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COMHDHÁIL NÁISIÚNTA NA hÉIREANN

BREXIT, IRELAND, & OUR FUTURES

The referendum vote by a small majority of the UK electorate to leave the European Union by 2019 has sent shockwaves through the Irish, British, and EU political establishments. The granting of the referendum, in response to anti-EU sentiment, was a political gamble that misfired. It was not supposed to have happened that way.

In the aftermath of the vote, Theresa May's government, and the deeply divided British ruling class, now have to negotiate Brexit, with angry and vengeful EU elites determined to inflict retribution and prevent other EU member states from following suit.

However, there were clear majorities in Scotland and the north of Ireland to remain inside the EU. This raises, once again, the spectre of another possible Scottish independence referendum leading to a dissolution of the imperial United Kingdom state. In the six counties, real problems concerning the border, human rights, protective legislation, social safeguards and the future of the devolved institutions will come to the fore.

Certainly, the coming period will witness ugly and rancorous wrangling amongst the competing parties; and the divided UK elites appear not to know how to make the first move.

There are various reasons why a majority in England and Wales voted for Brexit. While racism and xenophobia were certainly factors in the vote, it would be wrong and unjust to argue that it was the main factor. Many voters, particularly those in the post-industrial regions were registering their rejection and

contempt for arrogant metropolitan British and EU elites, whose neo-liberal austerity policies have had a socially destructive effect upon formerly cohesive working class communities. The British are the first to vote to exit the European Union. It is unlikely that they will be the last.

Brexit has thrust much of the Irish political establishment into a state of near panic, with growing concerns over such issues as the possibility of the imposition of a so-called hard border, damage to existing trade flows with the UK, and potential damage to the fragile political institutions north of the border. Brexit has exposed the fact that, notwithstanding more than four decades of EU membership, a disproportionate volume of our exports in traded goods still goes to UK or US markets.

Unfortunately, many of those we choose to negotiate on Ireland's behalf suffer from super colonized mindsets, and are too used to looking over their shoulders for



British approval before taking any initiatives. There are others who suggest that our response to the Brexit crisis should be to immediately rejoin the British Commonwealth, and look more to the so-called Anglo-sphere countries for our economic future. Foreign minister Flanagan argues that we should act in defence of British interests inside the EU once Britain leaves! This view, from a senior Irish government minister is not only reprehensible, it is downright stupid politics. If indeed this strategy were to be implemented, it would not be long before our EU partners came to see Irish

officials as a British "fifth column" of puppets and cats-paws. We would very quickly find ourselves frozen out of key internal EU business. Either Mr Flanagan should be made to desist from making this type of statement or he should be removed from the foreign affairs portfolio.

Labour leader Brendan Howlin, in a recent speech, suggested that the UK electorate could be persuaded to vote again on EU membership. So, Mr Howlin wishes that British voters be made to change their minds, in the same way that the EU forced us Irish to do in relation to the Nice and Lisbon treaty referendum votes. He is not alone in promoting this idea; there is a large and determined lobby campaign in Britain attempting to bring about a second vote and the longer the uncertainty continues, the greater will be the clamour. Any attempt to overturn the referendum result will be seen by many as a coup d'état and Nigel Farage has warned of civil unrest, if it is tried.

Ireland, in 1973, joined what was then called the European Economic Community. From then until recent years, the experience was mostly positive. Irish living standards undoubtedly improved; important infrastructure projects were funded; EU workplace protection and human rights legislation became part of Irish law. This was the epoch known as "Social Europe".

Today, however, we need have no illusions about the EU, which has become an imperial project with a northern core of dominant creditor states, and a southern periphery of supplicant debtor states, such as Greece. Ireland, with its 200 billion euro "national" debt, is desperately pretending to belong to the former group.

The EU today sees its ultimate project as being the creation of a super-state. It is, through its centralized increasingly non-accountable institutions, confiscating the remnants of sovereignty, particularly from smaller member states. The control freaks in Brussels, Strasbourg and Frankfurt, are ever more displaying a contempt for democracy and the will of the electorates in the member states. A vicious neo-liberal ideology now dominates economic thinking and policy within the union. Social Europe is now being shredded, and a determined effort is being made to dismantle the welfare state and the post WW2 social contract. The European Union is no longer the co-prosperity alliance most Irish people voted for in 1973; it has become the enforcer of the insolent demands of parasitic global financial institutions and predatory transnational corporations.

((To be followed up.))

