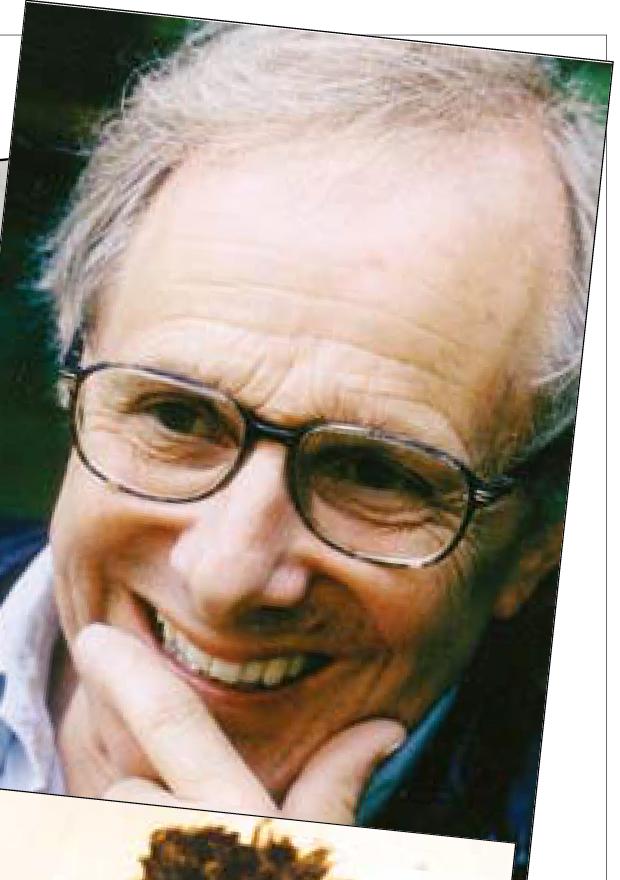
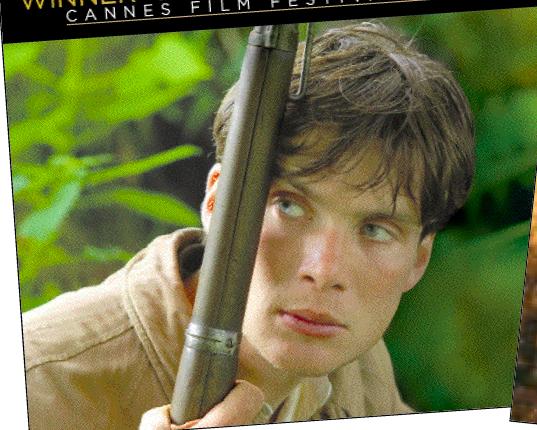


**A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIRST
WEST CORK HISTORY
FESTIVAL**



**WINNER • BEST FILM PALME D'OR
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL 2006**



THE Embers of Revisionism

Essays critiquing creationist Irish history
and Roy Foster on Ken Loach's

THE Wind that Shakes THE Barley

Brian P Murphy osb & Niall Meehan

THE AUBANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2017

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Front cover photographs, clockwise from top left: retired Professor Roy Foster, *Wind that Shakes the Barley* director Ken Loach, Third West Cork Flying Column Commander Tom Barry, Loach-film publicity poster featuring actor Cillian Murphy.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIRST WEST CORK HISTORY FESTIVAL

The Embers of Revisionism

Critiquing Creationist Irish History

Dr. Niall Meehan, Faculty Head, Journalism & Media, Griffith College Dublin

‘Adulterers, homosexuals, tinkers, beggars, ex-servicemen, Protestants: these were the many dangerous and potentially lethal labels for Ireland’s inhabitants in the revolutionary period.’

David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands*, 1998, p95

Introduction – enter Conor Cruise O’Brien

Historians who search for enhanced knowledge of past events never do so in a vacuum. Inevitably, societal pressures infiltrate the historian’s thought processes. When the subject matter of history comes closer to the present, politics intervenes. This is especially so in Ireland where the past is never past, but instead is considered the political present in retrospect.

Attempts to control the presentation of Irish history redoubled after 1970. This was due to official apprehension that nationalists and republicans in revolt against sectarian rule in Northern Ireland might influence southern popular consciousness.¹ The consequent attempt to revise and to reverse a nationalist version of Irish history, so as to alienate southerners from northerners, was actively pursued by Conor Cruise O’Brien. He operated prominently in four areas of Irish life: government, politics, academic history and journalism. Their interaction was central to the relative success within academia of the revisionist project.

In revising Irish history O’Brien revised also his 1960s self. Before tacking to the right during the 1970s, he contributed three important articles to London’s *New Left Review* (NLR). They contained observations and sentiments he would later either ignore or disavow.

The first in 1965 challenged Cold War neo-colonialism, a subject of which O’Brien had direct personal experience. In 1961 he was forced out of his UN role in the province of Katanga in the newly independent, former Belgian, Congo. He had opposed the violent attempts of Western interests and white-ruled Rhodesia to partition off and turn Katanga into a client

state. O’Brien wrote in the *Observer* on 10 December that year, ‘My resignation from the United Nations and from the Irish Foreign Service is a result of British Government policy’.²

In exile from Ireland from 1962-68, O’Brien was associated with the ‘new left’. He opposed United States involvement in the Vietnam War, racism plus police violence in the US and Apartheid in South Africa. A 1967 *NLR* essay explained O’Brien’s role in exposing how the CIA funded and manipulated *Encounter* magazine (through the Congress of Cultural Freedom). O’Brien recounted also *Encounter*’s failed attempt to silence him. Another 1967 essay warned that ‘counter revolutionary subordination’ of intellectuals by the state in western society was a threat to ‘scholarly integrity’.³

O’Brien was a committed supporter of resistance to US forces in Vietnam. Some years earlier he had supported the Algerian fight for independence from France. At a 1967 symposium on the Vietnam War O’Brien clashed with Hannah Arendt, who had remarked, ‘As to the Viet Cong terror, we cannot possibly agree with it’. O’Brien responded,

I think there is a distinction between the use of terror by oppressed peoples against the oppressors and their servants, in comparison with the use of terror by their oppressors in the interests of further oppression. I think there is a qualitative distinction there which we have the right to make.⁴

In December 1967 O’Brien was front-page news in the *Irish Times*, that reported his arrest while demonstrating against the war, and being kicked by a policeman. In May 1968 O’Brien condemned police attacks on, and harassment of, the militant, armed, Black Panther Party.⁵

O’Brien linked his Irish and international perspectives in his second NLR contribution, ‘The Embers of Easter’, on the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising against British rule. It was a robust anti-imperialist interpretation of Irish history. O’Brien had a connection there too. His uncle, the pacifist Francis Sheehy Skeffington, was executed during the Rising on the orders of a later

² Conor Cruise O’Brien: ‘The Congo, the United Nations and Chatham House’, *New Left Review*, I/31, May-June 1965. See O’Brien’s account in *To Katanga and Back*, 1962.

³ ‘Some Encounters with the Culturally Free’, *New Left Review*, I/44, July-August 1967. Conor Cruise O’Brien, ‘The Morality of Scholarship’, in Conor Cruise O’Brien, Northrop Frye, Stuart Hampshire, *The Morality of Scholarship*, 1967, p72.

⁴ Christophe Gillissen, ‘Ireland, France, and the question of Algeria at the United Nations, 1955-62’, *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, v19, 2008, p155. Conor Cruise O’Brien, with Hannah Arendt, Naom Chomsky, Robert Lowell, ‘The Legitimacy of Violence as a Political Act’, in Alexander Klein, ed., *Dissent Power and Confrontation*, 1971, p117. Evi Gkotzaridis linked O’Brien’s later thoughts with those of US-based German Jewish refugee and political theorist, Hannah Arendt. Gkotzaridis, a supporter of the revisionist project, speculated as to whether they ‘may have met’ between 1965-1968. They did and disagreed, *The Trials of Irish History, 1938-2000*, 2006, p219.

⁵ ‘Cruise-O’Brien and Spock arrested, anti-war protest in New York’, ‘Cruise-O’Brien is unable to walk’, *Irish Times*, 6, 7 December 1967. ‘Violence in Oakland’, *New York Review of Books*, v10, n9, 9 May 1968.

¹ As admitted by Ronan Fanning in the introduction to his *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910-22*, 2013, pp3-4.

found ‘guilty but insane’ Cork-born, Anglo-Irish British officer, Captain J.C. Bowen-Colthurst.⁶

To great fanfare, in December 1968 O’Brien joined the small but then vibrantly and newly left-wing Irish Labour Party. Under a soon to be abandoned slogan, ‘The 70s will be socialist’, he was easily elected to the Dáil (Irish Parliament) at the June 1969 general election. O’Brien’s triumphant return to Ireland coincided with the emergence of civil rights demands that became a civil rights revolt in Northern Ireland. He was quickly in the thick of opposition to the North’s ‘Orange state’.

In the London *Observer* on 19 January 1969, O’Brien criticised that newspaper’s support for northern premier Terence O’Neill’s policy of ‘gradualism’. He asserted that the ruling Unionist Party was the ‘political arm’ of the Orange Order,⁷ in which ‘the denial of rights to Catholics is an essential – indeed *the* essential – part of its character’. O’Neill’s call-up of the ‘armed Orangemen’ of the paramilitary B-Special RUC reserve was ‘more instructive... than... the studied moderation of his language’. To ‘proceed slowly’,

... implies a corollary, the greater the resistance, the slower the pace. This is an encouragement to the Paisleyites⁸ in and out of uniform to increase their provocations. Those who are repressed will respond - and are responding - in kind, and the more gradual the process the more long-drawn out and bloody it will be.

It turned out as he then predicted.

Addressing the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee in New York on 12 December 1969, O’Brien said Catholics were ‘the blacks in Northern Ireland’. He further remarked,

“No bombs, no rights” read a local headline. There is no doubt that the young people of the civil rights movement with backing from older people achieved first through non-violent symbolic protest, and then through the use of a degree of violence, far more than their elders had achieved in two generations of argument and minority voting... [T]he cost was high and not yet paid in full... In this case violence did indeed assure a hearing for moderation, which in the absence of violence had gone unheard for nearly fifty years.

O’Brien argued against an overt anti-partition strategy, as he had witnessed the limits of anti-partition propaganda while a civil servant in the early 1950s. Civil rights agitation was, he thought, much more subversive of Northern Ireland’s existence.⁹

⁶ ‘The Embers of Easter 1916-1966’, *New Left Review*, I/37, May-June 1966. Published also in the *Irish Times*, 7 April 1966, and in Owen Dudley Edwards, Fergus Pyle, eds., *1916 The Easter Rising*, 1968. For Bowen-Colthurst trial report, *Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook*, ‘1917 issue, Compiled by the “Weekly Irish Times” Dublin’, at www.academia.edu/6336653. Bowen Colthurst’s ‘insanity’ lasted a year, at which point he was released and emigrated to Canada.

⁷ A mass Protestant anti-Catholic organisation.

⁸ Followers of Protestant (in 1971 Democratic) Unionist Party leader, the Reverend Ian Paisley, J.J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985*, 1989, p427.

⁹ In D.H. Akenson, ed., *Conor Cruise O’Brien, Anthology*, 1994, pp201-202..

O’Brien moved rightwards from 1970, in opposition to the emergence of a sustained IRA campaign against the northern regime. He accused the ruling Fianna Fáil government of having encouraged it, though he ignored his own contribution. O’Brien began to develop a hysterical style of analysis, at one point referring to the prospect of a Fianna Fáil inspired *coup d'état* and, hence, of a ‘Greece of the colonels’ type regime in Ireland.¹⁰

The 1970s turned sour instead of socialist for the Irish Labour Party, after it reversed a no-coalition policy in 1970. As minister for Posts & Telegraphs in a 1973-77 labour-Fine Gael government, O’Brien’s new outlook and behaviour betrayed earlier convictions.

The legislative and political legacy of this former champion of scholarly integrity was a highly effective broadcasting censorship and a policy of crushing dissent through, amongst other things, police brutality.¹¹ State violence was now preferred to that of its victims.

Friend and foe alike altered their view. In 1965 the playwright John Arden was so enamoured of O’Brien’s reputation, he dedicated *Armstrong’s Goodnight*, a play with a ‘Congo parallel’, to the Irishman. After O’Brien lost his Dáil seat in 1977 Arden singled him out again. He condemned the recently defeated Irish government’s ‘appalling record on civil liberties, prison conditions and police malpractice’. Arden criticised an,

... insidious smear campaign put out by the Coalition and subscribed to by Dr. Cruise O’Brien, whereby all demands for reform... were presented as [the] aiding and abetting of ‘subversive terrorism’.

He noted also O’Brien’s promotion of broadcasting censorship and ‘endeavours to extend his influence upon the press and thence into a far wider field of literature and art’.¹²

On the other hand, in 1974 *Encounter* editor and CIA functionary Melvin J. Lasky, ousted by O’Brien ten years earlier, observed presciently and without contradiction:

I have been following Dr. O’Brien’s new and substantially revised ideology with the greatest of satisfaction... it does seem to me that he now stands with us.¹³

¹⁰ Conor Cruise O’Brien, *States of Ireland*, 1972, pp281, 293-4. Angela Clifford, ‘Arms Crisis Misconceptions’, ‘John Devine’s report’, *Irish Political Review*, v24, n12, Dec 2009. Interestingly, Mark McNally’s ‘Conor Cruise O’Brien’s Conservative Anti-Nationalism’, *European Journal of Political Theory*, v7, n3, 2008, detected degrees of right-wing continuity in O’Brien’s thought processes. He does not dwell sufficiently on O’Brien’s 1960s left turn.

¹¹ ‘O’Brien says Garda beatings ‘worked’’, *Sunday Times*, 8 November 1998; Eamon McCann, ‘Conor Cruise O’Brien is a hypocrite’, *Hot Press*, 22 September 2003.

¹² Arden gives history a Congo parallel’, *Times* (Lon), 7 July 1965; John Arden, ‘Conor Cruise O’Brien’s defeat’, *Times* (Lon), 27 September 1977.

¹³ ‘Backbencher on O’Brien’, *Irish Times*, 20 July 1974. Laskey’s comment was noted in D.R. O’Connor Lysaght, *End of a liberal, the Literary Politics of Conor Cruise O’Brien*, 1976. The *New York Times* reported (8 May 1967) senior CIA operative Tom Braden as stating that *Encounter* was financed by the CIA through the Congress for Cultural Freedom and that one of its editors was ‘an agent in place’. John Sutherland (*TLS*, 18 June 2004) noted, ‘It can only have been Lasky’. See obituary, ‘Melvin Lasky, Cold warrior who edited the CIA-funded *Encounter* magazine’, *Guardian*, 22 May 2004.

Though he disguised the extent of his political recalibration, O'Brien felt obliged to disavow the 1966 'Embers of Easter' article. That was because a much-quoted sentence asserted, 'The Labour Party in this three-quarters-of-a-nation has been dominated for years by dismal poltroons'.

An opportunity to make amends came with *States of Ireland* in 1972. O'Brien declared, 'there are things in this article... with which I am no longer in sympathy' (p247, n9). *States of Ireland* was a pivotal book that reframed the nationalist revolt in Northern Ireland as an expression of Irish 'Catholic nationalism'. O'Brien now claimed that this phenomenon characterised all Irish expressions of discontent with British rule.¹⁴ It was part history lesson, travelogue and family biography, that, as one review put it, made for 'a bit of a mess', where 'the mess, so to speak, is the message'.¹⁵ O'Brien had reinvented Irish history within a sectarian paradigm.

It was quite a turnaround.

As Labour's 'new recruit' in December 1968, O'Brien spoke to an 'almost full' Liberty Hall. His analysis of Irish nationalism and of the role of Irish Catholicism had a more nuanced and materialist basis. He suggested that support for 19th century Irish Parliamentary Party leader Charles Stuart Parnell, for Sinn Féin in 1918, Fianna Fáil in 1932, and now for Labour, all represented shifts to the left. O'Brien remarked also that the influence of the Catholic Church 'has often been exaggerated, especially by outside observers', even if it had been 'real, extensive and generally favourable to the social and economic *status quo*'. However, southern 'anti-clericalism to appease [Protestant-evangelical leader Ian] Paisley... would be futile as well as ignominious'.

Writing in July 1968, O'Brien asserted that the then Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, 'widely deemed to be a bigot', was 'much less to be feared and reprobated than the sophisticated modern bigotry of Enoch Powell', then a racist British Conservative MP. From 1974-87 Powell represented the Ulster Unionist Party in the House of Commons.¹⁶ O'Brien claimed also that the Irish were 'resistant to racism' due to 'religious influences and ... Wolfe Tone republicanism'. He observed on both occasions that, as he put it in December, 'conservative laymen exploited the Church in defence of their own positions'.¹⁷

That was the pre-revisionist view. Whereas in 1966 O'Brien celebrated the 1916 Rising, by 1979 he termed

its remembrance a 'cult' in Ireland.¹⁸ He detected fascist underpinnings to republican philosophy. Somewhat incongruously, he also expressed sympathy for the 'predicament' of Afrikaners in racist South Africa. He established common cause with Israeli Zionists during the 1980s. In 1958 he had observed that Palestinian 'refugees [from Israel] are the victims of a wrong'. Now, the victims were wrong.¹⁹

Protestant unionists became portrayed as Ireland's oppressed minority.

In 1996 O'Brien joined Northern Ireland's UK Unionist Party. In 1998 he was 'glad to be an ally... in the defence of the Union' with Democratic Unionist Party leader and founder of the Free Presbyterian Church, the Reverend Ian Paisley. That too was quite an about-face. In 1968 O'Brien called Paisley a 'hate merchant'. The alliance lasted until 2007 when Paisley did something O'Brien opposed and also predicted would not happen. He agreed to participate with Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland's mandatory power-sharing administration.²⁰ In this way O'Brien jettisoned most of what he once proclaimed. He ended up more unionist than the unionists themselves, to the right of Ian Paisley.

O'Brien died in December 2008. His long-term intellectual legacy is diverse. It includes the movement in Irish historical studies first systematised in *States of Ireland*. Usually termed (as Melvin J. Lasky intimated) 'revisionism', it stimulated research asserting that the Irish independence movement was in part a sectarian, irrational, prejudicial, and anti-Protestant formation.

This essay will explore that part of O'Brien's legacy, over one hundred years on from the 1916 Rising and fifty from 'The Embers of Easter'.

Part I assesses the evidential pretensions of the historiographical tradition O'Brien championed.

Part II will demonstrate how O'Brien's influential 'Catholic nationalism' thesis encouraged a partial critique of southern Irish society. It established important misunderstandings about the origin and nature of the modern Irish state, that fed into revisionist understanding.

Part III will critique Professor David Fitzpatrick's notable revisionist claim that prefaces this article. It is the logical outcome of O'Brien's approach. I will ask whether, to adapt O'Brien's 1967 observations, intellectual enquiry has been subordinated to powerful ideological preconceptions. Has scholarly integrity been com-

¹⁴ A point discussed in McNally, *op. cit.*, pp309-10.

¹⁵ 'The irresponsibility of Unionism', *TLS*, 10 November 1972.

¹⁶ Powell was elected for South Down, Peter Crutchley, 'Enoch Powell's last stand: Why did he enter Ulster politics during the Troubles?', at www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-29114378.

¹⁷ 'O'Brien addresses Labour meeting, 1969 seen as the turning point in political history', 'Corish outlines Labour's rebirth', 'Big attendance at meeting,' *Irish Times*, 20 Dec 1968. Owen Dudley Edwards, ed., *Conor Cruise O'Brien Introduces Ireland*, 1969, pp13, 16, 19. The title of the book, for the US market, indicated O'Brien's then name recognition. In it O'Brien recommended that readers consult *The Embers of Easter* article.

¹⁸ 'Easter 1916 a cult in Ireland – O'Brien', *Irish Times*, 29 March 1979.

¹⁹ D.H. Akenson, *Conor*, p474. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism*, 1986. ; 'Ireland suggests solution for refugee problem', *Irish Times*, 14 November 1958.

²⁰ Maol Muire Tynan, 'O'Brien to stand for UK Unionist Party', *Irish Times*, 3 May 1996. James Kelly, 'Derry issue could go to UN', *Sunday Independent*, 13 October 1968. Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'I'm happy defending the Union with Ian', *Sunday Independent*, 3 May 1998. 'Paisley's decision won't be any surprise to me', 'Only Ian Paisley can speak for Ian Paisley', *Sunday Independent*, 24 March, 7 April 2007.

promised by revisionist ideas and the repressive policies required in the 1970s to clear space for their promotion?

I – MAKING SPACE FOR REVISIONISM

Revisionist historiography ‘gathered momentum’ during ‘the course of the [Northern Ireland] Troubles’. It challenged, *pace* O’Brien, ‘the idea that Irish people are, or should be, exclusively Gaelic and Catholic’.²¹ The approach counterposed itself to this preferred stereotype by presuming to explore instead ‘Irish history in all its density, ramifications and complexity’. Marc Mulholland from Oxford University described practitioners supportively as ‘the revisionists of nationalist mythology’. Unionist mythologies, however fanciful, do not much interest these thinkers.²²

Roy Foster, later also of Oxford, announced prematurely in 1986, ‘We are all revisionists now’.²³

Addressing the issue of revisionist histories generally, Losurdo observed, ‘Revisionism is synonymous with the liquidation of the revolutionary tradition and of the war-revolutions of the 20th Century’. Explanations of historical research within this tradition as merely revisions of previous research are, he suggested, tautological.²⁴ In the Irish case, revisionism is a mission-driven project whose central organising idea is that the struggle for Irish independence is or was an ethno-sectarian Catholic project. It should be understood therefore as an ideological exercise.

Foster’s major survey, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (1988), was described as a ‘revisionist milestone’. In the *Sunday Times* (30 October 1988), O’Brien termed it a ‘magnificent book [that] supersedes all other general accounts of modern Irish history’. The work was ‘the channel through which all the pent-up scepticism of four decades of revisionism could burst into Irish public life’.²⁵

Echoing O’Brien, Foster argued that Irish nationalism was shrouded in sentimentalised ‘myth’, masking a reality revealing sectarian anti-Protestantism. Charles Townshend of Keele University summarised Liverpool University academic Marianne Elliott’s related view that Catholic ‘tribal myth[s]’ ‘are not agreeable or diverting fantasies but dangerous self-deceptions that all too readily form the parapet of an endless pseudoethnic warfare’. Elliott’s contesting of this invented construct was, remarked Townshend, ‘surely... what Irish

historical revisionism is all about’.²⁶

Revisionist arguments tend, therefore, to strip away lineaments construed as justifying, or merely empathising with reasons for, the IRA’s 1970-94 armed campaign in Northern Ireland. Narratives that disrupt the continuity of revolutionary memory are usually celebrated and promoted as path breaking models for others to follow.

In questioning the secular basis for Irish separatism, the revisionist approach tends to undermine broadly left-wing and liberal sympathy for anti-imperialist politics in Ireland. Due to repetition of favoured themes over a number of years, it has been a somewhat successful exercise. Critical interrogation of Irish nationalism is of course perfectly legitimate. What is questionable is revisionism’s resistant approach to contrary evidence and a tendency towards being self-referential.

Those who admire Roy Foster’s work sometimes portray criticism as itself sectarian and/or xenophobic. For example, the Irish novelist John Banville observed in 2015 that Foster’s study of the poet W.B. Yeats,

... provoked nationalist wrath for ... well, as so often, it was not quite clear what they were wrathful about, unless it was the fact that Foster is a Protestant Irishman who lives and works in England.

Such caricatures often appear, as here, without evidential support. They effectively seal off the revisionist tradition from dialogue, beyond supportive commentary from an admiring coterie.²⁷

Evidence-less (or ‘lite’) assertions are not merely the preserve of novelists. Among academic revisionists, the equation of Irish nationalism with Catholic sectarianism is often simply assumed. Take, for example, Boyce and O’Day’s supportive 1996 essay collection on the ‘Revisionist Controversy’. They referred at one point to Charles Stewart Parnell, the late 19th century Protestant nationalist leader, as having been ‘incorporated into the republican myth’. The observation was followed by, ‘Irish nationalism was engaged with ... its enemies, the Protestants of Ireland’.²⁸ We are led therefore to believe, implausibly, that Parnell was his own enemy.

Professor Joe Lee’s critique of revisionist debates asserted that they tend to be bogged down in generalities and, as a result, ‘standards of the use of evidence’ have ‘lapsed... lamentably’. He observed in 2001 that, ‘the close case study of individual texts is a basic prerequisite for serious discussion of Irish history’. Also, ‘the search

²¹ Marilynn J Richtarik, *Acting Between the Lines: The Field Day Theatre Company and Irish Cultural Politics 1980-1984*, 1995, pp72, 73.

²² Evi Gkotzaridis, *op. cit.*, p221. Marc Mulholland, ‘Democracy and revolution’, *Times Change*, Spring 1997, p26.

²³ Roy Foster, ‘We are all Revisionists Now’, *Irish Review*, v1, n1, 1986.

²⁴ Domenico Losurdo, *War and Revolution, Rethinking the 20th Century*, 2014, p28.

²⁵ Kevin O’Neill, ‘Revisionist Milestone’, in Ciarán Brady, ed., *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism 1938-1994*, 1994, pp217-221. Andrew Browne, ‘Saturday Review Profile: Roy Foster, interpreter of myths’, *Guardian* (Lon), 13 September 2003.

²⁶ Charles Townshend, ‘Religion, War and Identity in Ireland’, *Journal of Modern History*, v76, n4, December 2004, p884, on Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster*, 2002.

