental places' such as Japan and others, critically the Peoples Repub-

lic of China, to absorb the capitalist idea and to engage in Schumpeterian contests in return and win in many ways. Who doesn't have a Samsung tv or a Huawei phone these days? Whose heat pump isn't Asian-manufactured?

Asia has proved to be the Great Contender as it were as opposed to being the opiated 'market' sump that was imagined and planned by the West. Critical to it all was I think the twice-risen Japan after its conquest and reconquest by the Americans but also critically, there was the rebirth under the CCP of China. And now militarily, the Afghan ghost returns (yet again).

Fergus O Rahallaigh

Eddie O'Neill (1951-2021)

—a personal tribute

This 25 July the death took place, from terminal cancer, of Eddie O'Neill, founding President of *Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland* (FIBI). I first met Eddie O'Neill in 2009 on the occasion of the Dublin funeral of International Brigade veteran Bob Doyle. Along with Bob, Eddie had co-founded *Friends of Charlie Donnelly* in order to honour the memory of that poet and platoon leader of the James Connolly Section of the 15th International Brigade's Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Donnelly had been killed in action during the battle of Jarama in February 1937. Their shared objective was realised with the unveiling in 2010 of the Charlie Donnelly memorial cairn outside the municipality Rivas-Vaciamadrid, adjacent to the Jarama battlefield where he had fallen. *Friends of Charlie Donnelly* was transformed into *Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland*, and in May 2013 Eddie invited me to join the FIBI Executive and to speak at the unveiling of an Anti-Fascist Action memorial plaque in honour of International Brigade volunteers from the Dublin suburb of Inchicore. A close comradeship and friendship was formed over the succeeding eight years, notwithstanding differing political backgrounds.

Eddie O'Neill hailed from the County

Tyrone townland of Derrytresk, close to the Killybrackey birthplace of Charlie Donnelly. In the late 1960s Eddie campaigned for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland as a member of People's Democracy. Interned without trial in 1971 while serving his engineering apprenticeship at Shorts, Eddie was incarcerated in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, and Magilligan Prison Camp, County Derry. It was there, on the weekend preceding the infamous Bloody Sunday massacre of January 1972, that Eddie witnessed its precursor, as British paratroopers fired plastic bullets and CS gas at a peaceful anti-internment protesters on Magilligan Strand.

I had been aware for some years that Eddie had been an IRA prisoner in England, but not much aware of the details, until in 2014 I read a book entitled *Special Category—The IRA in English Prisons Volume 1: 1968-1978*. It was authored by Ruan O'Donnell and published in 2012.

O'Donnell introduced Eddie as follows:

"The drastic measure of internment without trial had been introduced in the Six Counties on 9 August 1971 and overwhelmingly targeted men from the Nationalist and Republican community... News of the physical abuse and harsh

sensory deprivation techniques applied to a select group of detainees created an international furore once exposed. Tyrone student Eddie O'Neill was among those detained, an experience which hastened his abandonment of engineering studies in Belfast in favour of IRA operations in England.

Eddie said of his own torture in Gough Barracks:

"I was made to stand for hours with my fingertips to the wall and my feet as far back as possible. There was a whistling sound like wind escaping and lights were flashed on and off. After a while I collapsed. I was picked up and put in the same position. If I refused, the usual procedure was to kick me in the privates."

Very much inspired by Eddie, this Volume 1, numbering 528 pages, was a remarkable accomplishment by O'Donnell. There was not a Republican prisoner for whom details were not given. Mentioned on twenty of its pages was Conor Lynch, imprisoned for seven years in Wakefield, and who joined the British & Irish Communist Organisation while there. Later a member of the *Irish Political Review Group*, he was a regular contributor to this magazine until his passing, and funeral tributes to Conor in the March 2012 issue of *Irish Political Review* can be freely downloaded from the Athol Books website.

In 2015 Eddie O'Neill gifted me O'Donnell's no less impressive 432 page *Vol. 2: 1978-1985*, in which he again featured prominently, as he will

no doubt also feature in a third volume under preparation, as it was 1988 before he was finally released after fourteen years imprisonment.

Following Eddie's release from internment in 1972, he served in the IRA's East Tyrone Brigade. His leadership qualities resulted in him becoming O/C of an Active Service Unit [ASU] in London. As O'Donnell related, on 5th January 1974 the London ASU, having issued advance warnings, caused "*considerable damage and disruption to tourism by bombing the Boat Show in Earl's Court and the Trafalgar exhibit at Madame Tussaud's*". On 6th April the Uxbridge shopping centre in Middlesex was fire-bombed, but arrests followed police raids on 10th April:

"The unit responsible was imaginatively dubbed the 'ghost bombers' by the *Sun* and following their arrest as the 'Uxbridge Eight'... The leader of the group was twenty-four year old Eddie O'Neill (aka 'Eamon Quinn') a student of aircraft engineering in Belfast who hailed from East Tyrone. Of pronounced leftist politics, O'Neill was well versed in the long history of Irish resistance in his native county. He gravitated from participation in Civil Rights campaigning with People's Democracy to membership of the IRA... He had been subjected to 'white noise' interrogations in Gough Barracks, Armagh, and a subsequent stint on remand in Crumlin Road Gaol broadened his exposure to prison life."

The trial began in January 1975. Eddie was among those convicted in March "*of having caused and conspired to cause explosions*" in the Greater London area, resulting in a sentence of twenty years maximum security imprisonment. O'Donnell related how, when Eddie was on remand in Brixton Prison, he "*was in a toilet cubicle in the washing area when four English prisoners threw a bucket of boiling water over the partition badly scalding his shoulders and back*".

Eddie recalled: "*I thought I was knifed. The water was straight out of the Burco boiler ... it removed the skin from the top of my shoulders to the top of my thighs*".

O'Donnell continued:

"His injuries may have been far worse had he not sensed danger and prepared to defend himself from a sustained assault. With great presence of mind, Eddie aggressively went 'straight out' to confront his assailants. Effective use was made of a convenient broom handle dropped by cleaners who fled the scene. One attacker was immediately floored. The sudden arrival of prison staff to violently restrain O'Neill increased his suspicions that

they had assisted the criminals. He was dragged away along a cast iron radiator which 'peeled' his damaged skin 'like an orange'."

O'Donnell related that, while Eddie O'Neill was imprisoned after sentencing in Long Lartin in 1975, one of the wholly innocent and framed Birmingham Six prisoners, Dick McKenny, was also sent there. "*Prisoners threw lumps of steel and machinery parts at him on his first day in the metalwork shop*", while a gang had "*been told by the screws that they had carte blanche to attack Irish prisoners*".