*Paul McGuill & Francis Martin,
INC*

NORTH-SOUTH & EAST-WEST COMPARISONS & COSTS OF BREXIT

<i>Economic Indicator</i>	<i>North of Ireland</i>	<i>Irish Republic</i>
Income Tax Rates	Basic 20% £11k-£43k Higher 40% £43k-£150k Top 50% £150k+	Basic 20% €0-€33.8k Higher 40% €33.8k + USC 0.5% €0-€12k, 2.5% €12k-€18.7k
Motor Tax (p.a. for 2 ltr engine)	£295 (€339.25)	€710
Unemployment Benefit	£73.10 (per week age 25+) (€84.07)	€300 p.w.
Pension (weekly)	£119.30 (€137.20)	€219
Child Allowance	£1076.40 (first child per year) (€1237.87)	€1680 per year first child
Average wage	£18,720 (p.a., 2011) (€21,528)	€36,181
Domestic Rates/Property Tax	£758.50 (p.a., £100k house in Antrim) (€872.27)	€225 (p.a. average €125K house) + €260 p.a. water charge + €336 bin charge=€821)
University fees	£3925 (€4513.75)	€3000 max
Disability benefit	£140 max per week (€161)	€188
TV license	£145.50 (€167.32)	€160
Size of the public sector	69.2% of GDP (2010)	36% of GDP (2010)

* Exchange rate £1 = €1.15, 19/8/16

"It would be rather interesting for historians of the future to compare a Catholic state launched in the South with a Protestant state launched in the North and see which gets on the better and prospers the more."(Lord Craigavon)¹

In 1911, when Britain was the 'workshop of the world', Belfast was Ireland's biggest metropolis with a population of 400,000. In 2006, the city's population was 276,450, far behind the much more cosmopolitan Dublin population of 1,045,769. In 2011, 15% of the North's population was over 65 years of age; two thirds of these were Protestant, 21% of the population were under 16 years old and a majority of these were Catholic. 48% of the North's population were Protestant and 45% Catholic; by 2020, it is reasonable to expect that these figures will be reversed. Many working class Protestant estates in the North feel abandoned by their Unionist leaders. In 2014, only 20% of Protestant boys from deprived backgrounds got five or more good GCSE's; only travellers had poorer results, while 77% of Catholic girls got five or more good GCSE's; the Chinese community alone did better.

The Republic is a more egalitarian society than Britain; 8.2% of the population live below the poverty line in the South, while in the UK this figure is 15% of the population. In 2007, the richest 1% of the UK population owned 24% of the wealth, while in the Republic the richest 1% owned 20% of the national wealth. The Republic is also a much more cosmopolitan society than the North. In 2011, 12% of the population of the Republic were non-Irish nationals, while only 4.1% of the Northern population were born outside "these islands"; yet there are about four times more racist attacks per capita of population in the North than in the South.

The North has always struggled to support itself economically. As early as 1923, the Northern state had a total revenue of £13.8 million, but had to pay an imperial contribution (for defence and diplomacy etc.) of £6.7 million to Westminster along with £1.9 million for reserved services (e.g. courts etc.). This

left only £5.2million to pay for health, education, social welfare, roads, housing etc., which the previous year had cost £6.3 million. In its first full financial year, the Northern statelet was already facing a deficit of £1.1 million. To avoid this, the Northern government renegotiated the amount it would pay towards the imperial contribution. The North still struggled to provide the same level of services available in Britain and, once again, the Westminster government provided an "Equalisation grant" of up to £900,000 per year from 1926-32. Unemployment in the North was particularly high, ranging from 15% of the insured workforce in the "boom year" of 1928 to 28.3% in 1938. The North also had the worst death rate in Britain and Ireland at 15.5 per 1000 in 1924. The infant mortality rate at 76 per 1000 in 1938 was considerably higher than in the South. In 1938, 46% of all who died between the ages of 15 and 25 died from TB. A survey of Belfast working class districts in 1938 found that 36% lived in absolute poverty, while 87% of rural houses had no running water.² The economic salvation of the North came with the outbreak of World War Two in that, while it cost the lives of 5500 people from the North, unemployment fell to 5% in 1943 and wages rocketed. After the war, the introduction of the welfare state in Britain led to these services being underwritten and paid for by Westminster through transferred taxes, agreements on national insurance and social services, and write-downs on the amount paid to the imperial contribution. By 1962, the British taxpayer subsidies to the Northern statelet and its industry and agriculture was to the tune of £60 million a year. As a quid pro quo, Stormont in effect allowed its budget to be written by the Treasury in Whitehall. Economically much remains the same today; in 2004, the North had total tax receipts of £10.7 billion and total expenditure of £16.9 billion, a deficit of £6.2 billion; by comparison, that same year, the Republic had a total revenue of €35.5 billion and a total expenditure of €32.5 billion, a surplus of €3 billion. The collapse of the Celtic tiger and the global economic crisis have severely damaged the Re-

¹O Cleary Conor, *Phrases make History Here*, page 95

²FSL Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine*, pages 701-714.

public's public finances in the intervening period.

The British Brexit referendum decision will have a much more profound effect on the Northern Irish economy than any other part of the UK state. From 1989 to 2013, the North received €5.34 billion in grants from the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) and is due to receive another €283 million in grants from this body from 2014-2020. In addition to this, the 29,000 people employed in agriculture in the North benefit from €2.5 billion of Common Agricultural Policy EU subsidies for the period 2014-2020.

INC

PRONOUNCEMENTS OF FIRST DÁIL

Whereas most Irish people are aware of the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916, there are many who are not aware of the Declaration of Independence and the Democratic Programme of the first Dáil which convened on 21 January 1919 which we therefore reproduce below.

