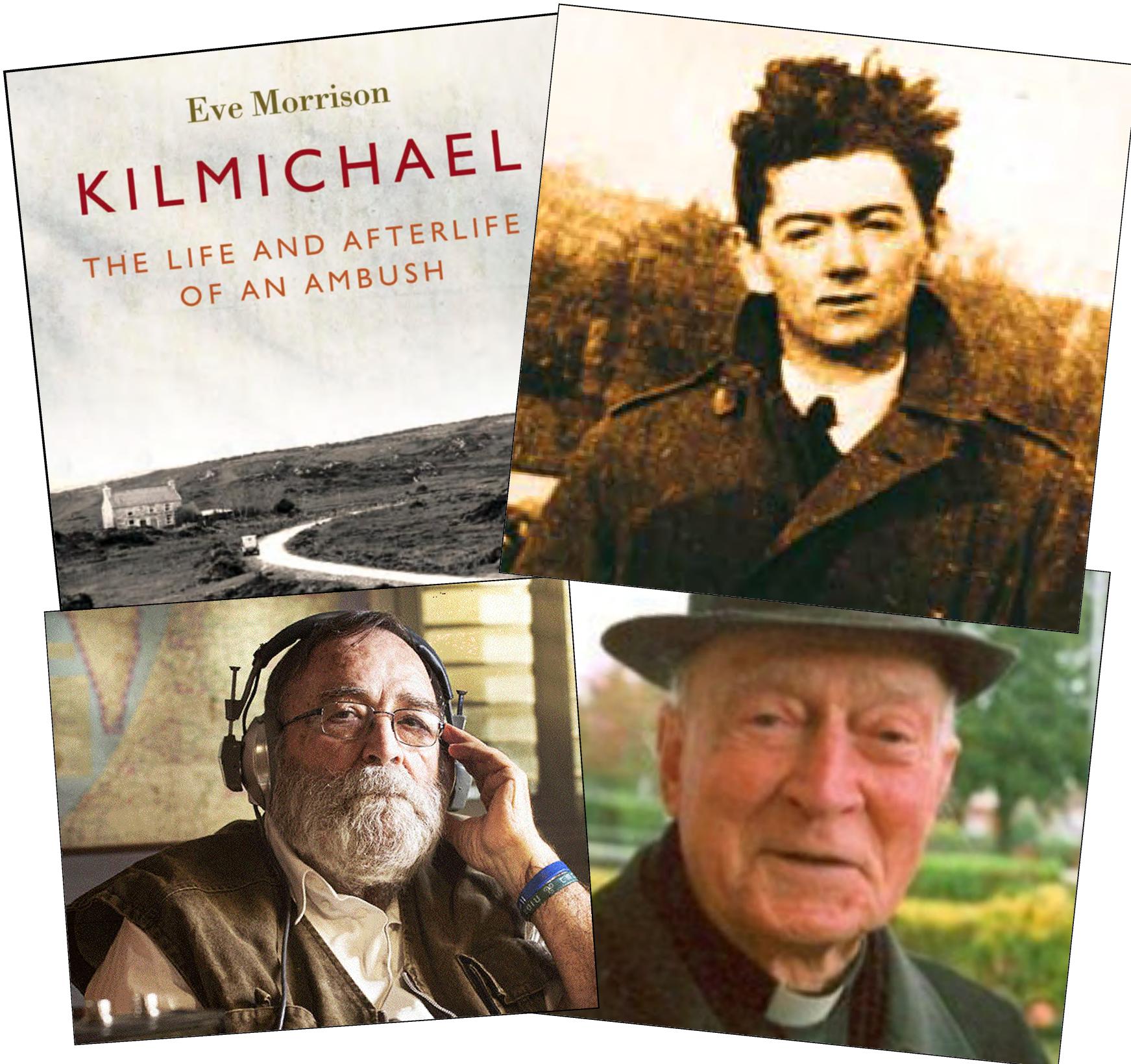


**NIALL MEEHAN Two ESSAYS**

# Rehabilitating Peter Hart



# Ethnic Cleansing from Bosnia to Belfast via West Cork

**THE AUBANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

## DR NIALL MEEHAN (PHD)

Niall Meehan was for twenty-six years Head of the Journalism & Media Faculty,  
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# REHABILITATING PETER HART

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Front cover shows, clockwise,  
Eve Morrison Kilmichael book, Tom Barry,  
Fr John Chisholm, Teddy Katz

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# Rehabilitating Peter Hart

Peter Hart, Eve Morrison, Father John Chisholm and the 1920 Kilmichael Ambush

This critical review is dedicated to the memory of Dr Brian P. Murphy osb, who died in 2022

## Introduction

Dr Eve Morrison in *Kilmichael, the Life and Afterlife of an Ambush* (2022) broadly defends the late Peter Hart's polarising research on the Irish War of Independence, but her own research is almost equally defective.<sup>1</sup> Hart's work was criticised outside the academy and celebrated within. A University College Cork (UCC) history module on the ensuing debate notes,

Although [Peter Hart's *The IRA and its Enemies* (1998)] received a number of glowing reviews from the historical establishment, it subsequently became one of the most controversial works within Irish historiography.<sup>2</sup>

Oxford University's first 'Foster Professor of Irish History', Ian McBride, observed in his first essay in that post that 'the ferocious reaction' to Hart's 'brilliant, prizewinning monograph ... shows little sign of abating'. Morrison's research is evidence that a near quarter century of controversy seems set to endure. In what Morrison called a 'devastating critique', McBride questioned in particular Dundee University's Dr John Regan's criticisms of Hart, to which Regan was denied a response. The point will be considered later, in light of Morrison's allegation that critics of Hart's work want to censor it.<sup>3</sup>

Writing from within what are termed 'revisionist' perspectives on Irish history, Hart claimed that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) engaged in ethnic aggression against Irish Protestants, in County Cork in particular, during the 1919-23 War of Independence and subsequent Civil War. His analysis of the 28 November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush, the main subject of Morrison's book, was integral to that attempt.<sup>4</sup> *The*

<sup>1</sup> Eve Morrison, *Kilmichael, The Life and Afterlife of an Ambush* (hereafter Morrison, *Aftermath*), Merrion, 2022, p169.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Andy Bielenberg: Peter Hart, The IRA and its enemies, violence and community in Cork 1916-1923', HI2105, Case Studies in Research Skills, in Undergraduate Handbook(s), School of History, UCC, 2018-2021.

<sup>3</sup> Ian McBride, 'The Peter Hart Affair in Perspective: history, ideology, and the Irish Revolution', *Historical Journal*, August 2017. McBride ignored what he termed the 'less interesting' Kilmichael debate, (p21, n64). Morrison, *Aftermath*, p169. See John M Regan, *Myth and the Irish State*, IAP, 2013. Private communication.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies* (hereafter, *Enemies*), OUP, 1998, p292.

*IRA and its Enemies* essentially recreated southwards a unionist or British conception of the post-1968 Northern Ireland conflict. Hart portrayed the earlier southern war as a mirror image of dominant perceptions of the later conflict, as a sectarian and ethnic conflict, in which the IRA persecuted Protestants and other imagined enemies. Martin Maguire observed that Hart,

... de-legitimised revolutionary republican violence and made it irrational and atavistic, driven by primitive hatred and greed. His inadequately researched and tendentious history of the IRA of the War of Independence was seized upon and used as an analogy to the IRA campaign in the Northern Ireland Troubles, so that the latter could be stripped of ideology and portrayed as a recrudescence of an ancient and atavistic hate.<sup>5</sup>

However distorted the picture it was clever writing, rather as an intelligent policeman might construe societal conflict, devoid of politics and suffused with personal animosity, enmity and suspicion.

Hart's emphasis on victimised 'marginalised' groups, targeted by the IRA, gave his work an impression of sociological depth and a left-wing veneer, superficially attractive to modern social democratic and liberal sensibilities. It fitted with a view celebrated by practitioners, that revisionist historical research constituted a healthy antidote to myth-making Irish-nationalist inspired hagiography. Hart's work made use of the apparatus of scholarly research, in which evidence serviced the author's pre-conceptions. I will detail these observations in the course of what follows.

The success of Hart's endeavour can be seen in attempts afterwards by historians to replicate his findings. Persecuted southern Protestants became a sought-after category. An oft-cited victim was Kate Carroll in Monaghan, killed in March 1921, allegedly for informing. She was one of three women executed by the IRA. It was largely because she was Protestant, argued a number of historians. I pointed out in "She is a Protestant as well..." that historians possessed zero evidence for their claims, not least since Carroll was Roman Catholic. When historians discovered their mistake they failed to account for their deficient narrative. Some instead promoted an alternative mistaken theory, that an intolerant IRA targeted Carroll as an antisocial element.<sup>6</sup>

To Eve Morrison's work, which contains interesting aspects, not least a compelling explanation of British policy and Irish resistance before the Kilmichael Ambush, though the legitimising success of Sinn Féin's 1918 general election victory is underplayed. After that point, Morrison subordinates

<sup>5</sup> Martin Maguire, 'History: Discipline or Instrument?', *Dublin Review of Books*, May 2014, review of John M Regan, *Myth and the Irish State*, at <https://drb.ie/articles/history-discipline-or-instrument/> (accessed 2 August 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Niall Meehan, "She is a Protestant as well", distilling British propaganda in accounts of the death of Kate Carroll in April 1921, Aubane, 1920. Available at <https://www.academia.edu/43753997/>.

her analysis to an elaborate, confused, and oftentimes nitpicking defence of Hart's research. Here and there snippets reveal information previously speculated upon. For instance, that Hart developed an association with Kevin Myers, a right-wing anti-Irish-republican journalist. Professor the late David Fitzpatrick of Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Hart's doctoral supervisor, thought Hart should be 'delighted' with Myers' provocative publicising of the research.<sup>7</sup>

Dr Morrison's supporters suggest that her book is fair-minded with an 'impartial, even-handed spirit'.<sup>8</sup> Its 292 pages wear a scholarly face (containing 176 pages of text and 107 pages of appendices, references, and bibliography). I experienced it as a sustained polemic, an apologia for *The IRA and its Enemies*, with notes. It seems to me a misguided apologia for her dead friend, and marred by the very methods of which she disapproves.

### Adding to *ad hominem*

Morrison argues that those taking issue with Peter Hart's research offer little of value to students of Irish history. Her introduction reflects this approach,

If parts of this book come across to some readers as overly reflective of my frustration with aspects of the modern debate, others may be of the view that I have not been nearly critical enough. I do have several biases, which I not only freely admit to but also have no intention of giving up. I consider the revisionist/anti-revisionist binary to be a profoundly unhelpful and largely meaningless division. I am exceptionally biased against ad hominem attacks, unfounded conspiracy theories and individuals who seem primarily interested in discrediting people rather than in getting to the truth (as far as it is ascertainable). I see no point in engaging with those who hide behind pseudonyms and read political predispositions into every line of their opponents' work but keep schtum about or deny their own affiliations, or those who criticise other historians according to standards that they apply selectively and do not observe themselves. [NM emphasis]

That is interesting since, as we shall see, Dr Morrison is guilty of faults she finds in others.