McKenny was badly beaten in March 1976 and, after two weeks in solitary for refusing to return to work, he was moved to another cell near Republican prisoners. Drawing on Eddie's account, O'Donnell continued:

"The IRA men could see that he was '*in bad shape psychologically*' and felt obliged to intervene in the interests of all their countrymen... The clique led by an ex-paratrooper was identified as the main threat and republicans, backed by Dublin and Belfast criminals, took pre-emptive action against the ringleaders on the day of a planned assault on McKenny. Eddie O'Neill recalled: '*lessons had to be taught that if you messed with us this is what is going to happen.*' The confrontation against vastly superior numbers was broken up before the republicans inflicted a satisfactory level of damage on their enemies. They ascertained from an English political ally that 'a come back' in the form of multiple knife attacks was imminent and would take place in a work zone covered by cameras rather than staff. The decision was taken to meet this potentially lethal challenge with commensurate and pre-emptive force: '*if we had to, we'd kill them. We weren't going to be downtrodden. If we fought the Brits at home we weren't going to be beaten by screws.*' When word reached the English gang that a serious contest was in the offing a flurry of requests for transfer led to the rushed evacuation of most of its members from the jail in Transit vans... McKenny appreciated that '*Republican and other Irish prisoners took action*' on his behalf and were punished with a week in solitary. He was able to resume his metalwork assignment. John Barker, an informed English political prisoner on good terms with O'Neill ... professed no interest on purely pragmatic grounds in men who proclaimed their innocence. He made an exception for McKenny on the basis that he had been so '*so crudely fitted up*'. The protection extended by the IRA and friendly English prisoners garnered the Birmingham Six an invaluable respite from persecution."

Foiled in an escape attempt, Eddie was transferred to Wormwood Scrubs in

October 1976, from where he also attempted to escape in 1977, as also from Parkhurst in 1980, and Albany in 1983. He was constantly being moved from prison to prison, with much time spent in solitary confinement in Punishment Blocks. His leadership qualities were again to the fore in the July 1978 Gartree rooftop protest.

The FIBI Executive's obituary said of Eddie:

"As a result of the relentless attempts to break his spirit, in May 1979 he was rushed to the prison hospital at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight suffering from blinding headaches, insomnia, partial blindness and partial paralysis. For the previous two years he had suffered an inhumane regime of sleep torture, consisting of his cell light being left on 24 hours a day and frequent night searches, even though he was forced to strip before going to bed and to leave his clothes outside his cell. He had no sooner finished his treatment than he was transferred to Winson Green prison and put back into solitary. He subsequently received a severe beating from prison officers. When he complained about his injuries, he lost his remission. Ever the fighter, he appealed this capricious decision, and the lost remission was restored. He took everything that the empire could throw at him."

O'Donnell wrote as follows of the mid-August 1979 assault in Winson Green, where a sleeping Eddie O'Neill had been singled out for a vicious beating and severe kicking:

"The Tyroneman was '*roughed up a bit*' entering Winson Green, '*but at 6.30 the next morning I was battered, kicked to pieces, broken ribs etc ... I woke up to find five or six of them beating me*'. Such was the violence of the assault that one of his assailants suffered a broken arm. Rather than acknowledge staff initiation, O'Neill, who had been lying asleep when struck with batons, was preposterously charged with GBH. His injuries were such that he was kept '*out of circulation*' for ten days and only allowed exercise at night."

Eddie's leadership qualities led to an ever-mounting respect for him from the non-political 'ordinary decent criminals'. In Albany Prison in January 1983 there was a further assault on Eddie when a fellow IRA prisoner, Steve Nordone, discovered that, as his mother, sister and Austrian fiancée arrived for a scheduled visit, that visit was abruptly cancelled. O'Donnell related:

"Having returned to the second floor, he and O'Neill glimpsed the disconsolate trio in the distance beyond the front gate. They demanded an explanation from the Principal Officer who disclaimed any knowledge of the reasoning of his security

colleagues and declined to ascertain this when requested. A second attempt to remonstrate ended badly when Nordone lost his patience and threw a heavy table into an office wall. Staff rushed into the area and began striking the two republicans. O'Neill had nothing personal against those with whom he grappled and was surprised when one began to aggressively drive his boot onto his lower leg in an effort to break the limb. A Manchester prisoner alerted the wing and, as alarm bells sounded, the landing became 'swamped with guys'. The removal of the Irish men from the melee did not resolve the issue as British prisoners threatened to 'wreck' the prison if an explanation justifying the root cause of the incident was not forthcoming. Repercussions were also promised if the IRA men were beaten in the Punishment Block... A short 'lie down' in Durham Prison ensued but the indisposition to accuse the Irish men of assaulting staff, as opposed to simply 'fighting' revealed 'they wanted to play it down a bit because it was embarrassing'."

By February 1983, the overwhelming majority of the "ordinary decent criminals" in Albany were supporting the demands of Eddie and his comrades, as he was theirs. A *de facto* all-embracing prisoners' rights organisation was being welded together. In his chapter, "*The Broad Front and Mutiny in Albany, 1983*", Ruan O'Donnell related:

"Albany, according to O'Neill, was '*always a tinderbox ready to go. We were going to help it on its way.*' ... A basic strategy was devised to undermine the prison administration by motivating ordinary British prisoners to rally in support of the better conditions they deserved. The IRA recognised that English class politics, reliant on conservative traditions of social deference and acceptance of authoritarianism, was inhibiting prisoners from self-assertion... Two separate strands of IRA ambition were played out in Albany. One centred on the workshops, which they intended to totally destroy in a broad effort involving agitated British prisoners... A second conspiracy entailed a long held plan of mounting a roof top protest ...with a view to pressing their ongoing demands for repatriation. Ultimately, workshop protests in May 1983 facilitated a general melee in which the occupation and scaling of B Wing became viable. The result was a prison riot... during which millions of pounds of damage was inflicted on a major Dispersal System asset... In retrospect the Albany episode was a turning point in the Prison Department's attitude towards life-sentenced IRA prisoners in England..."

"The sequence of events culminating in the Albany Riot of May 1983 began in February when the vast majority of men joined in a wider 'strike' to demand 'equality of treatment with prisoners in Northern Ireland'. In early 1982, 210 of

the 279 prisoners in Albany had signed a petition seeking the 50 per cent remission available in the North of Ireland to IRA and INLA prisoners in the aftermath of the 1981 Hunger Strike... Serious unrest in Albany dated from 12 May 1983... O'Neill, former O/C of the IRA's 'Uxbridge Eight', privately compiled a detailed analysis dated 18 July 1983 regarding 'the world within walls' in the advent and course of the riot. This was furnished to interested parties on the outside and specifically to Lord Avebury and journalist Nick Davies. The document was privately imparted in order to counter Home Office claims that no terms had been agreed to end the protest. The Tyrone man was then awaiting sentence on charges of 'mutiny' which could have added many years to his sentence... O'Neill theorised that the staff overused Rule 43 (segregating prisoners) and imposed petty sanctions to 'lean on' prisoners with a view to inciting reaction that would justify severe countermeasures in which the ascendancy of the POA (Prison Officers' Association) would be demonstrated..."