Declaration of Independence

Whereas the Irish people is by right a free people:

And Whereas for seven hundred years the Irish people has never ceased to repudiate and has repeatedly protested in arms against foreign usurpation:

And Whereas English rule in this country is, and always has been, based upon force and fraud and maintained by military occupation against the declared will of the people:

And Whereas the Irish Republic was proclaimed in Dublin on Easter Monday, 1916, by the Irish Republican Army acting on behalf of the Irish people:

And Whereas the Irish people is resolved to secure and maintain its complete independence in order to promote the common weal, to re-establish justice, to provide for future defence, to insure peace at home and

goodwill with all nations and to constitute a national polity based upon the people's will with equal right and equal opportunity for every citizen:

And Whereas at the threshold of a new era in history the Irish electorate has in the General Election of December, 1918, seized the first occasion to declare by an overwhelming majority its firm allegiance to the Irish Republic:

Now, therefore, we, the elected Representatives of the ancient Irish people in National Parliament assembled, do, in the name of the Irish nation, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make this declaration effective by every means at our command:

We ordain that the elected Representatives of the Irish people alone have power to make laws binding on the people of Ireland, and that the Irish Parliament is the only Parliament to which that people will give its allegiance

We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English Garrison:

We claim for our national independence the recognition and support of every free nation in the world, and we proclaim that independence to be a condition precedent to international peace hereafter:

In the name of the Irish people we humbly commit our destiny to Almighty God who gave our fathers the courage and determination to persevere through long centuries of a ruthless tyranny, and strong in the justice of the cause which they have handed down to us, we ask His divine blessing on this the last stage of the struggle we have pledged ourselves to carry through to Freedom.

De bhrigh gur dual do mhuintir na hÉireann bheith n-a saor náisiún.

Agus de bhrigh nár staon muintir na hÉireann riamh le seacht gcéad bliadhain ó dhiúltadh d'annsmacht Gall agus ó chur ina choinnibh go minic le neart airm.

Agus de bhrígh ná fuil de bhunadhas agus ná raibh riamh de bhunadhas le dlighe Shasana san tír seo acht foiréigean agus calaois,

agus ná fuil de thaca leis ach sealbh lucht airm I n-aimhdheóin dearbhthola muinntire na hÉireann.

Agus de bhrigh go ndéarna Saor-Arm na hÉireann Saorstát Éireann d'fhorfhógairt I mBaile Átha Cliath Seachtmhain na Cásca 1916 ar son muinntire na hÉireann.

Agus de bhrigh go bhfuil muinntir na hireann lán-cheaptha ar neamhspléadhchus iomlán do bhaint amach agus do chosaint dóibh féin d'fhonn leas an phobuil do chur chun cinn, an ceart d'athchur ar a bhonnaibh, an tsíothcháin I nirinn agus caradas le náisiúnaibh eile do chur I n-áirithe dhóibh féin agus féineachus náisiúan tsíothcháin I nirinn agus caradas le náisiúnaibh eile do chur I n-áirithe dhóibh féin agus féineachus náisiúnta do cheapadh go mbeidh toil na ndaoine mar bhunudhas leis agus cothrom cirt is caoi-theamlachta dá bhárr ag gach duine I nÉirinn.

Agus de bhrigh go ndéarna muinntir na hÉireann, agus sinn I mbéal ré nuadha de stair an domhain, feidhm a bhaint as an Olltoghadh, Mí na Modlag, 1918, chun a dhearbhuighadh de bhreis adhbhalmhóir gur toil leó bheith díleas do Shaorstát Éireann.

Ar an adhbhar son deinimídne .i.na teachtaí atá toghtha ag muinntir na hÉireann agus sinn I nDáil Chomhairle I dteannta a chéile, bunughadh Saorstáit d'áth-dheimhniughadh I n-ainm náisiún na hÉireann agus sinn féin do chur fá gheasaibh an deimhniughadh so do chur I bhfeidhm ar gach slighe ar ár gcumas.

Órduighmíd ná fuil de chomhacht ag éinne ach amháin ag na Teachtaíbh toghtha ag muinntir na hÉireann dlighthe dhéanamh gur dual do mhuintir na hÉireann géilleadh dhóibh, agus ná fuil de pháirliment ann go mbeidh an náisiún umhal do ach amháin Dáil Éireann.

Dearbhuighmíd ná fuilingeóchaimíd go bráth an cumhangcas atá dá dhéanamh ag an annsmacht Ghallda ar ár gceart náisiúnta agus éilighmíd ar chamthaí na Sasanach imtheacht ar fad as ár dtír.

Ilighimíd ar gach saornáisiún ar domhan neamhspléadhchus na hÉireann d'admháil agus fógraimíd gurab éigean ár neamhspléadhchus chun síothcháin a chur I n-áirithe do'n domhan.

I n-ainm muinntire na hÉireann cuirimíd ár gcinneamhaint fé chomairce Dhia an Uile-Chomhacht do chuir misneach agus buantseasamhacht n-ár sinnsear chun leanamhaint leó go treun les na céadta bliadhain gcoinnibh tioránachta gan truagh gan taise: agus de bhrigh gur móide an neart an ceart a bheith againn san troid d'fhágadar mar oighreacht againn, aithchuingimíd ar Dhia A bheannacht do bhronnadh orainn I gcóir an treasa deiridh den chomhrac go bhfuilimid fé gheasaibh leanmhaint do go dtí go mbainfeam amach an tsaoirse.