At one point the author complains, '[Niall] Meehan... made an unsanctioned recording' of a 2011 publicly advertised weekly research seminar at TCD's Centre for Contemporary Irish History. The 26 October talk, by Morrison, was entitled 'Kilmichael revisited: the veterans speak'. I was one of at least two people openly to record it. A third regular attendee

<sup>7</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, pp147, 154-5. Hart's debt to Myers is clear in his 1992 PhD thesis, 'The Irish Republican Army and its Enemies', that became his *The IRA and its Enemies*, OUP, 1998. Myers discussed in Niall Meehan, 'The Embers of Revisionism', Aubane, 2017, p17 (at <https://www.academia.edu/34075119>).

<sup>8</sup> See Jack Hepworth (Morrison's Oxford University Canon Murray Fellow successor) review, <https://www.theirishstory.com/2022/05/26/book-review-kilmichael-the-life-and-afterlife-of-an-ambush/>, accessed 22 June 2022. At the 24 May 2022 book launch in Dublin, Pádraig Yeates reported Morrison 'one of the fairest minded' 'Irish historians of the revolutionary era' (I am indebted to Pádraig Yeates for kindly sending me a copy of his remarks).

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19 Oct	Bombs along the Border: recollections of an Ordnance officer Colonel Joseph O'Sullivan
26 Oct	Kilmichael revisited: the veterans speak Eve Morrison, Trinity College Dublin
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Notice of talk by Eve Morrison, who objected afterwards to UCC historians listening to a recording

habitually recorded speakers in plain sight but was unsuccessful on this occasion. He made contact and asked if I could send him my recording. I did so. It found its way also to UCC historians, one of whom congratulated Dr Morrison. Instead of being pleased, she was alarmed. Her talk included portions of interviews with two Kilmichael Ambush participants, audio-taped in 1969 by Roman Catholic priest Father John Chisholm. Morrison reported that Fr Chisholm was 'especially wary' of UCC, apparently because a critic of Peter Hart had worked there previously as an administrator.<sup>9</sup> We will return to Fr Chisholm, who attended Morrison's 2011 talk, and his important contribution.

Morrison's intensive inquiries led back to me and now this 'research' is displayed for readers of academic history. Not content with her revelation, Morrison further advised that 'Meehan [is] a former press officer for the Dublin Branch of People's Democracy (PD)'. True, I held the position during the 1982 Irish general election, supporting PD-sponsored Bernadette McAliskey in the Dublin North Central constituency. Despite this political pedigree, Morrison warns that 'Niall Meehan's arguments [have] an undeserved radical gloss'. This, of course, is a specimen of *ad hominem* 'argument' Dr Morrison

<sup>9</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, pp159, 252 (n46). In her note 46, Morrison cites 2012 email correspondence on the issue and notes in reference to her text, 'Meehan acknowledged this'. As I dispute that, the otherwise private correspondence is included in an appendix.

otherwise decries. While describing what I did for three weeks in 1982, Morrison ignored, in that it is unmentioned, ten-years as a Communications Department lecturer in Dublin City University, to 1995, followed by twenty-six as Journalism and Media Faculty Head at Griffith College Dublin. In the latter post, I researched revisionist historiography, including on the Kilmichael Ambush.<sup>10</sup>

It is difficult to discern what aspect of the discussion Morrison's information serves. To take a comparable example, formerly a member of the Rathmines branch of the Socialist Workers Movement (SWM), during the 1980s-90s Morrison contributed engaged political commentary and film criticism to its newspaper, *Socialist Worker*.<sup>11</sup> As interesting as that may be, it seems to me to have little if any relevance to the discussion at hand.

In a recent *Irish Times* Q&A session Dr Morrison made a curious new claim, that criticism of Peter Hart's work was, in part, a product of requirements of the 'modern republican movement', an insinuation also without solid foundation.<sup>12</sup> During the 1980s, her book claims, independence veterans and members of Kilmichael and Crossbarry Ambush commemoration committees were 'openly sympathetic to Sinn Féin and the IRA'. That was because they 'took part in West Cork H-Block Committee support group events during the 1980-81 hunger strikes'. On that basis, since they did the same elsewhere, Dr Morrison's former SWM

comrades were equally sympathetic to Sinn Féin and the IRA, a notion they (and possibly she), might vigorously contest.<sup>13</sup>

Colouring-in the debate with a political crayon typifies Dr Morrison's approach, in this case reducing criticism of Peter Hart's research to a Sinn Féin influence, indeed conspiracy, but no compelling empirical evidence is proffered, mostly guilt by alleged association.

Morrison advances another unsupported claim, that the controversy surrounding Hart's work derives from a 'traditional nationalist narrative' of the War of Independence which cannot bear 'besmirching' of 'Ireland's national heroes'. This too is a mistaken caricature. She asserted also that Hart critics extol 'the authentic, uncontested, grass-roots nationalist history'. Her one citation is to Jack Lane's, 'What is revisionism?' Lane briefly noted a 'consensus', before the emergence of a dominant revisionist paradigm he critiqued at length.<sup>14</sup>

### Peter Hart and Teddy Katz

Morrison also claimed that, 'the campaign mounted against Hart involved a blatant and sustained effort to silence and censor it [sic]'. Perhaps in an attempt to sustain this serious allegation, and in consideration of the world beyond Ireland, Morrison noted 'obvious parallels' between criticism of Peter Hart's research and controversy surrounding an MA thesis in Israel's Haifa University by Teddy Katz.<sup>15</sup> Exploring Peter Hart's research alongside Katz's is indeed instructive, but not in the way Dr Morrison evidently believes.

In 1998 mature student Teddy Katz, a left-wing Israeli Zionist, detailed a 22-23 May 1948 massacre of 200 mostly young men by regular Israeli troops in Tantura village, Palestine. According to Ilan Pappé, author of *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2007), the wipeout was one of approximately 40 such massacres. At that time, when the state of Israel was formed, upward of 750,000 Palestinian refugees were expelled or fled to neighbouring states. Pappé noted,

Katz interviewed 135 persons for his thesis. The Tantura chapter is based on the testimonies of forty witnesses, by coincidence twenty Arabs and twenty Jews, all of them taped.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p137.

<sup>14</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, pp2, 135, 155. Jack Lane, 'What is revisionism?', <https://aubanehistoricalsociety.org/ahs40.pdf> (accessed, 13 June 2022). Morison's one cited reference to the term 'besmirch' (p133) undermines her usage. UCC historian John A Murphy criticised an invitation to Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams, to address the 1983 Kilmichael Ambush commemoration. Murphy, a vociferous opponent of the post 1969 IRA campaign, said the invitation 'besmirched' a 'story of resistance by a sturdy people'.

<sup>15</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p170.

<sup>16</sup> Ilan Pappé, 'The Tantura case in Israel: The Katz research and trial' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, v30, n3, Spring 2001, p21. Jonathan Ofir, 'The Tantura massacre of 1948 and the academic character assassination of Teddy Katz', 3 March 2016, <https://mondoweiss.net/2016/03/the-tantura-massacre-of-1948-and-the-academic-character-assassination-of-teddy-katz/>, accessed 20 June 2022.

<sup>10</sup> *Kilmichael Afterlife*, pp159, 171, 252 (n47). In note 47 I am additionally described, 'Meehan actively campaigned against state censorship of republicans in the 1980s and 1990s'. I conducted academic research on censorship under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act and was, during the latter period, secretary of the Repeal Section 31 Campaign. Of Morrison's eleven newspaper references following, just one, which should have come before Morrison's Section 31 observation, references the 1982 election. The remaining ten, all Section 31 references, include some on DCU research, plus on a significant High Court and Supreme Court finding against RTÉ self-censorship in 1992-3 (see 1992-93 RTÉ reports on Niall Meehan *YouTube* channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiV3mgEs4hE-M8QrT7IYVg>). One *Irish Press* (published Mon to Sat) reference gives 24 April 1988, a Sunday. Morrison's main text elsewhere misreports effects of the ministerial censorship order under Section 31: it did not prohibit 'media interviews with the IRA' (p137), but rather, post October 1976, Irish radio and television interviews with representatives and spokespersons for various organizations, including Sinn Féin and the IRA (newspapers were unaffected); the RTÉ Authority was not sacked in 1972 'after it broadcast an interview with IRA leader Seán Mac Stiofáin' (p140), but for broadcasting a report of an interview; the censorship order, pre-1976, banned utterances promoting political ends by violent means. It did not name organisations.

<sup>11</sup> At one point Morrison criticised what she termed African-American film director Spike Lee's 'essentially shallow perception of racism', *Socialist Worker*, for *International Socialism and a Workers' Republic*, 82, October 1991. On another occasion, Jason O'Donnell from Cork accused Morrison of contributing 'crude reductionist drivel'. She had asserted, 'CAPITALISM. The way it distorts every aspect of our lives including our sexual relationships, is the root cause of rape', SW 47, May 1988 (punctuation as in original). Rathmines information from SWM contemporary.

<sup>12</sup> 'Kilmichael: a 1920 battle that is still being fought', <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/2022/06/07/kilmichael-a-1920-battle-that-is-still-being-fought/> (accessed, 20 June 2022).



Teddy Katz in *Tantura*, directed by Alon Schwarz: robbed of academic award by Haifa University, Israel, after documenting Israeli Army Tantura Village massacre of 200 Palestinians in 1948. Compared by Eve Morrison with treatment of Peter Hart.

Katz's completed research achieved a mark of 97%.<sup>17</sup>

After a newspaper publicised Katz's research, Israeli Army interviewees sued for libel, in effect denying what was recorded. Katz was nearing 60 and suffered a stroke shortly before the case was heard. He had significant money worries, exacerbated by the legal challenge. He was under intense immediate-family, media and other pressures to recant. At a 6-hour private meeting attended by relatives, soon after the case started, Katz was induced to apologise and to rescind his findings. He almost immediately regretted his action, but the court refused to allow retraction of his signature. Independently, Haifa withdrew Katz's MA award but then gave the option of resubmission. A revised and expanded MA, reinforcing original findings, was failed under highly dubious, if not rigged, circumstances. Katz was thereby prevented from pursuing research at doctoral level. There is little objective doubt that the Tantura massacre occurred as Katz described it and that some academics, cheered on by some in the Israeli media, coordinated to successfully rob Katz of his academic award, in an assault on academic freedom.<sup>18</sup>

Peter Hart's 1992 PhD dissertation was also regarded as brilliant, but it was not subject to a normally-standard *viva voce* examination. The December 1992 external examiner's report noted an 'outstanding thesis' with a 'deliberately revisionist perspective'. Chapters on the November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush and killings in late April 1922, that would later prove most controversial, were singled out. The report was signed 'Charles Townshend', Keele University.

In January 2008, Professor Charles Townshend

told me he did not examine Hart's thesis and queried supervisor David Fitzpatrick's assertion that he did. In April he noted, amongst other things,

PhD vivas are the kind of thing one never usually forgets. [...] Two further inquiries you might make: who was the internal examiner? and is there any record of TCD paying me a fee?