"The refusal of prisoners to work in the mail-sewing area on 12 May 1983 was one of an intermittent series of protests against what many regarded as an unworthy task reminiscent of Victorian era convictism. The men knew that much of the product was quietly discarded and that the real purpose had more to do with establishing conformity rather than generating saleable output. Albany's new sewing facility was referred to as 'the punishment shop' ... (for a) 'degrading and demeaning task'." On this occasion the strike escalated day by day, and was transformed into a full scale riot on 20 May. Now it was time for Eddie and three fellow IRA prisoners—Stevie Blake, Tony Clarke and Paul Norney—to aim for the roof, along with other prisoners. O'Donnell's narrative related how Eddie led the way:

"Although less fit than normal due to a debilitating lie-down in Durham, O'Neill climbed and pulled himself up the exterior of B Wing and onto the roof. The Tyrone man reached the third floor of the building unaided before being passed a plank he needed to pass from one ledge to another. He boosted Stevie Blake to safety and was then pulled up. MUFTI (Minimum Use of Force and Tactical Intervention) squads were evidently distracted at ground level as they prepared to move in and confront the rioters. O'Neill's precarious ascent was closely followed by English man Mickey Browne, who was regarded as simply 'going for a riot'. With a line firmly secured, Norney and Clarke crossed onto the roof from the breach they had helped to create, as did five other prisoners. The ten included non-political English, Irish and Scottish prisoners along with Fahad Mihi, a well-disposed Jerusalem born member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Com-

mand... One of the first banners unfurled read: 'Prison reform, Parity with Irish prisoners' in reference to the protest of February 1983 in support of parole entitlements won by the IRA and INLA in Long Kesh..."

"A perceptive article by *Guardian* journalist David Beresford explained the roof top protests... Repatriation separated the IRA from the general concerns of the Category A population but the '*more politicised*' republicans were, nonetheless '*in the vanguard of prison reform*', as evidenced by the thirty plus complaints lodged with the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights, Strasbourg)... The specific agenda of the protesters had crystallised on the roof and fell into two segments in recognition of IRA and general prisoner issues."

The roof top protesters forced the British Home Office to finally come to an agreement on 24 May, negotiated via interlocutors, and which included meeting a demand to apprise their families of the location of prisons to which the protestors would now be shifted. Ruan O'Donnell's narrative continued:

"The protesters not only intended to vigorously contest the roof if attacked but had unlimited water and sufficient food on hand to comfortably survive for at least two weeks. The Tyrone man increased the only non-violent pressure he could bring to bear by insisting that no further dialogue would take place if their reasonable demands were dismissed... A reply was received at 10.30 p.m. in the form of a letter read by interlocutors. The men were assured that the Home Secretary guaranteed their personal safety... (Final terms were) agreed by 11.45 p.m. and discussions then turned to the all-important minutiae of managing the descent without the stigma of capitulation. O'Neill knew from experience that the authorities with whom he had negotiated in good faith would probably renege on the substance of the negotiations, yet he drew strength from the knowledge that at least forty persons had witnessed the hard-won deal. The IRA complement was defiant as there had been '*no unconditional surrender, so the moral victory was ours*'. The men unfurled a newly produced blanket banner on 25 May to encourage public identification with their aims and to bind the authorities to at least part of the negotiated agreement... The republicans descended from the heights to cheers from British prisoners..."

Eddie O'Neill was removed to Brixton Prison and charged with 'mutiny', a charge which permitted unlimited loss of remission. While this charge was no longer pursued in 1984, *An Phoblacht / Republican News* reported that he was held in "*a dungeon in Brixton*". O'Donnell further related:

“O’Neill’s elderly parents travelled from East Tyrone to see him with the requisite documentation to permit four ‘accumulated’ visits starting 28 March 1984. The second visit was abruptly terminated after twelve minutes whereupon O’Neill was ‘ghosted’, as they later discovered, to Wakefield in the north of England... ‘Such an action shattered my parents ... the H[ome] O[ffice] will no doubt claim my move was not designed to disrupt my visits’. The sudden shift added expense, inconvenience and tension to the trip. A lesser quality experience for the remaining slots had been engineered and the couple found on arrival in the Yorkshire prison that two tables had been positioned to prevent physical contact... He did not then realise that his mother had sustained a serious knee injury in the course of her travels.”

It was four years later, in 1978, when Eddie was finally released. The FIBI Executive’s obituary stated, *inter alia*:

“Following his eventual release, he continued his republican activism but widened it to encompass internationalism and anti-fascism. This path inspired him, along with International Brigades veteran Bob Doyle, Harry Owens and a small number of others, to establish the Friends of Charlie Donnelly, in memory of a fellow republican socialist, Co Tyrone native and International Brigader who had fallen at the Battle of Jarama in defence of the Spanish Republic in February 1937... Thanks in no small part to Eddie’s single-minded dedication to getting things done and his ability to attract people to work with him, in 2010 the group evolved into Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland (FIBI)... Eddie stayed particularly close to his many friends and comrades in the Republican Movement and he had a deep and enduring bond with his fellow ex-prisoners, many of whom joined him as he led solidarity trips to Spain and the Basque Country from 2007 onwards.”

From the outset of us getting to know each other, I told Eddie that I had opposed the war in which he fought and during which he had suffered so much. This did not matter to him, and we had a number of frank conversations about that war. I had been opposed to both the Official and Provisional IRA Wars, and in January 1994 I had jointly cooperated with my father, notwithstanding our own political differences, in calling for an IRA ceasefire. I therefore welcomed the ceasefire that came that August, but I regarded its February 1996 breakdown as having been made inevitable by the criminal irresponsibility of the Rainbow Coalition Government of Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left, who were demanding IRA decommissioning as a precondition before they would

agree that Sinn Féin should be admitted to all-Party talks. It required the defeat of that Government for the Peace Process to resume and lead to a new IRA ceasefire in July 1997, followed by the *1998 Good Friday Agreement*.