Democratic Programme

We declare in the words of the Irish Republican Proclamation the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be indefeasible, and in the language of our first President. Pádraig Mac Phiarais, we declare that the Nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation, and with him we reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.

We declare that we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Justice for all, which alone can secure permanence of Government in the willing adhesion of the people.

We affirm the duty of every man and woman to give allegiance and service to the Commonwealth, and declare it is the duty of the Nation to assure that every citizen shall have opportunity to spend his or her strength and faculties in the service of the people. In



return for willing service, we, in the name of the Republic, declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the Nation's labour.

It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as Citizens of a Free and Gaelic Ireland.

The Irish Republic fully realises the necessity of abolishing the present odious, degrading and foreign Poor Law System, substituting therefor a sympathetic native scheme for the care of the Nation's aged and infirm, who shall not be regarded as a burden, but rather entitled to the Nation's gratitude and consideration. Likewise it shall be the duty of the Republic to take such measures as will safeguard the health of the people and ensure the physical as well as the moral well-being of the Nation.

It shall be our duty to promote the development of the Nation's resources, to increase the productivity of its soil, to exploit its mineral deposits, peat bogs, and fisheries, its waterways and harbours, in the interests and for the benefit of the Irish people.

It shall be the duty of the Republic to adopt all measures necessary for the recreation and invigoration of our Industries, and to ensure their being developed on the most beneficial and progressive co-operative and industrial lines. With the adoption of an extensive Irish Consular Service, trade with foreign Nations shall be revived on terms of mutual advantage and goodwill, and while undertaking the organisation of the Nation's trade, import and export, it shall be the duty of the Republic to prevent the shipment from Ireland of food and other necessaries until the wants of the Irish people are fully satisfied and the future provided for.

It shall also devolve upon the National Government to seek co-operation of the Governments of other countries in determining a standard of Social and Industrial Legislation with a view to a general and lasting improve-

ment in the conditions under which the working classes live and labour.

Dearbhuighimid, i mbriathraibh for-fhógra Saorstáit Éireann go bhfuil sé de cheart ag muinntir na hÉireann sealbh na hÉireann do bheith aca agus cinneamhain an náisiúin do bheith fé n-a riar, agus nách féidir an ceart san do bhaint díobh; agus fébh mar dubhairt ár gceud Uachtarán Pádraig Mac Phiarais, dearbhuighimid gur ceart go mbeadh, ní amháin fir agus mná na hÉireann, acht adhbhar maoin na hÉireann fé riaradh an náisiúin, idir talamh agus gustal na hÉireann, gach sadhas maoin agus gach gléas chun maoin do sholáthairt dá bhfuil san tír; agus athfhógraimid an rud d'fhógair an Píarsach gur dual go mbéadh tosachagceart an phobuil chun leasa an phobuil ar cheart an duine chun seilbhe fé leith.

Dearbhuighimid gur mian linn an ceart, an tsaoirse agus cothrom do chách a bheith mar bhuntacaí riaghlughadh na tíre, agus ná fuil d'urradhas le buanughadh Riaghaltais ná saorthoilughadh na ndaoine chuige ach é.

Dearbhuighimid go bhfuil sé de dhualgas ar gach fear agus gach mnaoi bheith umhal, díleas, freagarthach agus freastalach don Phobalacht; agus go bhfuil sé de dhualgas ar an náisiún feuchaint chuige go mbeidh caoi ag gach duine san tír ar a cheart agus a acfuinn féin do chur i bhfeidhm ar mhaithe le leas an phobuil. Mar chúiteamh ar fhreagra is freastal na ndaoine, dearbhuighimid i n-ainm an tSaorstáit, gur dual do gach duine a cion féin de thoradh saothair an náisiúin a bheith aige.

Isé an príomhchúram a bheidh ar Riaghaltas an tSaorstáit ná gleusa soláthar chun leas corpordha, leas spioradálta agus leas inntleachta na leanbháí do chur i n-áirithe dhóibh; feuchaint chuige ná béidh an t-ocras ná an fuacht ag goilleamhaint ar éin leanbh de cheal bídh, eudaigh ná dín tighe; acht go bhfaghaidh siad gach cóir agus gleus is gádh dhóibh chun teagaisc agus taithighe ceart do thabhairt dóibh i gcóir na hoibre a bheidh le deunamh aca mar chomhaltaí den tSaorstát Gaedhealach.

Is follus do Shaorstát Éireann nach foláir an dlighe gránna iasachta a bhainnean le Tighthe na mBocht i nÉirinn agus gach a nga-

bhann leis de chéimsíos is de náire, do chur ar ceal, agus plean éifeachtach éigin do cheapadh a bheidh oireamhnach don tír chun aire cheart do thabhairt do sheandaoineibh agus do lagaibh an náisiúin, daoine a thuilleann freastal agus buidheachas ón náisiún i n-ionad tarcuisne agus neamhshuime. Na theannta son, beidh sé de chúram ar an Saorstát gach gleus is áis dár ghádh a chur i bhfeidhm chun sláinte an phobuil agus leas corpordha an náisiúin, agus leas anama an náisiúin dá bhárr do chur i n-áirithe dhóibh.