I shared with Prof Townshend my understanding that there was no viva, to which he responded, 'No viva? - now that really is more than puzzling'. TCD then faxed Professor Townshend a copy of the examiner's report. In his last, May 2008, communication Prof Townshend told me he had suffered 'a memory lapse' and now asserted that he was the external examiner. Professor Fitzpatrick, as was then accepted practice, was both internal examiner and supervisor of the work. Prof Townshend confirmed: a) there was indeed no viva; b) uniquely, he had not retained a copy of Hart's PhD thesis; and c) his examination fee went astray in the US, where he had been researching.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps, given the assertion that they are seldom forgotten, the highly unusual absence of a *viva voce* examination caused Prof Townshend's memory failure. Had it been held, anomalies and weaknesses in Hart's research might have been addressed at an early stage.

Hart's work was, as his Dictionary of Irish Biography entry asserts, 'lavishly praised'. Unlike Katz, he obtained grants enabling him to continue his research. Hart obtained full-time academic employment in Queen's University Belfast (QUB) in 1998, followed by a prestigious 2002 appointment as Canada Research Chair in Irish Studies at Memorial University, Newfoundland, before his untimely death in 2010 aged 44.<sup>20</sup> After 1998 Hart faced criticism from individuals. There was no institutional threat to his PhD award. Hart suffered no discernable career ill-effects. If anything, as Joost Augusteijn recently noted, Hart's QUB employment was 'partly politically inspired'. Katz was denied the right to pursue research in a university, never mind become employed in one.<sup>21</sup>

Hart's PhD research on Cork pales in comparison with Katz's MA, in terms of scale. Whereas Katz tape-recorded 135 named individuals, Hart interviewed, anonymously, 13 republicans and 13 Protestants, whose utterances he mostly noted, not recorded. He said he personally interviewed two participants about the Kilmichael Ambush, and claimed access to three

<sup>19</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, pp146-7. Townshend 1992 examiner's report and 2008 email correspondence, January to May 2008, in author's possession.

<sup>20</sup> John Gibney, 'Hart, Peter', Dictionary of Irish Biography, <https://www.dib.ie/biography/hart-peter-a10179> (accessed 29 July 2022).

<sup>21</sup> Joost Augusteijn's review of Morrison's book noted, 'I know from insiders that the decision to offer Peter Hart a permanent position in Queen's in 1999, which had a negative effect on my own chances of obtaining such a position, were partly politically inspired', 'The Kilmichael Ambush', <https://drb.ie/articles/the-kilmichael-ambush/>, accessed 1 November 2022. See also Augusteijn's illuminating, 'Teaching and researching Irish History in Northern Ireland: a Personal View', *European Review of History*, v9, n1, 2002, esp. pp109-111.

<sup>17</sup> Ilan Pappé, *Out of the Frame, the Struggle for Academic Freedom in Israel*, Pluto, 2010, p73. This book is essential reading on closing down intellectual inquiry in Israel.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter 3, 'The Katz Affair', pp71-86.

more participant interviews, audio-taped in 1969. That was untrue. At most Hart heard two, not five or more, participant ambush accounts. As we shall see Hart's two interviews, in particular, were highly problematic.

Hart's errors were far more serious than six discrepancies discovered in 230 Katz transcripts. On one occasion Katz inadvertently substituted 'Nazi' for 'German' in one interviewee's account of WWII German Army treatment of POWs. In another discrepancy, Katz

... summarised the testimony of a Tantura survivor, Abu Fihmi, as describing a killing, where the witness did not say this directly (though in fact, this is clearly what he meant).

On four occasions Katz,

... inserted a note from his written side notes, which was not audible in the taped testimony. Katz [said later] that many of the recordings were done in Arabic in noisy surroundings, and he had to get helpers in Umm El Fahm [an Arab village in Israel] to work out what was said, which was sometimes hardly audible.

While these were 'surely mistakes' they were also deemed 'trivial' transcription errors. Pappé observed, 'No discrepancies were found in any of the remaining 224 references concerning Tantura'.<sup>22</sup>

### Palestinians and Irish Protestants

Hart's methodological errors considerably distorted the historical record. He alleged in 1996 that the IRA ethnically cleansed Irish Protestants on a significant scale, writing,

Similar campaigns of what might be termed "ethnic cleansing" were waged in parts of King's and Queen's Counties, South Tipperary, Leitrim, Mayo, Limerick, Westmeath, Louth, and Cork. Worst of all was the massacre of fourteen men in West Cork in April, after an I.R.A. officer had been killed breaking into a house.<sup>23</sup>

It is notable that support for this assertion consisted of Hart's then forthcoming *The IRA and its Enemies*. As we shall discover, only the West Cork example had substance and that for a specific reason undermining Hart's claim. The rest were devoid of attempts at substantiation. The ethnic cleansing allegation was amplified publicly by, amongst others, Paul Bew of Queen's University Belfast and the BBC's Fergal Keane. As the essay following argues, Hart's claims appear to have been influenced by:

- a) Widespread news of actual ethnic cleansing in war torn Yugoslavia during the 1990s;
- b) Transposition of news reports into widely disseminated unionist propaganda, tarring the IRA with the same brush in Northern Ireland.

<sup>22</sup> Pappé, *op cit*, p26; Ofir, *op cit*.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Hart, 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland', p92, in Richard English and Graham Walker (eds.), *Unionism in Modern Ireland: new perspectives on politics and culture*, Gill and Macmillan, 1996. Morrison (*Aftermath*, p153) mistakenly asserted that the phrase was one of a number of 'polarising expressions' in Hart's *The IRA and its Enemies*, 1998.

## We stand with David Miller

READ THE OPEN LETTER



David Miller, misquoted by Eve Morrison. Miller is a real victim, like Teddy Katz, of hostility to objective analysis of the State of Israel. See <https://supportmiller.org/>. Morrison evidently believes that hounding critics of Zionism may be compared with critiques of Peter Hart's historiography.

It is a good example of Hart transporting views of the post-1968 Northern Ireland conflict backwards and southwards into 1918-23 Irish history.<sup>24</sup>

Be that as it may, due to the assertion being unsustainable, Hart contradicted himself in *The IRA at War*, an essay collection published in 2003. He now concluded, 'What happened in southern Ireland did not constitute 'ethnic cleansing''. Hart did not reference his 1996 claim, even though the same volume reproduced, without qualification, the essay containing it. Hart then denied, in 2006, having ever made an ethnic cleansing allegation.<sup>25</sup>

If particularly interested in ethnic violence in Ireland, Belfast and environs post-1920 was where to find it. Shootings, house burnings and expulsions, affecting thousands of Irish nationalists, socialists and trade unionists, were rife. Sectarian persecution of Roman Catholics, that became the hallmark of the new Northern Ireland territory, descended to a murderous level. Though they were less severe, partly because more successfully resisted, those attacks were analogous to what Palestinians experienced in 1948. Instead, Hart's assertion of systemic persecution of southern Irish Protestants was based on invention and exaggeration. For example, Hart once described West Cork's Bandon district as 'the Gaza Strip of the Irish Intifada'. In any case, unlike Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland, or Palestinians, Irish Protestants constituted an economically and socially privileged group that, with notable and significant exceptions, in general supported British rule.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See essay following.

<sup>25</sup> See Hart's essay collection, *The IRA at War*, OUP, 2003, in which his 1996 claim of ethnic cleansing is reproduced (p237) and, in a new essay, refuted without reference to the earlier assertion (p246). For Hart's denial that the claim was ever made, *Irish Times*, 28 June 2006. Paul Bew, 'History it ain't', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 October 1996; Fergal Keane, 'A timely reminder of the Irish Republic's brush with a kind of ethnic cleansing', *Independent* (Lon.), 28 September 2002. It should be noted that Hart in his 1992 PhD thesis and 1996 article inadvertently invented an additional, fourteenth, victim of the April 1922 killings (discussed later). See 'Distorting Irish History Two, the road from Dunmanway: Peter Hart's treatment of the 1922 'April killings' in West Cork', see <https://www.academia.edu/612672/>.

<sup>26</sup> 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/](https://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-

Comparison of Hart's with Katz's retraction is misleading. Katz's research denial, made due to overwhelming public and private pressure, was almost immediately retracted. Unlike with Hart, the evidence contradicted the denial and Katz felt an intense obligation to the memory of those killed. It also undermined Katz's sense of moral worth as an individual. He has continued to assist in publicising what happened in Tantura in 1948.

Not content merely with the Katz example, Morrison also compared criticism of Hart with what she termed other 'high-profile public efforts to censor, discourage or otherwise prevent research into controversial historical events'. She cited Polish government attempts to outlaw publication of research on 'Polish complicity in the holocaust' during World War II. She mentioned also, on the other hand, 'right-wing Israeli students groups' that 'picket lectures, inspect reading lists and record the lectures of suspect academics, looking for signs of anti-Zionist bias'. The Irish state does not outlaw historical research and no student groups systematically confront or otherwise harass Irish university lecturers. The extended analogy, while instructive of Morrison's method, is, again, without foundation.<sup>27</sup>

It should be noted that academic research on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not merely compromised in Israeli, but also in British and US universities. Professor David Miller was sacked from Bristol University in 2021, following an organised anti-semitism smear, for publishing objective research on Zionist propaganda networks.<sup>28</sup> Anyone wishing to research or, more importantly, contest real intimidation, harassment and bullying of academics, should examine the disturbingly instructive Miller case.<sup>29</sup> In an ironic twist, Morrison holds Miller responsible for my 'undeserved radical gloss', because the *Spinwatch* website, with which Miller is associated, published my research and also criticism of Morrison by John Young, the son of Kilmichael Ambush participant Ned Young.<sup>30</sup>

94; Pádraig Ó Ruairé, chapter seven, 'Belfast's Bloody Sunday', *Truce*, Mercier, 2016. Kieran Glennon, *From Pogrom to Civil War; Tom Glennon and the Belfast IRA*, 2013, p264. See also John D. Brewer, Gareth I. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland*, Longman, 1998. Peter Hart, *The IRA at War*, 2003, OUP, p31.

<sup>27</sup> Morrison *Aftermath*, pp170-1.

<sup>28</sup> See, 'Support David Miller' at <https://supportmiller.org/> (accessed 26 August 2022). See, for US examples, William I Robinson, Maryam S Griffin (Eds), *We Will Not Be Silenced: The Academic Repression of Israel's Critics*, Pluto, 2017. See also, for Israel, Ilan Pappé, *Out of the Frame: The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Israel*, Pluto, 20014.

<sup>29</sup> See 'Support David Miller' at <https://supportmiller.org/> (accessed 26 August 2022).

<sup>30</sup> Morrison *Aftermath*, pp170-1. Niall Meehan, 'Why Spinwatch is publishing John Young's Statement', at <https://spinwatch.org/index.php/Issues/northern-ireland/item/301-why-spinwatch-is-publishing-john-young-s-statement>. Morrison mistakenly believes, p255 (n93) that 'the Spinwatch website has been taken down', repeated p256 (n101). She also asserted, pp168, 256 (n100) that David Miller 'initially declined to offer me a right of reply'

Hart was forced by the weight (or absence) of evidence over many years to contradict, albeit silently, an ill-founded assertion. The ethnic cleansing error, which pre-dated *The IRA and its Enemies*, was one of a number of related, arguably more serious, mistakes. It is agreed, including by Morrison who acknowledged briefly 'an error of judgment on Hart's part', that *The IRA and its Enemies* censored a retrospective British Army assessment of Protestant-loyalist informing against the IRA. The British work was entitled, 'The Record of the Rebellion in Ireland in 1921 and the part played by the Army in Dealing with it (Intelligence)'. Citing it, Hart wrote,

The truth was that, as British intelligence officers recognized, 'in the south the Protestants and those who supported the Government rarely gave much information because, except by chance, they had not got it to give'.