²⁷ John Banville, ‘Moral Lepers’, *LRB*, v37, n14, 16 Jul 2015 (ellipsis in original). This point, on revisionist evidential paucity, made also by Christine Kinealy, ‘Beyond revisionism: reassessing the Great Irish Famine’, *History Ireland*, v3, n4, Winter 1995, p30.

²⁸ George D. Boyce, Alan O’Day, eds, *The Making of Modern Irish History, Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy*, 1996, pp8, 9. Largely a response to the more even-handed Ciarán Brady, ed., *op. cit.*, 1994, which Boyce and O’Day ignored.

for true history revolves around constant debate'.²⁹ As should be clear from this analysis, revisionists don't do debate.

As early as 1993, the historian Brian Murphy suggested that Foster's (and more generally, revisionist) historiography on this sectarianism point is 'quite literally flawed at source'. Foster misinterpreted archival material so as to assert that 'emotions' surrounding the Irish language revival movement, the Gaelic League, were 'fundamentally sectarian and even racialist', plus that Irish Nationalism by 1912 'was Anglo-phobic and anti-Protestant'.³⁰ Foster shuffled off Murphy's exacting criticism by ignoring it.

Nevertheless, revisionist assertions gained ideological traction because they were part of a self-questioning motif encouraged by southern Irish society's post-1960s 'modernisation' process - which required the Dublin government's increasing subservience to the interests of US and European capital. The 'modernisation' motif was conditioned internally by secular reaction to overbearing Roman Catholic influences on the southern state, which the latter had facilitated, for social-control purposes, since the 1920s. These are the resentments that underpinned *Modern Ireland's* 'pent-up scepticism'.

The Irish elite's new interests and perspectives tolerated criticism of an assumed omnipresent Catholic nationalist bogeyman, that was construed as not only impeding secular progress at home but, more dangerously, as underlying the Provisional IRA's northern revolt. Though this new economic phase had its critics, for some on the left the case against Irish capitalism became subsumed within a case against Catholicism, as though they were synonymous. Ironically, therefore, Irish opinions on the secular right converged with both liberal/‘progressive’ and social democratic critiques of an allegedly baneful and inseparable ‘Catholic nationalism’.

²⁹ ‘*The Canon of Irish History – a Challenge*’ Reconsidered’, in Toner Quinn, ed., *Desmond Fennell his Life and Work*, 2001, pp60, 80, 81.

³⁰ Brian Murphy, ‘The Canon of Irish Cultural History: some Questions concerning Roy Foster’s Modern Ireland’, *Studies*, v82, n326, Summer, 1993, pp171, 172, 173 (at www.academia.edu/33610680/; also in Brady, *op. cit.*); Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, 1988, pp453, 459. Murphy identified Foster’s reliance on Patrick O’Farrell’s *Ireland’s English Question*, published in 1971: ‘a book that has no footnotes’, replete with difficult to trace, inaccurate and out of context quotations, Murphy, p176. O’Farrell argued that in the ‘Irish world view’ ‘religion [was] both the pivot and the lynch-pin’. England ‘was always modern’, whereas Ireland was a ‘constant anachronism’, in Elizabeth Malcolm, ‘Patrick O’Farrell and the Irish history Wars, 1971-1993’, *Journal of Religious History*, v31, n1, March 2007, p34. Malcolm noted perceptively that for O’Farrell (as for revisionist historians generally), ‘Irish republicanism was ultimately a misguided enterprise’. See also, Brian Murphy, ‘Is revisionism in Irish History built on insecure foundations’, *Irish Times*, 24 September 1992. Responding, a clearly stung O’Farrell referred to ‘Father Murphy’ and enquired if ‘priest-history practitioners have... nothing better to do’ (8 October). Murphy then noted, ‘with regret, that ... Professor O’Farrell... failed to address any of the historical matters under discussion’ (19 October).

Part II, following, will explore the basis of this confusion and will demonstrate that it was made possible partly by a failure to integrate the socio-economic role and position of the southern Protestant community.

II – THE SOUTH

Stimulated by 1960s radicalisation, the Irish women’s movement and its supporters fought a series of important battles on democratic rights in southern Ireland: victorious in liberalising contraception laws during the 1980s, in making divorce constitutional in 1995, and still proceeding on abortion. These struggles were with the state and, increasingly, with right-wing secular forces in civil society.³¹ As the ideological authority of the Roman Catholic Church faded, it revealed a state that used churches plural (including the Anglican Church of Ireland) to socially control populations through licensed delivery of welfare, detention, education and health care.³² An important intent of this edifice of semi-state Christianity, that pre-dated independence, was prevention over a long historical period of a rights-based education and welfare system: secular, free at the point of entry and funded through taxation.

Take education, that is resourced and regulated by the state at primary and at secondary level. Responsibility for what goes on outside the curriculum is avoided by relying on Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland ownership of most schools. This divided responsibility has significant effects. As a child Louise O’Keefe was sexually abused by her headmaster, a lay teacher. She sued the Department of Education for failure in its duty of care. The state argued successfully in the Irish courts that the appropriate responsible body was the Roman Catholic school management committee, consisting of some parents and teachers, chaired by the local parish priest. In 2014 the European Court of Human Rights found in O’Keefe’s favour.³³

In other words, the state was responsible. Using threats of substantial court costs, the state had persuaded other litigants to withdraw. In attempting to reinstate their cases after the O’Keefe judgment, the claimants were subject to the same threats. As O’Keefe put it:

It’s the same attitude that I encountered all the way through the court system here in Ireland - that I should have sued the church, that my parents shouldn’t have

³¹ See Emily O'Reilly, *Masterminds of the Right*, 1992, on anti-abortion groups and individuals plotting the successful 1983 anti-abortion referendum, a victory that has since turned to dust in terms of popular preferences and attempts at reversal.

³² See Niall Meehan, ‘Church & State and the Bethany Home’, supplement to *History Ireland*, v18, n5, Sep-Oct 2010 (www.academia.edu/320793/); ‘Shorthand for Protestants - sectarian advertising in the Irish Times’, *History Ireland*, v17n 5, Sep Oct 2009 (www.academia.edu/192463/).

³³ ECHR, Decision, application no. 35810/09, Louise O’Keefe against Ireland. Barry Roche, ‘Cabinet to make decision on primary school abuse claims’, 20 November 2014; Louise O’Keefe, ‘Victims of abuse in national school continue to be abused by the State’, *Irish Times*, 20 November 2014, 13 January 2015.

sent me to that school, that it's everybody's fault but the State's.³⁴

O'Keefe's treatment illustrates cynical official attitudes toward allegations of abuse. The state franchised services out to adherents of Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, proceeded to starve them of adequate resources, and then sat back while they absorbed the sole blame for what inevitably went wrong.

The Roman Catholic Church's discomfort was compounded by its evident hypocrisy in covering up rampant clerical sexual abuse, as well as the fact that its strictures generally in relation to human sexuality are increasingly ignored. O'Keefe's brave stand against the state, plus allegations of both abuse and neglect in Protestant institutions,³⁵ complicate a message in which the Roman Catholic Church is quite often singled out. Implicating other actors complicates an overarching 'Catholic nationalist' thesis. Abuse within Protestant settings has tended, therefore, to be underreported.³⁶

2.1 'Catholic Bourgeoisie'

A one-time consistent opponent of 'Catholic nationalism' is the left-leaning *Irish Times* commentator and essayist Fintan O'Toole. He succinctly expressed an often-associated modernisation imperative running parallel to such opposition, so as to distract southern attention from the northern crisis. O'Toole referred to,

The demands of a young, highly educated population and the needs of a pluralist society to disentangle itself from the tribal religions that have made violence endemic in Northern Ireland ...³⁷

An important political pre-cursor of these attempts at disentanglement came from an unusual source, the Sinn Féin and IRA split in 1969-70. Afterwards, 'provisional' and left-sounding 'official' versions of those organisations competed.³⁸ 'Official' Republican ideology incorporated elements of ultra leftism reminiscent of third-period Stalinism, accompanied by apocalyptic rhetoric, before the group's gradual descent into reformism.

An important 'Official' document, *The IRA in the 1970s* (1970), indicated a future focus on 'pseudo-nationalist Catholic/capitalist philosophy', the qualifier

³⁴ Joe Humphreys, Barry Roche, 'School abuse survivors offered up to €84,000 in cases against State', *Irish Times*, 16 December 2014. See also, 'Max Barrett', *Phoenix*, v34, n19, 23 September 2016.

³⁵ See, Niall Meehan, *The Irish State & the Bethany Home - submission to Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn*, 24 May 2011, at www.academia.edu/1423646/. See also 'Church and State and the Bethany Home', *op. cit.* Leading Irish Swimming Association coaches were involved also in abuse, Justine McCarthy, *Deep Deception*, 2010.

³⁶ Niall Meehan, 'Irish Times struggles with Non-Catholic abuse', *Village*, February 2017, at www.academia.edu/31332320/.

³⁷ Fintan O'Toole, *Black Hole, Green Card, The Disappearance of Ireland*, New Island, 1994, p133; also in, O'Toole, *Ex-isle of Erin*, 1997, p101. For a critical assessment, Daniel Finn, 'Rethinking the Republic, Fintan O'Toole and the Irish Crisis', *New Left Review*, II/90, November December 2014.

³⁸ One side was 'provisional' Sinn Féin and the 'provisional' IRA; the other, 'official' Sinn Féin and the 'official' IRA.

'pseudo' then implying that this 'philosophy' was not sufficiently nationalist. A subsequently important aspect of late 1970s 'official' discourse was that a dominant 'Catholic bourgeoisie' refused to industrialise southern Irish society.³⁹ Leaving aside evident economic illiteracy, within this important shift of perspective, the so-called 'Catholic bourgeoisie' was now fused with an equally retrograde, rather than generally progressive, Irish nationalism.

British imperialism was no longer faulted for Irish socio-economic underdevelopment. Instead, 'American economic and cultural imperialism' became responsible for the ills of the present. However, mainly US investment was welcomed on the basis that it would create a larger industrial working class.⁴⁰ The investment was predicated on southern Ireland's post-1973 membership of the EEC (now EU) and use of the state as a profit-laundering, low-tax, tariff-free entry point to European markets.⁴¹ The analysis cut the organisation away from its own roots, in which the Irish poor suffered from imperial as well as capitalist oppression. It severed also a basis for confrontation with Britain in Northern Ireland.

Significantly, as Henry Patterson observed, the new view 'explain[ed] in socialist terms ... some "revisionist" findings'.⁴² The findings harnessed the organisation to socio-economic modernisation in the interests of southern Irish capitalism. Radical sentiment was simultaneously 'disentangle[d]' from Northern Ireland, a process encouraged by a combination of state repression, and broadcasting censorship that O'Brien had perfected. Traditional republican anti-clericalism was harnessed to a project that turned in on the politics that spawned it. This emerging mentalité was attractive within sections of the middle-class intelligentsia. To the extent that they avoided opposing repression in Northern Ireland, such views could constitute radicalism without official repercussions, thus avoiding career-inhibiting consequences.

The 'officials' grew for a period in the South and declined in the North. As Sinn Féin – the Workers' Party (1976) and then The Workers' Party (1982), they developed a base in trade unions and in semi-state organisations, including *Rádió Teilifís Éireann* (RTÉ).⁴³

2.2 Southern Economy

The main problem with 'official' analysis of 'Catholic capitalism' is that it was based on a flawed analysis of the southern Irish economy.

³⁹ *IRA in the 1970s* in Justin O'Brien, *The Arms Trial*, 2000, p17; Sinn Féin the Workers Party (SFWP), *The Irish Industrial Revolution*, revised ed., 1978.

⁴⁰ *United Irishman*, February 1977, in Henry Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion: a Political History of the IRA*, 1997, p170. SFWP, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ Daniel Finn, 'Ireland on the Turn?', Political and Economic Consequences of the Crash', *New Left Review*, II/67, January February 2011, pp9-10.

⁴² Patterson, *op. cit.*, p168. Patterson, who adopted an Althusssarian approach, was a member of the party.

⁴³ Farrell Corcoran, *RTÉ and the Globalisation of Irish Television*, 2004, pp36-42.

Roman Catholic ideological dominance in the truncated post-1922 Irish state was constructed through consolidation of pre-existing conservative forces. The 1922-23 Civil War crystallised the right wing of the independence movement, incorporating elements of southern unionism which was mainly Protestant. These economically and socially conservative class fractions constituted a mutually supportive hegemonic block.⁴⁴

Complicating the 'Catholic bourgeoisie' argument was the fact that large parts of the economy were in distinctly Protestant, rather than Catholic, hands. Aspirant Catholic capitalists attempted to muscle their way into an already crowded arena. It is a topic meriting discussion, not least due to its usual absence from most post-1970 surveys of southern Irish society, but also because it clarifies Catholic-centred confusions. Mainly Roman Catholic southern Irish society contained a great deal of sectarian neutrality, revealed by passivity in the face of relative Protestant privilege and preferential hiring.

The *Church of Ireland Gazette* observed on 19 May 1922: 'the Protestant community holds a commanding position in the economic life' of Southern Ireland. That remained the case for many decades. The 1936 census of population noted that 'Protestants as compared with Catholics', 'are in more skilled and more remunerative occupations'.⁴⁵ The observation was not repeated.

Differences remained marked. It was noted that in 1961, 31% of all 'directors, managers and company secretaries' were Protestant. As late as 1972, fifty years after state formation, the less than 4% Protestant population provided an estimated 25% of senior managers in banking and industry, plus 36% of all bank directors.⁴⁶

Part two of a six-part 1965 *Irish Times* series by Michael Viney on southern Irish Protestants opened with, 'For Heavens sake,' said a Protestant accountant, 'don't make us out to be whingers, we've nothing to whinge about.' As a working citizen the Protestant of the Republic of Ireland has little to complain of. Among the poor, he [sic] is unlikely to be poorer for being Protestant. Among the wealthy, he is likely to be wealthier for it.

Viney pointed out that 65 in every 1,000 Protestants in the workforce were directors, managers and company secretaries. A further 83 were in professional and technical occupations. The Catholic figure was nine and 43 respectively.⁴⁷ A 1968 analysis of social mobility found,

Analysis by religious adherence shows a significant difference between the status composition of the Catholic and non-Catholic sections of the Dublin community: two-thirds of Catholic men are to be found in the three lowest status categories; but three-

⁴⁴ See John M Regan, *The Irish Counter Revolution*, 1999; James F. Meenan, 'Economic Life', in Michael Hurley SJ, ed., *Irish Anglicanism, 1869-1969*, 1970, pp141-2.

⁴⁵ In Meenan, *op. cit.*, p140.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p141. Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State, Ireland's privileged minority*, 1983, p89.

⁴⁷ Michael Viney, 'The Five per Cent-2, The Best Man', *Irish Times*, 23 March 1965.

quarters of the non-Catholics are in the four upper, or nonmanual, categories. The proportion of non-Catholics in the highest category of social status is four times that of Catholics. In the lowest status category the proportion of Catholics is double that of non-Catholics.⁴⁸

Between 1926 and 1991 the proportion of the Protestant population within the three highest socio-economic occupational groups rose from 32.5 to 39.5%, twice the Roman Catholic proportion on both occasions. A 1971 *Irish Times* two-part survey observed that 12% of married Protestant men over 45 were employers.⁴⁹ In the 1991 Census, though constituting 4.4% of the non-agricultural labour force, Protestants still constituted 6.6% of proprietors, 9.5% of managers and 8.6% of the professions, excluding nursing. Former Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald pointed out (and celebrated the fact) that, 'in many professions Protestant over-representation is on a far larger scale'. In agriculture Protestants were over represented in 'ownership of all farms down to the 50 acre level', owning 17.6% of farms over 200 acres.⁵⁰ The larger a farm was the more likely to be in Protestant hands.

These observations do not preclude the existence of poor and marginalised southern Protestants.⁵¹ Relatively, there were fewer than in the Roman Catholic population.

Kurt Bowen noted that in many businesses, 'segregation was an internal matter of Protestant office workers and Catholic labourers'.⁵² There was a promotion point, beyond which Catholics could not go. As Brian Inglis, from a well-to-do Protestant background, remarked in 1962,

Protestantism might no longer hold political power ..., but it was still firmly in control of many businesses.

Several had remained so Protestant dominated that no Catholic could hope for promotion to the ranks of senior executives – let alone become a director.

Of those that did offer grudging advancement, career progress can be traced in the large accountancy firm Craig Gardner, that appointed its first Roman Catholic partner in 1944, the first senior partner in 1968.⁵³ Did Protestants suffer reciprocal discrimination in Catholic-

⁴⁸ Bertram Hutchinson, *Social Status and Inter-Generational Social Mobility in Dublin*, ESRI, n48, October 1969, p31 (also, see pp6-7).

⁴⁹ Patrick T. Kehoe, 'The Irish Executive – Who is he?', *Irish Times*, 31 July 1973. Jack White, *Minority Report*, 1975, p162, citing *Hibernia*, 2 March 1973. H.J. Roundtree, 'The Southern Protestant 2 – the roots of decline', *Irish Times*, 29 September 1971.

⁵⁰ Garret FitzGerald, *Reflections on the Irish State*, 2003, pp150, 151. Garret FitzGerald, 'Statistics show Protestants enjoying privileged lifestyle in the Republic', *Belfast Telegraph*, 13 December 1995.

⁵¹ However, in Belfast 'the Church of Ireland, like the Roman Catholic Church, is the church of the poor'. Presbyterians were the affluent party, David Kennedy, 'Aspects of the northern situation', in Hurley, ed., *op. cit.*, p155. Poor or not, a Church of Ireland adherent was less likely than a Roman Catholic to experience employment discrimination.

⁵² Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp95, 96. Bowen was mistaken in one respect, in suggesting (from White) that after 1926 discrimination was no longer advertised. In fact it was openly displayed in classified newspaper advertising, Meehan, 'Shorthand for Protestants', *op. cit.*, 2009.

⁵³ Inglis, *West Briton*, 1962, p160. Tony Farmar, *A History of Craig Gardner & Co.*, 1988, pp171, 185.

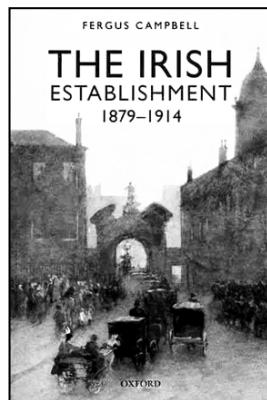
owned businesses? After availing of preferential hiring mechanisms, there may have been too few remaining unemployed to experience it.⁵⁴

Kurt Bowen's neglected 1983 study, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, was accurately subtitled, *Ireland's privileged minority*. Though it should have been, this book was not reprinted and its research was not built upon. Roy Foster's *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (1988, p334) described a 'tiny Protestant minority' of 'dwindling and infinitesimal proportion', in which 'a modest unofficial form of ascendancy lingered' until 1936. The observation appears based on failure to consult Bowen. It demonstrated a limited academic curiosity about the community from whence Foster came. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, fascinated Foster quite a lot.⁵⁵

Fergus Campbell's more recent tour-de-force, *The Irish Establishment* (2009), has, so far, suffered the same fate as Bowen's research. The path-breaking study monitored a painfully slow erosion of the semi-feudal landlord system during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Campbell traced also the emergence of a distinct Protestant business class that formed the backbone of the southern Irish bourgeoisie. It described a society with sectarian features similar to those associated later with Northern Ireland. The work established the socio-economic foundation for relative Protestant privilege, nurtured in the post 1922 independent Irish state. In his review in 2010 the US scholar D.W. Miller concluded, 'We can expect considerable controversy over this brilliant and provocative book'.⁵⁶ The controversy has not emerged, because engaging with inconvenient research is a significant revisionist anti-pastime.⁵⁷

Relative privilege within the southern Protestant community was enhanced up to the late 1960s by Fianna Fáil's policy of protectionist (not 'Catholic') economic nationalism. Protestants in business 'were well placed to take advantage of investment from' those, mainly British companies, that 'set up factories behind the [Irish] tariff wall'. 'Advantage' arose because British subsidiaries were obliged to be in beneficial Irish ownership.⁵⁸

Economic preferment was accompanied by social controls. Protestant educational, health, welfare and moral sanction arrangements (in the form of homes for unmarried mothers, orphanages for their offspring, and export of such children to the US) were given at least equal



scope to those of Roman Catholic counterparts.⁵⁹ Separation was enforced, so as to prevent Protestant-Catholic intermarriage. The Roman Catholic *Ne Temere* decree, obliging the Protestant partner to agree to raise all children as Roman Catholic, made such unions highly unpopular.⁶⁰

Those combined mechanisms ensured, if Protestants desired, their everyday separation from interaction with Roman Catholics in schools, hospitals, charities, dances, sports and other clubs, entertainments and, of course, places of employment.⁶¹ Tangible economic rewards provided for a generally agreeable caste over class solidarity lower down the occupational scale.

2.3 'Wonderful Catholics', 'Good Little Protestants'

Thoughtful affluent Protestants largely accepted the irritations of overarching Roman Catholic influence. Clerical interference preserved Catholics in their allotted place. It thereby retained relative Protestant privileges inherited from the sectarian basis of British rule. As time went by the interference became an ever-greater irritant to those at whom it was directed, Catholics, who revolted in increasing numbers from the mid-1960s on.

Protestant Fine Gael TD (Dáil deputy) Maurice Dockrell, of Dockrell's large hardware business, acknowledged the positive socio-political role of Roman Catholicism. While Dublin's Lord Mayor in 1960-61, he was criticised by co-religionists for kneeling and kissing the ring of a visiting Roman Catholic bishop. Dockrell explained himself in 1965:

I thought it was about time an Irish Protestant paid tribute to the wonderful Catholicism of the Irish people. ... Let's not fool ourselves – if the majority of the Irish weren't Catholics they wouldn't be good little Protestants, they'd be rip roaring anti-clerical communists.⁶²

Tellingly, Dockrell reported that he experienced no Catholic animosity in his representative positions, since, 'the Irish Catholic has long been used to finding Protestants in positions of trust'. Socio-economic equilibrium maintained by the state was enabled with the aid of a

⁵⁴ Bowen, *op. cit.*, p36.

⁵⁵ See Foster's 'How the Catholics became Protestants', in *Luck and the Irish*, 2008, that also did not cite Bowen. Foster remarked, p60, that 'the major role that the community played ... in business life' was something a 'cynic' might dwell upon. In a note (73, pp200-1), Foster cited Fitzgerald on relative Protestant prosperity.

⁵⁶ D.W. Miller, review: *The Irish Establishment, History, Reviews of New Books*, v39, i1, 2010.

⁵⁷ Apart from Foster's dismissive reference, not mentioning the book, to 'the possessor bourgeoisie alleged by Fergus Campbell to have held the reins of privilege well into the twentieth century', in a celebratory review of David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant Histories since 1795*, 2016, www.drb.ie/essays/feeling-the-squeeze.

⁵⁸ Meenan, *op. cit.*, p142.

⁵⁹ Meehan, 2010, *op. cit.*, pp4, 7.

⁶⁰ Tim Fanning, *The Fethard on Sea Boycott* (2010), related an attempt by a Wexford parish priest in 1957 to pressurise a Church of Ireland member married to a Roman Catholic to send her children to the local Roman Catholic school. Sheila Cloney's removal of herself and her children from the village of Fethard-on-Sea focused international attention on the effects of *Ne Temere*. The priest-led boycott of local Protestants, for allegedly aiding a 'kidnap' of Roman Catholic children, ultimately put a nail in the coffin of religious authoritarianism. It was a watershed, not least due to local republican opposition and Taoiseach Eamon de Valera's denunciation of the boycott in the Dáil. While characterised as an indication of Roman Catholic Power, in fact it indicated a church overreaching and beginning to lose its grip on reality, as well as its flock.

⁶¹ Meehan, 2009, *op. cit.*

⁶² Michael Viney, 'The Five Per Cent 2, The Best Man', *op. cit.*,

phalanx of mainly Roman Catholic clerics in plain view and substantial numbers of Protestant employers in the background. Dockrell and his colleagues, some of the ‘conservative laymen’ adverted to by Conor Cruise O’Brien in 1968, were grateful to the Roman Catholic Church for combating the putative communists. That Church, in turn, was uninterested in highlighting extensive anti-Catholic discrimination in various fields of employment, which might stir up unwelcome labour unrest.

One group of lay Roman Catholics founded the Knights of St Columbanus to redress the balance from an opposing sectarian direction, unsurprisingly initially in Northern Ireland. Parity of discrimination, rather than abolition, was an organisational goal. Supreme Secretary, W.L. Burke, asserted in 1958 that ‘a Protestant employer is perfectly entitled to employ non-Catholics in equal manner with a Catholic employer who employs only Catholics’.⁶³ Sectarian imbalance, rather than sectarianism exercised the Knights.

The prospect alarmed the Catholic Church. Spiritual advisors redirected the mainly middle-class Knights away from the world of work, towards combating ‘evil literature’, ‘horror comics’ and films with raunchy content, plus combating secular socialist ideas within the working class. These efforts, increasingly rejected by the target audience, relegated the organisation to irrelevance and ‘apathy’ during the course of the 1960s and 1970s. Alex Findlater of the large Protestant-owned grocery business, Findlater’s, asserted that, contrary to some opinion and unlike the equally secretive mainly Protestant Free-masons, the Knights little impacted on business life.⁶⁴

Brian Inglis remarked in 1962, that even though ‘there seemed to be all the material [necessary] for a campaign against Protestant domination of industry’ in the south, it did not emerge. He also observed,

The astonishing thing is not that a few [right-wing Catholic] organisations... existed, but that they wielded such little influence.⁶⁵

Sectarian employment patterns disappeared in many businesses when they expired or were bought out, as the economy opened up to competition. During the 1960s corporate raiders, principally Michael Smurfit and Tony O'Reilly, acquired some of them. While O'Reilly appears to have been indifferent Smurfit regarded Protestant prejudice with a disdain inherited from his father. Jefferson Smurfit was excluded from a Dublin golf club, though not for the sufficient reason of being Catholic. It was because someone with ‘an unfamiliar name, a big nose and successful business must be a Jew’.⁶⁶

Of the companies that survived, Guinness’s brewery had a reputation as a large-scale paternalistic employer. The Guinness case is instructive as a least explored element of southern Irish social development. It demonstrates how rigid class distinctions accompanied sectarian hierarchies.