Eddie and I agreed to differ on how we viewed the outcome. To see Sinn Féin Ministers sitting on a Stormont Executive had not been the objective for which Eddie had fought his war. But he would never surrender to either disillusionment or cynicism. He now channelled all his leadership energies into his work with FIBI, as well as into internationalist solidarity with the Basque Country, Catalunya, Cuba and Palestine. The Eddie O’Neill I came to admire and love as a true comrade and friend had come to a deep understanding that the Second World War, with all its previously unimaginable horrors, could have been prevented had not the UK and the USA, in particular, stabbed the Spanish Republic in the back, as it fought to defend itself against the ultimately victorious onslaught of the combined forces of Franco, Mussolini and Hitler. The Imperialist warmongers of today

should and could be better confronted with a thorough public understanding of how International Brigade volunteers, derided by both UK and US authorities as ‘premature’ anti-fascists, had, in their defence of the Spanish Republic, fought to halt the onward march of Hitler.

In promoting FIBI, as well as the *Charlie Donnelly Winter School* which he had established in his native Tyrone, Eddie always worked on a cross community non-sectarian basis, and he not alone worked closely with non-Party and Communist Party and Sinn Féin members, but also with Fine Gaelers and Unionists prepared to honour the memory of individual International Brigaders who hailed from their respective localities. A particularly close bond had, of course, been formed from the very outset between Eddie and Bob Doyle (1916-2009), a veteran of both the IRA and the Republican Congress’s Irish Citizen Army, not least because of the courage in the face of vicious brutality that Bob had shown as an International Brigade prisoner in the Fascist concentration camp of San Pedro. Among Bob’s fellow prisoners in that camp had been Frank Ryan,



With Eddie O’Neill saluting the Cuban flag in Áras an Uachtaráin, on the occasion of the State visit to Ireland of the President of the Republic of Cuba in October 2019.

my fellow-Dubliner and friend Maurice Levitas, and New Yorker Hy Wallach, father of my partner Nancy.

See <https://albavolunteer.org/> and enter 'Wallach' as the Search word, for both Nancy's Lincoln Brigade tribute to Eddie, and details of Hy Wallach's concentration camp imprisonment.

Eddie very much appreciated my defence of Bob Doyle against Kevin Myers' characterisation assassination, which can be read on the Athol Books website in the June 2009 issue of *Irish Political Review*. He had also welcomed my defence of Frank Ryan against the character assassination indulged in by Roy Foster and Fearghal McGarry—see the December 2005 issue of this magazine online—and when we worked closely on the refurbishment of Ryan's Glasnevin granite tombstone in 2016, he asked me to give the oration at the re-dedication ceremony.

Over the course of our friendship we also exchanged literature. Each month I would send Eddie copies of this magazine, while he would send me articles penned by his favourite *Irish News* columnist, Patrick Murphy, the last one being sent only weeks before he passed on.

We did not, however, converse about the points where we would differ on the contents of such reading matter. But Eddie did indicate what he had particularly liked in *Irish Political Review*—Wilson John Haire's memoirs of the sectarian oppression he had endured in Belfast and Carryduff.

He also very much appreciated my review in this magazine's February's issue of *SALUD!*, Peadar O'Donnell's 1937 eyewitness account of the outbreak of the Spanish War, the publication of its marvellous second edition being the major achievement of Eddie's last year of life.

There was one further issue to be dealt with. Eddie had an abiding loathing for the character assassination of Charlie Donnelly that had been indulged in by C Desmond Greaves, Editor of the Connolly Association's *Irish Democrat*. Greaves had been ably answered by Peter O'Connor, Donnelly's comrade-in-arms in Spain who, with two fellow Waterford volunteers, had retrieved Donnelly's body from the Jarama battlefield for reburial. Eddie was therefore delighted that my article in this April's issue included the following:

"In *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association—An Emerald Jubilee Pamphlet 1938-1978*, the *Irish Democrat*, Edi-

tor C. Desmond Greaves was to doubly misrepresent Donnelly as being akin to "one of the 57 varieties of Trotskyism", but "whose innate nationalism came out when a military decision had to be taken" to join the Lincolns in January 1937.

In a letter to the editor, carried in the December 1978 issue of the *Irish Democrat*, Peter O'Connor proceeded to contradict Greaves with the actual facts:

"At that meeting, Charlie Donnelly, Johnny Power and myself fought very hard to go to the British Battalion. The main reason given by those who were for going to the Americans was because of the wrongs done to the Irish nation by the English in the past. They claimed that, though they were anti-fascist, they still looked on the English as the enemy. Those of us—and here I mention Charlie

Donnelly in particular—pleaded passionately for a distinction to be made between anti-fascist working class comrades from England, and British Imperialism. It was an understandable historical but political mistake that the vote went against us."

See www.international-brigades.org.uk/newsletters for issue no. 97 of the International Brigade Memorial Trust's *eNewsletter* dated 4th August 2021, where I provide many further details of Eddie's work for FIBI, and where I also provide a link to the full text of the FIBI Executive's obituary. When I informed the singer-songwriter Andy Irvine, and composer of "The Ballad of Frank Ryan", that Eddie had passed on, his comment was: "A better man I never met". I heartily concur.

Manus O'Riordan

The Last King Of Afghanistan

Most of us know something of the recent history of Afghanistan – its period of occupation by the Soviet Union at the invitation of what was the communist, mainly middle-class, elite of Kabul, ensconced in the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan—the remaining political party at the time which could protect their class privileges. Obviously the tribal areas wouldn't have agreed to Soviet intrusion, invited or not, as the military force being called in were to be their oppressors. The Soviets entered the country on 24th December 1979 – and left on 15th February 1989 in an orderly fashion, having failed in their mission (though the DRA survived for a few more years afterwards).

What is not widely known about was the opposition to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and its ally the Soviet Union of the armed Maoist group, the Liberation Organisation of the People of Afghanistan (SAMA), operating out of Parwan Province. It was one of several Maoist groups operating at the time, but not in association with the more conservative rural forces.

During Soviet times one TV clip showed a Soviet Army special forces group talking to an elderly Afghan. He was dressed in his usual tribal clothes that had probably been around for centuries. Here he was in a remote area being questioned by foreign soldiers, one of whom knew this man's particular language. The questions

could have been the basic police questions: "Who are you and where do you live? Then what are you doing here?"

Whatever the encounter meant I felt uneasy, despite thinking the Soviets were there for a good reason. This single clip gnawed at my conscience.

Following the Soviet withdrawal, the USA-led NATO force of 42 nations then invaded Afghanistan in 2001, with most withdrawing from the hopeless fight in 2014. The US and a few other nations stayed on until 2021, for what they said was the training of the Afghan army, and while at it, directing futile airstrikes against the Taliban.

Western communists/socialists like to think that the photos, on the Internet of Kabul, showing the modern Western dress of the people—the short skirts and the tinted blonde hair of some of the burqa-free women, came from the communist period. But all of this started during the time when Afghanistan had a monarch. These photos are from the 1960s, or even the mid-1950s, before the communist takeover. Western dress was kept going in the communist period, of course. The odd tribesman in the street among these fashionable people looks disconcerted, lonely and lost, a beggar, in his own country.