On that basis, Hart alleged that Protestants, as distinct from Roman Catholics the IRA executed, were innocent sectarian victims and not actual informers or spies.

Hart omitted a passage following in the British text: 'An exception to this rule was in the Bandon area where there were many Protestant farmers who gave information'. It confirmed accurate IRA targeting in 1920-21, noting, 'many [...] were murdered while almost all of the remainder suffered grave material loss'.<sup>31</sup> One year later, during the late evening and early mornings of 26-29 April 1922, after an unarmed IRA officer was shot dead, thirteen West Cork

to John Young. She cited, 'Email Miller to Morrison, 29 Aug. 2012'. On request, Miller forwarded a copy of this correspondence. Morrison's assertion is not accurate. She initially wrote, 'I have prepared a short response to John Young's statement. I hope you will publish it'. Miller replied, 'please send it to me. We don't normally post responses, but we will have a look'. Morrison then wrote, 'Actually, on reflection, I don't think I'll bother replying to Mr. Young's statement. I stand over everything I wrote, but there is no point in dragging things out'. Miller replied, 30 August, 'I wonder if you might be inadvertently dragging things out by not replying. I am no expert on the period, but whoever is right about what John Young said or about what Ned Young did or didn't say, there do seem to be serious issues under debate here. In the interests, therefore, of settling at least some elements of the debate one way or another, it might be worth you attempting to demonstrate that you are correct? Anyway, let me know what you think'. There was no response. Over a year later, 14 October 2013, Morrison instead requested, not unreasonably, that the website category of the item, 'Northern Ireland', be changed. Miller agreed. On 8 April 2014 Miller noted that Morrison had responded to John Young in *History Ireland*. He offered, in the absence of one on Spinwatch, to insert a link. That was done. On 29 September 2014 Morrison concluded with, 'I note you have posted my response as requested, thanks for that'. In the course of her discussion, Morrison observed on 14 February 2014, 'Niall Meehan is no historian', to which Miller responded (8 April), 'I suppose you mean Niall Meehan is a historian with whom you disagree?'. The *History Ireland* correspondence referred to is collected in 'Kilmichael Ambush 1920-2020 Relatives Speak: Maureen Deasy (daughter of Liam Deasy) Seán Kelleher (son of Tom Kelleher) Maura O'Donovan (daughter of Pat O'Donovan) John Young (son of Ned Young) plus historians Niall Meehan, Eve Morrison, Pádraig Ó Ruairé', at <https://www.academia.edu/44579836/> (accessed 26 August 2022).

<sup>31</sup> Morrison *Aftermath*, p161, Hart citation, *Enemies*, pp305-6.

Protestant civilians in an area between Bandon, Dunmanway and Clonakilty, were killed. In 1996 Hart had reported these killings as the 'worst example' of IRA ethnic cleansing. He devoted the penultimate *IRA and its Enemies* chapter in 1998 to them. On the basis of his censorship, Hart asserted in relation to ten of the victims,

Behind the killings lay a jumble of individual histories and possible motives. In the end, however, the fact of the victims' religion is inescapable. These men were shot because they were Protestant.<sup>32</sup>

Hart concluded in relation to the killers and their alleged prejudices,

These were angry and frightened young men acting on impulse and, in some cases at least, alcohol. In their view Protestant unionists were traitors. Their status was codified in the political language—or mythology—of the day in terms such as: landlord, landgrabber, loyalist, imperialist, Orangeman, Freemason, Free Stater, spy, and informer. These blanket categories made the victims' individual identities—their ages and helplessness—irrelevant. All were enemies. All were guilty. [...]

The April massacre is as unknown as the Kilmichael Ambush is celebrated, yet one is as important as the other to an understanding of the Cork I.R.A. Nor can the murders be relegated to the fringes of the revolution or described as an isolated event. They were as much a part of the reality of violence as the killings at Kilmichael. The patterns of perception and victimization they reveal are of a piece with the whole revolution. These deaths can be seen as the culmination of a long process of social definition which produced both the heroes of Kilmichael and the victims of the April massacre. The identity of the former cannot be fully understood without the latter.<sup>33</sup>

The censored British analysis suggested an accurate IRA assessment in 1921 of significant loyalist informing and identified informers, in other words activity assisting British counterinsurgency.<sup>34</sup> In April 1922, after the republican split over the Anglo-Irish Treaty, in the lead up to Civil War, that IRA assessment appears to have had further repercussions. Suppressing this possible interpretation through censorship was but one example of Hart's flawed methodology.

In *The IRA and its Enemies* generally, in order to justify his eventual conclusions with regard to the April 1922 killings, Hart continually alleged IRA sectarian intolerance. Two paragraphs on page 83 illustrate the superficial appearance of even-handedness:

British anger also occasionally expressed itself in sectarian terms. Anti-Catholic songs were heard sung during reprisals, threatening notices and letters from the so-called 'Anti-Sinn Fein Societies' often used

Orange imagery, priests were sometimes singled out for revenge, and rioting soldiers sometimes declared themselves out to get 'the Catholics'. This does not seem to have been a major factor in Crown forces violence, however.

The same process took place among Irish republicans. [...] The politics of revenge also took an unexpected direction as [Irish] nationalism veered towards sectarianism in late 1920 and guerrilla war became, in some places, a kind of tribal war. As the war escalated, Cork's Protestant minority increasingly came to be seen by the IRA as 'the enemy within'. As 1920 progressed, they became prime targets for robbery, extortion, dispossession, and murder.

Here, occasional sectarianism is 'not a major factor in Crown forces violence', whereas the IRA as a whole allegedly engaged 'in a kind of tribal war' from late 1920 against an 'enemy within', all Cork Protestants. On page 290 he concluded, without evidential support, that Cork Protestants were 'outsiders and enemies' and 'fair game' for the IRA plus 'a large segment of the Catholic population'.

Taking Hart's first, 'Crown forces', paragraph, two newspaper articles and former British Auxiliary commander F.P. Crozier's memoir, *Ireland Forever*, were cited.<sup>35</sup> Support for the second paragraph, containing the IRA sectarianism allegation, was self-referential. It read, 'See Part IV', in other words fifty pages following. These pages reproduced Hart's censorship of the British Army archival source and his account of the 26-29 April killings.

Four years after publication of *The IRA and its Enemies*, in 2002 Hart edited *British Intelligence in Ireland, 1920-1921, the Final Reports*. That was an abridged account of the British assessment he had censored. Hart termed it the 'most trustworthy [archival source] we have'. He now included the passage omitted in 1998 but with no explanation of the earlier omission. Instead, Hart inserted a deflecting footnote distorting the 'trustworthy' British assessment in order to question its accuracy,

In *The IRA and its Enemies* (pp 293-315) I argue that the great majority of those shot as informers in Cork were not British agents, and that many actual informers were spared because they were protected by their social position and connections. Some condemned West Cork Protestants did give, or try to give, information but there is no evidence that they acted en masse despite this statement.<sup>36</sup>

The passage and earlier citations illustrate Hart's faux sociology. As detailed by John Borgonovo in 2007, IRA intelligence was sophisticated and, in general, accurate. Borgonovo's research was the first from within the academy to criticise Hart's approach,

<sup>32</sup> *Enemies*, p288.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, pp291-2

<sup>34</sup> For more extensive discussion: Brian Murphy, 'Peter Hart, the issue of sources', *Irish Political Review*, 2005 (also in Meehan, Murphy 2008); Niall Meehan, 'Examining Peter Hart', *Field Day Review* 10, 2014, p124 (nn72-6).

<sup>35</sup> Hart, *Enemies*, p83, n58, 'Crozier, *Ireland for Ever*, 114-15; *Irish Times*, 1 Dec. 1920; *Examiner*, 25 Sept. 1921 [sic]. 25 September 1921 was a Sunday, the *Cork Examiner* appearing Monday to Saturday.

<sup>36</sup> In Brian Murphy, 'Peter Hart, the issue of sources', IPR, v20, n7, July 2005, at <https://www.academia.edu/83590967>.

referring to it at one point as ‘irresponsible’.<sup>37</sup> I was reliably informed in 2008 that Professor David Fitzpatrick and another leading Irish historian advised Irish Academic Press, unsuccessfully, that Borgonovo’s research did not merit publication.

Hart’s 2002 editorship witnessed a new act of censorship. While notifying readers of non-publication of some elements of the British analysis, Hart failed to state that a section on ‘The People’, was omitted. It contained highly prejudicial material, including,

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.<sup>38</sup>

That newly censored passage contained a more crudely expressed variant of Hart’s view. To sum up, in 1998 in order to accuse the IRA of sectarianism, Hart censored commentary in a ‘most trustworthy’ British source on Protestant-loyalist informing, in an area where the IRA targeted some allegedly active Protestant loyalists. Following this, in 2002 Hart censored material demonstrating British, not Irish, prejudice. Typically incisive, the late Brian Murphy noted in 2005 that though the British commentary contained racist and anti-Irish material, it did not accuse the IRA of sectarianism.<sup>39</sup>

In 2021 John Regan of Dundee University detailed, in findings so far ignored, falsification in *The IRA and its Enemies* of statistics on southern Irish Protestant emigration during the War of Independence. Contrary to Hart’s tale of Protestants being driven out by IRA activities in large numbers, Regan said that data on departures was in line with previous emigration trends under British rule. Indeed, in 2013 David Fitzpatrick, Hart’s doctoral supervisor, examined records of Cork’s Methodist congregations and said they demonstrated no abnormal flight or mass persecution. He concluded that, ‘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’, meaning it resulted from inadequate reproduction and a consequent aging population. The empirical, statistical, basis of Hart’s analysis was faulty. It is noteworthy that, though she cited Regan’s research in order to disparage it, Morrison failed to state Regan’s central argument, that Hart’s statistics were falsified.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> John Borgonovo, *Spies, informers and the ‘Anti-Sinn Féin society’: the intelligence war in Cork City, 1919–1921*, IAP, 2007, p97; see also pp84–5.

<sup>38</sup> Brian Murphy, *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> John Regan, “‘All the nightmare images of ethnic conflict in the twentieth century are here’: erroneous statistical proofs and the search for ethnic violence in revolutionary Ireland, 1917–1923”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2021. David Fitzpatrick, ‘Protestant Depopulation in

The problem with Hart’s research is not that he came to particular conclusions but that he did so based on withholding evidence pointing to opposite interpretations and also that he manipulated and falsified evidence.