Beidh sé de dhualgas orainn cabhrughadh le meudughadh gustail an náisiúin, an talamh a dheunamh níos torthamhla agus níos iontsaothruighthe; mianach na hÉireann, a portaigh mhóna, a cuid iascaigh, a bealaigh uisce, agus a cuanta do chur chun críche i ceart chun tairbhe muintire na hÉireann.

Beidh sé de dhualgas ar an Saorstát gach níd is gádh do dheunamh chun ár ndéantúsa d'aithbheóchaint is do neartughadh agus

feuchaint chuige go saothróchfar iad do réir “comhar oibre” ar an gcuma is fearr ‘s is oireamhnaighe ‘s is mó raghaidh i dtairbhe do chách. Cuirfar feadhannaigh ó Éirinn go tíortha thar lear d’fhonn ceannuidheacht agus tráchtáil do chur chun cinn idir Éire agus na tíortha úd, a raghaidh i leas don tír seo agus dosna tíortha eile. Nuair a thabharfaidh an Saorstát fé thráchtáil an náisiúin, idir díoluidheacht agus ceannuidheacht, do riarad, beidh sé de dhualgas ar an Saorstát gan biadh ná earraí eile go bhfuil gádh leó do leigint thar lear ó Éirinn go mbiedeh a leórdhóthain fachta ag muintir na hÉireann, agus a saith i dtaisce aca i gcóir an ama le teacht.

Beidh sé de chúram ar Riaghaltas an Náisiúin, leis, a iarraidh ar Riaghaltasí tíortha eile cabhrughadh agus comhoibriughadh ar chomh-chéim leó chun dlighthe i dtaobh gnáthshaoghail agus gnáth-oibre an phobuil do cheapadh a chuirfidh feabhas mór ar an gcóirughadh saoghail is saothair a bhíonn le fághail ag lucht oibre.

WAR OF INDEPENDENCE ***Sectarian or Political?***

Readers of *The Sunday Independent* will no doubt be familiar with the relentless spreading of anti-nationalist/anti-republican bile, spearheaded by columnist Eoghan Harris, in particular. His almost weekly assault on those who fought against British occupying forces during the Irish War of Independence of 1919-1921 claims republicans were motivated by sectarianism and engaged in the ethnic cleansing and the extermination of Protestants in west Cork.

This period in Irish history was one of turmoil and disorder in which the legitimate authority of the State, brought about by the 1918 general election when Sinn Féin received a massive electoral endorsement winning 75 of the 103 seats. This was endorsed by the first Dáil Éireann in January 1919, but was rejected by the British government. It is regret-

table that some columnists writing in *The Sunday Independent*, and other publications, regularly portray, falsely, the struggle for freedom from colonial oppression during the War of Independence as generalised anti-Protestant sectarianism. It is also regrettable that Independent newspapers have allowed a partisan figure like Harris to dictate understanding of this period of Irish history almost uncontested, as alternative viewpoints differing from those of Mr Harris are mainly ignored.

Eoghan Harris regularly raises the alleged sectarian killing of ten Protestant civilians in the Bandon Valley in Cork in April 1922. The reason for these killings is a matter of contested debate. Did republicans fight a sectarian war or a political war during the War of Independence? If we are to accept the view of

southern Protestants, then it was a non-sectarian campaign. After the April 1922 killings, a Protestant Convention, fully representative of southern Protestantism, met in the Mansion House. On 11 May 1922, they resolved "that until the recent tragedies in the County Cork, hostility to Protestants by reason of their religion, has been almost if not wholly, unknown in the twenty-six counties in which Protestants are in a minority." Furthermore, the killings of these 10 Protestant civilians was acknowledged by leading Methodist Crown Prosecutor and west Cork independent TD Jasper Wolfe (who co-ordinated loyalist compensation claims) as non-sectarian. In other words, Protestants regarded these killings as exceptional.

Trading on and promoting society's capacity for self-doubt and introspection, Mr Harris generates a propaganda diet reminiscent of that promoted by Carson and Craig. They drove thousands of Catholics out of jobs and houses in 1920-22. Brave Protestant socialists who opposed this unionist sectarian drive to divide the working class in the six counties were also driven out.

Present day Protestants who oppose Harris's views on the War of Independence are also subject to ad hominem attack. Dr Martin Mansergh, who served under three Fianna Fáil leaders as Director of Research, Policy and Special Advisor on Northern Ireland, was a target of Eoghan Harris on this very issue. Writing on October 9th in 2005 on the killing of the Protestant Pearson brothers in Coolacree, Harris had the effrontery to term Senator Mansergh a "posh southern Protestant" who "provides a rotten role model for any young Protestant Irishman". Harris was equally offensive the following week: "Dr Martin Mansergh ... has a posh accent. I could almost hear his dulcet tones in his *Irish Times* column last week".