The changes in Afghanistan can be confusing. If I had thought harder and looked back a lot more I would have remembered the mainly middle-class London tourists

making for Kabul. One of these was in her early twenties, the daughter of a partner of mine. She had gone off to buy what was called ethnic clothing, which was popular with the young trendy middle-class during the 1960s. She brought her 8 year old daughter with her, with Afghanistan so peaceful at the time. Like so many of the Hampstead group of the young and trendy in North London, she would make a good profit on a stall in Portobello Market, Notting Hill Gate, in selling her Afghan wares.

It was also an opportunity to bring back some cannabis. This was before the drug trade became gangster-ridden. It would also be sold in the Portobello Market, but from under the stall to the mainly trendy. The working-class had not as yet latched on to the drug trade. It was still in the hands of the middle-class. A suitcase made of hardened cannabis, filled with ethnic clothing, almost unbelievable, was bought in a Kabul market. The case would be delivered at night to whatever hotel room number was given, simply left outside, with a knock on the door, with the courier disappearing before the door was opened. It was a tense moment but the sellers always kept their word.

Airport surveillance was lax at the time, with no sniffer dogs in sight, plus, the usually young middle-class sophisticated couriers were not under suspicion during this period. Some of these couriers bought airline tickets from Kabul to obscure small provincial towns in Canada, when things got more difficult with the authorities, and from there bought another ticket to a smallish airport in the UK, to avoid their Kabul destination being recorded. The mother, with her young daughter, with her naturally blond hair, was a sensation in the Kabul market. Tribes people wanted to buy her and grow her as a future bride. It was all very amiable and humorous in what was a peaceful Kabul. Mother and young daughter had few things to fear in Kabul.

Mohammed Zahir Shah (October 15, 1914 – July 23, 2007) was the last King of Afghanistan, reigning from 8th November 1933, until he was deposed on July 17, 1973. For 39 years, he was the longest serving ruler of Afghanistan since the foundation of the Durrani Empire in the 18th Century. He expanded Afghanistan's diplomatic relations with many countries, including both sides in the Cold War. In the 1950s Zahir Shah began modernising the country. He created a new constitution and constitutional monarchy. His reign was marked by peace. In August 1960, the 10 year Sino-Afghan Treaty of Friendship

was signed with communist China, and another with the Soviet Union.. Also in that year, 2nd to 5th March 1960, Nikita Khrushchev, visited Afghanistan. He is seen in a TV clip in Kabul, sitting in an arena during a game of Buzkashi, in which horse-mounted players attempt to drag a goat or calf carcass towards the goal. He looks like he is enjoying his trip.

The Soviet Union, by 1960, had built the Salang Highway across the Hindu Kush range to shorten the route from Kabul to the Northern provinces by 190 km. The Soviets also promised \$22,400,000 in aid to construct the Jalalabad dam on the Kabul River to provide electricity for the capital. Soviet technicians found oil in the area of Mazar-i-Sharif on the side of the Amu Darya (Oxus) river. The US economic aid, in competition with the Soviets, was \$165,000,000, including a loan of \$50,000,000. The Afghan National Assembly approved the budget estimate for the year 1960-1961, balanced at 4,500,000,000 Afghanis. Abdulla Malikyar, Minister of Finance, declared that a total of 2,540,000,000 Afghanis of the budget expenditure would be used to implement the last year of the 1957-61 Development Plan.

Enter Mohammed Daoud Khan, of the centrist Afghan National Revolutionary Party, cousin of the King, (18 July 1909 – 28 April 1978). He served as the fifth Prime Minister of Afghanistan from 1953-1963. Born into the Musahiban royal family, Khan started out as a Provincial Governor in the 1930s, and later as an army commander, before he was chosen as Prime Minister. He was to become the leader of the coup, backed mainly by officers in the Afghan army, to overthrow the monarchy. The coup d'état made him President from 1973-1978. He renounced his royal title. It was a bloodless coup, while the King was on holiday in Italy.

Daoud Khan established a single-party republic, ending more than 225 years of continuous monarchical government. The now ex-King remained in exile near Rome until 2002, returning to Afghanistan after the end of the first Taliban Government. He was given the title Father-of-the-Nation, which he held until his death in 2007, at the age of 92.

Eventually, Mohammed Daoud became known for his autocratic rule, educational and progressive reforms, pro-Soviet policy and Pashtun irredentism. His social and economic reforms during his time as Prime Minister to the King (and after the coup as President) were thought to be rela-

tively successful. But his foreign policy led to tense relations with neighbouring countries. He was assassinated in 1978 during the Saur Revolution, led by the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The 1978 coup and assassinations plunged Afghanistan into everlasting conflict to the present day, until the second Taliban revolution settled the matter.

What-might-have-been must suffice for hindsight, and hindsight usually brings about a sense of loss. Here we had a progressive constitutional monarch and his socially-minded Prime Minister leading Afghanistan. The Soviet Union and communist China were at home with this Afghanistan and most likely preferred him to remain in place.

But the foolish Mohammed Daoud, his cousin, thought otherwise.

We have often heard in the media of the West of the Soviet Union forcing Communism on to countries. This has, of course, happened during WW2, after the great sacrifices of the Red Army, when the victors had a choice, and an entitlement, after defeating Nazism. The West also decided they would put in place their mode of government in France, Italy and Greece, which had strong communist inclinations. But it isn't acknowledged that the Soviet Union, in its great patriotic war, and at the height of its triumph, and during its occupation of Austria, encouraged Social Democracy to take over this country, regarded as the first victim-nation of Nazi Germany. This is when the Austrian communists felt it was their role.

In Afghanistan the Soviet Union was dragged into a struggle they didn't want to be in. It was during a period when monarchies were being eradicated, as having had their day. This was true in the case of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia. The Soviet Union helped this new Republic of Ethiopia with military equipment and air power. But they did see the value of Mohammed Zahir Khan, who was to become the last King of Afghanistan.

The higher echelons of a society have been systematically eradicated through lack of foresight, leaving, what could be called a peasant army to put Afghanistan together again, at a great cost to them in human life and economic hardship.

They've done all the crucial work so now their flag is in the ascendant.

Wilson John Haire.
21.8.2021

Frank Busted:

The following report appeared in the *Irish Times*:

Thu, May 27, 2021

Ronan McGreevy

"President Michael D Higgins described the shooting of an elderly woman during the War of Independence by the IRA as an act of "exceptional cruelty".

President Michael D Higgins has said the shooting of an elderly woman during the War of Independence by the IRA was an act of "exceptional cruelty".