Morrison prefaced her brief ‘error of judgement’ observation with, ‘Hart’s errors have been blown out of all proportion’ and also commentary on allegedly unreasonable ‘relentless’ criticism. She then dwelt on a draft of the British intelligence assessment Hart censored being completed prior to the April 1922 killings, ignoring its substance.<sup>41</sup>

### Southern Protestants

The creation of a sectarian society in Ireland by Britain created also sectarian privilege and associated political loyalties based on religion, which intersected with class inequalities in Irish society. Nevertheless, pro-British southern Protestants were less numerous and also notably less sectarian than avowedly Protestant unionists in the new ‘Northern Ireland’. That territory was constructed from six of Ulster’s nine counties. A two-thirds sectarian majority sustained Northern Ireland within the UK. As Roman Catholic Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) turned Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officer John M Regan put it, ‘the further one gets from [the Northern Ireland capital] Belfast, the less sectarianism there is generally’.<sup>42</sup>

A sense that ‘Ulster’ unionists had betrayed southern counterparts through separation, plus indiscriminate Crown Force activity, some of it driven by northern loyalists in the RIC, undermined pro-British southern Protestant certainties.<sup>43</sup> They began, in significant numbers, to oppose unionist propaganda alleging that republicans targeted them. They protested also against attacks on them by British forces. This can be illustrated in letters from John Annan Bryce to the London *Times* on 30 September 1920 and subsequently. Bryce, the younger brother of a former British Chief Secretary for Ireland, noted what had happened after Bantry Protestant merchant G.W. Biggs wrote on 24 July 1920 to the *Irish Times*, to state that no sectarian ill feeling affected his business or personal life. Afterwards, Biggs’ family home was

Revolutionary Ireland’, *Irish Historical Studies*, XXXVIII, v38, n152, November 2013. Morrison, *Aftermath*, p168.

<sup>41</sup> See Brian Murphy, ‘Peter Hart, the issue of sources’, *Irish Political Review*, v20n7, July 2005, included here as an appendix. Discussed in Niall Meehan, ‘Examining Peter Hart’, *Field Day Review* 10, 2014, p124 (nn72–6). *Aftermath*, pp161–2.

<sup>42</sup> In Joost Augusteijn, ed., *Memoirs of John M. Regan, a Catholic Officer in the RIC and RUC 1909–48*, 2007 p78.

<sup>43</sup> See on Munster Divisional Police Commissioner, Lieutenant Colonel Gerard Smyth and 1920 Listowel RIC mutiny, witness statement of RIC Constable Jeremiah Mee, BMH WS379 at <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/> (for a partial RTÉ reenactment, in a collaborative project between Irish Military Archives and the *History Show*, RTE Radio 1, <https://soundcloud.com/military-archives/014-jeremiah-mee-ric>); on RIC District Inspector Oswald Swanzy, implicated in shooting dead Cork Lord Mayor, Tomás Mac Curtin, Brendan O’Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, Volume II: Control, OUP, 2019, pp22–3.

commandeered by British military and his substantial shop was burned down. Annan Bryce complained of a British threat to burn republican-owned properties, if loyalist dwellings were targeted. He observed, citing Biggs's experience,

There is no justification for the issue of such a notice in this district, where the only damage to loyalists' premises has been done by the police.

In later correspondence Annan Bryce reported the arrest and deportation back to Ireland of his wife Violet, for attempting to speak in Wales on British reprisal burnings and other atrocities.<sup>44</sup>

Brigade Major Bernard Montgomery, of later World War Two Battle of El-Alamein fame, who served in Cork, noted, 'it never bothered me a bit how many houses we burned' plus 'I regarded all civilians as 'shinners' and I never had any dealings with them'.<sup>45</sup> Evidently, Protestant civilians were similarly disregarded. Hart, who largely ignored stated Protestant experience, distorted Montgomery's remark to casually and disingenuously insert his view of IRA intolerance. He implied, not citing Montgomery, a sectarian distinction between 'any Irishman' and 'native Protestants',

And, since almost any Irishman was automatically deemed a 'Shinner' and an enemy (just as native Protestants were so often defined as 'loyalists' and enemies by the I.R.A.), casual violence became routine. Alienation generated violence and vice versa.<sup>46</sup>

This discussion is expanded upon in the essay following.

Returning to the stand-out April 1922 killings, during the 1919-21 War of Independence the IRA successfully targeted some members of the alleged West Cork civilian pro-British network. After the January 1922 Republican split over the Anglo-Irish Treaty, prior to the Irish Civil War in June 1922, some republicans appear to have returned to target more. The killings were sparked on the morning of 26 April, when three loyalists were deemed responsible for killing an unnamed IRA officer. During the late hours of 26 April and following, ten more civilian killings followed. Failure to identify individual perpetrators has inhibited definitive conclusions. This difficulty affects also a possibly associated arrest on the afternoon of 26 April, followed by execution, of three senior British

<sup>44</sup> For Annan Bryce letters, House of Commons questions, editorials, see *Times* (Lon.), 30 Sep, 8 Oct, 1, 2, 4, 9, 12, 16 Nov 1920, summarised in Eamon Dyas, 'The Crown's Campaign Against Protestant Neutrality in Cork During the Irish War of Independence', *Church & State* 86, Autumn 2006, at, [https://www.atholbooks.org/archives/cands/cs\\_articles/bryce.php](https://www.atholbooks.org/archives/cands/cs_articles/bryce.php) (accessed 17 October 2022).

<sup>45</sup> Montgomery in Nigel Hamilton, *Monty, the Making of a General 1887-1942*, Hamish Hamilton, 1981, pp158, 160. Also see, John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the "Anti-Sinn Féin Society": The Intelligence War in Cork City, 1920-1921*, Irish Academic Press, 2007, p157.

<sup>46</sup> Hart, *Enemies*, p83, unsupported observation. Montgomery named as 'civilians as shinners' author later, pp101, 139.

intelligence officers on active duty in plain clothes in Macroom. Two were recognised as having tortured suspects during interrogations.<sup>47</sup>

In a round-up on allegedly paranoid republican perceptions of 'loyalist conspiracy', Hart briefly noted the 'kidnapped' Macroom officers' fate on page 280. Their status as spies was placed within inverted commas, concluding a passage dismissing,

... conspiracy theories [that] were flourishing in southern Ireland at this time, fed by political uncertainty, paranoia, and the continuing fear of renewed war with Britain. On the same day that [IRA officer Michael O'Neill] was shot [dead by the first victims of the April killings], for example, another republican was killed in a raid in Wexford<sup>48</sup>] after receiving 'information that certain Orangemen possessed firearms'.

In a separate and disconnected, discussion, 166 pages earlier, Hart more accurately described the British officers as 'still plying their dangerous trade'. While a connection between the officer's fate and the first or subsequent civilian killings is by no means proved, the executions were a highly-significant simultaneous event Hart minimised. They led to a large-scale confrontation between British forces and the IRA.<sup>49</sup> Evidently, dwelling on this episode between the IRA and its enemy did not suit Hart's thesis. Hart also, it should be noted, cited the 1 May *Irish Times* on three more 'kidnapped', then released, British officers. They were fictitious, the newspaper did report what Hart claimed.

Indisputably, as distinct from his critics, Hart engaged in censorship and distortion. Teddy Katz and those who defend his work occupy a similar relationship to the Israeli academy, as do critics of Hart's research to the Irish and British academy. No critique of Hart's work, from the late Brian Murphy and Manus O'Riordan, from Joost Augusteijn, John Borgonovo, Seamus Deane, Luke Gibbons, Conor Kostick, Barry Keane, Brendan O'Leary, John Regan, Meda Ryan and myself, display the extreme characteristics, by authors she does not name, Morrison complains of.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Michael Walsh, WS 1521. See also, Patrick J. Twohig, *Green Tears for Hecuba*, 1994, pp 227-8, 341, 343; Dan Corkery, BMH WS 1719, Sean Healy 1479, Michael Walsh 1521, Tomás Ó Maoileoin (Malone), 845; John Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, Cork UP, 2011, p38; AJS (Stephen) Brady, *The Briar of Life*, Original Writing, 210, p196; Charlie Browne, *The Story of the 7th*, 2007, p82

<sup>48</sup> Wexford, in Leinster, is over 200 Kilometres from Bandon, in Munster.

<sup>49</sup> John Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, Cork UP, 2011, pp38-9. See also Nigel Hamilton, *Monty, the Making of a General 1887-1942*, Hamish Hamilton, 1981, p163. Hart cited Hamilton but his incorrect pagination (153-54) should be 162-63.

<sup>50</sup> Alphabetically: Joost Augusteijn, The Kilmichael ambush, Oct 2022, <https://drb.ie/articles/the-kilmichael-ambush/> (accessed 29 Oct 2022); Joost Augusteijn review of Coolacres, *History Ireland*, V17, n3, May-June 2009; John Borgonovo, *Spies, informers and the 'anti-Sinn Féin society': the intelligence war in Cork City, 1919-1921*, IAP, 2006; John Borgonovo, 'Review Article: Revolutionary Violence and Irish Historiography', IHS, n150, v37, November 2012; Seamus

Articulating various criticisms of Hart's research exercises and upholds academic freedoms. Morrison's censorship allegation, besides being unfounded, illustrates again over-heated rhetoric substituting for evidence.

### Kilmichael Ambush

The Kilmichael Ambush argument, the main subject of Morrison's book, is to a large extent about evidence-use in history writing, not who-shot-whom. Those who defend Hart's methods tend to display evidence like a barrister defending a client. Some facts, however significant and relevant, are ignored. Evidence selectively presented, some of it insignificant or irrelevant, attempts to convince the jury of academic and public opinion that Hart's view of the IRA as an ethno sectarian association of prejudiced Roman Catholics was justified.

People may of course believe what they like about the Kilmichael Ambush, at which 15 British Auxiliaries and a Black and Tan were killed, plus three IRA fighters.<sup>51</sup> Peter Hart's methodology, consisting in part of controversial anonymous interviews, provides little basis for rational beliefs on the subject. His assertion that ambush commander Tom Barry was a lying serial-killer was especially provocative.<sup>52</sup>

Hart's central point was that a 'false surrender' narrative, in Barry's *Guerilla Days in Ireland* (1949) and subsequently, was a lie. Barry alleged that IRA fighters were fired on as they approached to take what they assumed was a genuine surrender. Two IRA fatalities resulted from this Auxiliary 'false surrender' ruse, justifying Barry disregarding further surrender calls and leaving, he thought, no enemy survivors.<sup>53</sup> For Hart, Barry's 'lies and evasions' about this event covered up a 'massacre' of prisoners. He asserted 'There was no false surrender as [Barry] described it. Any surviving Auxiliaries were simply

Deane, 'Fact and fury', *Guardian* (Lon.), 6 January 2001; Luke Gibbons, 'Challenging the Canon: Revisionism and Cultural Criticism', in Seamus Deane (ed.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. III, Field Day, 1990; Luke Gibbons, 'Families divided by ideals', *Irish Times*, 17 June 2006; Barry Keane, *Massacre in West Cork*, Mercier, 2014; Conor Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland: Popular Militancy 1917 to 1923*, CUP, 2009; Meda Ryan, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*, Mercier, 2003; Meda Ryan, 'The Kilmichael ambush, 1920: exploring the "provocative chapters"', *History*, v92, n306, April 2007; Niall Meehan and Brian P. Murphy, *Troubled history: a 10th anniversary critique of Peter Hart's 'The IRA and its enemies'*, Aubane, 2008; Niall Meehan, 'Examining Peter Hart', *Field Day Review*, 10, 2014; Manus O'Riordan, 'Peter Hart and Tom Barry', *History Ireland*, v13, n3, May-June 2005; Manus O'Riordan, 'Peter Hart and his enemies', *History Ireland*, v13, n5, Sept-Oct, 2005; Brendan O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, vol. 2, OUP, 2019. Brian P. Murphy, *The Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920*, Aubane, 2006. John Regan, *Myth and the Irish State*, IAP, 2013;

<sup>51</sup> One badly wounded Auxiliary, Frederick Forde, was left for dead, though survived. Cecil Guthrie escaped, but he was captured and killed before he could report what had happened.