Brewers in Guinness, a grade immediately below the board of management, were required up to 1939 to resign if they married a Catholic. The first Roman Catholic executive director was appointed in 1975.⁶⁷ Jack Carruthers, 1953-69 Workers’ Union of Ireland (WUI) brewery branch secretary, referred to a ‘socially and morally corrupt structure’ in which ‘the top management were 99% Protestant and/or Free masons’. His union, that officially gained entry in 1949, did much to challenge a system in which ‘the humble labourer [had been treated] as dispensable industrial shit’ and required ‘to identify himself by his brewery number only’. The ‘gentlemen’ ‘staff’, said Carruthers, ‘epitomised all that the class struggle stood for’ by their ‘intellectual stupidity’. They were, he reported,

... ably supported from beneath by the non-staff or labouring foremen or chargers who, almost without exception achieved their position because of religion, usefulness to their superiors and through nepotism of the worst kind.⁶⁸

Another employee observed:

The brewery I joined in 1953 [aged 14] was class-ridden, dictatorial and autocratic. People like me had no rights and could not even express ourselves. On several occasions (as a messenger boy) I was fined a shilling for looking contemptuously at my superior, a man messenger.

He noted too a relaxed, but related, side to brewery life:

Managers came to Guinness after serving in the [British] Empire and saw their commission in Dublin as just reward for their efforts. Some of them did little more than sit in front of the fire and read the paper... I was one of those who lit the fire, left out their pens and newspapers, and watched the life and times they had in the company. One manager had his slippers laid out for him every morning!

In the end, hard fought trade union activity forced Guinness management during the 1960s ‘to recruit ‘staff’ from the once despised labour ranks’, thus defeating the firm’s sectarian employment ethos. Indeed, the 1950s provider of slippers was appointed Managing Director in 1989.⁶⁹

Ignorance of (and perhaps an inhibited middle-class refusal to consider) this important aspect of modernisation, within social science as well as historical investigations, facilitated proponents of revisionist ideas who constructed a sectarian Catholic-nationalist anti-Prot-

⁶³ Evelyn Bolster, *The Knights of Saint Columbanus*, 1979, p125.

⁶⁴ Bolster, *op. cit.*, pp121, 125-30. Alex Findlater, *Findlaters, the Story of a Dublin Merchant Family 1174-2001*, 2001, p467.

⁶⁵ Inglis, *op. cit.*, p161.

⁶⁶ C. H. Walsh, *Oh Really O'Reilly*, 1992, pp178-215. Tony Farmar, *Heitons, a Managed Transition*, 1996, pp108-9. Tony Farmar, *Privileged Lives, a Social History of Middle Class Ireland 1882-1989*, 2010, p133.

⁶⁷ David Hughes, “*A Bottle of Guinness Please*”: *The Colourful History of Guinness*, 2006, p38. Al Byrne, *Guinness Times*, 1999, p115.

⁶⁸ In Martin Duffy, *The Trade Union Pint, the Unlikely Union of Guinness and the Larkins*, 2012, p30.

⁶⁹ Finbarr Flood, *In Full Flood, A Memoir*, 2006, p74; Martin Fitzpatrick, ‘Don’t shoot the messenger boy, someday he’ll be boss’, *Irish Independent*, 12 March 2006; ‘Carruthers in Duffy, *op. cit.*, p188.

estant, narrative within Irish historical scholarship, that they then presumed to critique.

In this context, Peter Hart's *The IRA and its Enemies* (1998), a history that appeared rooted in sociological insight, became, as we shall see, a very important example of the 'flawed at source' methodology identified within the revisionist tradition by Brian Murphy. Let us therefore examine Irish Protestants in recent history and in modern Irish historiography in part III.

III – REVISIONISM AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Revisionist inspired attempts to portray Protestants as sectarian victims during the 1919-23 War of Independence and Civil War period are based on a considerable distortion of the historical record. Two journalists in particular generated considerable public interest in, and acceptance of, these research claims. Examination of a fusion between right-wing commentary and the politics of Irish historiography appears necessary, particularly when articulated using O'Brien's 'Catholic nationalism' framework. In addressing the position of southern Protestants, during and immediately after the War of Independence, the analysis here adopts an (heretofore) novel approach. It reports what Protestants said about their community's alleged persecution at the time.

The question is, whom did the IRA kill, injure, expel or otherwise target during the 1919-21 period and its aftermath? The issue has been of abiding interest since David Fitzpatrick's doctoral student, the late Peter Hart, published *The IRA and its Enemies* in 1998, and essays in 1990, 1993 and 1996.⁷⁰ Hart's research also suggested that, in addition to Protestants, mixed-marriage (Catholic and Protestant) couples plus adulterers and prostitutes, preoccupied the IRA for various prejudicial or 'categorical' reasons.⁷¹ Senior historians endorsed his approach, for instance TCD's Eunan O'Halpin in 1998:

[Hart] has set a standard of forensic documentary research which ... those rushing to the defence of the good name of Cork republicanism may conceivably emulate but will surely not surpass.⁷²

In 1999 the historian and journalist Ruth Dudley Edwards cited with approval 'Hart's horrifying description of persecution [of Protestants] during the period 1920-23'. That same year Paul Bew of Queen's Belfast regarded Hart's 'brilliantly documented, statistically sophisticated, and superbly written' 'great book' as the 'first... which can stand comparison with the best of the historiography of the French Revolution'.⁷³

⁷⁰ Hart died in 2010. See note 123 for relevant Hart publications. See Niall Meehan, 'Examining Peter Hart', www.academia.edu/8348624/, in *Field Day Review* 10, 2014 (PDF available for €10, at fieldday.ie/shop/books/field-day-review/irish-studies-2014/).

⁷¹ David Fitzpatrick, 'Introduction', in David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Terror in Ireland, 1916-1923*, 2012, p4. Hart's categories are discussed later.

⁷² Review, *The IRA and its Enemies*, *TLS*, 6 November 1998.

⁷³ Ruth Dudley Edwards, *The Faithful Tribe, an intimate portrait of the Loyal Institutions*, 1999, p262. Fintan O'Toole also thought *The IRA and its Enemies* a 'great book', 'Who was the real Michael Collins? The organiser', *New Republic*, ccxxxiv, n9, 13 March 2006. Paul Bew, 'Peter

Likewise, Senia Paseta from Oxford approved of Hart's 'innovative and brilliant' 'first class historical writing'. Paseta also noted, with regard to anonymous interviews Hart had conducted, that 'Hart was clearly faced by a wall of silence; his greatest achievement is his success in penetrating this wall'.⁷⁴ In December 1998 Roy Foster nominated the work as one of his books of the year. He chaired the Ewart Biggs Prize panel that awarded the 1998 prize to Hart. In asserting later that the IRA targeted 'everyday Protestants', Foster referred to Hart's 'scrupulous exploration of guerrilla activity in Cork from 1916 to 1923'.⁷⁵

3.1 Deceived Schoolboys

A warm glow of academic approbation propelled Hart to the forefront of his profession. It occasioned also considerable media interest in Ireland and Britain. For instance, Irish-born BBC journalist Fergal Keane's commentary adopted the guise of a hitherto-deceived schoolboy:

The campaign of terror waged against Protestants in the Bandon valley in County Cork was never in our textbooks, though our classrooms were only a matter of miles away. In fact, I had to wait until a Canadian academic, Peter Hart, produced his exceptional *The IRA and its Enemies* before I learnt the extent of 'ethnic cleansing' in my own home country.

Hart's 'ethnic cleansing' claim was not in his book. It was in a 1996 essay and derived from 1990s Bosnia via Ulster unionist propaganda about the Provisional IRA.⁷⁶ It will be examined later. Keane referred also to,

... a new generation of historians and writers such as Roy Foster and Peter Hart [who] cast a colder eye backwards. The label "revisionist" is frequently applied to those who see Irish history in terms more complicated than Orange and Green and Imperial Brits - I prefer the term "realist".⁷⁷

Keane's observations were an attempt to link, through discussion of alleged nationalist sectarianism, two phases

Hart, 'The IRA And its Enemies, Violence and Community in Cork 1916-1923', *Canadian Journal of History*, v34, n2, Aug 1999, p302.

⁷⁴ Senia Paseta, 'Peter Hart, The IRA and its Enemies. Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923', *English Historical Review*, v115, i460, February 2000, p246.

⁷⁵ Roy Foster, *New Statesman*, 4 December 1998. Foster complained (*Irish Times*, 7 July 2006) that literary theorist Declan Kiberd gave 'an inaccurate and inadequate impression' of the Ewart Biggs prize, after Kiberd observed, 'for years some who explored the blind-spots of Irish nationalism were awarded prize'. Roy Foster, 'Something to Hate: Intimate Enmities in Irish History', *Irish Review*, n30, Spring-Summer 2003, p10.

⁷⁶ Eric Kauffman, *The Orange Order, a Contemporary Northern Ireland History*, 2007, p132.

⁷⁷ Fergal Keane, 'Mr McGuinness has opened the way to truth', *Independent* (Lon), 5 May 2001. Repeated in 'A timely reminder of the Irish Republic's brush with a kind of ethnic cleansing', *Independent* (Lon), 28 September 2002, containing 'The ethnic cleansing of the Bandon Valley is one of the most odious chapters in our history, though I learned nothing about it at school'. Another journalist, Geoffrey Wheatcroft, contributed, 'The conflict [in Cork] was at its most brutal, close to ethnic cleansing – and no one can call that phrase excessive after reading the Canadian historian Peter Hart's remarkable and frightening book *The IRA and Its Enemies*', 'Ethnic cleansing in the Free State', *New Statesman*, 10 July 1998.

of 'Troubles' conflict: 1916-23 and 1968-94.

There is a further context to consider, related to previous discussion. Hart's striking formulations appeared linked to a contemporary 'wall of silence', which enhanced their news value.

Southern Irish society was wracked by revelations, during the 1990s and 2000s, of child sexual abuse perpetrated and also covered up by Roman Catholic clergy, mainly in education, detention and welfare institutions. Following a television exposé, in 1999 RTÉ and *Irish Times* journalist (the late) Mary Raftery, plus TCD sociologist Eoin O'Sullivan, published the best selling and harrowing *Suffer the Little Children, the inside story of Ireland's industrial schools*.⁷⁸

Hart appeared to reveal a deliberately hidden secret history (*á la* Fergal Keane): 'Catholic nationalist' original sins that laid a basis for misery that was to follow. The revelations seemed to be evidence of, as Conor Cruise O'Brien memorably foretold, 'Catholic nationalism with the lid off'. In September 1997 O'Brien endorsed Hart's essay in Richard English and Graham Walker's edited collection, *Unionism in Modern Ireland* (1996). There, Hart accused republicans of engaging in 'ethnic cleansing' of Protestants (p92). O'Brien expertly guilt-tripped impressionable liberal or post-Catholics who,

... have either forgotten or never realised what happened to the Protestants ... when the new State was set up in 1922. That story is succinctly told in an essay by Peter Hart 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland'.⁷⁹

Various historians supported elements of the claims advanced in 1998 by Hart, and those of Professor Fitzpatrick that preface this article.⁸⁰

3.2 Journalists and History

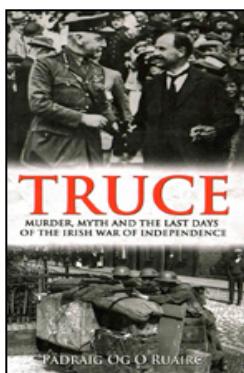
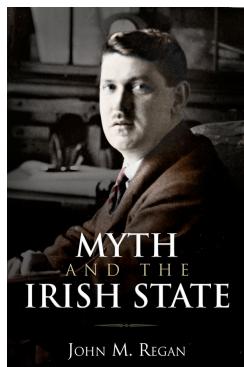
Some scholars published alternative, but less publicised responses. John M. Regan's *Myth and the Irish State* (2013), confronted problems with Peter Hart's methodology, in addition to expertly tracing and critiquing revisionist imperatives within southern Irish academia.

Pádraig Ó Ruairc's *Truce: Murder, Myth and the last days of the Irish War of Independence* (2016) refuted

⁷⁸ Exposure promoted also some simple-minded navel gazing suggesting, on the basis of a prevalence of Roman Catholic clerical perpetrators, that child sexual abuse is a peculiarly Irish phenomenon. For example, Patsy McGarry, 'An Irish disease', 'Roots of a warped view of sexuality', *Irish Times*, 4 May 2002, 20 June 2009. For intimations that it is a far wider phenomenon, crossing class, religious, and other boundaries: Niall Meehan, *Morris Fraser, Child Abuse, Corruption and Collusion in Britain & Northern Ireland*, Spinwatch, 31 March 2016, esp. pp16-22, at www.academia.edu/23870062.

⁷⁹ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Ancestral Voices: Religion and nationalism in Ireland*, 1995, p37. Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'Uniting all in grief', *Irish Independent*, 6 September 1997.

⁸⁰ Richard Abbott, *Police Casualties in Ireland*, 2000, p294, Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish Revolution*, 2006, pp154-5; *The Irish Revolution 1916-1923*, 2013, p94. Jane Leonard, 'Getting Them At Last: the IRA and Ex-servicemen', in David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Revolution in Ireland 1917-1923*, 1990, pp119, 121. Gerard Murphy, *The Year of Disappearances: Political Killings in Cork 1921-1922*, 2009, *passim*. Eunan O'Halpin, 'In the Name of the Republic', TV3 (Irl.), 18, 25 March 2013.



suggestions alleging IRA violent abandon in the days leading up to the Anglo-Irish Truce on 31 July 1921. It criticised allegations of IRA sectarianism and of gratuitous attacks on ex-British forces personnel.

In his (as usual) fair-minded review, on the Irish Story website, John Dorney questioned Ó Ruairc's critique of two journalists who write on Irish history, Kevin Myers and Eoghan Harris. Dorney observed that their copy owed,

... rather too much to the propaganda put out by British forces at the time, and a lot more to Myers' and Harris's antipathy to the Provisional IRA and its political wing Sinn Féin in the 1990s and 2000s. But no one who takes history seriously is in any danger of taking them as reliable historical sources.

Dorney continued:

The problem is that it tends to confuse this kind of journalistic polemic with serious historical argument. So while the likes of Kevin Myers' writing on the War of Independence may fairly be dismissed as biased and without factual support, the same cannot be said for several other important arguments made by historians.⁸¹

The distinction between historians and journalists may not be that cut and dried. Dorney suggested that 'journalistic polemic' should be ignored, though in history books the same allegations about alleged IRA sectarianism becomes 'important argument'. There is a distinction to be made between (ostensibly) objectively derived and properly sourced historical research and subsequent newspaper summary, but Dorney's strict separation may not hold in this circumstance.⁸² For example, does David Fitzpatrick's unsourced view on the 'dangerous... labels' attached to adulterers, homosexuals, et al, constitute 'argument' or 'polemic'?

It is a recognised feature of 'revisionist' controversies in Ireland, Germany, Spain, Israel and Greece, in which historical, usually national, narratives are questioned, that they form part of a wider public discourse.⁸³ In this process historians and journalists participate. Their contributions become, at that juncture, political interventions. Confronting crossovers and connections between historiography and journalism may therefore be particularly apt in this circumstance.

⁸¹ At, www.theirishstory.com/2016/07/28/book-review-truce-murder-myth-and-the-last-days-of-the-irish-war-of-independence/.

⁸² Unless newspaper and television history is different, it did not hold in Dorney's 'TV documentary Review: In the Name of the Republic', at <http://www.theirishstory.com/2013/03/28/tv-documentary-review-in-the-name-of-the-republic/>.

⁸³ See Antoniou Giorgos, 'The Lost Atlantis of Objectivity: the Revisionist Struggles Between the Academic and Public Spheres', *History and Theory*, n46, December 2007.

Foster admitted in 1983, 'revisionism can itself be seen as part of the pattern whereby the study of Irish history reacts in a Pavlovian way to the dictates of politics'.⁸⁴ Revisionist arguments thus are often responses to prevailing political circumstances. For example, perceived consequences of Sinn Féin's entry into electoral politics in the 1980s, and of the 1994 IRA ceasefire, coincided with a discernable change of revisionist tone and direction. Systems of overt censorship, embedded with vigour while O'Brien was minister in charge of broadcasting from 1973-77, began to erode.

The diminution of violence did not lead to a reduction of revisionist effort. Quite the contrary. Some journalists and academics promoted revised history in 'a more explicitly populist direction' at a 'more strident level', combined with, suggested Kevin Whelan, a 'coarsening of the rhetoric'. Eoghan Harris typified the new tone during a temporary breakdown of the 1994 ceasefire:

If we persist with the peace process it will end with sectarian slaughter in the North, with bombs in Dublin, Cork and Galway and with the ruthless reign by powerful Provisional gangs over the ghettos of Dublin.

That unfulfilled note of hysteria may have been due to a post-censorship, post-armed conflict, phenomenon noted by Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, in which 'the ceasefires led to a new openness in the South to the North and Northerners'.⁸⁵

Harris and Kevin Myers were united in opposition to the Northern Ireland Peace Process. The more it seemed to suit Sinn Féin, the less they liked it. The duo welcomed and relentlessly publicised Peter Hart's research in this context, Myers from as early as 1990, Harris from 1998.

Disentangling the intelligentsia from too much sympathy with the nationalist predicament in Northern Ireland involved also alienating them from anti-imperialist emphases in Irish history. These were portrayed via Hart's research as, in reality, delusional exercises in Catholic nationalism and a precursor to the IRA's post-1968 campaign in Northern Ireland. Like Fergal Keane, earlier, Harris used Hart to compare both periods in the *Sunday Independent* on 26 June 2011 ('Following IRA's bloody track from the Bandon Valley to south Armagh'):

Just as the Kingsmill Massacre [in January 1976] comes from a long history of sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland, so too the Bandon Valley murders [in April 1922] come from a long history of Catholic nationalist sectarianism in the South, a prejudice against Protestants from which the IRA was not free.

Harris said of Kingsmill coverage, of the sectarian

⁸⁴ Roy Foster, 'History and the Irish Question', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, v33, 1983, p170.

⁸⁵ Kevin Whelan, 'The Revisionist Debate in Ireland', *Boundary 2*, v31, n1, Spring 2004, p192; Eoghan Harris, 'Informing on the peace process to save lives', *Sunday Times*, 15 December 1996. Joseph Ruane, Jennifer Todd, *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland, Power, Conflict and Emancipation*, 1996, p254. Christine Kinealy noted Harris's attempt in 1995 to characterise non-revisionist perspectives on the 1845-52 Great Irish Famine, as 'a ploy by the IRA to humiliate the British government', *The Great Irish Famine, Impact, Ideology, and Rebellion*, 2002, p223, n19.

killing of ten Protestant men,

It helped give a new generation a sense of anger and shame at the agendas of all the IRAs. Some 20 years after the event, I felt the same anger and shame as I read Peter Hart's book *The IRA and its Enemies*. At its core was the IRA's killing of 10 Protestants in the Bandon Valley area in 1922, The enforced exodus of hundreds of Protestant families from West Cork, followed by the shameful silence of 76 years⁸⁶ that was finally broken by Hart's book in 1998.

The sectarian 1976 Kingsmill attack (claimed under a cover name) was a local IRA response to the sectarian killing during 24-hours previously of six Catholics, three male members each from the Reavy and O'Dowd families. Loyalists with security force assistance, intent on undermining an IRA ceasefire, carried out that less publicised attack.⁸⁷ In his commentary, Harris suggested that advancing explanatory or contextual detail is an attempt,

... to roll back the broad conclusions of Peter Hart's path-breaking work, to blur, obfuscate, niggle and quibble in a way which objectively helps to hide the poor bodies of murdered Protestants stretched on the road of south Armagh or at the front doors of their farms and shops along the Bandon Valley.

Leaving the all too prevalent McCarthyism aside, in other words broader discussion disrupts the impact of the message Harris and others wish to convey. The 'core' of that message was Peter Hart's treatment of 'the IRA's killing of 10 Protestants in the Bandon Valley area in 1922'. It is the most controversial aspect of Hart's research and will be considered later.

The interesting point about Harris and Kevin Myers, as influential journalists of long-standing, is that both were once, like O'Brien, on the political left. Like him, they moved right in an anti-republican direction. Their enthusiastic endorsement of O'Brien's views emerged after bruising early 1970s encounters. These affected their media careers and helped propel Harris and Myers toward their eventual political destination. Another trait they share with O'Brien is in regarding their talents highly. Myers observed in 2010, 'I invented the entire subject of historical journalism for the period 1914-23'.⁸⁸

In doing so Myers reinvented himself.

⁸⁶ Not so. For example: Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic*, 1999 [1937], pp704-5; George Seaver, *John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg, Archbishop*, 1963, pp120-2; J.H. Whyte, 'Political Life in the South', in Hurley, ed., *op. cit.*, 1970, p143; R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland, 1859-1969*, 1975, pp109-10; Bowen, *op. cit.*, 1983, p23.

⁸⁷ See, Liam Clarke, 'RUC men's secret war with the IRA', *Sunday Times*, 7 March 1999; Susan McKay, 'Disgusting justification for sectarian murders', *Irish Times*, 30 January 2007. On violent loyalist-British connections, Anne Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland*, 2013. See also 'IRA Truce: 9 February 1975 to 23 January 1976 - Summary of Main Events', at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/truce/sum.htm>.

⁸⁸ 'The IRA campaign in Cork against Protestants and non-republicans was on a truly vast scale', *Irish Independent*, 12 November 2010. Myers was promoting Gerard Murphy's *The Year of Disappearances* (2010, from academic publisher Gill & Macmillan), whose research plumbed new revisionist depths. See, Niall Meehan, 'An 'amazing coincidence' that 'could mean anything': Gerard Murphy's *The Year of Disappearances*', Spinwatch, 17 November 2010, at www.academia.edu/372431/.

3.3 Left, Right

During the late 1960s Kevin E. Myers studied for a History BA in University College Dublin. In 1969 he contributed to *The Gentle Revolution, the Crisis in the [Irish] Universities*, with a chapter entitled, 'Till the next time'. His trenchant observations on 'a wicked and exploitative [capitalist] system' were accurately summarised: 'Reform is not enough; it must give way to revolution'. Myers was dismissive of 'wretched proposals that emerged from the corporate ignorance of staff and students'. While his views have altered, Myers' maintained a belief in their superiority over those of others.⁸⁹

After graduation, Myers was employed as a journalist by *Rádió Teilefís Éireann* (RTÉ). In November 1972 he resigned due to censorship imposed under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, in particular the government's sacking of the ruling RTÉ Authority. Eight months later, on the basis that Conor Cruise O'Brien was a new 'more open' minister, Myers returned as a freelance reporter. RTÉ management then banned Myers. To no avail, the National Union of Journalists cited the new minister's previous trenchant opposition to censorship.⁹⁰ Instead, O'Brien ignored Myers and proceeded to perfect censorship with amending legislation in 1976. O'Brien combined that with bruisingly effective public and private RTÉ interventions, that eroded the broadcaster's capacity to question northern and security policy.⁹¹

Myers sought alternative free-lance employment in Belfast. His journalism exposed security force double standards and uncovered loyalist collusion with state forces. After returning to Dublin and employment by the *Irish Times*, he wrote its 'Irishman's Diary' column. Myers became increasingly unsympathetic toward republicans. He reignited his interest in history and developed the idea that the IRA was anti-Protestant:

Murdering people for their religion was what republicans had always done, especially in their most celebrated period 1919–22. Only the successful seizure of Irish historiography by Irish republicans has concealed this vital truth.

He combined attempts to seize it back with an illiberal drift. This caused particular controversy in 2005 when Myers referred to single mothers as 'MoBs', or 'mothers of bastards'.⁹² He departed for the *Irish Independent* later that year and attracted less attention. He writes today for

⁸⁹ Philip Pettit, ed., *The Gentle Revolution, Crisis in the Universities*, 1969, pp19, 35, 36.

⁹⁰ 'Journalist resigns from RTÉ post', 'Opposition lead in condemning sacking of RTÉ Authority', 'RTÉ bans talk with journalist', 'Journalists protest at RTÉ ban', *Irish Times*, 29 November 1972, 21, 22 June 1973; Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'Why I stand by Section 31', *Irish Independent*, 3 January 1987.

⁹¹ For example, Donal Foley, 'Saturday Column', *Irish Times*, 5 March 1977; 'RTÉ staff "censored reports on Garda"', *Irish Press*, 7 March 1977. See also, John Horgan, 'Journalists and censorship: a case history of the NUJ in Ireland and the broadcasting ban, 1971–94', *Journalism Studies*, v3, n3, 2002.

⁹² Kevin Myers, *Behind the Door*, 2006, p87. Kevin Myers, 'An Irishman's Diary', *Irish Times*, 8 February 2005.

the *Sunday Times* southern Ireland edition.