Eoghan Harris's narrow-minded sectarian vision of Irish identity, the one promoted almost weekly in *The Sunday Independent*, is contrasted by the broadminded response

from southern Protestants in Irish civil society during 1920-22. They said exactly the same as their co-religionist of today, Dr Mansergh, that Republicans were non-sectarian in the War of Independence. Indeed, one of the reasons we had a War of Independence in the first place was in reaction to the sectarian nature of British rule.

It is regrettable that Eoghan Harris is given almost unchallenged column inches to promote partisan politics in defiance of objectivity and fairness. It is also unfortunate that narrow-minded sectarian propaganda is published uncritically by *The Sunday Independent*, ironically in the name of balance and fairness.



It is unworthy of a newspaper of supposed record to relentlessly permit allegations that Roman Catholics felt such hatred for their Protestant neighbours, purely on the basis of religious belief, that they harassed, persecuted and even murdered them generally in a sectarian manner. The allegation by Harris, almost on a weekly basis in *The Sunday Independent*, that the primary motivation behind the killings of

Protestants during the War of Independence was sectarian is itself sectarian.

Also, during this period of the War of Independence, another contentious claim of sectarian killings of Protestants emerged which was referred to as the "Coolacree killings" in Co Offaly. Two brothers named Pearson were killed by the IRA in June 1921. This was acknowledged by the IRA. Following these killings, Fr Montgomery Hitchcock, a historian and Rector of nearby Kinnitty, stated that the area was "absolutely free from sectarian feeling, not to say bitterness". He had "never known one case of religious intolerance. We can only live and let live down here". How could a Church of Ireland clergyman square the killing of the Pearsons (who were not 'pacifists') with this statement? It can only be that, during the course of the conflict, when a member of a minority religious community was attacked, it was generally perceived as being due to activity not religious identity.

However, having been in search of a suitable 'atrocious' perpetrated by republicans against innocent Protestants during the period of the War of Independence, Ireland's political revisionists appear to have settled on the killings of the Pearson brothers as their cause célèbre. Claims that the exposure of the killings at Coolacree has made an important contribution to debunking the 'sordid lie' of the War of Independence, clearly implies that these killings were either sectarian in nature or a land grab by the IRA. However, events and words in Offaly at that time suggests otherwise.

The Pearson family were very much part of the local community and were held in high esteem by their neighbours. Indeed, the father, William Pearson, was so well regarded as to be elected an officer of the Kings County Farmers' Association in Kinnity. In June 1921 the Cadamstown, Co Offaly, a unit of the IRA was ordered to block the Birr-Tullamore road in anticipation of a British army convoy traveling this route. At around midnight, the roadblock party came under gun attack with three IRA casualties. Following an investigation by officers of the local IRA leadership, the identities of the attackers was established as the three Pearson brothers of Coolacree. The Pearson farmhouse was kept under observation and their mail was intercepted. It was noted that British staff army officers were regular visitors to the farmhouse. Having satisfied themselves that not alone were the Pearsons responsible for the armed attack on members of the IRA, but were also passing information on republicans to the British army'. Thomas Burke, Officer in Command No 2

TURNING IN THEIR GRAVES

The government's programme for the "centenary of commemorations" contained many bizarre events like a giant canvas draped in front of the bank of Ireland in College Green depicting Grattan, Parnell, O'Connell and Redmond. What, if anything, any of these men had to do with the 1916 Rising was never explained by the Department of the Taoiseach which had organised its erection. This "com-

memoration" was as bizarre as trying to commemorate the battle of the Somme with a canvas or portraits of Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmett, John Mitchell and Roger Casement. The canvas was removed after the portrait of Redmond was defaced with graffiti reminding people of his role in sending 30,000 Irish volunteers to their certain deaths in the First World War.

Brigade Offaly IRA, ordered that the three brothers be executed and their house burnt. The order was carried out on June 30th 1921 and both Richard and Abraham Pearson were executed as British spies.

The Pearson brothers had deliberately and consciously engaged in an act of war on the British side in the War of Independence, so their execution was a legitimate act of war. The sole motive in these IRA executions was political, without regard to creed or class. Many Catholic collaborators were also subject to the same treatment. Indeed, just prior to the execution of the Pearsons, the South Offaly Brigade IRA killed one spy, two informers and three RIC men - all Catholics. Between 21st September 1920 and 29th June 1921, six RIC men were shot dead in Co Offaly alone, all Catholics. It appears that the compilation of the chronicle of events surrounding the Coolacree incident disseminated by British verisimilitude is now being peddled by Irish history revisionists, whereby the acceptable version of 'facts' are those favourable to British/unionist propagandists. Although the War of Independence was won, the battle against revisionism continues.

Publishing relevant evidence is not for the purpose of condemning or condoning historical events. However, it may prevent contemporary observers using them for tendentious purposes creating heat where there should be light.

*Tom Cooper,
Cathaoirleach,
INC*

The large military procession which the Government organised on O'Connell St on Easter Sunday 28th March 2016 attracted a crowd of 250,000. However, it relegated the

role of the people of Ireland to passive observers. Part of the ceremony contained the by now obligatory minute silence for "all who died" so that the rebels of 1916 once again had to share their moment of glory with the very enemy that had suppressed them.