<sup>52</sup> Hart, *Enemies*, p100.

<sup>53</sup> The course of the battle is outlined in Niall Meehan, 'Examining Peter Hart', *Field Day Review* 10, 2014, <https://www.academia.edu/8348624>.

'exterminated'. Hart concluded that 'Kilmichael was a brave, daring, and even brilliant ambush but it turned into a massacre' that belonged to a 'world of 'disappearances' and revenge killings'.<sup>54</sup> This 'world of 'disappearances' and revenge killings' constituted the organising core of Hart's perception of the War of Independence, that was integrated into his analysis of the Kilmichael Ambush.

The Kilmichael encounter, small by international standards, was big in the Irish context, not merely as the single largest defeat of British forces in the field. It was pivotal in establishing an Irish capacity to resist British counter-insurgency. British reaction in 1920 was spear-headed by augmenting a demoralised and increasingly depleted RIC with, in the main, relatively well paid English recruits with First World War experience. An autonomous officer-based RIC militia, the Auxiliary Division, plus ordinary recruits to the RIC known as the Black and Tans, appeared in Ireland during the second half of 1920. These forces, referred to in 1965 by Conor Cruise O'Brien, before his revisionist turn, as a sort of English *Freikorps*, reinforced and systematised what the RIC had started. They burned down or otherwise destroyed villages, cities, towns, and economic infrastructure. They also shot and tortured suspects plus uninvolved citizens. Their notoriety was such that a 2021 Irish government proposal to commemorate the centenary of the RIC's abolition was at first severely criticised, then scrapped.<sup>55</sup>

Some are puzzled by the Kilmichael controversy. A question asked, in summary, is, 'Who cares if Auxiliary survivors were executed?'. It is as though, given their reputation and also the IRA's incapacity to house prisoners, it was to be expected and was unremarkable. Defenders of Hart's analysis point to Tom Barry's reported pre-ambush injunction to his troops,

There was no plan for retirement until the column marched away victoriously. This would be a fight to the end. ... The Auxiliaries were killers without mercy. If they won no prisoners would be taken back to Macroom. The alternative now was kill or be killed.<sup>56</sup>

While Barry spoke of Auxiliaries killing prisoners as a matter of course, his warning about the consequences of a bloody close-encounter should not be considered remarkable. The probable consequence, potentially, of an IRA soldier not doing his utmost to kill an enemy at close quarters is to be killed himself. Since Barry's view was expressed alongside his false surrender account, evidently he did not consider the assertions mutually exclusive.

The point is that Peter Hart cared about the false surrender narrative and emphasized its relative

<sup>54</sup> Hart, *Enemies*, pp36, 37. Hart emphasis.

<sup>55</sup> See, on abandoned RIC commemoration, Tommy Graham editorial, *History Ireland*, Sep-Oct 2022, p3.

<sup>56</sup> Tom Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, Anvil, 1989 [1949], p40.

importance. He was perfectly entitled to examine and to question it. The executions established for him ethnic hatred by out of control Irish military forces. He contended, echoing barrack-room ideology, that the Kilmichael Auxiliaries were decent men engaged in an impossible task. He falsely cited 'I.R.A. men recall[ing] their decency and restraint'. He also linked his Kilmichael analysis to alleged IRA persecution of Protestants.<sup>57</sup> The way in which he did so, why he did so, and the way in which Dr Morrison defends his methods, are suitable subjects for discussion.

Hart's main strength, seemingly, was that he had spoken to two ambush veterans anonymously in 1988-89, nearly 70 years after the event. He claimed access also to three audio-taped veteran accounts recorded in 1969, which Hart again reported anonymously. Dr Morrison paraphrased criticism of Hart's interviews as follows:

- a) 'The most notorious (and again entirely false) allegation [is] that Hart claimed to have interviewed a dead man';
- b) 'Most infamously, it was alleged that Hart had claimed that he interviewed [ambush participant] Ned Young six days after the latter had died';
- c) 'One of the veterans involved (Ned Young) was dead by the time Peter claimed to have met him'.<sup>58</sup>

Morrison's sole support for her contention is an October 2005 advertising 'flyer' for a Meda Ryan book signing. Since Morrison does not, I will quote the relevant section following a sub-heading, 'Dead man talking',

One issue attracting increasing attention is Professor Hart's claim to have anonymously interviewed a participant in the Kilmichael ambush six days after records indicate the last participant died on November 13 1989. Hart refuses to name the alleged informant ...'

This text does not identify Ned Young as, or conflate him with, Hart's 19 November 1989 interviewee. It points to an anomaly, given that all recorded participants were deceased when Ned Young died on 13 November 1989. The sub-heading over the text, Morrison's only seeming support, illustrates an impossible feat. Either Hart interviewed someone not an ambush participant, or else the Kilmichael Ambush participation record is inaccurate, on which more below.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> On false citation see Hart, *Enemies*, pp62-3, 292; Meehan, 'Examining Peter Hart', p117.

<sup>58</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, pp155, 164, 254 (n72). Eve Morrison, 'Kilmichael: a 1920 battle that is still being fought', <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/2022/06/07/kilmichael-a-1920-battle-that-is-still-being-fought/>, accessed 22 June 2022). This canard is repeated by Jack Hepworth, *op cit*.

<sup>59</sup> The 'flyer' continued, '[T]he new paperback edition of *Tom Barry – IRA Freedom Fighter* [...] lists when all participants in the

Somewhat backhandedly, Morrison credited me with 'demolish[ing] the claim that Hart had interviewed a dead man' when, in 2008, I identified Edward 'Ned' Young ('EY' in Hart's PhD thesis) as one of Hart's anonymous interviewees.<sup>60</sup> Morrison continued, 'Instead of abandoning the dead man interview claim, however, another surge of attacks was initiated'. Who by is not indicated. Mistaken references and unsupported claims of this sort proliferate in Morrison's research.

In 'Troubles in Irish History' (2008) and 'Examining Peter Hart' (2014) I queried, as had Meda Ryan in 1999 and 2003, Hart's claim to have interviewed two veterans anonymously in 1988-89. From late in 1986 only Ned Young was recorded as the last surviving participant. Hart interviewed the second veteran six days after Young's well-publicised death, one day after the *Southern Star* newspaper in West Cork headlined, 'Ned Young last of the "Boys of Kilmichael"'. The entirely legitimate question asked was, who is this second man?<sup>61</sup>

Ambush participation was compiled initially in 1938 by those who fought at Kilmichael; in 1995, definitively, in a long-term community research project. Hart agreed that was so, inadvertently contradicting his interview claims. He stated that '*The Wild Heather Glen* [research] ... includes a profile of every man at the ambush, with many valuable biographical details'. Young was the last man standing in that publication. That may be why Hart changed the 19 November interviewee's status from fighter to unarmed scout, between his 1992 PhD thesis and 1998 book.<sup>62</sup> As Meda Ryan pointed out, however, no Kilmichael scout survived beyond 1971. During the 1980s, deaths of then surviving participants were chronicled and publicised methodically. The daily *Cork Examiner* captioned a large front-page photograph of Ned Young in 1987 as the 'last boy of Kilmichael'.<sup>63</sup> No additional claimant held his hand aloft asserting, 'I too was there'.

Kilmichael ambush died, putting further pressure on Peter Hart to explain a very curious anomaly'.

<sup>60</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p164, n72. The same unsupported point made on p155. Niall Meehan, 'Troubles in Irish History', in Brian Murphy, Niall Meehan, *Troubled History*, Aubane, 2008, p22.

<sup>61</sup> Meda Ryan, *Tom Barry IRA Freedom Fighter*, Mercier, 2003. Niall Meehan, 'Troubles in Irish History, *op cit*. See reproduction of *Southern Star* front-page report of death of Ned Young, 18 November 1989, in 'Examining Peter Hart', *op cit*, p109; for discussion of Hart interviews, pp108-113. In 1998 Meda Ryan sent an unpublished letter to the *Irish Times* querying Hart's 19 November 1989 interview date, reproduced in Jack Lane, Brendan Clifford (ed.), *Kilmichael, the False Surrender*, Aubane, 1999.

<sup>62</sup> *The Wild Heather Glen, the Kilmichael Story in Grief and in Glory*, Ballineen-Enniskeane Heritage Group, 1985. Hart, *Enemies*, p131, n17. See Niall Meehan 'Examining Peter Hart', *Field Day Review* 10, 2014, p110, where I discuss this.

<sup>63</sup> For *Southern Star* reports of deaths of three remaining 1980s Kilmichael veterans, 3, 24 December 1983, 7 December 1985, 20 December 1986, 26 November 1988, 18 November 1989; *Cork Examiner*, 30 November 1987.

In a letter exchange with me in 2017 in the *Southern Star*, Dr Morrison reported that she had resolved the problem, by expanding the participant list and identifying Hart's mystery interviewee as Willie Chambers. She also divulged that Chambers told his son that, while the battle raged, he guarded Enniskeane Bridge approximately 15km away.<sup>64</sup> I suggested then to Dr Morrison that a person cannot be in two places simultaneously, a point left unaddressed. Her book deals with the problem in this ingenious manner,

If Chambers was on foot, the fact that he was posted several miles away during the fight (as he told his son) is difficult to reconcile with his witnessing some of the action (as he told Hart). The activity reports for his company, however, say Chambers and other Volunteers commandeered bicycles and horses and carts 'from hostile people in the Coy area ... almost daily'. Conceivably, if Chambers was using one of those modes of transport, he could have been sent to check the bridges earlier in the day and returned at some point during the ambush.

'Conceivably', perhaps also incredibly, particularly if Chambers was not tasked with 'check[ing]', as in inspecting, a bridge, but rather with guarding it. In 1989 Chambers did not, it appears, report to Hart galloping a horse or riding a bicycle to the scene in time to observe the most critical phase of an ambush, only those in the immediate vicinity knew of. Chambers did not feature in participant lists and did not, so far as is known, claim he fought at the ambush.<sup>65</sup> Morrison does not suggest otherwise. Given Chambers' stated whereabouts during the ambush, despite what Hart reported, Ned Young may still safely be recorded as the ambush's last survivor.