His interests were not merely local. On 18 October 2001 Myers accused US officials of paying insufficient attention to his advice, post-9-11. They ignored his support for US belligerency in Afghanistan and in Iraq, while failing to adequately shun Sinn Féin. After accepting his first (belated) US Embassy invitation Myers was dismissive of diplomats who called him 'Myles', but observed nonetheless, 'We live within the American imperium, the most benign empire in world history'.

In 2006 Myers stated that he 'better understand[ed] the position of the government' that had imposed the censorship that derailed his career in 1972-3.⁹³

Eoghan Harris obtained his History BA in University College Cork in 1965, under Professor (later Senator) John A. Murphy.⁹⁴ He had been, since the mid 1960s, a committed supporter of Sinn Féin / 'Official' Sinn Féin / Sinn Féin the Workers' Party / The Workers' Party. Harris originated the Official's 'Catholic bourgeoisie' archetype. In 1987 He proclaimed himself a firm supporter of Conor Cruise O'Brien and of censorship under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.⁹⁵

This was despite O'Brien in 1973, as the new Posts and Telegraphs Minister, demanding of its Director General that RTÉ sack Harris, the station's then best-known republican ideologue.⁹⁶ Harris may have been unaware of that private intervention. He was certainly aware that in 1974, while addressing senior RTÉ managers, O'Brien alleged that the IRA had attained a 'spiritual occupation' of RTÉ. This was after forcing said managers to watch with him a recently broadcast programme on internment, that Eoghan Harris had produced. A number of broadcasters were disciplined, Harris most of all. He was banished from television current affairs programming.⁹⁷

In broadcasting exile in agriculture and children's programming Harris, like Myers, also changed his views. He became, alongside O'Brien, neo-unionist in his outlook. Other Workers' Party sympathisers exercised considerable influence on RTÉ current affairs programming. Their activities were aided by the censorship regime,

⁹³ Kevin Myers, *Watching the Door*, 2006, pp115-6.

⁹⁴ Patterson, *op. cit.*, p169. Murphy and Harris shared a mutual antipathy to the 'Provisional' side of the Republican Movement split in 1969-70. Murphy (the son of a West Cork War of Independence IRA volunteer), however considered 'the notion', put forward by Harris and others, 'that tens of thousands of [southern] Protestants were compelled to flee their shops and farms [to be] Paisleyite mythmongering', 'Reform ignores the realities of history', *Sunday Independent*, 10 October 2004.

⁹⁵ 'RTÉ producer Harris defends Section 31', Gerald Barry, *Sunday Tribune*, 29 November 1987. Patterson, *op. cit.*, pp168-9.

⁹⁶ Tom Hardiman, RTÉ Director General, April 1968 to April 1975, personal communication, 9 June 2009. The point was first made in *Village* magazine (see note 97). Hardiman observed that my text should have stated that O'Brien visited Hardiman unannounced, that O'Brien insisted (not 'asked') that Harris be sacked, that Hardiman rejected O'Brien's demand, something I had implied (email, 2 September 2009).

⁹⁷ Niall Meehan, 'Eoghan Harris fed the hand that bit him - Conor Cruise O'Brien sidelined the man who later idolised him', *Village* magazine, September 2009. 'Easter 1916 a cult in Ireland – O'Brien', *Irish Times*, 29 March 1979.

whose aim was to deny a voice to resistance to British rule. This ensured the airing of subject matter promoting party policy and personalities, plus persistent misreporting of Northern Ireland. According to former RTÉ Authority Chairperson Farrell Corcoran, the Workers' Party grouping acted as an 'unofficial staff watch-dog group', that reinforced 'complex layers of self-censorship', influenced by 'revisionism'. Producer Gerry Gregg, a Workers' Party supporter, reportedly asserted that RTÉ current affairs was indeed 'revisionist in its approach to Northern Ireland'.⁹⁸

Former President Mary McAleese, then an RTE journalist, was scathing of the 'biased at worst, misguided at best' reporting of the 1981 H-Block hunger strikes, during which ten republicans died.⁹⁹ While northern bias was broadly acceptable, programmes undermining the Labour and Fianna Fáil parties, so as to poach their working class voters, inevitably caused friction.

In a 1987 critique of objective journalism, Harris criticised what he termed 'factualism' and endorsed censorship. Workers Party influence in RTÉ trade unions and in programme making at that stage faced increased internal and external opposition and resentment.¹⁰⁰

In 1989-90, as the Berlin Wall came down, the Workers' Party imploded. Harris departed from RTÉ and from the Workers' Party, further rightwards.¹⁰¹ He regularly promoted revisionist historiography as a *Sunday Times* (Éire) and then *Sunday Independent* columnist. In 1997 Harris revised his past. He asserted that he had been 'under the intellectual influence of Conor Cruise O'Brien' at the very time O'Brien was attempting to have him dismissed from RTÉ. Throughout various party-political flip-flops an admitted policy of 'demonising' Irish republicans remained consistent, accompanied also by enthusiastic support for the 2003 Blair and Bush invasion of Iraq.¹⁰²

3.4 Reporting History

Harris and Myers do not communicate their views on Irish history in isolation. They have acted as

⁹⁸ Kathryn Holmquist, 'Lifting the stigma from manic depression', *Irish Times*, 25 November 1988 (at that Harris stage blamed his RTÉ demise on depression). Corcoran, *op. cit.*, pp36-42. Patsy McGarry, 'The most difficult time', *First Citizen, Mary McAleese and the Irish Presidency*, 2008, p87. See also, 'Battles with the Workers party', in Betty Purcell, *Inside RTE*, 2014; Niall Meehan, 'How RTE censored its censorship', *Sunday Business Post*, 20 April 2003.

⁹⁹ McAleese RTÉ critique in, 'It was the worst of times', Ray MacManais, *The Road from Ardoyne, the Making of a President*, 2005, pp174-91. Also, McGarry, *op. cit.*, pp84-99. For the alternative view, Gerry Gregg, 'RTÉ, the "Stickie myth" and falling standards', *Magill*, June-July 2005.

¹⁰⁰ See notes 95, 97-99.

¹⁰¹ Harris was said to have advocated 'Blairism' ahead of its time', Patterson, *op. cit.*, p257.

¹⁰² Eoghan Harris, 'A history lesson that slayed the green giant', 'Caught in the Free State', *Sunday Times* (Éire ed.), 13 October 1996, 26 October 1997. On Harris support for the Iraq War, Brian Hanley, Scott Millar, *The Lost Revolution: the Story of the Official IRA and the Workers' Party*, 2010, p598.

cheerleaders, so-to-speak, bringing historical research of which they approve to a wider audience. They have relied in the past on Roy Foster, Peter Hart, Gerard Murphy, Paul Bew and Eunan O'Halpin. If Myers and Harris distort history, as Dorney argues, the errors may originate in historical research, not merely within journalists' imaginations. Conversely, one historian revised his opinions based on Kevin Myers' influence.

In the *Sunday Independent*, 15 December 2013, Eoghan Harris provided an example of the journalist-historian nexus. He cited accurately Paul Bew's *Ireland, The Politics of Enmity* (2007, p390)¹⁰³ on Sinn Féin winning 485,105 votes in the pivotal December 1918 General Election. That led to formation of the separatist First Dáil (Irish parliament), a situation of contested dual power with Britain, and to the 1919-21 War of Independence. To contextualize or belittle Sinn Féin's success, Bew emphasized that Sinn Féin's opponents (the constitutional nationalist and unionist parties) had together received 72,330 more votes (557,435 in total). Therefore, Bew concluded that Sinn Féin had a minority all-Ireland mandate. Its dominance was confined 'within [Irish]¹⁰⁴ nationalism' (p390) - an assertion Harris endorsed.

That was far from the full story. In the election, Sinn Féin won 73 of 105 Irish seats. No votes were cast in 25 of the 73, which Sinn Féin won unopposed. This dearth of opposition artificially reduced Sinn Féin's vote to 47% of the total. Without question, 60 to 70% of the electorate supported Sinn Féin in 1918. Bew appeared to acknowledge but actually further obscured this fact:

Against this, it has to be said that some twenty-five seats out of the 105 [should be 'Sinn Féin's 73'] were not fought, most [should be 'all'] of them likely handsome Sinn Féin victories.

Bew's formulation implied that other parties might either have won some of the 25 and/or had significant support in others.¹⁰⁵ Harris had accurately reported the historian Bew's flawed presentation of an election result.

Dorney asserted that Myers and Harris's accounts are sometimes based on British propaganda. Distortion of the 1918 result is but one hackneyed and repeated regularly (especially by Kevin Myers¹⁰⁶) example.

3.5 Tales of the RIC

A central repository of British propaganda, *Tales of the RIC*, was published in *Blackwoods Magazine* in 1920-21 and then in book form.¹⁰⁷ This article series constructed a parallel British narrative of the War of Independence.

¹⁰³ Over the course of his career Bew also traced a left to right trajectory via The Workers' Party. See Hanley, Millar, *op. cit.*, pp395, 463, 597-8.

¹⁰⁴ For revisionists nationalism is Irish, never British or unionist.

¹⁰⁵ For an objective discussion, 'The Irish Election of 1918', www.ark.ac.uk/elections/h1918.htm. Bew also insinuated (p390) Sinn Féin electoral fraud and intimidation, though he cited a constituency the Sinn Féin candidate won by 13,452 votes to 6,840.

¹⁰⁶ For example, in the *Irish Times*, 14 October 2000, 16 April, 14 October 2004; *Irish Independent*, 31 August 2012.

¹⁰⁷ *Tales of the RIC* is available at www.academia.edu/27999432/.

One chapter, 'R.M.', renamed Kilkee, Co Clare, Acting Resident Magistrate Alan Lendrum as 'Anthony Mayne'. Lendrum, who was killed by the IRA in September 1920, had recently returned from fighting Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union. A long accepted account, originally in *Tales*, suggested that the IRA captured Lendrum and 'buried [him] up to his neck on a... beach, to await the incoming tide and death'. His impatient captors then dug up and reburied their Protestant victim nearer to the water's edge, so as to hasten his demise.

That is how Kevin Myers told the story in the *Irish Times*. It so impressed him he mentioned it four times over five weeks, on 30 May, 22 June, 3 & 6 July 1989. The not dissimilar *Tales of the RIC* version concluded with, 'The next flood tide put an end to a torture the like of which [the Russian revolutionaries] Lenin and Trotsky could hardly exceed for sheer malignant devilry' (p75).

A year and a half elapsed before Myers mentioned the story again, on 29 January 1992. It was in fact, 'not true'. When the IRA attempted to arrest Lendrum he reportedly produced a gun and was mortally wounded by his assailants. Lendrum's body was initially weighted down and secretly buried near a lake edge.

After taking possession of the body, British propagandists concocted their salt-water saga. The buried-alive story appeared in some prominent works of history and in novels set during the period. No mention was made in the re-telling of the extended torture and killing of two IRA volunteers whom British forces held responsible. Myers had repeated propaganda reproduced in history books.¹⁰⁸ He also had the good grace, eventually, to repudiate the 'tale'.

In fact, Myers scotched two untruths in his 29 January 1992 column. On 19 December 1989 Myers had claimed that Cork Sinn Féin Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney (who died on hunger strike in Brixton Prison) was a bloodthirsty fanatic who intended to shoot dead the local Roman Catholic Bishop. After representations from present-day relatives, Myers apologised as well for that piece of historical fiction (but did not reveal its origin).

In the 19 December 1989 column Myers raised also the IRA-sectarianism allegation. Unlike the other efforts mentioned here, it has had long-term repercussions. He alleged that one of IRA flying-column commander '[Tom] Barry's men ... organised a pogrom of Protestants in the [West Cork] Dunmanway area in April 1922'. Here, Myers criticised a then accepted, uncontentious and recently published view, by David Fitzpatrick in the *Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (1989). Fitzpatrick had observed that, despite Ulster Unionist 'provocation', 'few attacks upon southern

¹⁰⁸ See Eoin Shanahan, 'Telling tales: the story of the burial alive and drowning of a Clare RM in 1920', *History Ireland*, v18, n1, Jan-Feb 2010. Also: 'IRA Volunteers in County Clare, 1916-1925', www.clarelibrary.ie/elolas/coclare/history/ira_volunteers_coclare_1916_1925_biographies.htm; 'Capt. Alan Cane Lendrum MC & bar', www.Cairgang.com/other-people/british/castle-intelligence/lendrum/lendrum.html.

Protestants were reported during the 'Troubles', though many vacant houses were burned' (p246).

Myers influenced Fitzpatrick's then doctoral student Peter Hart, whose 1993 PhD thesis cited 'personal information' from Myers on these April 1922 killings. Hart's penultimate chapter in *The IRA and its Enemies*, 'Taking it out on the Protestants', endorsed Myers's 1989 claims with minor qualifications: 'These men were shot because they were Protestant'.¹⁰⁹ David Fitzpatrick seems to have been convinced also, nine years later in 1998 by Hart his former student, perhaps also indirectly by Myers, his 1989 critic.

3.6 Academic Tales

Before examining the specificity of Hart, Fitzpatrick and Myers's claims, we should first note the fate of another RIC 'Tale', this time omitted from subsequent narratives. Its relationship to information that attracted historians' critical gaze is instructive. Chapter XVIII concluded by identifying a 'Gaelic organiser' named 'Pádraig O'Kelly' as in reality 'a Jewish Bolshevik agent', recently 'suddenly disappeared from Glasgow when the police began to get unpleasantly attentive' (1921, p261). It was entitled, 'A Jew in Gaelic Clothing'.

The point is, should academic historians mentioning *Tales of the RIC* alert readers to its unreliability?

The first Trinity College Dublin Lecky Professor of History, W. Alison Philips, was ill equipped to do so. His *Revolution in Ireland* repeated and supported the Jewish-Bolshevik-from-Glasgow story (1926, p259). This fiction appeared first in 1919, in the London *Morning Post*, which discovered also a 'Jew of Russian descent' in Belfast. These labour agitators were, said the daily newspaper, 'the Trotskys of Belfast and Glasgow'.¹¹⁰

If Phillips embraced racist and political prejudices redolent of his era, what of modern historians? In a 1999 *Historical Journal* article (v42, n3), on 'Moderate Nationalism and the Irish Revolution', Paul Bew referred to *Tales of the RIC* as merely 'the powerful anti-Sinn Féin series of articles' (p742). He noted that it accurately reported widespread use of Sinn Féin Courts in 1920, thus implying the work's objective authority. He made no mention of its anti-communist antisemitism or that it was a work of fiction. That would have been appropriate,

¹⁰⁹ Hart PhD p237, that references also, 'Myers has further identified two key officers'; see also p379, 'the men named by Myers'. The information is not in Hart's 1998 book. The thesis reported, p392, 'I did not even know [the event] had taken place until a year into my research'. That information tallies with Myers' December 1989 *Irish Times* column. Had Hart consulted Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic* (1965 [1937], pp704-5, in print) during his literature search he would have known earlier. Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies*, 1998, p288.

¹¹⁰ Russian Revolutionary Leon Trotsky was also Jewish. The British antisemite, A.H. Lane, *The Alien Menace*, 1934, p132, noted, 'As the *Morning Post*, 1 February, 1919, remarked: "The bell-wether in the Glasgow upheaval is a Jewish tailor called Shinwell; in the Belfast strike Shinwell's counterpart is one Simon Greenspon, a Jew of Russian descent."

particularly as Bew's point about Sinn Féin courts sets the scene in 'A Jew in Gaelic Clothing' (*Tales*, pp253-4).

In the same article, Bew also cited as authoritative the opinions of the 'writer, C.H. Bretherton', a 'staunch unionist who enjoyed stirring up trouble'. Though 'overstated', Bretherton 'put his finger on a sore point', an alleged similarity of the 1922 Anglo-Irish Treaty settlement with what was on offer from Britain in 1914 (Bew, p746). It is probably not so important that Bew omitted telling readers that Bretherton was also an English Roman Catholic, an *Irish Times* reporter, and a secret correspondent of the *Morning Post*. What is of significant interest is that Bretherton's *The Real Ireland* (1925, p71) outlined his (and the *Morning Post*'s) view of the source of Anglo-Irish difficulties:

The impetus that set the ball of rebellion rolling in 1916 was supplied in Ireland, as in other slave-minded countries, by the international Jew.

In addition to encouraging perceptions that Judaism and communism were synonymous, Bretherton observed that Dáil President Éamon De Valera's father was 'a Maltese Jew' (p73). As a racist writer and as *Morning Post* correspondent Bretherton contributed to the development of fascist ideology between the wars, not least that of precocious Galway loyalist William Joyce. The latter fled the IRA and Ireland in 1922 and Britain for Germany in 1939, where he re-emerged as a thorn in British sides on Nazi radio as 'Lord Haw Haw'.¹¹¹ That was the type of trouble Bretherton was interested in stirring.

It is not as though Irish antisemitism did not (and does not¹¹²) interest Bew. In a *Daily Telegraph* article



Daily Telegraph 14 October 1996, Paul Bew on Michael Collins film

('History it ain't', 14 October 1996), Bew criticised Neil Jordan's 1996 feature film *Michael Collins*. He referred to the IRA intelligence leader's alleged 'enthusiasm for [an unidentified] fanatically anti-Semitic element of the Irish nationalist press'. Kevin Myers and Eoghan Harris shared Bew's dim

view of the popular film, ludicrously compared with 'fascistic art'. Ten years later, a similar campaign of opposition greeted Ken Loach's *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*. Bew concluded, in what purported to be an expert historical critique:

¹¹¹ Mary Kenny, *Germany Calling*, 2008, pp89, 90. See R.M. Douglas, 'The Swastika and the Shamrock: British Fascism and the Irish Question, 1918-1940', *Albion*, v29, n1, 1997.

¹¹² See 'Lord Bew: If we could bring peace to Ireland, why not Israel?', *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 April 2015. According to Bew, Irish sympathy for the plight of Palestinians and opposition to Israeli government policy stemmed from 'old-fashioned peasant antisemitism' and 'Peasant Catholic antisemitism'. He provided no evidence for this novel observation. It does not feature in his important first book featuring the said peasantry, *Land and the National Question in Ireland 1858-82*, 1978.

The Protestant minority in Collins's native Cork suffered a form of ethnic cleansing; and it is the all-too understandable fears of a similar fate which condition much of unionist behaviour today.

The 'form of ethnic cleansing' mentioned by Bew, popularised by Harris and Myers, originated in a (previously mentioned) 1996 essay by Peter Hart. Bew's 1999 academic article pursued the point with (p740), 'Hart has... demonstrated the existence of a distinctly sectarian and anti-Protestant tinge to the IRA's activity in Cork'.

3.7 Protestant Views

References to the 'anti-Protestant tinge' emerged during the 1920s and 1930s. *Irish Times* journalist Lionel Fleming, son of the Anglican Rector of Timoleague, West Cork, noted them in his memoir, *Head or Harp* (1965, pp92, 168-9).

Unharmed but fearful members of 'the gentry', who in 1922 'made their way instantly to England, became a powerful factor in ... anti-Irish propaganda by all the right wing newspapers'. As a result, 'the stories of persecution multiplied and a warm hearted British public subscribed thousands of pounds to the Distressed Irish Loyalists Fund'. Fleming singled out in this context *Morning Post* reporting and that of C.H. Bretherton. On 22 December 1936, Fleming wrote an editorial response:

We have... no patience with the attempts that are being made to suggest that the loyalists who remained in the Free State are being treated unfairly, or that any discrimination is being made against them.

'Evidence' cited by historians and journalists today of IRA sectarianism during the War of Independence relies to a degree on propaganda generated at the time and afterwards. The allegation was rejected emphatically by spokespersons for southern Protestants, not least the then Protestant and unionist *Irish Times*. In response to a serious though brief southern sectarian reaction to renewed attacks on Catholics in Northern Ireland, the newspaper observed on 22 July 1935:

The South is too familiar with political disturbance, but not, during the last two hundred years, with bigotry... [A]lthough many Protestants suffered during the "troubles," it was not for their faith but for their political views.

That appeared to be a settled opinion. In 1924 John Henry Bernard, TCD Provost (1919-27) and former Anglican Archbishop of Dublin (1915-19), whose family was from Co. Kerry, declared,

During the melancholy years 1920-1923, there have, indeed, been outbursts of violence directed at loyalist minorities, but for the most part it has been qua loyalist and not qua Protestant that the members of the Church of Ireland have suffered.

As 'a convinced unionist', Bernard might have been predisposed to allegations of IRA sectarianism.¹¹³

Even earlier, on 26 May 1922 the quite unionist and

¹¹³ 'The Church since Disestablishment', *Irish Times*, 14 January 1924, McDowell, *op. cit.*, p108.

anti Irish nationalist *Church of Ireland Gazette* responded to the killing of 13 Protestants in the Bandon Valley on 26-29 April 1922, which seemed then, exceptionally, like a sectarian attack:

We represent the Protestant minority in Southern Ireland, a minority which is defenceless, not so much on account of its numerical inferiority as on account of the fact that it has not needed to defend itself against anything or anybody.

In other words, implied the *Gazette*, Protestants were not IRA targets during preceding hostilities. Earlier still, on 11 May the representative Protestant Convention that packed out Dublin's large Mansion House, declared:

That we place on record that, until the recent tragedies in the County Cork [the 26-29 April killings], 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.

Despite this emphatic testimony, allegations of IRA sectarianism were voiced during the 1919-21 period.

Ulster unionists attempting to deflect attention from ongoing attacks on Catholics in the North during 1920-22 (before and after formation of the Northern Ireland statelet), alleged that Protestants in the South were persecuted. Southern Protestants, including clergy, responded consistently, publicly, that they were mistaken. Indeed, the representative Protestant Convention, initiated in early April 1922, was convened to oppose sustained unionist sectarian violence against Catholics in Northern Ireland, to disassociate southern Protestants from it and to refute Ulster Unionist claims about Protestant treatment in the South. Letters initiating the Convention appeared in the *Irish Times* on 7 April 1922. The reference to 'recent tragedies in the County Cork' was inserted into the Convention resolution in early May.¹¹⁴

Protestant meetings all over southern Ireland, preceding and supporting the Convention, resolved that sectarian persecution did not feature in their lives. The 29 April 1922 West Cork based *Southern Star*, under the headline 'Pogrom Denounced', reported a 'largely attended meeting of the Protestants of various denominations in the parish of Schull'. They condemned 'the atrocious crimes recently committed in the North of Ireland' and disassociated Protestants from,

... the acts of violence committed against our Roman Catholic fellow countrymen. Living as a small minority ... we wish to place on record the fact that we have lived in harmony with the Roman Catholic majority and that we have never been subjected to any oppression or injustice as a result of different religious beliefs.

Revisionist accounts of the period, including Hart's, avoid or obscure this significant phenomenon.¹¹⁵ In 2013

¹¹⁴ For an illustration of British persecution of some Protestants who testified to a non-sectarian atmosphere in nationalist southern Ireland and/or who attempted to publicise indiscriminate Crown force reprisals, see, 'The Crown's Campaign against Protestant Neutrality in Cork During the Irish War of Independence', *Church & State*, Autumn 2006 (available online).

¹¹⁵ See 'Examining Peter Hart', *op. cit.*, pp133-5.

Charles Townshend bravely ventured though, 'there is a problem taking [the 11 May 1922 Protestant Convention resolution] as unforced testimony':

If Protestants had been subject to 'hostility', or even to what F.S.L. Lyons in a famous phrase called 'repressive tolerance', they would be more likely to play it down than to emphasise it.¹¹⁶

If that was so, the Convention resolution would have ignored 'recent tragedies' in Cork.

Townshend's text directed readers to Chapter 50 (of 58) of Gerard Murphy's 'richly detailed (albeit often speculative)' *The Year of Disappearances* (2010). The Peter Hart-inspired Murphy alleged there that six un-named, untraceable, though paradoxically, 'well known and prominent', Cork Protestants were disappeared by the IRA on St Patrick's Day, 1922. No evidence was advanced. Instead, Murphy cited Cork Protestants in business soon afterwards condemning attacks on Catholics in Northern Ireland, and 'deny[ing] that they have been subject to any form of oppression or injustice by their Catholic fellow citizens'. Murphy's interesting 'detail' occasioned this 'speculative' observation: 'for southern Protestants in general, suppression was the price of survival'.¹¹⁷

However this commentary may be described, to borrow Paul Bew's memorable headline, 'History it ain't'.

Revisionist authors, energised by a whiff of southern republican sectarianism, appear less inclined to investigate northern unionist variants. For example, David Fitzpatrick's 2012 edited collection, *Terror in Ireland 1916-1923*, concentrated on purported southern 'terror'. The North barely featured. 'Terrorists' in this work are always the IRA.¹¹⁸ The casually applied anachronism is evident in Fitzpatrick's chapter on the September 1920 reprisal destruction by British 'Black and Tans' of the north Dublin town of Balbriggan. This included burning down the town's main employer, leaving hundreds without work. Fitzpatrick observed that, consequently, 'Irish terrorists [were seen as] less

Sunday Independent 17 December 2006

 At the very heart of our sectarian history

Irish Independent 29 August 2006

 KEVIN MYERS Laziness and propaganda have unfairly tarnished the Black and Tans' reputation

¹¹⁶ Townshend, *The Fight for the Republic*, 2013, p371. The phrase 'repressive tolerance' was made famous in 1965 by Herbert Marcuse, the Marxist critic of consumer capitalism. Townshend's observation did not source Lyons (*Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939*, 1979, p163), who in turn did not reference Marcuse.

¹¹⁷ Gerard Murphy, *The year of Disappearances*, 2010, p272 (n62, p498).