Mary Lindsay (60) and her chauffeur James Clarke (50) were executed by the IRA in March 1921 and buried in an unmarked grave. Their bodies were never recovered.

Mrs Lindsay's crime in the eyes of the local IRA was informing on a planned IRA ambush at Godfrey's Cross, between the villages of Coachford and Dripsey.

She had heard about the proposed ambush from a local grocer who told her not to take the road through Dripsey to Ballincollig because a company of IRA men were hiding out in anticipation of the military passing that way on the morning of January 28th, 1921.

She not only informed the military in Ballincollig Barracks, but also told the local parish priest Fr Ned Shinnick, who had made an enemy of himself among local republicans by repeatedly denouncing the IRA from the altar.

Shinnick in turn informed the local IRA commander Frank Busted, but his warning was not heeded.

Consequently the ambush party were taken by surprise when a detachment from the Manchester Regiment arrived on the scene as darkness was falling on the afternoon of January 28th.

Eight IRA men were captured. Five of them were executed – Daniel O'Callaghan, Patrick O'Mahony, Timothy McCarthy, and Thomas O'Brien.

In revenge Lindsay and Clarke were executed, most likely by Busted himself."

It occasioned the following letter, which the Irish Times did not publish:

I refer to the above and wish to set the record straight in regard to a number of points made in the article.

Three attempts were made to save the lives of Mary Lindsay and James Clarke, and those of the five captured volunteers.

The first was by the 6th Battalion, Cork No 1 Brigade IRA, the second by Mary Lindsay herself, both in letters to the British Military at Victoria Barracks, Cork.

The third was an appeal from prominent Cork citizens including the Catholic Bishop of Cork to spare the lives of the captured volunteers who had been sentenced to death, which would also have resulted in the sparing of Lindsay's and Clarke's lives.

Unfortunately, all were ignored by the British.

Furthermore, had Fr. Shinnick told the IRA himself (he sent a messenger) who had informed the British of the planned ambush I would suggest that they would have called it off and no lives would have been lost — as Mrs. Lindsay was a known loyalist and had connections with the military.

Frank Busted claims that his mother Mrs. Nora Busted was visited by four Auxiliary officers within days of the execution.

Lindsay and Clarke were executed by a firing squad, on the orders of but not by Busted himself.

Finally, Frank Busted mentions in the 1974 book on these events ("*Execution*") and in his testimony to Ernie O' Malley over 20 years earlier, that his mother Mrs. Norah Busted was interrogated by four Auxiliary officers within days of these executions, on the night of March 14th 1921.

She died the next day. Her death certificate states '*Heart failure*'.

War indeed can be terrible.

Brian O 'Donoghue
(grandson of Frank Busted)
8.6.2021

Continues Page 28, Column 1

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

Climate Change Report

The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) has issued a report which is hailed as “*Code Red for Humanity*”, but it falls into the common error of talking about “*environment*” in the same context as “*climate*” when in fact environment and climate are two completely different things.

As we understand the meaning of words, “*climate*” means the overall weather and temperature of the world and of its regions, whereas “*environment*” means the surroundings and conditions in which we live. Climate certainly affects the environment but the reverse is not true—environment does not affect the climate of the world.

We human beings cannot affect the climate. As we know, carbon is one of the basic building blocks of the world and of the universe and it cannot be abolished. It does move around—it is spewed up by volcanoes, and it is burned up by great wildfires caused by the sun, and it is burned up by fires in the earth—such as the burning coal deposits in Siberia and in Northern Australia which have been burning for centuries. It is calculated that at any one time there are over two hundred volcanoes spewing up CO₂, methane and sulphuric gasses.

Climate changes which do occur are caused mainly by the activities of the Sun and the Moon.

Human activity is tiny when compared to the forces of nature and human activity has no effect on climate change.

Climate change does occur as geologists have proved. The sea level does go up and down very substantially from time to time. If governments really accepted this reality, it would be helpful. No new residential areas would be built at sea-level. New towns would be built on hills well above sea level; high bridges would be built, instead of undersea tunnels, to connect communities.

On the other hand, environment can be

to some extent controlled. For example, the greatest pollutant in towns and cities is traffic of large vehicles, such as buses and trucks. Sensible cities such as at St. Malo in France have banned all trucks and buses from the city centre. Cars are permitted because they do not pollute much and in St. Malo there are just one exit and one entrance into the city centre for cars and small vans and so there is no “*through traffic*”. And the great result is a good environment. It is not rocket science and it can be done with the right planning.

Certainly, we must all agree that smog in cities should be reduced because smog is very injurious to human health. So environmental changes and adjustments are necessary: Such as using electricity in cities for cooking, heating and transport and thus shifting the smog to the location where the electricity is generated.

And we should not blind ourselves to what we are doing—we are just shifting the smoke from one place to another. Because forests of trees live on carbon dioxide, it would be very sensible to have electricity-generating stations up-wind of large forests so that the Sun will induce by photosynthesis the exudation of oxygen from the trees. The trees need carbon dioxide and we humans need the oxygen.

Is it not time for governments to explain these simple facts of nature to the public, rather than blindly producing electric cars? The public could quite easily grasp the facts that decarbonisation of the planet is impossible and wide re-cycling of carbon is what is necessary.

CHAUCER, BOCACCIO AND THE GREAT PLAGUE

It is topical at present to study the great plagues of the past. Surprisingly little is written about the influenza epidemic of 1918, which is reputed to have killed more people than were killed in the 1914-1918 Great War. Apparently, President Woodrow Wilson of the USA was suffering from the ‘flu when he negotiated and signed the *Treaty of Versailles* on 28th June 1919. That influenza epidemic was first diagnosed at a USA army base and it spread like wildfire all around the world before it fizzled out. The virus which caused it was not capable of being seen by the human eye until a sufficiently powerful microscope was developed in the 1930s.

Many plagues are reported in the Holy Bible and there have been many back over recorded history. The most famous plague is probably the Black Death, the Bubonic Plague which raged for over a hundred

years, on and off, in the 13th and 14th centuries A.D.

The Black Death was not one, but two plagues raging simultaneously—there was *Bubonic Plague*, which caused feverishly raised temperature and produced ugly pustules (the buboes) in armpit and groin, not usually fatal, and there was at the same time a *Pneumonic Plague*, which affected the lungs and which was very contagious and usually with fatal results. About one third of the population of Europe were killed. Whole towns and villages were depopulated. Ships, some with very valuable cargoes on board were found drifting at sea with the crews dead. One merchant, in Milan I think it was, got the idea of isolation and stocked his house with food and had all the doors and windows on the ground floor bricked up so that no one could get in or out and notably: he and his family and his servants survived.