There is more, though, to Morrison's discoveries after perusing Hart's research notes. At the 2020 West Cork History Festival Dr Morrison additionally revealed that, in his interview, Ned Young did not

<sup>64</sup> In *West Cork's War of Independence: Sectarianism, Tom Barry, Peter Hart and the Kilmichael Ambush - a 2017 Southern Star, Irish Times, discussion*, <https://www.academia.edu/34399025/>, pp 10-17.

<sup>65</sup> Apart that is, reportedly, to Hart. If Chambers is Hart's 19 November 1989 interviewee, he is the only one in Hart's PhD thesis whose initials, 'HJ', do not approximate to his name. For example, Edward 'Ned' Young is 'EY', Dan Cahalane is 'CD' and John L. Sullivan is 'JS'. Jack Hennessy, who died in 1970, is the only ambush participant whose initials might suit. His Witness Statement, which implied a false surrender event, is discussed later. Though Hart consulted Hennessey's statement, his book did not cite it on the ambush. I also pointed out in 2014 (p110), while Hart's 1992 PhD thesis (p46, n50) identified 'HJ' as his ambush-site tour-guide, his 1998 book (p33, n56) changed this to 'one of my interviewees'. Morrison does not address these anomalies. She criticised Brendan O'Leary for not recognizing, in 2018, 'that all of [Hart's] interviewees had been identified' (p166). Identified, how so? The West Cork *Southern Star* published a letter from Morrison on 11 June 2017. For the first and only time before her book appeared in 2022, Morrison claimed that Chambers was Hart's 19 November 1989 interviewee. She added, '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'. Given that fact, as discussed here, if Chambers is the mystery interviewee, he is not 'identified' as a Kilmichael Ambush participant. See, <https://www.academia.edu/34399025/>, p10.

discuss the ambush with Peter Hart. An almost throwaway observation in Morrison's book contained, 'There is no direct commentary about Kilmichael in Hart's notes'.<sup>66</sup> Ned Young was 96 at the time and, according to John Young, his son, had previously suffered a stroke that affected his ability to speak.<sup>67</sup> Hart's Young 'interview' may not, therefore, have been conventional.

In this context, considerable efforts expended by Morrison to contradict John Young on his father's medical condition appear superfluous.<sup>68</sup> By her own admission, despite claims in *The IRA and its Enemies*, Ned Young said nothing to Peter Hart about the Kilmichael Ambush.<sup>69</sup> Why argue over whether Young was capable of speaking to Hart if he did not talk about the ambush? We are left with three possibilities. Either, incredibly, Hart did not ask Young about the ambush, Young refused to discuss it, or he was incapable of doing so. Take your pick.

To sum up, Hart discussed the Kilmichael Ambush with someone, Chambers, who was not there in November 1920. In addition, Hart's claimed discussion with an acknowledged participant, Ned Young, ignored the ambush. If Morrison is correct, Hart's claim to have partially based his reconstruction of the ambush on interviewing Ned Young cannot be true.

#### Fr John Chisholm and his audiotapes

Besides his two interviewees, Hart's ambush narrative was also based, he said, on three further accounts, audio taped in 1969 by a Father John Chisholm.<sup>70</sup> That was another misreport. There were two, not three, taped Chisholm interviews with participants. One of these two taped interviews was with the same Ned Young. Hart never reported that he counted an anonymous interviewee twice. Hart's claim of interviewing five ambush participants is cut to two: he over-counted three Chisholm interviews by one; Ned Young was counted twice (and, in any case, said nothing about Kilmichael to Hart); while the 19 November interviewee (Chambers) was not there. Reporting interviewees anonymously made Hart's false claims possible.

In an even more serious failing, Hart failed to cite Young, on Chisholm's tape, hearing of a false surrender from comrades after fighting ceased. Young also reported, this too ignored by Hart, being told that ambush participant John Lordan killed an Auxiliary he

<sup>66</sup> See, 'Morrison wants the stage to herself', *Southern Star*, 22 August 2020, at <https://www.academia.edu/44049155/>; also, 'Minidefence of Hart's theory on Kilmichael', *Southern Star*, 14 November 2020, at <https://www.academia.edu/44483351/>. *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p77.

<sup>67</sup> See John Young 2007 affidavit, in Niall Meehan, *Troubled History*, AHS, 2008. See also 2012 'Statement by John Young, son of Edward ('Ned') Young', at, <https://www.academia.edu/44579836/>, pp11-12.

<sup>68</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, pp164-5

<sup>69</sup> *Aftermath*, pp164-5.

<sup>70</sup> Had obtained also one other tape recording from another source, whose contents need not detain us.

thought had falsely surrendered. Young did not himself witness the false surrender, as he reported he was in pursuit of an escaping Auxiliary when it was said to have happened.<sup>71</sup>

To amplify the previous point: Hart falsely partly based his denial of a Kilmichael false surrender on his interview with Young, a participant who allegedly did not discuss the ambush with Hart; and then he failed to include Young's references to a false surrender which appear on Chisholm's audiotape.

Fr John Chisholm, who died in 2014, was not a passive actor in this saga. He taped participant accounts for a War of Independence account he ostensibly edited, Liam Deasy's *Towards Ireland Free* (1973). Morrison described Chisholm as 'a philosophy lecturer [...] and the holder of three doctorates', though not what in, as 'a biblical scholar, choirmaster and teacher [plus] unabashed conservative'. She left out that Fr Chisholm also actively promoted,

Marian devotion at Medjugorje [in Bosnia Herzegovina], where six local people are said to be in communication with the Mother of God. [...] [It] brought him into conflict with bishop of Mostar Pavao Zanic [who] had little time for apparitions.

Some who confessed to Fr Chisholm were 'convinced that he had the gift of reading souls'.<sup>72</sup>

Fr Chisholm participated in an engaged, lucid, 2012 audio interview, available on the *Irish Life and Lore* website, whose remarkable contents Eve Morrison does not include in her book. He said that before researching the ambush, Tom Barry's false surrender account 'struck me as questionable'.<sup>73</sup> When he met Barry to discuss Kilmichael, Fr Chisholm failed to pursue his opinion because, he said, Tom Barry was 'a fiery character'. Instead, as Morrison concedes, during his 1969 interviews, 'Chisholm talked too much and tended to interrupt his interviewees'.<sup>74</sup> That was in an attempt, in some cases, to contradict the false surrender narrative. He remarked at one point to ambush participant Jack O'Sullivan about Barry's *Guerilla Days in Ireland* that he 'wasn't satisfied with it' and, 'It seems to me that it wasn't accurate and that there was a lot of imagination used in it'.<sup>75</sup>

These are views Chisholm was perfectly entitled to

<sup>71</sup> See Morrison, *Kilmichael Aftermath*, pp122-3 for partial Young transcript.

<sup>72</sup> 'Priest, scholar and champion of Medjugorje shrine, John Chisholm: January 25th, 1922 - October 25th, 2014', *Irish Times*, 8 November 2014. 'Chaplain to the English speaking pilgrims', 30 October 2014, <https://deaconjohn1987.blogspot.com/2014/10/chaplain-to-english-speaking-pilgrims.html>.

<sup>73</sup> 'Fr John Chisholm (b. 1922)', interviewed by Maurice O'Keefe, <https://www.irishlifeandlore.com/product/fr-john-chisholm-b-1922-2/> (hereafter, Chisholm *Life and Lore*). The interview was 'compiled on 3rd October 2012 and appeared on our website shortly thereafter', Jane O'Keefe, *irishlifeandlore.com*, 11 June 2022 (via email, I am grateful to Jane O'Keefe for this information).

<sup>74</sup> Morrison, *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p78.

<sup>75</sup> From transcript by Jer O'Callaghan, Blackrock Pictures, of 1969 Fr Chisholm interview with Kilmichael Ambush veteran Jack O'Sullivan (with thanks to Jer O'Callaghan). Extract in Niall Meehan 'Examining Peter Hart', *Field Day Review* 10, 2014.

express but were not appropriate with interviewees, because they amounted to leading the witness.

Chisholm reported in his 2012 *Irish Life and Lore* interview having asked O'Sullivan in 1969, 'Was there a false surrender?'. He reported O'Sullivan's as saying, 'No, it was a clean fight, There was no false surrender'. But that alleged exchange is not in Jack O'Sullivan's Chisholm-interview transcript, which I have placed online. I will return later to Chisholm's claims.

It is unfortunate that in her otherwise copious appendices, Morrison did not include transcripts of Ned Young and Jack O'Sullivan's interviews. It is unfortunate also that TCD is the repository to which Morrison has given the Chisholm tapes. That is because TCD reports that access to what it terms 'non-orthodox format' material will be denied for an extended and as yet undetermined period.<sup>76</sup> At this stage, placing the audio online would seem the best and obvious solution. Over to Dr Morrison.

Neither any interviewee, Hart's or Chisholm's, nor any participant account, asserted that the false surrender narrative was itself false. In his 2012 interview, Chisholm even spoke of elderly and then bedridden participant Paddy O'Brien refusing as late as 1974 to confirm Chisholm's theory, despite the latter's best efforts. Morrison's response is to state that 'veterans were careful not to contradict [Tom] Barry directly ... but they did so by inference and implication'.<sup>77</sup> Let us examine her reasoning.

#### Other accounts

Morrison paraphrased a 1955 witness statement by Timothy Keohane as stating that, 'no one was killed or fatally wounded when the Auxiliaries resumed firing'. Here is what Keohane stated,

... Tom Barry then called on the enemy to surrender and some of them put up their hands, but when our party were moving onto the road they again opened fire. Two of our men (John Lordan and Jack Hennessy, I think) were wounded by this fire. Pat Deasy had been wounded, while Jim Sullivan and Mick McCarthy (V/C Dunmanway Battn) had been killed prior to this happening.<sup>78</sup>

A plain reading is that auxiliaries who gestured toward

<sup>76</sup> Aisling Lockhart, Reading Room Services Executive, TCD, via email, 5 May 2022, '... this material is [...] uncatalogued. It is this Library's policy not to permit access to uncatalogued material. All newly acquired material takes its place in a cataloguing schedule, and the Chisholm collection is not yet scheduled for cataloguing. Secondly, this material is in a non-orthodox format, i.e. it is not paper-based. Therefore, following cataloguing, it needs to be integrated into the workflow of staff other than the cataloguing archivist. This will require further time. Finally, this Library has embarked on a major refurbishment which will see both the collections and the reading rooms moving premises over the next year. This will command all the resources available and must regrettably have a negative impact on the cataloguing scheduling for new accessions'.

<sup>77</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p129. Morrison refers, p100, to Chisholm's admission re O'Brien in a 1990 letter to Hart, though without dating the interaction to 1974 or noting that it was in connection with Chisholm's attempts to promote hostility to Tom Barry's response to *Towards Ireland Free*.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, pp118, 120, 129.

surrender (a term Morrison avoided) resumed firing and injured two IRA fighters. It is clear, though seemingly not to Morrison, that Keohane described a false surrender event.