¹¹⁸ It should be noted that contributor Brian Hanley critiqued the use of terror terminology as applied to the IRA and its non-application to state forces. He remarked also on the absence of analytical interest in northern unionist 'terror' during the post-1968 period, pp11-12, 20-22.

arbitrary and malign than British forces'. The sentence described, accurately, evolving southern Protestant attitudes. It contradicted what Fitzpatrick asserted in his introduction about IRA targeting of Protestants. Had Fitzpatrick swapped 'terrorists' for 'forces' his formulation would, of course, have been more accurate still. After all, the previously encountered West Cork Anglican Rector's son, Lionel Fleming, observed,

I have never met anyone with experience of the Black and Tans who has defended them, or who has been able to justify the extraordinary policy of using a Crown force for the sole purpose of *indiscriminate* terrorism.¹¹⁹

Scholars interested in attempted pogroms, allegations of ethnic cleansing, attacks on Protestants and targeting of World War One veterans, would have less difficulty discovering a semblance of those things northwards. Within weeks of 20 July 1920, unionist mobs in Belfast drove 10,000 Catholics (including over 800 hundred ex-British-forces personnel), and also Protestant trade unionists ('rotten prods'), from their jobs, accompanied by mass expulsions from homes, house burnings, sectarian killings, refugee streams, and sustained repression that lasted, on and off, for two years.¹²⁰ In areas where the IRA was not in a position to mount a defence, nationalist casualties were higher.¹²¹ In the end Irish nationalists were violently ground down, endured 50 years of sectarian suppression and emerged to make their feelings known in the period 1968-94.¹²²

3.8 Adulterers and Homosexuals

A ragbag of additional forms of prejudicial irrationality has accompanied allegations of IRA anti-Protestantism during the 1919-22 period. In silently overturning his 1989 commentary, David Fitzpatrick amplified and embellished his new 1998 view:

Adulterers, homosexuals, tinkers, beggars, ex-servicemen, Protestants: these were the many dangerous and potentially lethal labels for Ireland's inhabitants in the revolutionary period.

Fitzpatrick's notable claim (conspicuously omitting the term, 'Roman Catholic') was reinforced by Peter Hart's equally un-sourced observations:

- a) in 1990, 'Adulterers, wife-beaters, drunkards and tramps got short-shrift with the IRA';

¹¹⁹ Fleming, *op. cit.*, 1965, p70, Fleming emph.. Although Peter Hart cited Fleming's memoir for other purposes, he never quoted or referred to this passage. It should be pointed out that Kevin Myers championed these counterinsurgency forces, 'Laziness and propaganda have unfairly tarnished the Black and Tans' reputation', *Irish Independent*, 29 August 2006.

¹²⁰ See the contemporary, evidence based, G.B. Kenna (*pseud.* Fr. John Hassan), *Facts and Figures of the Belfast Pogroms*, 1922, at www.academia.edu/6318325/. See also: Geoffrey Bell's *Hesitant Comrades, the Irish Revolution and the British Labour Movement*, 2016, on British labour and trade union responses, in particular pp85-94; Pádraig Ó Ruaire, chapter seven, 'Belfast's Bloody Sunday', *Truce, op. cit.*, 2016.

¹²¹ Kieran Glennon, *From Pogrom to Civil War, Tom Glennon and the Belfast IRA*, 2013, p264.

¹²² See John D. Brewer, Gareth I. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland*, 1998.

- b) in 1993, the IRA attacked 'unmarried mothers, adulterers and mixed (Catholic and Protestant) couples';
- c) in 1998, Hart added, in addition to the above, 'prostitutes'.¹²³

Where Fitzpatrick originated his 'homosexuals' reference is unknown (though I wrote and asked, without reply). The same goes for the 'adulterers', unmarried mothers and mixed-marriage couples. The only notable alleged homosexual during the period was the Irish patriot Sir Roger Casement, whom the British hanged as a traitor in 1916.¹²⁴

Fitzpatrick's suggestion that the IRA targeted former WWI British-forces personnel is successfully challenged in Paul Taylor's *Heroes or Traitors* (2015).¹²⁵ The other source-less claims appear equally groundless, though it should be noted that British intelligence agents disguised themselves, sometimes unsuccessfully, as 'tinkers [and] beggars'.

Whatever prejudices, or indeed enlightened views, its volunteers may have held, it would not appear that they determined IRA military activity, except in so far as the defeat of British forces was considered an enlightened and/or a prejudicial activity. Republicans appear to have concentrated on targeting Crown forces and those perceived as working actively on their behalf, irrespective of denomination.¹²⁶

Hart and Fitzpatrick's assertions were not challenged, although at the least they should have been questioned. Instead, in his first endorsement of the then doctoral

¹²³ 'Youth Culture and the Cork IRA', in David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Revolution? Ireland 1917-1923*, 1990, p22; 'Class, Community and the Irish Republican Army in Cork, 1917-1923', in Patrick O'Flanagan, Cornelius Buttner, eds, *Cork History and Society*, 1993, p977; *The IRA and its Enemies*, 1998, p183.

¹²⁴ If we delve further back, in 1895 Irish playwright Oscar Wilde was prosecuted by the British state for then illegal homosexual activities. This arose after an unsuccessful defamation action by Wilde, who acted when acc-used by the Marquess of Queensbury of 'posing as a somdomite [sic]'. Wilde's courtroom adversary acting for Queensbury was fellow Dubliner and future Ulster Unionist Party leader Edward Carson, Douglas O. Linder, 'The Trials of Oscar Wilde: an Account', at law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/trials/wilde/wildeaccount.html. As for adulterers, five years earlier Charles Stuart Parnell was deposed as Irish nationalist leader. After being cited in a divorce action, Welsh Non-Conformist clergy, aided by Tory press opinion, successfully pressurised British Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone to shun Parnell. The Irish Parliamentary Party divided over whether retaining Parnell as leader might jeopardise Irish Home Rule. Subsequent emphasis on Catholic opposition to divorce, as a factor in Parnell's downfall, was a 'misleading simplification', said Conor Cruise O'Brien in his pre-revisionist, PhD-based, *Parnell and his Party 1880-90*, 1957, p333. Protestant Irish Parliamentary Party MPs voted to remove their co-religionist Parnell by 8 to 4 in December 1890. They were more opposed to Parnell than the 60 or so Roman Catholic MPs. O'Brien brought out quite well the impression of a Roman Catholic clergy and hierarchy leaping on to an anti-Parnell bandwagon, after the fact.

¹²⁵ Paul Taylor, *Heroes or Traitors? Experiences of Southern Irish Soldiers Returning from the Great War 1919-1939*, 2015. See also, John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti Sinn Féin Society': the Intelligence War in Cork City, 1920-1921*, 2007.

¹²⁶ See Borgonovo, *op. cit.*

student, Kevin Myers wrote (*Irish Times*, 23 May 1990):

As Peter points out, the [IRA] functioned as a form of morality police, enforcing norms which the new state in due course would impose with the rule of law.

Superficially, that first-name-terms observation appeared to be a plausible and even an enlightened unravelling of the source of Catholic authoritarianism within the southern Irish state. However, if Hart's research had been quickly subject to critical and/or public scrutiny, perhaps the regurgitation of evidence-less assertions in 1998, and afterwards, might have stopped there and then. Instead, a stereotypical version of Irish history became privileged and, in the absence of a robust response, was believed by readers of newspapers and students in lecture halls, who, as John Dorney put it, 'take history seriously'.

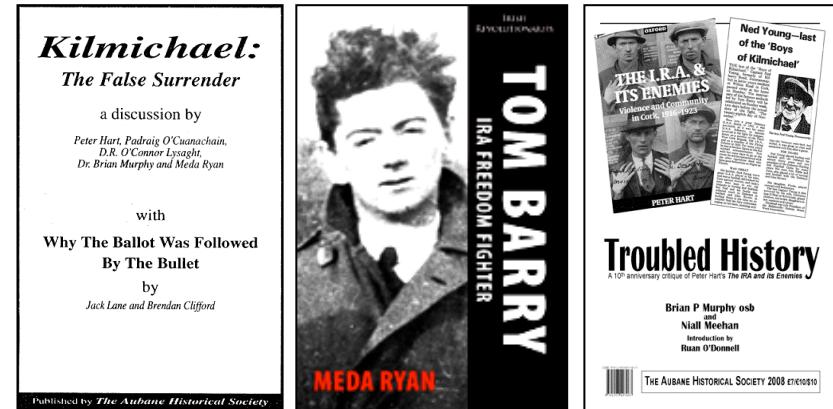
3.9 Kilmichael Interviews

Hart provided a semblance of evidence with plentiful footnotes, giving rise to initial confidence in his interpretations, but also unusual questions about sources. In letters to the *Irish Times* in 1998, Meda Ryan plus Brian Murphy and others, queried a Kevin Myers column. It had summarised Hart on the 28 November 1920 West Cork Kilmichael Ambush. During the attack, the IRA wiped out an 18-man British Auxiliary patrol. Hart's view, which he defended in the newspaper, was partly based on anonymous interviews with two ambush survivors. He alleged that the ambush commander, Tom Barry, executed unarmed prisoners without justification. Barry had stipulated that the Auxiliary wipe-out was due to a treacherous 'false-surrender', causing two of three IRA ambush fatalities. Hart said that was a lie.

In 1999 the Aubane Historical Society published the material in *Kilmichael: the False Surrender*. Alongside the newspaper controversy, it stimulated initial interest in Hart's research, at that stage exploring differences in interpretation. However, the pamphlet included an unpublished, by the *Irish Times*, Meda Ryan letter. It queried Peter Hart's quite puzzling claim to have interviewed one of two unnamed Kilmichael Ambush veterans six days after the last (97 year old) participant died. In addition, it later transpired that the last participant had suffered a debilitating stroke prior to Hart's claimed 'interview'.

The Kilmichael controversy has run parallel to the sectarianism debate. It prompted Meda Ryan to write her biography, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter* (2003). Hart was unable to satisfactorily respond to criticism of his work. Further anomalies were identified with publication of *Troubled History* in 2008.¹²⁷ It revealed that Hart changed the designation of his mystery anonymous interviewee from ambush fighter in his 1992 PhD thesis, to unarmed scout in his 1998 book.

¹²⁷ Kilmichael arguments dissected in 'Examining Peter Hart', *op. cit.*



3.10 April killings

The 1999 Aubane publication contained also Brian Murphy's important 1998 review of *The IRA and its Enemies*. Murphy noted that Hart censored information from an archival British military source. It qualified an opinion Hart cited and accepted, stating that Protestants generally did not inform on the IRA. Hart argued that Protestants the IRA targeted were, *ipso facto*, sectarian victims

Hart ignored a qualifying assertion from this British source, stating that, uniquely, some Protestant loyalists in the Bandon Valley did inform. They may, exceptionally, have played an active part in British counterinsurgency and intelligence networks. The location identified by the British source, that Hart censored, is where the April 1922 killings (Myers' 'pogrom of Protestants in the Dunmanway area') took place.¹²⁸

A considerable debate is ongoing about these previously mentioned killings, which create a best-case scenario for allegations of IRA sectarianism. They occurred ten months after the 1921 Anglo-Irish Truce, nearly four months after republicans disagreed about the subsequent Treaty, and merely eight weeks before the start of a Civil War that was fought over the Treaty. This volatility was accompanied by class struggles on the land and in industry.¹²⁹ Widespread opportunist criminality was a feature also of the unstable period.¹³⁰ In addition, sustained and severe anti-Catholic violence broke out with renewed vigour in the North.

The first three West-Cork civilian loyalist deaths occurred in the early morning of 26 April 1922 in the townland of Ballygroman. This was after one of the three had shot dead an unarmed IRA officer. Early the following afternoon in nearby Macroom three senior British intelligence officers in plain clothes, who were re-establishing civilian intelligence links, were captured with their driver and were executed. Besides being in breach of the Truce, two of the officers were recognised as having previously tortured and killed IRA prisoners. Though it was denied, the IRA carried out this action.

¹²⁸ See Brian Murphy, 'Peter Hart, the issues of sources', in *Troubled History*, *op. cit.*, and Brian Murphy here, p31.

¹²⁹ See Conor Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland: Popular Militancy 1917 to 1923*, 2009.

¹³⁰ John Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, 2011, pp34–38; Robert Kee, *The Green Flag, Volume III: Ourselves Alone*, 1972, pp163–64.

The Ballygroman three and the four British military personnel were buried secretly, the former in perpetuity, the latter until discovered in December 1923.¹³¹ Three more Protestant civilians were shot dead in Dunmanway over 26-7 April. On 27-8 April, six Protestant civilian killings took place south of Macroom between Dunmanway and Ballineen-Enniskeane, plus one in Clonakilty. A final assassination occurred on the 29th.

While the debate continues, in particular on the significance or otherwise of the military intelligence connection¹³² (which Hart also misreported¹³³), evidence tends to suggest that these civilians were targeted due to firmly held beliefs that most, if not all, had acted in concert with British forces (see 'Examining Peter Hart', pp124-33). As Brian Murphy intimated, Hart chose in 1998 to suppress information pointing to that supposition.¹³⁴ It appears unlikely, therefore, that these unexplained and seemingly inexplicable and therefore widely condemned killings, were motivated by religious antagonism. Ongoing sectarian attacks on nationalists in the north lent weight to contemporary theories that they were a spontaneous retaliation for that violence. The coordinated and targeted nature of the April killings suggests an alternative motive.¹³⁵

3.11 Ethnic Cleansing Retreat

Senior historians failed to impress on Hart the importance of addressing the points at issue in the debate. Instead, they circled the wagons and attempted to undermine those who legitimately questioned Hart's research. The critics played, in Gramsci's phrase, a subaltern role vis a vis the academy. They were portrayed as not entirely legitimate historians, an excuse for failure to engage with them.

Criticism gradually made its way, grudgingly, on to the pages of history books and it occasioned, eventually, some back peddling. While at one stage readers of War of Independence period research encountered numerous

¹³¹ See 'Examining Peter Hart', 2014, pp127-9 (plus n105). For a map of the area indicating where the killings occurred, p119. See Paul McMahon, *Irish Spies and British Rebels*, 2008, p67. Also, more detail, John Regan, *Myth and the Irish State*, 2013, chapter nine, 'The 'Bandon Valley Massacre' as a historical problem'. Before abandoning the search, later world-famous British officer commanding, Brigade Major Bernard Law Montgomery, was said to have been 'in a savage mood'. He held up evacuation of British forces from southern Ireland, led large-scale military formations searching for the officers, and engaged in open confrontation with the IRA. See, Nigel Hamilton, *Monty, the Making of General 1887-1942*, 1981, pp162-3. This significant event is excluded from Hamilton's later (longer, 902 vs 871 pages) *The Full Monty, Volume I, Montgomery of Alamein 1887-1942*, 2001. For discovery of the British bodies, 'How officers were shot: full story', *Irish Independent*, 12 December 1923

¹³² See Regan, *op. cit.*, 2013. For a view casting doubt on the officer's significance, Andy Bielenberg, John Borgonovo, assisted by James S. Donnelly, "'Something of the Nature of a Massacre': The Bandon Valley Killings Revisited", *Eire Ireland*, v49, n3-4, Fall-Winter, 2014.

¹³³ 'Examining Peter Hart', *op. cit.*, pp129-30.

¹³⁴ See Brian Murphy, 'Peter Hart, the issue of sources', in Brian Murphy, Niall Meehan, *Troubled History*, 2008.

¹³⁵ See 'Examining Peter Hart', *op. cit.*, pp116-135.

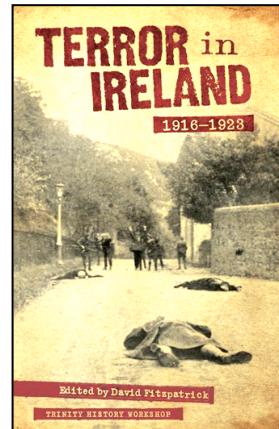
references to Hart's pioneering work, over time these have diminished. A recent book of essays honouring Roy Foster's achievements returned just one. It was in a curiously entitled chapter, 'Sense and shite', about historically themed fiction. The author reported that Hart's claims 'fire[ed] a fury in some [unspecified] quarters'. This inadequate, sourceless, assertion typified academic responses to criticism of Hart.¹³⁶

David Fitzpatrick initiated a controlled retreat in 2012, accompanied by a telling lapse. He observed in his editor's introduction to the *Terror in Ireland* collection, dedicated to Hart's memory, that due to its perceived excellence, Hart's 1992 PhD thesis had been 'accepted exactly as it stood' (p3). Fitzpatrick failed to mention, however, that the thesis was not subjected to the usual *viva voce* examination. To be sure, Fitzpatrick admitted that Hart was 'occasionally careless' in presenting archival material. Yet, an orthodox examination process might have unravelled and corrected some of the alleged carelessness, and perhaps might have clarified subsequently published anomalies.

In the same publication Fitzpatrick was himself careless in reporting Hart's 'ethnic cleansing' claims. In 1996 Hart had written that what had happened to Protestants during the conflict 'might be termed "ethnic cleansing"'. Within an otherwise quite vague and content less litany, Hart singled out as 'worst of all', the April 1922 West Cork killings.

Strangely, in his 2003 essay collection *The IRA at War*, Hart contradicted himself with: 'What happened in Southern Ireland did not constitute ethnic cleansing'. This was confusing, particularly since Hart reproduced his 1996 ethnic cleansing assertion, without qualification, in the same *IRA at War* book. The opposing claims are within ten pages of each other (pp237, 246).¹³⁷

In his introduction to the 2012 *Terror in Ireland* collection Fitzpatrick referred to Hart's 1996 essay-claim but failed to note his 2003 denial (p5). In an invited response to my online review, Fitzpatrick minimally acknowledged Hart's change of mind.¹³⁸ In 2013 Fitzpatrick provided more emphasis, in an essay on Protestant population decline in southern Ireland. He introduced his acknowledgment, however, by citing in his text Hart's 1996 ethnic cleansing claim, while disparaging what he termed 'vicious' though (as usual)



¹³⁶ Matthew Kelly, "'Sense and shite': Roddy Doyle, Roy Foster and the Past History of the Future", in Senia Paseta, ed., *Uncertain Futures: Essays about the Irish Past for Roy Foster*, 2016, p257.

¹³⁷ Since Hart revised the 1996 essay for the 2003 collection, failure to address the difference is odd.

¹³⁸ See review and response, www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1303. For more, www.academia.edu/1994527/.

unspecified ‘*ad hominem* attacks on Hart and his allies’. At that point, ten years later, Fitzpatrick footnoted Hart’s 2003 denial of ethnic cleansing.¹³⁹

Fitzpatrick’s 2013 observations were contained in an adroit piece of research that analysed the early twentieth-century history of Methodist congregations in Cork. He concluded his discussion (p659) by effecting a new reversal:

The spectre of Protestant extermination has distracted debate about revolutionary Ireland for too long, and should be laid to rest. The inexorable decline of Southern Protestantism was mainly self-inflicted.

Mimicking Hart’s practice, this 2013 reversal ignored previous views. It substantively returned Fitzpatrick to his 1989 position (criticised by Kevin Myers) about Protestants in general being left generally undisturbed. It overturned assertions, based on the work of his student, that Protestants had been systematically driven out.

Having made his discovery, Fitzpatrick deemed further discussion superfluous. Were this advice to be heeded it might circumscribe investigation of the statistical basis of Hart’s mistaken view. Fitzpatrick declared in 1978, ‘Let statistics be used as a hammer for shattering Irish self-deception’.¹⁴⁰ In this case it is Hart’s statistics that appear to be undermined. Fitzpatrick might reasonably have explained why once he thought one thing and then considered the opposite to be true, before reflecting and concluding (fifteen years later) that he was right the first time.

Absence of self-reflection appears to be a feature of the revisionist historian’s art. Hart wrote, mystifyingly, in the *Irish Times* on 28 June 2006 that he had ‘never argued’ that ethnic cleansing occurred ‘in Cork or elsewhere’, ‘in fact quite the opposite’. His letter began, ‘Niall Meehan, as usual, misrepresents my work’. On that occasion, at least, he had achieved the feat himself.

Fitzpatrick’s new analysis put the subject to rest for him - at least intellectually. Whether it had otherwise done so is unclear. On 11 January 2013, Fitzpatrick spoke about his Methodist research at the prestigious annual Parnell Lecture in Magdalene College Cambridge. He prefaced his remarks by singing what appeared to be a republican ballad, *A New Revenge for Skibbereen*, which began:

Twas in the month of April in the year of ‘22
We took it out on the Protestants; we could only
catch a few.

It continued in similar vein. During discussion afterwards Fitzpatrick ‘amazed’ his already somewhat surprised audience. He told them he had composed the sectarian doggerel the previous day. He did not wish, he said, to be accused, as Hart had been, of falsifying evidence. He

¹³⁹ ‘Protestant Depopulation and the Irish Revolution’, *Irish Historical Studies*, v38, n152, November 2013, p643.

¹⁴⁰ David Fitzpatrick, ‘The Geography of Irish Nationalism 1910-1921’, *Past & Present*, n78, February 1978, p137.

referred later to having sung a ‘spoof ballad.’¹⁴¹

The allegation of generalised IRA sectarianism toward Protestants has as much substance as Fitzpatrick’s ballad. It is a powerful message, promoted in works of history and in newspaper columns that reinforce each other. The tale is more sophisticated than that of the unfortunate Alan Lendrum, but it is as full of water, with little of substance beneath the surface. We cannot say that there was no republican sectarianism (who, with certainty, can say that?). We can assert only what evidence permits. Recently, there have been attempts to discover if sectarianism was a factor in the deaths of at least some of the 13 killed in April 1922.¹⁴² The settled southern Protestant conviction that republican anti-Protestantism was ‘almost, if not wholly, unknown’ was probably accurate. If anyone was in a position to approach certainly on the topic, surely they were.

IV CONCLUSION

By means of proof by constant assertion, incessant newspaper promotion and failure to address criticism, false allegations of IRA antisemitism and of ethnic cleansing of Protestants are recycled. Imperial antisemitism (of which there was quite a lot) and actual attempts at ethnic cleansing (against, mainly Roman Catholic, nationalists in Belfast) are generally unremarked upon. Some Irish historians appear to have reconstituted an approach rejected by most southern Protestants during 1920-22.

Arguments that distort historical sources or rely on none are a form of creationist history. Students of history are badly served if they are not alerted to violations of basic norms of social scientific method. These stipulate that if you make an assertion, provide a relevant checkable source. Partial citation and anonymous interviews do not suffice.

Questioning the factual basis of an essentially Ulsterised version of Irish history creates space for an adequate understanding of the emergence and consolidation of conservative forces in Irish society and within Irish historiography. It also helps to unlock and to explain aspects of sectarian privilege in Irish society that Conor Cruise O’Brien’s Catholic-nationalist paradigm obscures.

Ireland’s Decade of Commemoration is moving toward consideration of the War of Independence period, incorporating formation of the state of Northern Ireland. Unravelling historical misinformation will be an important part of this discussion of the past, and of the present.

¹⁴¹ The rest of the ballad is in ‘Examining Peter Hart’, pp145-6, see also *History Ireland* debate with Fitzpatrick, letters, v21, n6, Nov-Dec 2013; v22, n1, Jan-Feb 2014; v22, n2, Mar-Apr 2014 (letters extra, all online at www.academia.edu/5027882/). Audio recording of song, lecture, Q&A, in author’s possession.

¹⁴² See Bielenberg, Borgonovo, Donnelly, *op. cit.*, 2014.

The Wind that Shakes the Barley

Historical reflections on Roy Foster's criticism of Ken Loach's 2006 film

Dr. Brian P. Murphy osb

The foeman's shot burst on our ears,
From out the wildwood ringing;
The bullet pierced my true love's side,
In life's young spring so early,
And on my breast in blood she died,
While soft winds shook the barley.

Robert Dwyer Joyce, 1830-1883, author of the ballad that gives the film its title

Introduction

The film, 'The Wind that Shakes the Barley,' directed by Ken Loach and adapted as a screen play by Paul Laverty, was shown on Irish cinema screens throughout Ireland soon after the 90th anniversary of the Easter Rising in 2006. From the very first the film generated a lively, and often heated, debate on the character of British rule in Ireland and the Irish response to it, during the period that encompassed the Easter Rising, the War of Irish Independence (1919-1921) and the Irish Civil War (1922-1923).

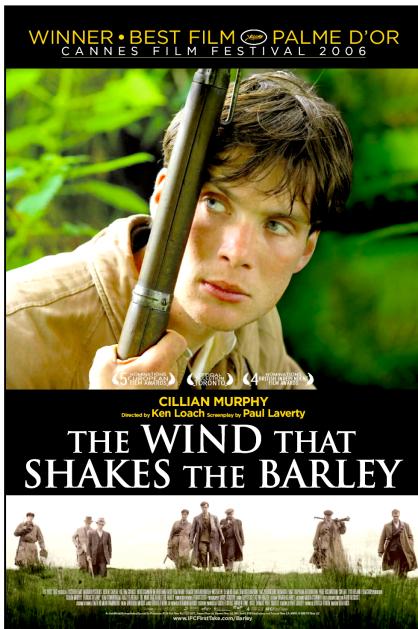
The film starts with a group of young men playing a game of hurling on a rough pitch traced out on a hillside in county Cork. They return home; they gather outside a farmhouse; they are suddenly surrounded by a unit of the police force. Names and addresses are demanded. Answers are prompted by the powerful use of rifle butts and the threatened use of bayonets. Within minutes one

UK and Irish *Daily Mail* 30 May 1976, headline leading to this online response, 'Why DOES Ruth Dudley Edwards loath her country so much?' Tim Pat Coogan's reply 31 May in Irish *Daily Mail* only

AS THE MARXIST DIRECTOR'S ANTI-BRITISH FILM WINS THE TOP PRIZE AT CANNES...