Yet again, the state with the compliance of John Green of the Glasnevin Trust, diluted its commemoration of those who won for us our freedom by unveiling the "Glasnevin Wall" on 3rd April 2016. This wall commemorates those who died lighting the flame of Irish freedom in 1916 alongside those who fought to extinguish it. No permission was sought from the relatives to use their loved ones' names on the wall. In fact, the state insisted on proceeding with this commemoration in direct opposition to the wishes of the relatives of members of those killed by the British state in 1916. They did so in the full knowledge of the distress, offence and anger that this would cause many who were even unable to have the names of their loved ones removed from this travesty of a commemoration.

One cannot for one moment imagine that the Irish state would proceed with such a commemoration if it were to cause similar offence to the relatives of British forces killed in Ireland. Imagine if the Irish government decided to erect a wall at the island bridge war memorial with the names of the 250,000 German civilians starved to death by the British naval blockade in World War One. No other civilized country would abase itself so completely as to defile the memory of its founding fathers as we have done. Imagine the outcry if the British government were to inscribe the names of IRA volunteers onto the Cenotaph in Whitehall; imagine if the Americans were to commemorate the Viet Cong on the Vietnam commemorative wall in Washington DC; imagine if the Poles were to commemorate the Waffan SS alongside the Polish resistance when commemorating the 1944 Warsaw uprising.

Disgusted by the state's inept and insulting original proposals to mark the 1916 Rising,

many relatives and other concerned citizens supported a citizens' initiative called "Reclaim the Vision of 1916". This small group of amateur volunteers with very limited financial resources presented a programme of events including an international poetry competition, a gala film screening attended by President Higgins and an all-inclusive parade and pageant in central Dublin on the 100th anniversary of the rising on the 24th April 2016 which brought out at least 40,000 people on to the streets of the city. This unapologetic people's celebration was completely ignored by most of the media establishment. *The Irish Times* devoted two lines and a caption-less picture to the event, while devoting most of its front-page article to a wreath laying ceremony by HARP for policemen killed in the Rising.



The Reclaim 1916 March

HARP was formerly the RIC & DMP commemoration committee, founded by ex Garda Gerry Lovett in 2010. It consists of a standing committee of less

than 10 members, yet its campaign to commemorate the 530 Police men, including Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, killed between 1916-1922 receives an inordinate amount of positive media attention and state support. Its annual commemorative Mass held in Mount Argus church Dublin is usually attended by a government representative. The RIC was an armed colonial militia neck deep in suppressing the Fenian rising of 1867, the land war and evictions of the 1880s, while the DMP beat two protesters to death on the 31st August 1913 during the Dublin lockout. The history of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries is a seamless garment of torture, arson, rape, murder and looting. Why anyone in their right mind would want to commemorate these Irish equivalents of Dr Papa Doc Duvalier's Ton Ton Macute beggars belief.

On 10th April 1919, President de Valera endorsed Dáil Éireann's decision to ostracise the RIC. Calling them "England's janissaries", he said: "Their history is a continuity of brutal treason against their own people. From their very foundation they have been the mainstay

of the privileged ascendancy and the great obstacle to every movement for social as well as national liberty.”

Maturity was the last thing on display by unionist members of Belfast city council who threatened to boycott a 1916 commemorative dinner attended by President Higgins resulting in its cancellation.

But why does the political, media and intellectual élite feel so at home commemorating the army of our colonial oppressors and so ill at ease commemorating those who sacrificed their lives for Irish freedom?

Perhaps one reason is that this élite has time and again displayed its eagerness to join EU battle groups and willingness to dispense with Irish military neutrality and join NATO. They are embarrassed by our nation's long and proud history of anti-imperialist struggle; they no longer identify themselves with the oppressed and the wretched of the earth, but rather with the forces of colonial exploitation. No longer satisfied to kiss the oppressor's jackboot, they now long to wear it.

Paul McGuil, Secretary, INC

THE LAST DAYS OF REVISIONISM

Revisionism, semantically, can have both a positive and negative meaning. In the first instance, research, and discovery of information can lead to a better understanding of issues, without altering a basic stance in regard to them. In the second, revisionism entails a reinterpretation and perhaps the use of documentation to discredit a traditional perspective. In fact, 'revisionism' entered the English language negatively at the turn of the last century as a description of attempts to derevolutionize socialism

Two of the main negative revisionists of Irish history in the Irish context are journalist-historian Ruth Dudley Edwards and QUB emeritus professor Liam Kennedy; its main political proponent is ex-taoiseach John Bruton.

Edwards, in her last book (*The Seven - The Lives and Legacies of The Founding Fathers of The Irish Republic*, 2016) maintains that the revolution which began 100 years ago had “little popular support” and Kennedy, in his last tome (*Unhappy the Land*, 2016), says that the organisers of the Easter Rising “had no mandate whatsoever from the people of Ireland.” Therefore, it was “anti-democratic”.