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) is held to be Italy’s greatest prose writer: and he is famous for his ‘*Decameron*’, in which he relates 100 stories, which were told by a party of people avoiding the plague on an Estate outside Florence. Perhaps they observed Social Distancing as they sat about on the grass listening to the storyteller of the day.

Many of the stories in the ‘*Decameron*’ are retellings of Arab stories told by pilgrims doing the Hadj—the once in a lifetime pilgrimage which every good Moslem wants to do. Pilgrims would not travel alone, it was too dangerous, and as they travelled on in the evenings they told each other stories.

Boccaccio, who trained as an accountant and worked as a diplomat for the city of Florence for many years, wrote many works of prose and poetry. He wrote a life of Dante and he lectured in Florence University on Dante’s life and works. His work was used as a source by Geoffrey Chaucer and by Shakespeare and by many European writers.

The ‘*Decameron*’ was published in 1353, which is about six or seven years after the Black Death raged in Italy.

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400) was the son of a London writer. His day job was mostly as a Controller of Customs duties and he served for a time as Clerk of Works on Windsor Castle. He also served in various diplomatic missions in Europe on behalf of the King of England, in the course of which he met Boccaccio. Chaucer imitated various works written

by Bocaccio—most notably in his twenty-three stories known as *'The Canterbury Tales'*, published about 1390. His scheme was for two stories from each one of twenty-nine pilgrims on their way from London to St. Thomas a Beckett's tomb in Canterbury.

The Great Plague reached England in 1348 through the seaports, and into Ireland in 1349: it was very severe in Ireland in 1350. It raged for many years and, worryingly, it returned for many years afterwards.

The Bubonic Plague is spread by flees from rats, and particularly by marmosets which live in the great deserts around the world—mostly in high latitude deserts such as the Gobi Desert in Mongolia, and the

Alps, and among the Rocky Mountains in the USA. Cases still occur—apparently up to ten cases a year in San Francisco—but they are not usually fatal due to modern medical care.

It would seem reasonable to conclude that the Covid-19 pandemic will fade away when populations become vaccinated all over the world. Pockets of infection will remain among animals in the wild.

High standards of hygiene must be maintained. What is very hard on Irish people who are very gregarious is that we have to learn to bow respectfully like the Japanese people and less of the hand-shaking, hugging and kissing. For a few years anyway.

Michael Stack ©

Frank Busteed

continued

The *Irish Times* now stands alone in not granting *'Right of Reply'* to a family member.

Nor even the courtesy of an acknowledgement.

They have not once published letters on matters pertaining to the War of Independence that I have sent them, even though these were kept short and had no attachments (as their rules state).

Whereas all the other Irish papers have, as does *The Sunday Times*, with an apology for being a day late in replying; (and including *The Sunday Independent* recently, to my surprise: I for the first time replying to a vicious (if ridiculous) article by Eoghan Harris—and from which our president, Michael D. Higgins, quoted an uncorroborated statement in relation to the execution that was referred to in *The Irish Times* article !)

Generally speaking, I am on side with Michael D. (including his views on women in Irish society), but the piece quoted in this article from a recent lecture he gave was somewhat extreme, and more important, not entirely accurate.

And, I would say, viewed from a modern lens.

A number of facts were not even mentioned, which I addressed in my reply .

In relation to Frank Busteed's mother's death, while to date no documentation from the British side has been discovered or unearthed, apart from that quoted in the well-known 1974 book on these events—*'Execution'*—it is not generally known to the public that this was also noted in his testimony to Ernie O'Malley over 20 years earlier (O'Malley Notebooks-P17b 112), and was generally known in Blarney at the time.

As I said in the concluding line of my letter-War is indeed terrible.

So much for balance, from a respected Irish newspaper.

Brian O'Donoghue.

Davis concluded

privilege of importing arms and ammunition from India was also withdrawn. The frontier line of the Khyber region was demarcated by the British Government. A clause that aroused much criticism was the withdrawal of the stipulation that the Amir's Government was to have no relations with any foreign power except England.

“Naturally, on the 23rd of February, 1921, the newly independent Afghan Government signed a Russo-Afghan treaty at Moscow, providing for a Russian subsidy for its Amir, for five Russian consulates within its frontiers, and other arrangements so favourable to Russia that the British demanded an immediate discontinuance of Russian propaganda in Afghanistan.

“Negotiations have been made for a new Anglo-Afghan treaty. Afghanistan has taken advantage of its independence, also, to proclaim the first Code of Criminal Law, the initial step toward constitutional government.”

(*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, supplement I, Volume XVII, New York, 1922)

QUOTE of the month—

Ex-Trinity scholar, Joe Duffy:

“The Irish Army were not involved in the Civil War.”

RTE Liveline, 17.8.21 at 14.50 pm.

This is the *Amadan* quoted in *The Sunday Business Post*, 17.5.1992:

“He remarked acidly that Trinity still possessed “some of the finest 16th century minds in the country”. How right he is!

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DAVIS continued

most respectable terms they can for future transactions, and "cut their lucky" ["*Get the best deal you can and hop it*].

(*The Nation*, 29.10.1842)

THE NATION: Selections 1842-1844. Vol. 1: Young Ireland; Daniel O'Connell, Monster Meetings; State Trials, A New Culture. Introduction by Brendan Clifford. 152 p.p. Index. ISBN 1 903497 02 7. Aubane Historical Society, 2000. €20, £15 post-free.

"The ideology of *The Nation* was liberal, but its liberalism was specific to Irish requirements and was therefore anathema to the Imperialist Liberalism of England. It was Irish-Ireland as well as Pluralist. Both qualities are relevant at a time when Ireland appears ready to make its contribution as part of an expanding Europe of the Nations." (2000)

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

An Imperial Perspective, 1926

"Afghanistan is the most important Mahomedan state in the Middle East, and one of the leading political and economic factors in Asia.

"Afghanistan is a land of mountains and deserts, with large tracts of cultivated areas along the valleys and in the vicinity of rivers, while irrigation has done much to reclaim land; and convert it into thriving oases, for the Afghans, as irrigation engineers, are surpassed only by the Chinese.

"Afghanistan is comparatively rich in mineral resources... Development of these on a scientific basis can only be carried out with the aid of foreign capital and enterprise, the introduction of which is distasteful to the Afghans.

"As a race the Afghans are tall and athletic with a handsome type of feature. Their bearing is proud and arrogant, and by nature they are vain and treacherous. [*Ah, where did we last here that and about whom?*]

"Cultivation of the land is the chief occupation of the people generally. The Afghan abhors shopkeeping and in the majority of cases owns the land upon which he lives.