Why DOES Ken Loach loathe his country so much?

by Ruth Dudley Edwards

of the young men, who persisted in giving his name in Irish, is taken inside the house and brutally killed. The transformation from peaceful play to violent murder is dramatic.

Foul! Cried the critics of the film; incidents like this never happened. 'Old-fashioned propaganda' was the term used by the historian, Ruth Dudley Edwards, to describe the film in the *Daily*

Mail. She added that it was a 'travesty of history' and asserted that by using 'a melange of half truths, Loach hopes he can persuade British politicians to "confront," and then apologise, for the Empire.' 'As Empires go,' she concluded, 'the British version was the most responsible and humane of all.'¹

Other political commentators, historians and film critics were just as scathing in their criticism: Tim Luckhurst in *The Times* claimed that the film was a 'poisonously anti-British corruption of the history of the war of Irish independence;' Simon Heffer in the *Daily Telegraph* called the film 'repulsive;' Steven King in the *Irish Examiner* (22 June, 2006) described it as 'pure and utter propaganda;' and Crispin Jackson in *The Tablet* (24 June, 2006) called it 'absurdly one-sided' - 'mere propaganda, as gaudy and rickety as a St Patrick's day float;' Stephen Howe, maintained that the film 'does mislead by selection and implication.' (*opendemocracy.org*).

Some historians and commentators, however, have written detailed reviews in support of the film, notably Luke Gibbons (*Irish Times*, 17 June 2006), Niall Meehan (*Irish Examiner*, 26 June, 2006), Brian Hanley (*History Ireland*, Sept/Oct. 2006) and George Monbiot (*The Guardian*, 6 June 2006). However, the major contribution on the subject has been the critical voice of the historian Roy Foster. In a lengthy article in the *Dublin Review*, Foster dismissed the film as 'an exercise in wish-fulfilment rather than history.'² He even took the time to find fault with 'the awful dirge' that gives the film its title and to comment that it was sung 'off-key.' He also offered a critique of the film's cinematic qualities.

Unlike Foster I am not able to say anything about the

¹ *Daily Mail*, British edition, 30 May 2006. See *Daily Mail*, Irish edition, 31 May 2006 for Tim Pat Coogan's response to Dudley Edwards review. This response did not appear in the English edition.

² Roy Foster, 'The Red and the Green,' *Dublin Review*, Autumn, 2006, number 24, p51.

film as cinema - my only qualification in that regard is that I attended the same school in London as Alfred Hitchcock but he had left before my arrival. Nor am I able to make, as Foster does, any observations about the quality of the singing but, in regard, to the historical content of the film and Foster's treatment of it, certain comments may be made. Incidents like the killing of the young Irish Volunteer did happen. So too did the brutal assassination of British troops by the IRA, which, although portrayed in the film, seem not to have been noticed by Loach's critics. Moreover, these incidents happened in the precise context in which Loach has chosen to set them.

The corporal in charge of the 'Black and Tan' police unit prefaced his interrogation of the young hurley players with the statement that he was acting under the powers of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). He added that he was implementing particular orders which prohibited people from gathering together either for playing Gaelic games or for speaking the Irish language. It was after these orders were issued that the young Irish speaker was killed. By stressing the Defence of the Realm Act at the very start of the film, Ken Loach and Paul Laverty, the screenwriter, provide the perfect answer to their critics who claim that they have failed to give any rationale behind the British war effort. If Donal O Drisceoil, listed as historical advisor, was responsible for this perceptive start to the film he should be commended.

Loach makes it clear, in a manner that few historians have done, that DORA, which was introduced in August 1914, was the weapon chosen by the British Government to confront Irish republicans. War was never officially declared: the Irish problem was treated as a domestic concern of the United Kingdom Government. The Act, supplemented by Defence of the Realm Regulations (DORR), effectively permitted the Army to use martial law powers as occasion demanded. In this way the terms Special Military Area (SMA) and Competent Military Authority (CMA) became features of Irish life in the years prior to the Easter Rising of 1916. Under this system and under the direction of Major Ivon Price, the chief intelligence officer at the Irish military command, newspapers were suppressed and persons imprisoned, even deported, without the process of civil law.³

Historical Background to the film

In this context, Roy Foster's critique of the film makes strange reading. He asserted (p46) that 'Loach's film, by beginning sharply in 1920 with no background information whatsoever, contrives to give a completely misleading idea of the historical situation in Ireland at the time.' In fact, with the mention of DORA, Loach has

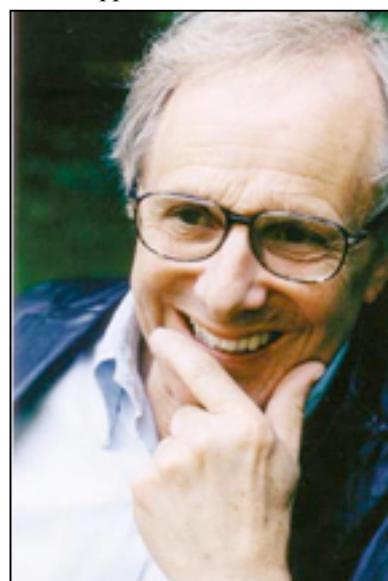
provided one of the most important single items of 'background information' that is required for an understanding of not only the Easter Rising but also the war of Irish Independence. Significantly, Charles Townshend, whom Foster rightly praises for his magisterial work, *The British Campaign in Ireland* (1975), stressed the importance of DORA from the earliest pages of his book.

Possibly of even more significance, no reference to DORA is to be found in the index of Foster's own book, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (1988), although it does appear in the text with specific regard to the 1916 Rising. Possibly, too, this failure to recognise the importance of DORA from its inception has led Foster, in his attempt to provide a more accurate historical background than Loach, to claim that in 1914 the political chains binding Ireland to England were 'fairly light' and that there was 'an exceptionally lively (and uncensored) press.' (*Dublin Review*, pp 47,48) Faced by such incidents as the Curragh Mutiny, the creation of an Ulster Provisional Government, and the shooting of civilians on Bachelor's Quay, Dublin, all of which took place in 1914, it seems reasonable to question Foster's benign description of the political scene at that time.

Questions must certainly be asked about Foster's description of the press as 'uncensored.' How, if the press was 'uncensored,' do we account for the suppression, on 2/3 December 1914 of *Sinn Fein*, *Irish Freedom*, *Ireland* and the *Irish Worker*? Is suppression not censorship? All of these journals were, by the way, suppressed under the terms of DORA! Several other

papers were to share the same fate before the Rising broke out. Even allowing for Foster's qualification that the situation was changed somewhat by the War, one is left with the distinct, if surprising, impression that Ken Loach, by following the path mapped out by Charles Townshend, provides a sounder introduction to the British campaign in Ireland than that offered by Roy Foster, himself. The same may be said of their contrasting views of the impact of the Crown Forces upon civilian life in Ireland.

³ See Brian P. Murphy, 'The Easter Rising in the Context of Censorship and Propaganda with Special Reference to Major Ivon Price,' in Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh, eds., *1916 The Long Revolution*, 2007, pp141-168.



Different scenarios: Ken Loach, Roy Foster

This Act, essentially an enlargement of the powers of DORA, declared that 'regulations so made are also provided for any of the duties of a Coroner and Coroner's Jury being performed by a Court of Inquiry constituted under the Army Act instead of by the Coroner and Jury.'⁷ By this legislation the Crown Forces were provided with a high degree of immunity from the civil law of the land.

At the same time as this legislation became law, a Government publication, the *Weekly Summary* was issued to the police forces, including Black and Tans and Auxiliaries. The first number appeared on 13 August 1920. It inculcated a racist attitude towards the IRA and condoned, even encouraged, the use of reprisals. For example, on 27 October 1920, it published, with apparent approval of the sentiments, an order by the Cork branch of the Anti-Sinn Fein Society which declared that 'if in the future any member of His Majesty's Forces be murdered, two members of the Sinn Fein Party in the County of Cork will be killed. And, in the event of a member of the Sinn Fein Party not being available three sympathisers will be killed.' Inevitably, with a government publication airing views like these, some members of the police forces took the law into their own hands. Such a course of conduct was encouraged by the constant endorsement given to the *Weekly Summary* in the House of Commons by Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland.

For example, when Canon Magner, the elderly parish priest of Dunmanway, county Cork, was killed on 15 December 1920, a military court martial dealt with the case. Reporting the incident to the Cabinet, Lloyd George stated that Magner's 'sole offence was to have helped a Resident Magistrate to get his car going. And here comes a drunken beast of a soldier who makes him kneel down and shoots him'.⁸ (The killing may well have taken place against a more sinister background: it may not have been the result of a simple chance encounter, as described by Lloyd George. Local tradition records that Canon Magner had received death threats from the Black and Tans after refusing to toll the church bells on 11 November 1920, Armistice Day.

Commenting on the affair, on 19 December, Mark Sturgis, an official in Dublin Castle, put the blame on General Tudor, Police Adviser, on the grounds that 'these men have undoubtedly been influenced by what they have taken to be the passive approval of their officers from Tudor downwards to believe they will never be punished for anything'.⁹ Ironically, and in a perversion of the judicial system, the procedure of court

martial, which was designed to prosecute the IRA, was also used to protect members of the Crown Forces who had committed crimes. The Auxiliary Cadet Officer, who carried out the brutal shooting of Canon Magner, was named Harte. He was found guilty but insane and sent to live in Canada: the same finding and the same country of re-location as Captain Bowen Colthurst. Of the court martial verdict on Colthurst, Tim Healy had said that 'never since the trial of Christ was there a greater travesty of justice'.¹⁰ The same judgement might well be applied to the verdict on Harte.

If Loach had wished to be provocative, he might well have selected the shooting of Canon Magner for the start of his film; or possibly the killing of Thomas MacCurtain in his home, surrounded by his family, by a unit of the RIC on 20 March 1920. In this case the Coroner's Jury declared on 17 April 1920 that 'the murder was organised and carried out by the RIC, officially directed by the British Government; and we return a verdict of wilful murder against David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of England; Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland' and other named officials'.¹¹

Roy Foster, by ignoring realities such as these (the names of Smyth, Magner and MacCurtain are not to be found in the index to his *Modern Ireland*), is critical of Loach on the basis that 'the impression created by this film is that Black and Tan rule was the general state of things in Ireland before independence, fully authorised and sanctioned by the authorities - which was not the case.' (*Dublin Review*, p47) This view is markedly at variance with that of Charles Townshend, who has stated clearly that 'official reprisals' began in the last week of December 1920, when General Macready 'informed the Cabinet that Military Governors in the Martial Law Area (MLA) had been authorised to inflict punishments after rebel outrages.' Once again Ken Loach, by remaining closer to the historical interpretation of Townshend than that proposed by Foster, has conveyed an authentic account of the war in Ireland. One can only wonder why Foster, having rightly praised Townshend's book as a 'brilliantly forensic analysis' of the period, has chosen to disregard the seminal findings contained in it.¹²

Democratic mandate and reference to Iraq

Loach attempts in the film to justify armed opposition to British rule on the basis of the Sinn Féin success in the 1918 General Election. He does not elaborate on this electoral mandate for the armed struggle: the lead character in the film (played by Cillian Murphy) simply states, during interrogation, that the 73 seats won by Sinn Féin in the December 1918 election justified resistance to British rule in Ireland. For reasons of focus, it made

⁷ *Irish Bulletin*, 5 Aug. 1920; Frank Gallagher, 'David Hogan,' *The Four Glorious Years*, 1954, pp96-98; Colm Campbell, *Emergency Law in Ireland 1918-1925*, 1994, pp27-29.

⁸ Thomas Jones, ed. Keith Middlemas, *Whitehall Diary*, vol.111, *Ireland 1918-1925*, 1971, p46.

⁹ Michael Hopkinson, ed., *The Last Days of Dublin Castle. The Diaries of Mark Sturgis*, 1992, p95.

¹⁰ Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, *British Militarism as I have Known it*, 1946, first published 1917, p14.

¹¹ Florence O'Donoghue, *Tomas MacCurtain, Soldier and Patriot*, 1971, first published, 1955, p166.

¹² Townshend, *British Campaign*, p149. Foster, *Dublin Review*, p46.

sense that such a basic statement sufficed to justify the IRA's military campaign. However, if Loach had the time to develop this theme of a democratic mandate, several factors could have been introduced into the debate.

Loach might have mentioned that, in the period prior to the December election, over two hundred leading members of Sinn Fein were imprisoned without trial under the terms of DORA, that had been introduced by Lord French in May 1918; that the Sinn Fein election manifesto and its election pamphlets were either censored or suppressed; and that at the first meeting of Dáil Éireann on 21 January 1919, some 36 Sinn Fein elected representatives were declared absent and described as 'in the hands of the foreigner.' These important realities, all a direct consequence of the imposition of DORA, find no place in Roy Foster's assessment of the 1918 election result in his study of *Modern Ireland*.

On the contrary, Foster attempted to minimise the election and the significance of 73 Sinn Fein seats by raising certain allegations of personation at the polls. These minor charges of malpractice pale into insignificance, when compared to the major impact of DORA. Once again, Loach's historical setting, however briefly delineated, is shown to be sounder than that of Foster. If any doubt existed as to the democratic mandate of Dáil Éireann and the IRA, it was dispelled by the Municipal elections of January 1920 and the County Council elections of June 1920. Both of these elections showed widespread support for Sinn Fein, even in Ulster, despite the Government's attempt to lessen their chances by introducing proportional representation into the electoral system.

Loach, understandably, within the constraints of the film, had no time to expand on these democratic credentials. However, they were articulated very clearly at the time by Eamon de Valera in a published appeal, in October 1920, to President Wilson of the United States. The pamphlet, entitled *Ireland's Claim for Recognition as a Sovereign State*, printed details of the recent elections in Ireland, not only that of 1918 but also the two local elections of 1920. De Valera concluded that 'to repudiate the evidence of the ballot, the most civilised method of declaring the national will, and to demand that, as a condition of recognition, the bullet be more effectively used, is to introduce into international relations an inhuman principle of immorality.'¹³ Loach, to his credit, has effectively conveyed this reality: British rule in Ireland in 1920 attached less value to the ballot box than to the bullet.

In this historical context one can discern a very real, if surprising, connection between Ireland and Iraq - a connection which Loach has argued for, but his critics have dismissed as unsustainable. Roy Foster, for

example, states clearly that 'Loach has also drawn parallels with the invasion of Iraq, which hardly fit the case.'¹⁴ The connection with Iraq, however, is firmly centred on the treatment that both countries received at the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles, July 1919. While England's rejection of an Irish Republic was to be expected, it was not expected that America would acquiesce in such a decision. Although President Woodrow Wilson had been bitterly critical of Irish-Americans, as hyphenated Americans and as supporters of Germany in the War, it had been hoped that the peace negotiations would be based on his Fourteen Point programme.

One of the points identified by Wilson, as a prelude to world peace, was the right to independence of small nations struggling to be free. This pledge, and the simmering conflict between the United States and England over naval supremacy, appeared to make an accord between the two powers impossible. The emergence of an Anglo-American alliance in world affairs - indeed, the present accord between the two countries in the war in Iraq - may, I would suggest, be traced to this time and to these particular events. For this reason it merits further attention. There were several reasons for Wilson's move towards an alignment with England. As well as a specifically calculated British diplomatic campaign to win Wilson over to their side, there were two underlying reasons for the accord. Firstly, it marked the culmination of the dreams and aspirations of Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Milner that there should be an Anglo-American alliance in world affairs; and, secondly, it was in harmony with the views of an influential group in American politics which had, over the last twenty years, promoted the expansion of America's own navy and empire.

The vision of Rhodes and Milner was given practical expression in the secret formation of the Round Table association and the public foundation of the Rhodes Scholarship scheme. Writing in his Confession of Faith, Rhodes confidently asserted 'why should we not join a secret society - with but one object the furtherance of the British empire, for the bringing of the whole uncivilised world under British rule, for the recovery of the United States, for the making of the Anglo-Saxon race but one empire?'.¹⁵ Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr, leading figures in the Round Table association, played leading roles in the shaping of the Versailles Treaty and of the Free State settlement in Ireland.

Their imperial aspirations found a sympathetic response among the ranks of those Americans who not only had presided over the recent occupation of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Honduras and the Philippines but also had approved of a world tour of the American fleet,

¹³ Eamon de Valera, *Ireland's Claim for Recognition as a Sovereign State*, 1920, pp20,21.

¹⁴ Ken Loach, 'Director's Note,' *The Wind that Shakes the Barely*, Cork, 2006, pp7-9; Foster, *Dublin Review*, p49.

¹⁵ Michael Collins Piper, 'The Rhodes Scholarships and the Drive for World Empire,' *The Barnes Review*, May/June 2004, p37.

numbering some sixteen battleships, in 1907-1909. Commenting on the American move towards empire, Charles Beard wrote: 'here, then, is the new realpolitik. A free opportunity for expansion in foreign markets is indispensable to the prosperity of American business. Modern diplomacy is commercial. Its chief concern is with the promotion of economic interests abroad.'¹⁶

In this context the Treaty of Versailles (28 June 1919) marked a triumph for the ideals of Rhodes and the Unionist dominated British Coalition government and also signalled the beginning of a new Anglo-American world order. The hope of Patrick Pearse, expressed in his surrender appeal of 29 April 1916, that the Rising 'has been sufficient to gain recognition of Ireland's national claim at an international peace conference' lost out to the imperial policy of Rhodes. The voice of Ireland was not to be heard at the Peace conference.¹⁷ By the terms of the Treaty, Great Britain, in return for engaging in the Washington naval talks with America (a Treaty was signed in January 1922), was given a free hand to pursue its commercial and strategic interests in such areas as Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), Afghanistan, Palestine, India and Africa.

As a result of the Versailles Treaty, Great Britain was free not only to impose military rule in Ireland but also to wage war in modern Iraq, where mustard gas was used against the Shias in 1920 and indiscriminate mass bombing against the Kurds in 1921. The oil fields of that country, both then and to-day, were one of the main policy objectives of the British government.¹⁸ The success of British policy, and the attendant failure of Ireland's case for recognition, was commented upon by Erskine Childers at the time. Writing publicly on 2 July 1919 in the *Daily News*, he asserted that 'it has not been difficult to stifle the voice of Ireland at Paris. Her independence has no market value, while its repression on the grounds of military necessity was the best of all precedents for similar policies elsewhere.' He concluded: 'the subjection of Ireland is international poison contaminating the politics of the world.' (*Daily News*, 2 July 1919)

The same view was later expressed by Robert Lynd, an English journalist and a member of the Peace with Ireland Council, who, reviewing the situation in Ireland in 1920, asserted that the responsibility for the murders 'rests primarily with the immoral violence of a Government which met the dreams of a small nation for self-Government, not with the Fourteen Points, but with the points of a bayonet.'¹⁹ Loach and Laverty, by identifying with the prescient words of Childers and

Lynd, have offered insights not only into the war in Ireland but also into the current war in Iraq. They point the way to universal truths in the conduct of human affairs that were also recognised by George Monbiot in his review of the film. 'Occupations brutalise both the occupiers and the occupied,' he stated. 'It is our refusal to learn that lesson which allows new colonial adventures to take place. If we knew more about Ireland, the invasion of Iraq may never have happened.' (*The Guardian*, 6 June 2006) Significantly, if regrettably, Roy Foster's particular historical focus does not enable him to discern this very real connection between the wars in Ireland and Iraq.

Social and Economic Issues

If Loach's emphasis on DORA and the 1918 general election contributed greatly to a sound historical backdrop to the film, so too did his focus at the start of the film on the ban on nationalist organisations. This ban, which was passed under the terms of Balfour's Criminal Law Act of 1887, became law on 10 September 1919 and had grave political, social and economic consequences. As a result of the ban, Dáil Éireann was declared a 'dangerous association' and was suppressed along with Sinn Fein clubs, the Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBan and the Gaelic League.

These firm measures were not occasioned by any major military action on the part of the IRA but rather by the attempt of Dáil Éireann to function as an alternative government. The launching of a Dáil Éireann Loan on 21 August 1919, in the name of the Government of the Irish Republic, while provocative to the Dublin Castle administration, was a positive attempt to raise money in order to initiate a programme of social reform. The Loan, itself, was declared to be 'seditious' and many newspapers, which carried advertisements for it were immediately suppressed. By adopting such tactics Dublin Castle became engaged in a war of attrition with the Irish people that had significant social consequences.

Loach and Laverty have received much criticism for attempting to address these consequences in their film. Support for their approach, however, is to be found in a most unlikely contemporary source: the writings of the official Press Censor attached to Dublin Castle, Major Bryan Cooper. He was a Protestant Unionist from county Sligo, who had fought bravely in the War, and who acted as the official Press Censor from the early months of 1919 until September of that year. Commenting on the government policy of suppression, in the month that he relinquished office, he stated publicly that 'it would surely be wise to abandon a procedure which only tends to inflame and exasperate moderate opinion in Ireland.' (*The Times*, 27 September 1919)

As the year drew to a close, Cooper became even more critical of government policy asserting that it was wrong to oppose Dáil Éireann's programme of afforestation and of industrial renewal. He concluded that the path which the government was 'now following

¹⁶ Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow. America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*, New York, 2006, p81.

¹⁷ Seamus O Buachall, ed., *The Letters of P.H. Pearse*, Gerard's Cross, 1980, p373.

¹⁸ See David Onniss, *Air Power and Colonial Control*, Manchester, 1990; see Pat Walsh, *Irish Political Review*, June 2004.

¹⁹ Robert Lynd, *Who Began it? The Truth about the Murders in Ireland*, 1921.

leads not to peace and contentment, not even to the maintenance of law and order, but the alienation of the sympathies of moderate Irishmen and the strengthening of Sinn Fein.' (*The Times*, 18 December 1919)

Similar support for Loach's focus on social and economic issues, indeed, his concern for the impact of war upon ordinary people, may be found in the writings of Erskine Childers. Reviewing the actions of the British Crown forces, both army and police, in the *Daily News* of 19 April 1920, Childers insisted that far more than military matters were at stake. He asserted that 'an attempt is being made to break up a whole national organisation, a living, vital, magnificent thing, normally and democratically evolved from the intense desire of a fettered and repressed people for self-reliance and self-development. This attempt, if we are to give words their right meaning, is the great crime, the fundamental crime.' (*Daily News*, 19 April 1920)

Loach addressed some of the social issues at the heart of this 'fundamental crime' by depicting the British army's brutal response to the railwaymen's strike, an event often ignored in many accounts of the war; by portraying the burning of a family farmhouse and the shooting up of a town as reprisal measures; and by staging a debate on the Democratic Programme in a Dáil Éireann court.²⁰ While Loach has been criticised for showing such incidents, the reality on the ground was far worse. Some forty creameries were burnt to the ground, or badly damaged, between the months of April and November 1920, as reprisals against IRA attacks.²¹ These creameries were the brainchild, in particular, of two Protestants, Sir Horace Plunkett and George Russell (AE), who were actively involved in their development as part of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society's work of improving the living conditions of both Unionists and Nationalists.

'Hit the creamery and you hit the community,' such was the rationale behind the actions of the Crown forces, as described by Hugh Martin, the British journalist, who travelled throughout Ireland in 1920 and, for his pains, the Auxiliaries attempted to kill him.²² Faced by British denials, particularly by Sir Hamar Greenwood, of the troops participation in these attacks, George Russell called for a public inquiry and maintained that 'creameries and mills have been burned to the ground, their machinery wrecked; agricultural stores have also been burned, property looted, employees have been killed, wounded, beaten, threatened or otherwise ill-

treated.'²³ Had Ken Loach been solely concerned with painting a totally damning picture of the British military regime in Ireland, as his critics claim, surely he would have featured the burning of these creameries or the burning of Cork City, 11/12 December 1920? That he refrained from doing so, says more for the balance of his approach than that of his critics.

With specific reference to those critics who say that social and economic matters received an unwarranted priority in the film, two final observations may be made. Firstly, at the start of period, in April 1919, a Soviet was declared in Limerick City. The method chosen to suppress the soviet was the imposition of DORA upon the city of Limerick: most of the city was defined as an SMA (Special Military Area) and General C.J. Griffin was appointed the CMA (Competent Military Authority).²⁴ Secondly, towards the end of the period, at the general election of June 1922, seventeen representatives of the Labour Party were elected to Dáil Éireann. Compared to the fifty-eight pro-Treaty deputies and the thirty-six anti-Treaty deputies, the number of Labour deputies was high. Moreover, it has been calculated that the average vote for a Labour candidate was 7,365; for a pro-Treaty candidate, 5,174; and for an anti-Treaty candidate, 3,372, thus providing a forcible reminder that, even at this critical stage in Ireland's political development, social and economic issues were the main concern of many.²⁵ Taken together the two events provide further confirmation, if any was needed, that Loach got it spot on, not only for his focus on social affairs but also for introducing his audience to the British forces in Ireland in the context of DORA.

Sectarianism

If Loach has been criticised for making too much of social and economic issues, he has also been criticised for showing too little of the IRA's sectarian attacks on Protestants. Roy Foster and other critics complain that, by ignoring the recent writings by Peter Hart on the IRA in Cork, Loach has concealed the religious conflict that permeated the war in that part of Ireland. In general it should be noted that Hart brings to his study of the period many of the characteristics that may be discerned in Foster's *Modern Ireland*. Like Foster, Hart makes no reference to DORA in the index to *The IRA and its Enemies* and, again like Foster, he trivialises the impact of the 1918 General Election. While focussing on alleged incidents, in which young Volunteers 'locked old people into their homes,' Hart makes no reference to the hundreds of leading Sinn Feiners who were actually behind

²⁰ See Mary Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution. The Dáil Courts, 1920-1924*, Dublin, 1994.