However, neither produces any evidence to back up these assertions. I have largely dealt with these in articles in *INC NEWS* (May 2014, Dec 2014 and April 2016). Much has been specifically made of those who jeered

the rebels in Dublin after the surrender in Easter week, thus arguing from a particular crowd to the generality of the Irish nation. The crowd in question is said to consist of some wives and mothers of those serving in the British army and in receipt of payments for same. The truth is that we do not know what the attitude of the general populace was.

Edwards states that the Military Council, which organised the Rising, was “a seven-man secret clique ... within a secret clique (the IRB) within a clique (the 100,000 Irish Volunteers) determined to ignore the electorate's endorsement of the IPP [Irish Parliamentary Party] and of Home Rule”. For a start, the electorate, given the restricted nature of the franchise, was far from universal and thus not democratic. As for ‘cliques’, it is naïve to suggest that it could be otherwise than to rely on same in the face of imperial repression. Apart from the fact, that one cannot exactly provide for a referendum on a national revolution, a mandate for this essentially derives from foreign occupation, and those who oppose this are entitled to rebel against violation of their rights whatever their numbers. (We have said before that, for example, it is a matter of speculation as to whether or not a majority of the French between 1940 and 1944 endorsed the Resistance to German Naziism.)

Edwards, however, holds that “the British

government was the legitimate authority” in Ireland and “helping its enemy was treachery of the highest order” for which there was “no conceivable justification,”. Kennedy ridiculously and tendentiously compares those who fought in the Rising to the “group of militants [who] crashed their bodies and their machines into the Twin Towers that dominated the lower Manhattan skyline”!

John Bruton, in his Opinion piece in *The Irish Times* of 8 April 2016, advises us that the Home Rule Bill of 1914 could have led to independence “had it not been derailed by the 1916 Rebellion” and later undermined by the War of Independence from 1919 to 1921. He does not mention that the Home Rule Act was accompanied by its suspension for the duration of the Great War with the promise that this would be lifted once the war was over.

But could Britain be trusted in this regard? Citing the example of Canada, Australia etc, pursuant to the Statute of Westminster 1931, which gave effective independence to the dominions, does not answer the question. The likes of Canada were not at the backdoor of Britain and had not experienced revolutionary contact with Napoleonic France or Wilhelmitic Germany which lingered in the mind of the British. Not only was Home Rule a milk and water devolutionary measure rather than independence, but even it could not be relied upon to actually come into being, never mind dominion status later. The paranoia of the British establishment regarding Ireland was articulated as late as 1983 when Secretary of State James Prior warned of Ireland becoming an Atlantic Cuba!

Bruton denounces the manifesto of the national birthright of his country and fails to acknowledge the heroism and bravery of those who fought for it. At best, he has a skewed historical sense of the relation between Britain and Ireland that leads to political wrongheadedness. More recently, one recalls his sickening laudation of Charles Windsor at an official trip to the Irish Republic, and holding him out as an example of what we should all be! It is appalling to think that this man was once Taoiseach.

A footnote of revisionism concerns the alleged proclivities of Patrick Pearse. Edwards

tells us that he was “a tormented, repressed paedophile.” In her book about Pearse *Triumph of Failure* (1977), she classified him as a latent homosexual. Now she has upgraded him further into the category of paedophile. Kennedy avers that he was “latently homosexual, and was seemingly sexually attracted to children”. In fact, there is no evidence that he was homosexual or a paedophile (not that there is anything wrong in actually being homosexual). Specifically, he cannot be accused of any illicit act. Aesthetically he saw the beauty of males, young people in particular, and celebrated this as an artist and poet. But that does not substantiate the Edwards-Kennedy conclusions about him. In reality, he had had a close friendship with a woman who tragically died an early death and, otherwise, insofar as any mental repression might be considered, this was more likely, in the Ireland of its time, to be repressed heterosexuality. However, one suspects that the purpose of seeking to cast aspersions on Pearse’s sexuality is an attempt to sully the whole enterprise of which he was one of the chief organisers.

Doubtless, revisionists were bitterly disappointed by the centenary celebrations of 2016 for the Rising. From ‘the lower classes’ up to official Ireland, there was a recognition and admiration for those who courageously laid the foundation stone of modern Ireland. This effective rejection of the detractors of the national revolution amounted to the final defeat of revisionism and its interment.

Revisionism thus ended its days deficient in scholarship, delusional in politics and lurid in psychological accusation.

Daltún Ó Ceallaigh, Eagarthóir, INC NEWS

RAFFLE

Winners last time: P Ó Snodaigh, Seán Gallagher, and Fergus MacAogáin. Enclosed with this periodical is a book of tickets for the next raffle; prizes are 1st €100, 2nd €50, and 3rd a book token.

AGM OF INC

The AGM is due to be held in the near future. Details of arrangements to be forthcoming accordingly.

<p>COMHDHÁIL NÁISIÚNTA NA HÉIREANN IRISH NATIONAL CONGRESS 27 Pearse Street, Dublin 2 Tel: 085 706 5200 Email: inc.cne@gmail.com Web: www.inc.ie INC NEWS Eagarthóir/Editor - Daltún Ó Ceallaigh</p>
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