"The almost universal religion is Mahomedanism, the adherents being mainly of the Sunni sect. Paganism is the religion of the Kafirs, a small but interesting tribe living in the mountains east of Kabul. Despite their protestations of piety it cannot be said that the different sects show strict adherence to the Koran and to Sunni precepts.

"The Ameer Ab-dur-Rahman, who reigned from 1880-1901... created a strong central government with a military organisation adequate to maintain his authority. The rule is to all intents an absolute monarchy.

"The laws are undergoing revision and the model taken is that of the Code Napoleon. Hitherto justice has been entirely administered in accordance with the tenets of Islamic law and the laws appertaining to the tribes, as well as that expounded by the Ameer, who is the sole court of appeal, but to whom all have access. Intimately connected with the life of the people is the tribal law system as administered by the mullahs.

"Prior to 1919 the foreign relations of Afghanistan were controlled by the British Government, but in August of that year a treaty was concluded under which the country was recognized as free and independent, both as regards internal and external affairs" (AFGHANISTAN by Lieut.-Col. P.T. Etherton, *Countries of the World*, Published at The Fleetway House, London, 1926. A Harmsworth company. Edited by J. A. Hammerton.)

A Catholic Perspective, 1922

"The establishment of Christian missions has never been permitted in Afghanistan. The various tribes are overwhelmingly Moslem and are the Sunni set of Islam. Their caliph is the Turkish Sultan, who, according to the sacred law, should be an independent sovereign, wielding an effective guardianship over the great Moslem holy places at Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem.

"The Turkish caliph has been made a virtual prisoner of the British in Constantinople and the holy places taken away from him. Mecca and Medina are in the hands of the King of Hijaz, who is subsidised by the British; and Jerusalem is held by the British themselves. This new

state of affairs has been bitterly resented by all of Sunni Islam (except the Arabs) as a destruction of its most sacred institutions, and as a result, Afghanistan has been greatly inflamed against the British government of India.

"In the Anglo-Russian agreement of 31 August, 1907, Great Britain undertook neither to annex or occupy any portion of Afghanistan nor to interfere in the internal administration of the country, provided the Amir fulfilled his engagements towards the British government.

"The Russian government declared that Afghanistan was outside the sphere of Russian influence and arranged that its political relations with Afghanistan should be conducted through the British government. The principle of the equality of commercial opportunity was to be observed.

"During the Great World War the Amir maintained strict neutrality. In 1918 the new Russian [U.S.S.R.] government at Moscow abrogated the 1907 treaty, and with London's concurrence in Moscow's abrogation, Afghanistan automatically became "officially free and independent, both internally and externally." The Amir Habib Ullah Khan, who has been a loyal friend of Great Britain, was murdered.

"Thereupon ensued a competition for the throne. At Jelalabad, a proclamation was issued that Nasr Ullah had assumed the throne but in Kabul the power was seized by Aman Ullah Khan, third son of the late Amir.

"Aman Ullah soon showed that he had control of the situation. Owing to the intrigues of the Russian government, the new Amir did not keep his promise of preserving the friendship of Great Britain, and in May a large Afghan army crossed the frontier and commenced pillaging on a large scale. Strong British forces moved up the Khyber and seized Dacca. Jelalabad and Kabul were repeatedly bombed from the air. In ten days the Afghans were severely defeated by General Sir Arthur Barrett, commander of the British forces. A peace conference was opened at Rawalpindi on the 26 July, 1920, and a preliminary treaty of peace was signed on 8 August, 1920.

"The Amir's subsidy was withdrawn and its arrears confiscated. The Afghan

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LABOUR

Comment

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The Englishman, for long long years, had ravaged Ganges' side—
 A dealer first, intriguer next,
 he conquered far and wide,
 Till, hurried on by avarice, and thirst
 of endless rule,
 His sepoy's pierced to Candahar,
 his flag waved in Cabul;

But still within the conquered land
 was one unconquered man,
 The fierce Pustani lion, the fiery
 Akhbar Khan—
 He slew the sepoy's on the snow, till
 Sindh's full flood they swam it
 Right rapidly, content to flee the
 son of Dost Mohammed,

The son of Dost Mohammed, and
 brave old Dost Mohammed—
 Oh! long may they
 Their mountains sway,
 Akhbar and Dost Mohammed!
 Long live the Dost!
 Who Britain crost,
 Hurrah for Dost Mohammed!

THOMAS DAVIS: "War With Everybody", *The Nation*, 29.10.1842)

War With Everybody

The Nation, 29th October 1842

War with everybody is at present the envious condition of our amiable sister of England.

At the uttermost end of earth her soldiers and sailors are triumphing—if triumph that can be called which is victory without glory—over a nation of feminine creatures, destitute even of the brute instinct of resistance, and apparently incapable of imitating the most timid animals, which become valorous by despair.

Thousands of these unhappy wretches, who yet, be it remembered, are human beings, nurtured to men's estate, not without many sufferings, tears and cares,—every one of them having parents, wives, children, friends, or some, or all of these to lament their loss—are being butchered mercilessly—mowed down by canister and grape, or driven into the rivers at the point of a bayonet—and for what?

Why, simply, because a horde of scoundrel smugglers, busy in the pursuit of unhallowed gain, have been interdicted by the Emperor of China—a potentate whose relations towards his subjects is less monarchical than paternal—from poisoning with their contraband opium the bodies, and rendering more imbecile the minds of his People.

This is, truly, an honourable warfare for a great, moral (?) and religious (??) nation to be engaged in; and we need hardly say, we wish it all the success it deserves.

Then, in the country beyond the Indus, where, really and truly, they had no business whatever—in Afghanistan—where ruled a monarch friendly, or at least not hostile, to the British—some insane fear of Russia and Persia, or rather some accursed lust of power, plunder, and blood-shedding, disguised under the mask of affected fear, set armies in motion through dangerous passes, and over barren

mountains, to achieve the semblance of a triumph in the capture of Kabul, and the dethronement of *Dost Mahomed*—the best, if not the only friend the British had in these barbarous regions.

But there are no Chinese men-women in Afghanistan, nor is *Akhbar Khan* a mandarin of the third button.

The doctrine of resistance is perfectly well understood among these fierce children of the crescent; and fearfully have they carried this doctrine into practice. Let the bones of thirteen thousand British subjects, whitening in the winter blast, testified how dearly England has paid for her unjust, and worse than that—her foolish, her stupid aggression upon this indomitable People.

There is no disguising the fact: England has been "thrashed" by a fellow living in the back of a mountain, this said *Akhbar Khan*. He shot down their Envoy—exterminated their legions—carried away captive their women and children; and the whole energy, wisdom and bravery of their rulers are now put in action, not to subdue the Afghans—not to tax them—not to divide and govern them—not even to *convert* them; but to buy off British women and children, get the

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