²¹ See *Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland*, London, 1921, appendix 10, 'Report to November 1920 of Co-operative Creameries and other societies stated to have been destroyed or damaged by armed forces of the Crown,' pp90-98.

²² Hugh Martin, *Insurrection in Ireland*, 1921, p69. Available at, www.academia.edu/6292615/.

²³ See evidence of Louie Bennett, secretary of Irish Women Worker's Union, *Evidence of Conditions in Ireland. The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland*, Washington, 1921, p.994, citing Russell in the *Irish Homestead*. Commission report at, www.academia.edu/6310490/.

²⁴ See Liam Cahill, *Forgotten Revolution. Limerick Soviet 1919. A Threat to British Power in Ireland*, 1990.

²⁵ See Conor Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland. Popular Militancy, 1917-1923*, 1996, p180.

prison bars under the court martial terms of DORA.²⁶

Inevitably, as a result, Peter Hart rejects the idea that the IRA enjoyed any form of democratic mandate for the war that it waged. The ideals of the 1916 Proclamation of Independence and the expression given to those ideals in the constitution of the reformed Sinn Fein Party in October 1917 find little place in Hart's analysis of the IRA. Nor does he give any indication that the armed struggle may have been motivated by any of the profound statements that were issued by Sinn Fein and Dáil Éireann at that time. For example, little or no emphasis is given to the statement against Conscription in 1918, the Sinn Fein election manifesto of the same year, the Declarations of Dáil Éireann and the formal appeal to the Paris Peace Conference, both made in 1919. Of the Conference, itself, and the Treaty of Versailles, Hart like Foster is significantly silent.

The origin of Peter Hart's work has been on a social analysis of IRA membership: this was the subject of his first published study on 'Youth Culture and the Cork IRA' as part of the Trinity College History Workshop.²⁷ This essay, which formed part of his thesis and subsequent book, argued that the social bonding that arose from the association of young men in such traditional groupings as the Wren Boys influenced their joining the IRA. The emphasis is on the social rather than the ideological; and on a social unity that is coloured by, among other things, boisterous behaviour and cross dressing - nothing to enhance the image of IRA membership!

The Wren Boys, who only engaged in their ritual celebration on one day of the year, the 26 December, St Stephens's Day, were, and still are, represented in England by the Mummers. Both groups celebrated the Winter Solstice. Questions arise as to the validity of Hart's approach: would it be relevant to research the Mummers in order to assess the social bonding that brought them into the British Army in the 1914-1918 War? Would it be relevant to research the Wren Boys in the Carcassonne region of France, whose ritual ceremonials lasted for a month, in relation to their joining the ranks of the French Army? Somehow I do not think so. And, yet, Loach is criticised for not following this pattern of interpretation mapped out by Hart's thesis.

Roy Foster, for one, is quite clear on this point. He laments the fact that the work of Peter Hart, composed with 'skill and empathy' and painting a picture of 'class resentment, religious and ethnic antipathy and local power-struggle' has not been portrayed in the film. (*Dublin Review*, p43) Writing earlier and more specifically about the small Protestant farmers, drapers and schoolteachers, Foster noted that they 'became

"targets" for reasons which had less to do with political affiliation than atavistic ethnic conflict.' (*The Times*, 21 May 1998) Hart's work, it is claimed, should have led Loach and Laverty to depict the execution of a Protestant landlord in the film as carried out for religious, rather than for military reasons; that he was shot, in other words, because he was a Protestant, rather than because he was an informer. Hart's use of official sources, however, to make this case are so selective as to be unsustainable.

Hart wrote, citing the official British *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland 1920-1921*, that 'in the south the Protestants and those who supported the Government rarely gave much information because, except by chance, they did not have it to give.'²⁸ If this quotation from the *Record* told the whole story, then religious motives, as the thesis of Hart maintains, must have played a part in the IRA's attacks upon Protestants for the simple reason that they had no information to give. In fact, the selective quotation from the *Record of the Rebellion* by Hart does not tell the whole story - far from it!

The next two sentences from the *Record*, which Hart has omitted, report that 'an exception to this rule was in the Bandon area where there were many Protestant farmers who gave information. Although the Intelligence Officer of this area was exceptionally experienced and although the troops were most active it proved almost impossible to protect these brave men, many of whom were murdered...'²⁹ In short, the Protestant farmers were shot because they were informers: the official British source on the war, acknowledged by Hart to be 'the most trustworthy source' that we have, rather than supporting Hart's claim of sectarian killing by the IRA, effectively shows it to be false.³⁰ If any possible doubt might remain on the issue, the views of Lionel Curtis, the shaper of events at the Paris Peace Conference, appear conclusive. Following a secret visit to Ireland in 1921, Curtis affirmed that 'Protestants in the south do not complain of persecution on sectarian grounds. If Protestant farmers are murdered, it is not by reason of their religion, but rather because they are under suspicion as Loyalists. The distinction is a fine, but a real one.'³¹

Peter Hart's selective use of this official source did not end with this omission in regard to the Bandon area, the very area which was at the centre of his thesis. In his

²⁶ Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies. Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923*, 1998, pp305,306.

²⁷ Peter Hart, ed. *Irish Narratives, British Intelligence in Ireland 1920-1921. The Final Reports*, 2002, p49.

²⁸ Hart, *Irish Narratives*, p.6. See Brian P. Murphy, *The Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920*, 2006, pp77-79, for more on Hart's use of sources.

³¹ Meda Ryan, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*, 2003, p.170. See pp156-170 for a critical assessment of Peter Hart's views on the killing of some Protestants in West Cork at the end of April 1922; and see John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Fein Society.' The Intelligence War in Cork 1920-1921*, Cork, 2007, for a detailed study showing that most of the Protestants killed by the IRA were, in fact, informers.

²⁶ Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies. Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923*, 1998, p166.

²⁷ Peter Hart, 'Youth Culture and the Cork IRA,' in David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Revolution? Ireland 1917-1923*, 1990.

edited version of the *Record of the Rebellion* not only did he fail to acknowledge that he had made a selective use of the document in his book, but also he made, without any notification, another very significant omission. This omission concerned the attitude of the British army towards the IRA. In a section entitled, 'The People,' the *Record of the Rebellion* stated that 'judged by English standards the Irish are a difficult and unsatisfactory people. Their civilisation is different and in many ways lower than that of the English. They are entirely lacking in the Englishman's distinctive respect for the truth ... many were of a degenerate type and their methods of waging war were in most cases barbarous, influenced by hatred and devoid of courage.'³² Questions arise over these selective omissions. The title of Hart's book encompasses the IRA and its enemies: by the first omission the IRA are incorrectly presented as sectarian killers; by the second omission the enemies of the IRA (the British army) are protected from their manifest expression of racism. Peter Hart did not explain these omissions? How does David Fitzpatrick, the series editor of *Irish Narratives* and the supervisor of Peter Hart's original thesis, explain them? How does Roy Foster reconcile them with the 'skill and empathy' that he has identified in Peter Hart's work?

Moreover, many examples, both personal and institutional, might be chosen to show that the film correctly portrayed the religious character in the south of Ireland during the war years. The personal experience of Robert Barton, a Protestant landowner of county Wicklow, is extremely relevant to this theme. Barton had actually served in the ranks of the British army during the Rising; he was then elected to represent Sinn Fein for county Wicklow in the 1918 election; and, as a member of Dáil Éireann, he was appointed Director of Agriculture in August 1919. He was responsible for the plan for the re-afforestation of Ireland, which the British authorities at Dublin Castle did their best to frustrate, and the introduction of a National Land Bank.³³

The National Land Bank provides an example of Protestants and Catholics working together to further the work of Dáil Éireann and of Ireland. It was instituted by Robert Barton in December 1919 as part of his plans to help native Irish people acquire land and to improve their farms. Among the directors of the Bank were to be found the names of other distinguished Protestants, such as Erskine Childers and Lionel Smith Gordon, a past pupil of Eton and Oxford. Draconian measures were taken by the Government to prevent the success of this scheme: meetings were broken up; raids were made on banks holding National Land Bank accounts; and Barton, himself, was arrested and deported in January 1920. Significantly, the action was taken against him under the

terms of DORA.³⁴

Far from driving Protestants from the land, Irish republicans, as represented by Dáil Éireann, selected Protestants to be in charge of its land reform programme! Indeed, it was the actions of the British government, not those of Irish republicans, which provided the greatest threat to the harmonious working together of Protestants and Catholics in both the National Land Bank and in the Co-operative Societies. Nothing could be further from the tenor and tone of Peter Hart's and Roy Foster's historical narrative on this matter. The work of two other organisations, the Irish White Cross Society and the Peace with Ireland Council, confirms this impression.

The Irish White Cross Society was founded in the early months of 1921 with the explicit aim of alleviating the distress and hardship caused by the actions of the Crown Forces. Leaders of the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church, the Chief Rabbi of Dublin and many lay Protestants combined to take part in this work. As well as George Russell, Sir Horace Plunkett, Erskine Childers, and Lionel Smith Gordon (chairman), whose names have featured in other organisations, among the other lay members were Professor Culverwell, James G. Douglas (honorary treasurer), Captain D. Robinson and a large number of women.

Among the Protestant women were Molly Childers, Dr Kathleen Lynn, Albinia Brodrick (the sister of the Earl of Midleton), Alice Stopford Green, and Charlotte Despard (the sister of Lord French). Significantly, this large and influential group of Protestants supported the Irish White Cross Society even though the name of Michael Collins, then a wanted man and known to be in the IRA, was listed as a trustee of the Society.³⁵ Some Protestants did decline to join the Society owing to the presence of Collins in it, but, it seems reasonable to ask, would so many leading non-Catholics have supported such relief work, if the IRA had been engaged in a sectarian war?

The Peace with Ireland Council, which was founded in October 1920 and which was based in London, concentrated on highlighting the atrocities committed by the Crown Forces. They did so by published pamphlets and by public talks. Among its members were many Protestants such as Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, Basil Williams, John Annan Bryce, Oswald Mosley, Sir John Simon, Lord Buckmaster, George Bernard Shaw and the Bishop of Winchester. The findings of D.G. Boyce about the Peace with Ireland Council, in his seminal and valuable, book on *Englishmen and Irish Troubles* (1972), records in great detail the important work of the Council. Once again it seems reasonable to ask, if leading non-Catholics would have contributed to the exposure of the actions of the British forces in Ireland, if the IRA had been engaged in a sectarian war?

³² *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland, 1920-1921*, Imperial War Museum, pp31, 32.

³³ See Robert C. Barton, Witness Statement 979, Bureau of Military History, National Archives, Ireland.

³⁴ Ibid. and Peggy Quinn, ed. *An Irish Banking Revolution, the Story of the National Land Bank Ltd.*, 1995.

³⁵ See *Report of the Irish White Cross to 31 August 1922*, 1922.

Despite these evident signs of co-operation between Catholics and Protestants, Roy Foster remains committed to the Peter Hart version of a sectarian war: questions over Hart's use of sources have not qualified his judgement in any way. Perhaps this is not surprising as Foster, himself, flying in the face of compelling contrary evidence, had earlier declared in his *Modern Ireland* that 'the emotions focussed by cultural revivalism around the turn of the century were fundamentally sectarian and even racist.'³⁶ Neither Foster, in his *Modern Ireland*, nor Hart, in his *IRA and its Enemies*, have any reference in the index to their books to the National Land Bank, the Irish White Cross Society and the Peace with Ireland Council. Moreover, the regular affirmations of distinguished Protestants throughout this period that there was no sectarian animosity among Irish people have not been able to influence the historical mind set of either Foster or Hart.

Douglas Hyde, the Protestant President of the Gaelic League, may have affirmed in 1913 that he had never known 'any member to be shaken or biased one iota by sectarian considerations' but his view cannot shake, or even shape, Foster's damning general conclusion that the cultural revival was 'fundamentally sectarian.'³⁷ In the same fashion, the words of George Russell (AE), published in letter form in June 1920, have not influenced the findings of Peter Hart. Writing in the context of the pogroms against Catholics in the north of Ireland and at a time that is central to Hart's thesis, Russell declared that 'I, as an Irish Protestant and an Ulsterman by birth, have lived in Southern Ireland most of my life. I have worked in every county, and I have never found my religion to make any barrier between myself and my Catholic countrymen, nor was religion a bar to my work; and in that ill-fated Irish Convention (1917) one Southern Protestant Unionist after another rose up to say they did not fear persecution from their Nationalist and Catholic countrymen.' (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 June 1920) For Roy Foster and Peter Hart to construct a narrative without taking cognisance of these Protestant voices raises important questions about the writing of Irish history.

Some Reflections on the Writing of Irish History

The historical approach of both Foster and Hart, which ignores these evident signs of religious accord in the midst of much bitter conflict, has a distinct, if dubious, historical lineage. It finds an echo in the declaration of Dr John Pentland Mahaffy, Provost of Trinity College, to the Irish Convention in 1917, where he stated that the differences between Catholics and Protestant marked

'the contrast not only of two creeds, but of two breeds, of two ways of thinking, of two ways of looking at all the most vital interests of men.' These words were not only cited by W. Alison Phillips, Lecky Professor of Modern History at Trinity College, but also endorsed by him in his 1923 history of *The Revolution in Ireland*. He asserted that 'creed marked the line of cleavage in everything that made for national sentiment. This is the fundamental fact which must be grasped, if the root cause of many of the subsequent troubles is to be understood.'³⁸

One cannot but suggest that the historical narrative of Foster and Hart, strikingly reminiscent of that proposed by Mahaffy and Phillips, would have been far different, if it had embraced a wider range of sources and if it had treated some selected sources more authentically. Apart from the specific lacunae relating to such issues as the Defence of the Realm Act, sectarianism and social/economic affairs, the major omission relates to their approach to the *Irish Bulletin* and to the writings of those associated with it. The main contributors were Robert Brennan, Frank Gallagher and Erskine Childers. The *Bulletin*, the daily news sheet of the Dáil Éireann Publicity Department, began publication on 11 November 1919 and continued until the signing of the Treaty in December 1921. It presented a detailed account of the War of Independence from an Irish republican perspective and, although openly engaged in the work of propaganda, it attempted to achieve its purpose by being a journal of reliable record.

Peter Hart ignores it; Roy Foster ridicules it. Foster stated that the war of public opinion was conducted by British liberals and by 'Erskine Childers's tersely efficient propaganda machine, the *Irish Bulletin* (brilliant at scaling up any military activity into a "notorious" looting or sacking.' (Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.499) The accuracy of this disparaging assessment of the *Bulletin* may be measured by the accuracy of Foster's footnote on Erskine Childers, in which he is described as 'Minister for Publicity in the Dáil 1919-1921.' In fact Childers never enjoyed the title of 'Minister for Publicity' of Dáil Éireann. For some months in 1921, starting in February, Childers did act as substitute minister for Desmond Fitzgerald who, in turn, was acting as substitute minister for Lawrence Ginnell. He did not act as minister, even as substitute minister, for the years 1919 and 1920. This lack of accuracy in detail does not inspire confidence in the accuracy of Foster's general conclusions. Although some support for his strictures about the *Irish Bulletin* may be found in the contemporary writings of Major Street, association with Street is a very mixed blessing: he was officially engaged in the work of black propaganda during the Irish war!³⁹

Street, based in the Irish Office in London, worked

³⁶ Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, London, 1988, p453; see Brendan Clifford, ed., *Envoi. Taking Leave of Roy Foster*, 2006, for more on Foster's use of sources.

³⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 25 January 1913. See also Brian P. Murphy, 'The Canon of Irish Cultural History: some Questions concerning Roy Foster's *Modern Ireland*', in Ciarán Brady, ed. *Interpreting Irish History, The Debate on Historical Revisionism*, 1994.

³⁸ W. Alison Phillips, *The Revolution in Ireland 1906-1923*, 1923, pp52, 53.

³⁹ C.J. Street, 'IO,' *The Administration of Ireland 1920, 1921*; see Charles Townshend, *British Campaign*, pp18, 119.

harmoniously with Basil Clarke, head of the propaganda office in Dublin Castle. In March 1921 their views on propaganda were clearly expressed in a private exchange of letters. Clarke informed Street that 'I would say that the labelling of the news as some way as official ("Dublin Castle," "GHQ," etc.) is the essence of the whole thing: the whole system of news hangs on it.' Street fully concurred with these sentiments and expressed his approval in graphic terms. 'In order that propaganda may be disseminated,' he wrote, 'in order that it may be rendered capable of being swallowed, it must be dissolved in some fluid which the patient will readily assimilate. Regarding the press as the patient, I know of only two solvents, advertisement and news, of which the latter if by far the most convincing and most economical.'⁴⁰

These men were concerned to win over the world at large to the British narrative of the war in Ireland. For our time the question remains as to how far the historical narrative of the Irish War of Independence has been influenced by the 'official' briefings of these propagandists. Herein lies the importance of the Irish Bulletin: it challenged, day in and day out, the 'official' version of the news. To ignore it and to reject it, as Hart and Foster have done, inevitably leads to a diminished historical narrative. Ultimately, it is in this context that Loach and Laverty, far from meriting criticism for their treatment of the Irish War, deserve commendation for discerning that Foster and Hart only tell part of the story and that a partial one. A final brief observation, drawn from the experience of W.B. Yeats, provides further confirmation that the scenes presented by Loach and Laverty are not only dramatic but also authentic.

Roy Foster's comprehensive study of W.B. Yeats contains clear evidence that Yeats was strongly opposed to reprisals and was critical of the conduct of the British Crown Forces in Ireland.⁴¹ Speaking at the Oxford Union on 7 February 1921, Yeats proposed the motion 'that this House would welcome complete Self-Government in Ireland, and condemns reprisals.' The motion was adopted with a majority of 90 (219 - 129). Yeats, in his speech in favour of the motion, declared that he was sorry for the people of Ireland but 'his sorrow for England was greater: for Ireland was preserving her honour, and Freedom would triumph.' He maintained that in the county of Galway 'such even-handed justice as was administered by the Sinn Fein courts had been un-known in the days of the English ascendancy' and he added that 'nothing that the Prussians had done in Belgium was missing from the British tactics in Ireland.'⁴²

The sentiments expressed in formal prose during Yeats's debating speech were also expressed by him in poetic imagery in a poem, which was explicitly named

⁴⁰ Murphy, *British Propaganda*, pp 28,29 citing correspondence in the Colonial Office files.

⁴¹ Roy Foster, *W.B. Yeats: a Life, Volume II*, Oxford, 2003.

⁴² *Young Ireland*, 26 February 1921 reporting the speech of Yeats to the Oxford Union.

Reprisals. Foster mentions the poem but does not reproduce it. Written in late 1920, the poem laments that the life of a British airman, who died with honour in the Great War, is tarnished by the conduct of British soldiers in Ireland. The airman, although not named, was William Robert Gregory, the son of Lady Augusta Gregory, who had been killed in January 1918. While Yeats was composing his poem, Lady Gregory was occupied in sending lists of Black and Tan atrocities to *The Nation* in order to make English people aware of the brutal actions taking place in their names. She was also annoyed that Yeats should use the death of her son to make political points and requested that he should not publish it.⁴³

The setting of the poem was Kiltartan, county Galway, where Lady Gregory lived and where, in the early afternoon of 1 November 1920, Ellen Quinn had been shot dead by a police patrol passing by in a lorry. Her death is referred to in the poem. Ellen Quinn, seven months pregnant and holding a baby of nine months in her arms, was standing in front of her farmhouse, when she was hit in the stomach by a volley of gunfire. She died before midnight, in the arms of her husband, Malachy, with the blood still oozing from her wounds. The poem by Yeats reads:

Half-drunk or whole mad soldiery
Are murdering your tenants there.
Men that revere your father yet
Are shot at on the open plain.
Where may new-married women sit
And suckle little children now? Armed men
May murder them in passing by
Nor law nor Parliament take heed.

These sentiments expressed by Yeats in regard to the killing of Ellen Quinn bear an uncanny resemblance to the ballad of Robert Joyce which has provided the title for Loach's film. Malachy, the husband of Ellen Quinn, might well have lamented the death of his 'true love' in the same words as the subject of Joyce's ballad:

And on my breast in blood she died
While soft winds shook the barley.

One may only surmise why Roy Foster has chosen not to allow these events in the life of Yeats, the debate at Oxford and the poem 'Reprisals,' to colour his review of the film. Whatever the reason for the omission, Foster's silence on the matter may offer some further explanation as to how Loach and Laverty could discern the historical reality of the Anglo-Irish war and Foster, himself, could not. They are to be congratulated not only for making this reality a feature of their film's broad historical canvas but also for painting that canvas in colours that convey deep personal experiences. The end-result has been a truly golden achievement, which was rightly recognised as such at the Cannes film festival.

⁴³ Judith Hill, *Lady Gregory, An Irish Life*, 2005, pp318, 319.

The Southern Star

50,000 READERS EVERY WEEK – WEST CORK’S LARGEST CIRCULATING WEEKLY

More historical, less hysterical analysis 28 May 2017

I am pleased that West Cork is to have its first history festival in July. However, I am saddened that the speakers chosen to discuss the War of Independence period express a narrow range of opinions.

It might more accurately be renamed the West Brit History Festival. Eoghan Harris and Kevin Myers require little introduction. They have expended acres of newspaper print extolling the merits of a historian who claimed he spoke to a participant in the November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush, six days after the last (97-year-old) veteran died. I refer to the late Peter Hart.

Another participant, Eve Morrison, supported Hart’s claim and stated she was on the trail of the mystery man. That was five years ago. Appropriately, Ms Morrison is speaking on ‘Cork Ghosts of the Irish Revolution’.

The combined efforts of these four to undermine the standing of ambush commander Tom Barry, and of the IRA generally, reduced academic history (and ‘historical’ journalism) to a laughing stock for a considerable period. Roy Foster, who spoke for himself when he said in 1986, ‘We are all revisionists now,’ is giving the introductory lecture. He, presumably, will set the tone at this cosy get-together.

The festival will resuscitate the sectarian theory that the IRA was sectarian during the War. Eoghan Harris will show his incompetent 2012 documentary, *An Tost Fada*. I hope festival-goers will be informed of at least one serious error, admitted by RTE after I complained.

The programme stated that two Protestant farmers, Matthew Connell and William Sweetnam, were killed in a sectarian attack in April 1922 after the Truce and Treaty, whereas they were actually killed beforehand, in February 1921, for reasons that were not sectarian. There are other howlers in the programme, which contemporary Protestants would have recognised as propaganda. The decade of remembrance needs broad discussion and a fair representation of opinion. This event is one-sided, with one partial exception: Andy Bielenberg. He was subject to a Harris-Myers mauling when his analysis, and that of John Borgonovo, on conflict deaths did not reproduce their imaginative views.

I hope he is not subject to more trumped-up fake-history claims. I suggest that the organisers broaden out the discussion, even at this late stage, so that more historical and less hysterical analysis is advanced.

TOM COOPER

The above letter, from Tom Cooper on the West Cork History Festival, generated correspondence on three topics: 1. From Simon Kingston on the festival; 2. From Gerry Gregg on his and Eoghan Harris’s documentary, *An Tost Fada* (‘The Long Silence’); 3 From Eve Morrison and Niall Meehan on Peter Hart and the Kilmichael Ambush. The letters follow.

Letters on the West Cork History Festival

Disappointment at pre-judgement of History Festival 10 June 2017
SIR – I am glad that Mr Cooper (Letters, May 26th) is pleased that West Cork is to have its first history festival (July 28th to 30th near

Skibbereen <http://www.westcorkhistoryfestival.org>). Indeed, we on the organising committee hope he might come down from Dublin to join us. It is disappointing, that he has chosen to pre-judge the event based on his opinion of some of the contributors.

Our aim is to complement the already rich cultural programme of the area.

The Festival will cover a range of subjects and periods, from the Knights Templar in Ireland, to piracy off the west coast, to Irish involvement in the First World War. We are honoured that so eminent a scholar as Professor Roy Foster has agreed to give the opening talk.

One of the Festival’s subjects, to which Mr Cooper refers, is the Revolutionary period in Cork and elsewhere in the country. Our contributors will approach this from several different perspectives and we anticipate that there will be a lively discussion. We do not imagine this will be the last word on the subject, nor on the wider themes of the approaching centenaries of the 1919 to 1923 years, on which Professor Eunan O’Halpin will speak.

We do intend, though, to make a contribution to a broader conversation. As mentioned, this is far from the only topic of the Festival. Another highlight will be a screening of *Rebel Rossa*, the biopic of the Fenian leader, featuring the late Shane Kenna of UCC.

Our ambition is that this will be the first in a series of annual events.

All are welcome to participate, including Mr Cooper, his judgment of its merits, historical or hysterical as he chooses, would be better informed by attending the event.

SIMON KINGSTON

Chair West Cork History Festival Committee

Fears about West Cork History Festival not allayed

25 June, 2017
I am pleased that Simon Kingston is glad (‘Disappointment at pre-judgement of History Festival,’ June 10th). However, he has not allayed fears that the West Cork History Festival promotes a narrow view of Ireland’s independence struggle.

He mentions Professor Eunan O’Halpin, who I omitted in my original letter. Prof O’Halpin narrated a two-part television programme in 2013. Part one dug up a field in Laois, in a futile attempt to uncover two disappeared IRA bodies from the 1920-21 period.

Futile because it turned out that the IRA did not shoot them. They survived the conflict unscathed. After that damp squib, in part two, Prof O’Halpin made exaggerated claims about the number of spies shot by the Cork IRA, and about the supposed innocence of those verifiably killed.

In the interests of inclusivity, I note that I also failed to mention the presence of Ruth Dudley Edwards, another aficionado of the excitable Kevin Myers-Eoghan Harris school of revisionism.

I would be very happy to accept Simon Kingston’s kind invitation to attend, were it not for the €180 price of admission, including dinner, excluding accommodation. If I eat a pack lunch (forgoing dinner) and sleep (like many homeless people today) in my car, I am afraid €80 is still too steep.

I daresay the cost is beyond that of many of the fine Cork people I know, who I am sure feel as I do that the festival programme represents a co-location of the converted. I have no problem with the advertised participants chatting amongst themselves, rather like the RIC in 1920 confined to barracks.

However, the festival is advertised as supported and funded (how much?) by Fáilte Ireland and is patronised by other fine persons. It appears broader than it actually is.

Perhaps the secretive organising committee, whose names are not on the festival website (please correct), could consider issuing further invitations. There is still time.

Perhaps also, in the interests of actual debate, some of the similarly-minded, advertised to speak, might volunteer to forgo their place. A different point of view might refresh the cloying atmosphere promoted by the current programme.

TOM COOPER

Letters on *An Tost Fada* ('The Long Silence')

Criticisms of *An Tost Fada* film answered 4 June 2017

May I make three points about Tom Cooper's tantrum of a letter in last week's *Southern Star* in which he made wild accusations about the 2012 RTE film, *An Tost Fada*, presented by Eoghan Harris and produced by me for Praxis Pictures

First, Cooper is a serial complainer to editors of national newspapers on issues which offend his extreme nationalist politics, including attacking the SDLP for commemorating the Irish dead of WW1.

Second, Cooper's complaint about alleged bias in *An Tost Fada* was rejected by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

Third, *An Tost Fada* is the personal testimony of Canon George Salter and not a polemic by Eoghan Harris or myself, as Cooper implies.

Canon Salter told a story that was both tragic and redemptive: how in April 1921, the IRA intimidated his father and mother to leave their family farm near Dunmanway at few hours' notice – but how they later returned to West Cork and resumed farming.

Cooper, having lost his case at the BAI, falls back on neurotic nit-picking. He calls it 'a serious error' when Canon Salter conflates the date of the shooting of two innocent Protestant farmers, Matthew Connell and William Sweetnam, in February 1921, with the shooting of 13 Protestants in the Bandon Valley in April 1922 – a slip of memory by an elderly man in his late eighties, which has no bearing whatsoever on the core issue of IRA intimidation.

Cooper is less interested in the dates than in denial. He claims Connell and Sweetnam were shot 'for reasons that were not sectarian.' That's not how it seemed to Protestants at the time.

As producer of the multi award-winning film *Close to Evil*, featuring Bergen-Belsen survivor, Tomi Reichental, let me put Cooper's campaign to explain away IRA crimes in a European context.

Recently, I returned with Tomi Reichental to film in Eastern European countries where ethnic cleansing of Jews had taken place. Everywhere we met a few good people who were willing to face what their grandfathers had done. But mostly we met nationalists and neo-fascists in deep denial.

Canon George Salter's testimony in *An Tost Fada* is a contribution to the truth that sets us free, and we are proud to present it as part of the West Cork History Festival.

GERRY GREGG, PRAXIS PICTURES

'Fishy on facts and high on hyperbole' 17 June 2017

Gerry Gregg's defence of his and Eoghan Harris's flawed documentary *An Tost Fada* is fishy on facts, high on hyperbole (*Southern Star*, June 3rd, 2017).

He forgot to mention that RTÉ accepted two of my complaints about the programme, which alleged IRA sectarianism against Protestants during and after the War of Independence. Gerry Gregg is wrong about the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, to which I took the remainder of my concerns. The BAI did not 'reject' my complaint. It determined that the programme 'did not have to comply with ... statutory requirements for fairness, objectivity and impartiality.' RTÉ agreed that this conclusion misread broadcasting legislation. Getting off on a dubious technicality is not vindication.

Gregg stated that the programme consisted of 'personal testimony' about events in 1922. That was three years before the subject of the programme, Canon George Salter, was born. Messrs Gregg and Harris should have checked family lore against evidence. They did not bother.

The programme reported that two Protestant victims of the IRA were killed some 15 months after the fact, eight months after the War of Independence concluded. Amazingly, this was accompanied by a camera shot of a gravestone that conveniently omitted the date of death inscribed on it. Why this startling ineptitude? It suited the programme's polemic about the IRA shooting Protestants for sectarian reasons. RTÉ understated matters when it admitted 'this mistake should have been identified and corrected during the production process.' Gregg's attempt to blame this mistake on Canon Salter demonstrates a mean

and unprofessional inability to take responsibility for errors. The documentary makers did not do their job.

During and after the War of Independence, southern Protestant opinion was divided. Most were revolted by Crown Force methods. A minority actively supported British reprisals and torture. The IRA targeted these latter when republican lives and liberty were put in jeopardy. The same happened with Roman Catholic informers and spies. There is no solid evidence of religion-based targeting. Republicans acted generally in the non-sectarian traditions of the movement founded by Wolfe Tone. That is why some Protestants joined it. Others said they feared Crown Forces more so than 'Sinn Féiners'. The Black & Tans and Auxiliaries, which had been opposed to independence forces, were precursors of the Nazi Freicorps, as Conor Cruise O'Brien noted in 1965.

Also opposing the all-Ireland Dáil forces were London newspapers like the Morning Post, which blamed Irish resistance on Bolshevik, Jewish, agitators. Such reactionary anti-Semitic ideas nurtured the formation later of Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts. That is a real 'European context,' not Mr Gregg's pathetic attempt to link Ireland's liberation war against a sectarian and racist empire with Nazi atrocities. Jews in Ireland at the time supported Sinn Féin and the IRA. Were they anti-Protestant too?

When not giving out about Jews and other 'aliens' during the 1920s, the Morning Post, plus die-hard English Tories, shed copious tears for southern Irish loyalists. They were successful in agitating for 'compensation,' causing thousands of said loyalists to make retrospective and often lucrative claims. Compensation file testimony reads like a very damp squib, as far as accusations of IRA sectarianism are concerned. Gregg and Harris did not bother to consult Canon Salter's father's testimony, which corrected other mistakes in their programme. In it, former Crown Prosecutor Jasper Wolfe stated that persecution was due to loyalty, not religion.

A critic of the Gregg-Harris film afterwards gave the file contents to Canon Salter. RTÉ stated in 2012 that it will 'ensure that (*An Tost Fada* mistakes are) corrected in any future broadcast'. So, Mr Gregg and Mr Harris: have you corrected them? Are West Cork History Festival goers to get unvarnished or varnished fiction dressed up as fact?

TOM COOPER

'Another outburst of toxic bile' 1 July 2017

Readers of *The Southern Star* were treated in the issue of June 17th to yet another outburst of toxic bile from Tom Cooper against Eoghan Harris and myself concerning our film for RTÉ, *An Tost Fada*, featuring Canon George Salter.

Once again, Mr Cooper spreads his poison while posing as a champion of truth and accuracy when it comes to any examination of the actions of the IRA during the 1919-23 period.

Your readers should know that, contrary to Mr Cooper's claims, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland did 'reject' his complaint about the programme in October 2012.

The BAI Compliance Committee chairperson, Chris Morash, stated that, 'upon a review of the programme it was the Committee's view that the programme did not contain any content that could be considered contrary to Section 3.5 (Factual Programming) of the BAI Code of Programme Standards.'

However Mr. Cooper's real grievance with Eoghan Harris and me is not about the details of *An Tost Fada* or the testimony of Canon Salter.

Both of us had relatives who took up arms to forge an independent Irish State. Both of us were reared in a tradition that looked upon the campaign of the IRA as heroic and noble.

Both of us have spent our lives asking questions about what we were told about the fight for 'Irish Freedom.'

For Tom Cooper, asking such questions is tantamount to treason.

In the case of what happened in West Cork in 1921-22, we believe local Protestants were the victims of sectarian murder perpetrated by IRA Volunteers. Tom Cooper will deny that fact until the day he has to face St Peter.

Southern Star readers can make up their own minds about the film and the story Canon Salter relates when *An Tost Fada* is screened at the West Cork History Festival in Skibbereen.

Thankfully, Ireland is still a free country.

GERRY GREGG, PRAXIS PICTURES

Problem with reason, not treason 15 July 2017

'Outburst of toxic bile... spreading poison... asking questions is tantamount to treason'.

Gerry Gregg's response (1 July 2017) to criticism of his documentary *An Tost Fada* ('The Long Silence') plumb new depths. The view it presents of my position is politically deranged.

Momentarily, I thought I was reading the 'North Korean Star'.

The Broadcasting Authority Ireland did not examine my complaint, for the reason cited on 17 June. Mr Gregg's separate citation does not contradict that fact. I repeat, he got off on a technicality.

Mr. Gregg did not address the mistakes RTE admitted, apart from blaming the elderly subject of his programme. We still don't know whether they will be corrected at the West Cork History Festival.

Gerry Gregg and Eoghan Harris, please tell us if you will comply with RTÉ's 2012 commitment. Please be a mensch, Mr. Gregg.

It is indeed commendable that, as Mr. Gregg assures us, he and Eoghan Harris, spent their lives asking questions. It is a pity they came up with so many wrong answers. Avoiding inconvenient evidence will do that.

Mr Gregg has his mind made up, having completed his questionnaire on life. His problem is not with treason, but with reason.

Sectarianism and its first cousin, racism, are a foul corruption of our common humanity. It was rejection of that component of British rule within the Irish body politic that motivated republican and socialist opposition. Those who were most solicitous of the alleged plight of southern loyalists tended also to be racist and anti-semitic.

Jasper Wolfe, former Crown solicitor for Cork, later independent TD for West Cork, stated that he was an IRA target because of his role not his religious identity. He later became friends with the person who tried to kill him. Wolfe's views were similar to those of most southern Protestants. His biographer, his nephew, reiterated the non-sectarian nature of Jasper Wolfe's personal and professional experiences.

Accusations of IRA sectarianism might stick in relation to one three-day period, 26-9 April 1922 in West Cork. There is a historical discussion about that, pro and con. Mr. Gregg's approach in his documentary was to present facts supporting his opinion, to confuse and to generalise from them.

Will those of a sceptical disposition at the West Cork History Festival, tempted to comment after the credits roll, experience a similar gale of outrage? If so, Messrs Gregg and Harris might experience another 'long silence'.

In the meantime, I suggest that Mr Gregg learn the art of sticking to and attacking the point, not the man (or woman or Catholic or Protestant, or Muslim or Jew).

TOM COOPER

Letters on Peter Hart and the Kilmichael Ambush

Misidentification of an Old IRA veteran 11 June, 2017

I would like to address some of the comments made by Tom Cooper in his recent letter (May 26th, 2017).

The 'unidentified scout' Hart interviewed on November 19th, 1989 was Willie Chambers, Teadies, Enniskeane. The oft-repeated assertion that Peter Hart claimed to have interviewed a Kilmichael veteran who was already dead (Ned Young, d. November 13th, 1989) is based on a misidentification by Hart's critics of the Old IRA veteran concerned.

Hart did interview Ned Young, but on April 3rd and June 25th, 1988. Chambers was a friend of Young's and a long-standing member of the Kilmichael Commemoration Committee. Chambers' son, Liam, confirmed to me that his father always said he had been an unarmed, secondary scout at the Enniskeane Bridge during the Kilmichael ambush. Liam is unable to confirm or deny what his father told Hart, but his Military Service Pension file might shed further light.

I would like to encourage those in possession of other IRA veteran recorded interviews Hart used to come forward as well.

As an historian, I strive to take into account all available records, and to be as objective and dispassionate as possible in my judgements.

I would appreciate it if Mr Cooper (and anyone else) would refrain from associating my work with either Kevin Myers or Eoghan Harris, or assume in any way that my historical or political views are in accord with theirs.

EVE MORRISON, TRINITY COLLEGE

Identification of IRA veteran interesting 18 June 2017

Eve Morrison's identification of an IRA veteran, interviewed anonymously by the late Peter Hart about the November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush, is of great interest (Letters, June 10th, 2017).

Controversy arose because the interview was dated six days after the last known Kilmichael veteran, Ned Young, died on November 13th, 1989. The discrepancy was first noted in Meda Ryan's 2003 biography, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*, on the ambush commander.

In 2008, I pointed out that Hart's mysterious interviewee was presented as an ambush participant in Hart's 1992 PhD thesis. He became an unarmed 'scout' in Hart's 1998 book, *The IRA and its Enemies*. He was identified in the thesis as touring Hart around the ambush site, a claim the book withdrew.

I indicated also a problem with words attributed by Hart to this interviewee. In 2012 Eve Morrison confirmed he did not utter them.

Eve Morrison now states that IRA veteran William Chambers is the individual in question. He confirmed to his son that he was, 'an unarmed, secondary scout at Enniskeane Bridge during the Kilmichael ambush.'

In that case, Hart seems to have put further words into this man's mouth. Hart cited him saying, 'he saw several (British) Auxiliaries surrender' during the fighting 'and then heard further firing, some of which came from the Englishmen' (Hart, 1998, p35).

Eve Morrison will surely concur that such an audiovisual feat is not possible on a bridge at Enniskeane, approximately 15km from the ambush location.

In 2012 in the edited collection *Terror in Ireland*, Eve Morrison suggested that Hart's errors resulted from muddle and not misrepresentation. I tend toward the latter view, explained in 'Examining Peter Hart' (*Field Day Review 10*, 2014).

Peter Hart claimed that ambush commander Tom Barry was a vainglorious serial killer, who falsely stated that IRA casualties at Kilmichael were caused by an Auxiliary false surrender.

Had he named his interviewees, Hart's claims would not have been possible.

Hart made further claims with regard to IRA sectarianism. Unfortunately, in what seems to have been a pattern, he censored and misrepresented archival sources in making them.

It is possible to believe what Peter Hart asserted, but his research is not a reliable support. In effect, his muddle appears to have been his method.

I echo Eve Morrison's call that relatives with veteran interviews and other archival material should make them available, I suggest to a public archive.

In Munster, UCC's History Department is one logical place for hosting such material. It may then be evaluated equally by all scholars and other interested members of the public.

NIAALL MEEHAN

Discrepancies about Kilmichael Ambush 24 June 2017

Niall Meehan's letter (June 17th) distracts from core issues relating to Hart's interviews.

In my 2012 chapter in *Terror in Ireland*, I identified all the Kilmichael veterans interviewed by Hart or by Father John Chisholm bar one, the 'unarmed scout'. I subsequently discovered that the only two anonymous quotes I couldn't identify at the time were from Hart's interview with Willie Chambers (November 19th, 1989), whom I then realised was the unarmed scout.

Meehan's contributions to the Hart interview controversy are characterised by misstatements of fact as well as of interpretation. To

give one example from your own newspaper, in July 2008 you published Meehan's assertion that the late Jim O'Driscoll, SC, was 'one of the signatories' to John Young's affidavit claiming Hart could not have interviewed Ned Young, his father.

O'Driscoll's *Irish Times* obituary in 2009 repeated this erroneous claim based on 'internet sources'. In reality, O'Driscoll had merely witnessed Young's signature, and had not endorsed Young's claims.

Marion O'Driscoll confirmed that her husband had introduced Hart to Ned Young and, contrary to what was being said, had flatly refused to attack Hart when asked to do so. In 2013, she and I wrote a letter to *History Ireland* (published online) requesting, in the strongest terms, that people stop associating Jim O'Driscoll with these allegations against Hart.

Hart used Willie Chambers' interview in good faith. Witness accounts collected decades after the events discussed in them often contain inconsistencies. For example, in 1973 Meda Ryan's interviewee Dan Hourihan said he witnessed the 'false surrender.' Yet in December 1937, he told the Military Service Pension board that, as the column moved into position, Tom Barry ordered him to return to his area to arrange billets in Ballinacarriga, which is even farther from the ambush site than Enniscrone Bridge.

There may be perfectly reasonable explanations for the discrepancies in the cases of both Hourihan and Chambers. All we can do is wait for more evidence to emerge.

In the meantime, Ryan should release her Kilmichael interviews, and Meehan should make more effort to get his own facts right.

EVE MORRISON, TRINITY COLLEGE

Jumping to Kilmichael Ambush conclusions 8 July 2017

Eve Morrison has written another interesting letter (24th June) on the 28 November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush.

Peter Hart claimed in *The IRA and its Enemies* (1998) that Ambush Commander Tom Barry lied about a British Auxiliary false surrender, causing two of three IRA casualties. Barry justified killing all of the Auxiliaries in a fight to the finish, disregarding further surrender calls.

Hart's view was partly based on anonymous interviews with two surviving ambush participants.

One of the two was a 'scout' interviewed by Hart six days after the last Kilmichael Ambush participant died.

One day before, 18 November 1989, the *Southern Star* headlined, 'Ned Young, last of the Boys of Kilmichael'.

In 1995 ambush participants (including scouts) were carefully and exhaustively tabulated in the Ballineen and Enniscrone Heritage Society's, *The Wild Heather Glen, the Kilmichael Story of Grief and Glory*. Ned Young was the 'last boy' in that publication too.

Hart's acknowledgement that 'a profile of every man at the ambush' was included, excluded his 19 November 1989 'scout' interview.

As the interviewee was not a 'scout' in Hart's 1992 PhD thesis, it is possible that the Wild Heather Glen caused Hart to re-designate him for his 1998 book.

Eve Morrison wrote on 10 June that the 'scout' was William Chambers. On 17 June I outlined why this identification is shaky. She has acknowledged a discrepancy.

There is another reason.

In Hart's 1992 PhD thesis his interviewees were identified by their actual initials (sometimes reversed). Edward 'Ned' Young was 'EY'. Others, like Dan Cahalane ('CD') and John L. O'Sullivan ('JS'), were identified similarly. The 19th November 1989 mystery man was 'HJ', which does not approximate to William Chambers.

Hart cited 'HJ' (in a footnote) on what he saw and heard at the ambush. At that time Chambers said he was 15 kilometres away.

As Hart claimed 13 anonymous interviews for his book (12 for the thesis), he may indeed have spoken to William Chambers. Is Eve Morrison sure Chambers is not an additional veteran cited by Hart?

My Field Day Review essay, 'Examining Peter Hart' (2014), suggested that the mystery interviewee's words could have been paraphrased from ambush rifleman Jack Hennessy's War of Independence witness statement. Hennessy died in 1970. Unlike Eve Morrison, I am not claiming certainty.

Eve Morison is right: more evidence would be helpful. So would not jumping to conclusions.

Eve Morrison brought up new matters in her letter. Though they do not relate to the 'scout', I will address them.

She asked that a person she named should not be associated with this debate. I happily comply.

She discussed Hart's second claimed interviewee. I pointed out in *Troubled History* (2008) he was Ned Young, as Ms Morrison confirmed in 2012.

Hart claimed also to have heard three additional anonymous taped interviews with Kilmichael participants, recorded in the late 1960s (the 'Chisholm tapes').

In 2012 Ms Morrison pointed out that there were two and that one was with Ned Young. The second was with Jack O'Sullivan, who died in December 1986.

Hart's claim of five anonymous ambush witnesses, in total, is therefore reduced to three (including the mystery 'scout').

Two questions arise. Why would Hart have interviewed Ned Young again in 1988? Why misleadingly count him twice?

Does Eve Morrison view Hart's double and miscounting as muddle or method?

It is possible that Hart met Ned Young, a 96-year-old man who suffered a debilitating stroke in 1997. His interview claim, in the ordinary sense of that word, is questionable.

Ned Young's son and carer, John, stated that Hart could not have 'interviewed' his father.

Hart's main text nowhere asked his interviewees, 'Was there a false surrender?' Also, no individual word, phrase or sentence from Ned Young is cited in Hart's Kilmichael Ambush chapter.

Young did make two statements affirming a false surrender on the 'Chisholm tapes', but Hart did not report them.

That is curious.

I again make the point that Hart's anonymous presentation caused these problems. Whatever people choose to believe about the Kilmichael Ambush, Hart's research is not a reliable guide.

It is a pity that West Cork's first history festival is not debating contentious subject matter derived from Hart, on which so many of its presenters appear to rely for their views.

NIALL MEEHAN

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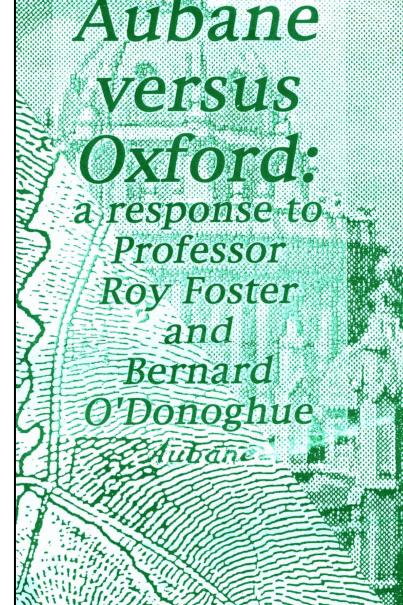
Aubane Historical Society

AN AFFAIR WITH THE BISHOP OF CORK

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Aubane Historical Society 2009 - Second Edition

Aubane versus Oxford: a response to Professor Roy Foster and Bernard O'Donoghue



The **Aubane Historical Society** produces books and pamphlets on local, national and international themes. We are a local historical society with an interest in the use and abuse of Irish history. We burst on to the international stage as 'the shadowy Aubane Historical Society' in Roy Foster's *The Irish Story*, aptly subtitled 'Telling tales and making it up in Ireland', in 2001.

As a result we have been shadowing Professor Foster ever since, beginning with *Aubane Versus Oxford* in 2002. It includes Tom Bartlett's *Times*

Literary Supplement review of *Telling Tales*. Professor Foster apparently asked that it not be published, which is why we republished it.

We have monitored how revisionist historians have been making it up in Ireland ever since.

A free copy of *Aubane Versus Oxford* to the first twenty from the West Cork History Festival who email jacklaneAubane@hotmail.com requesting a PDF copy.

[HTTPS://WWW.ATHOLBOOKS-SALES.ORG](https://www.atholbooks-sales.org)

THE EMBERS OF REVISIONISM

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIRST WEST CORK HISTORY FESTIVAL

The blurb for the West Cork History Festival tells us that it,

... will span a diverse set of places, historical subjects and periods, from the local to the international, ranging from the Knights Templar to the events of the Irish revolutionary period in West Cork. Leading historians will be joined by journalists and senior diplomats, and while much of their focus will be on Irish themes, the perspective will be international. The festival will be informal, participatory and with a menu for the intellectually omnivorous.'

This is all very welcome. But the festival does not include a session on the work of the late Professor Peter Hart who created the current interest in West Cork history twenty years ago.

In 1996 he asserted that the IRA were guilty of 'what might be termed' ethnic cleansing of Protestants. In 1998 he stated that IRA victims were killed, 'because they were Protestant'.

On the basis of these writings Hart made

Southern Star 29 April 1922

EPICROM DENOUNCED

At a largely attended meeting of the Protestants of various denominations in the parish of Schull the following resolution was unanimously adopted and arrangements made for its insertion in the public press:—

"That we members of different Protestant Churches in the parish of Schull condemn the atrocious crimes recently committed in the North of Ireland. We dissociate ourselves from the acts of violence committed against our Roman Catholic fellow countrymen. Living as a small minority in the South, we wish to place on record the fact that we have lived in harmony with the Roman Catholic majority and that we have never been subjected to any oppression or injustice as a result of different religious beliefs."

Rev G B Fairbrother, who presided, paid a warm tribute to the courtesy and consideration which he, in an experience of nearly 40 years, had always received from his R C fellow countrymen.

Others speakers who testified to the absence of sectarian strife, and who spoke in favour of the resolution, were Mrs J Attridge, Messrs J A Sheppard, A. T Cocks, G H Pattison, and S J Whitley.

himself and West Cork well known. He was lauded by his academic peers and in the media. As a result, he reached the top of his profession

No prize or praise was too high.

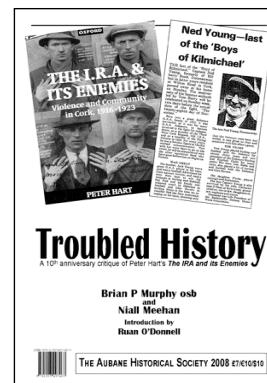
Hart's findings were first deployed in 1996, by Paul Bew against Neil Jordan's popular film on West Cork's Michael Collins. Ten years later they formed part of a sustained attack on Ken Loach's award winning and equally popular, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, that was set in West Cork.

Hart's research became the standard against which academic historians, journalists, historian-journalists and journalist-historians, measured political thought and popular culture, as applied to the War of Independence period.

Many of Peter Hart's mentors and cheerleaders are participating in the West Cork History Festival, but a silence has descended on Peter Hart and his legacy.

Why? We doubt if this Festival would have come into existence without his contribution.

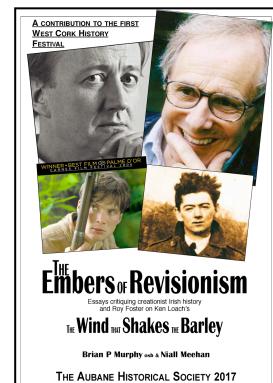
To help resolve this question, these pages contain essays by the authors of *Troubled History* (2008), Dr. Brian Murphy of Glenstal Abbey and Dr. Niall Meehan of Griffith College, on the origin of the research, both popular and academic, which prompted and promoted Peter Hart's histories.



Troubled History

A 10th anniversary critique of Peter Hart's *The IRA and its Enemies*
Brian P. Murphy & Niall Meehan
Introduction by Brian O'Donnell

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The Embers of Revisionism
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