Assuredly, Keohane's false surrender account is different from Tom Barry's, which reported two ambushers being killed by the ruse. He made no mention of injuries to Lordan and Hennessy. Jack Hennessy, in turn, reported that he was injured prior to a false surrender event. Unlike Keohane, Hennessy's testimony implied but did not use the term 'surrender'. His witness statement reported,

I heard the three blasts [from the O/C's whistle] and got up from my position, shouting 'hands up'. At the same time one of the Auxies about five yards from me drew his revolver. He had thrown down his rifle. I pulled on him and shot him dead. I got back to cover, where I remained for a few minutes firing at living and dead Auxies on the road. [...] When I reached the road a wounded Auxie moved his hand towards his revolver. I put my bayonet through him under the ribs. Another Auxie tried to pull on John Lordan, who was too near to use his bayonet and he struck the Auxie with the butt of his rifle. The butt broke on the Auxie's skull.<sup>79</sup>

Hennessy's call of 'hands up' to an enemy who had discarded his rifle implies a belief that his opponent was surrendering. It is possible to read into it an account of a false surrender. Morrison does so, albeit grudgingly, '... the Auxiliary did throw down his rifle, perhaps in a gesture of surrender, and pull out his revolver: was it an attempted ruse? Maybe.'<sup>80</sup>

Both Keohane and Hennessy mentioned John Lordan. As noted earlier, Ned Young, who was not present during the false surrender incident, reported being told afterwards that Lordan killed an Auxiliary, Lordan believed had tried to kill him after falsely surrendering.

As Barry reported it, after nine Auxiliaries in a first lorry were defeated, he and his small command post group moved to support the separate IRA attacking party, at the second lorry some 100 or so yards away. As he approached, Barry claimed he saw Auxiliaries discard rifles and call a surrender. This was followed by their drawing of and use of revolvers to kill two IRA fighters who rose to accept it. Barry then ordered, he wrote, a fight to the finish with no further acceptance of surrender calls. Barry took personal responsibility for the outcome.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Jack Hennessy, BMH WS 1234, 23 August 1955.

<sup>80</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p120.

<sup>81</sup> Tim Keohane was included as an ambush participant after some discussion, according to Flor Crowley in the *Southern Star* in 1973. He is not included in any published list, including in the comprehensive Ballineen Enniskane list published in 1995. Keohane constitutes the only known example of a veteran outside of recorded lists claiming ambush participation. Whatever the merits of his claim, there are none for those advanced by Morrison for veterans who never said they fought in the battle. See my discussion on Morrison's chapter in David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Terror in Ireland*, in 2012: review plus Morrison,

Aside from Barry, two accounts, Keohane and Young's, made explicit reference to a false surrender event, while in the third, Hennessy's, it was implied. Barry, as we shall see, agreed that Michael McCarthy was killed beforehand. The only difference of significance is over whether attackers were wounded or killed. Either way, a surrender was said to have been falsified, which appears to have sealed the fate of surviving Auxiliaries. Hart had access to Young and to Hennessy's testimony, yet he ignored it in his Kilmichael account. In 1937 Stephen O'Neill contributed the first published participant false surrender account in 1937 and stated emphatically (illustrated page 15),

On being called on to surrender, [the Auxiliaries] signalled their intention of doing so, but when we ceased at the OC's command, fire was again opened by the Auxiliaries, with lethal results to two of our comrades who exposed themselves believing the surrender was genuine.

Whichever account researchers may or may not choose to favour, a false surrender incident is deemed to have been a precursor to a determination to kill all remaining Auxiliaries. Morrison's sensible admission, 'It is impossible to know exactly what happened at Kilmichael', therefore begs the question, why assume that Tom Barry's account in particular is deliberately deceitful?<sup>82</sup> Why his and no one else's?

Differences from Barry's account are deemed by Morrison to be a deliberate to subvert it, though she largely ignores differences between the accounts that differ from Barry's. No consideration is given to the possibility of the Rashomon effect.<sup>83</sup> Nor to the simple possibility that accounts reflect different perspectives of the same event, in which all combatants fought their own personal war, limiting their horizons to the mortal danger immediately in front of them. Military historian William Kautt has argued that is why, usually, commanding officers remain to the rear, so as to survey and direct resources on an unfolding battlefield. That was, in part, the context under which, after completing a relatively short successful encounter at the first of two Auxiliary lorries, Tom Barry approached and surveyed the extended exchange at the second lorry.

Differences may also reflect the effect of intervening years on the memories of participants. Morrison's nitpicking, parsing and analysing of these varying recollections, seeking only a definitive refutation of Tom Barry's account, produces ever-diminishing results.

Morrison observed, 'That a group of ambush veterans did not agree with the [false surrender] version that appeared in [Tom Barry's] *Guerilla Days*

Fitzpatrick, reply at <https://www.academia.edu/1871818/>; my further response here, <https://www.academia.edu/1994527/>.

<sup>82</sup> *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p129.

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/e/pop-culture/the-rashomon-effect/>. See also, Karl Heider, 'The Rashomon Effect: When Ethnographers Disagree', *American Anthropologist*, v90, March 1988.

**The Only  
Surviving  
Section Leader  
(Stephen  
O'Neill,  
Clonakilty)  
Relates This  
Story of**

THE first attack on Auxiliaries in Ireland, and the first activity of the newly-formed Flying Column of the West Cork Brigade I.R.A., took place at Shanacastel, Kilmichael, on Sunday, 28th November, 1920. It was the most decisive encounter of the Anglo-Irish struggle, the entire Auxiliary convoy being wiped out and their arms and munitions captured. Three Volunteers, Michael McCarthy, Dunmanway; Jim O'Sullivan, Kilmacthomas, and Pat Deasy, Kilmacsimon, Bandon, were killed in action. The cross (below) overlooking the scene of the ambush records their sacrifice. The pictures, viewed singly and together, give an excellent impression of the country-side where the fight, which was for both sides a do or die affair, was waged between hastily trained Volunteers, poorly armed, and veteran officers of the World War, equipped with the most modern weapons.



# THE AMBUSH AT KILMICHAEL

Of the many hard-hitting attacks at the Encampment by the West Coast Column, of the 132nd, under Tom Edwards, on 19-20 Dec-24, perhaps the most notable, and in some respects, the most decisive. Up to the autumn of 1924, the system of war waged was in the nature of sporadic attacks on police and authorities by small groups of men in isolated areas. The success of these small guerilla companies compelled the enemy to move in greater numbers, and about this time, the 132nd Column (which had been (transferred from one area) sent to another. The Brigade Column was also moved to take in the new situations, and a brigade Column was formed. The 132nd Column was supplied as fully equipped and armed as possible. The 132nd Column and the Battalion should persist in their efforts to capture the 132nd Column. The Brigadier General, in any negotiations with the local Battalion, will be able to do so.

From their advent they had been the  
targets of their shooting and invasions,  
and repeatedly raided the district  
between ten miles South of Marron,  
and was in the West Coast Brigade  
area.

runs through flat, boggy country, but will eventually come a spot at Shanavest about a mile north of Glentane in the Parish of Kilmeelhead. Shortly after midnight on Saturday the Column moved on the long journey to its appointed position. A considerable number of the Column had never before participated in a military operation. The arrival of the late John Lordan, Vice Commandant of the Donegal, was a great relief to the

sleepless night, was not an enviable one. We waited on. About 4 o'clock the scouts signalled the approach of the lorries. There were a few tense minutes. The first lorry appeared and then the second—100 yards be-

was sighted opposed to the Admiral, who failed to see it in our case, and who expected the others to believe the Admiral to be gone. We remained in attack vigorously and never desisted until the enemy was annihilated. The same Admiral and ammunition came to us, were carefully secured and the hurries were Bermuda set

we were so pre-  
pared. A sixteen-  
hour march  
brought us to the  
Bandon River. We  
crossed it at  
Manch and Babbitt at  
Granite. An  
unoccupied labourer's cottage,  
containing a plentiful supply of straw,  
enabled us to secure a well-earned  
rest.

### The Three Who Died.

Victoria, such as ours on that day, were achieved without exciting a November 15, 1926 three young fishermen, as noble and unselfish as any that was ever fought, but their lives Kitchener to this day characterize. The men, Mr. and Mrs. Duncanson, Mr. Jim Givens, and Mr. Kalmus, were all killed outright. Poor Deaf, unconscious, Bandit, a heroic youth under sixteen years, was so severely wounded that he died a week later. His body is buried in the graveyard at Castlegordon-Kennedy, the cause for which they died is still unascertained.

And when our thoughts go back to the three gallant men who died for the Union at Belmont, we are sorry that the world was with us on that day. They died three years ago and whose memory will always be ever dear to "Fifer" Nahan of Chagoway River, "one of the best loved and most gallant Volunteers of the West Point Brigade. He too, has passed on. His life shortened by his wounds and 3 years of service to his country.

## The Auxiliaries Come To Macroom.

About September, 1920, a company of Auxiliaries was drafted to Maesteg and took up their Headquarters at the Castle. This body had been specially recruited from ex-Brigish officers and had had considerable

A lorry load of Black-and-Tans searching along a country road, as depicted in the Irish-made film, "The Dawn."

The front of Bandin Military Barracks, which was attacked on many occasions by the I.R.A. About one hundred yards from the main gate, Volunteer Daniel O'Reilly, of Granagh, Kilbirkin, was killed in action in one of the attacks on the 24th January, 1921.

### **Stephen O'Neill, first published participant account of false surrender, *Kerryman* 12 December 1937**

was well known'. Morison did not identify who was in the group, its size, or where their 'well known' dissatisfaction is to be found. Fr Chisholm interviewee Jack O'Sullivan criticised Barry's *Guerilla Days* book (which sentiment Father Chisholm endorsed), but said nothing negative, specifically, about its Kilmichael Ambush account. Furthermore, O'Sullivan's ambush account, interrupted by Fr Chisholm, did not contradict Barry's.

## **Tom Barry's false surrender accounts**

Dr Morrison's claim, following Hart, is that Barry concocted a false surrender account at some point in the 1930s. Her argument here is exceptionally weak. In support, she points to a tightly packed *Irish Press* article on 26 November 1932 by Barry, in which it does not feature (see illustration, page 17). That was not Morrison's view in 2012. She observed then,

In the case of an article written for *The Irish Press* in 1932, [Meda] Ryan [2003] has conclusively established that Barry had in fact protested at the editor's omission of the relevant passage.<sup>84</sup>

Now, Dr Morrison speculates, because she has not personally seen the letter Barry wrote to the Editor, it 'could date from the [1940s]'. That was when the *Irish Press* serialised Barry's *Guerilla Days in Ireland*. Morrison reassures herself, 'This would make more sense'. That is a mistake on her part, for two reasons. First, in the concluding three paragraphs of Barry's letter, cited by Meda Ryan in her Tom Barry biography, we find

... so much of [the copy] was cut out and altered... But it is the omission of the false surrender that concerns me most. You should print the full article, and give an explanation regarding that one on the 26<sup>th</sup> [of November 1932].

Second, the *Irish Press* on 17, 18 May 1948 included Barry's false surrender account (see illustration page 18, to aid the reader this material is online). The 40-part serialisation, from 10 May to 3 July 1948, regularly included a boxed-off statement to the effect that excisions were with the author's consent (as also illustrated). That indicated acuity by Barry on the point, resulting from what happened in 1932.<sup>85</sup>

Dr Morrison did not inform readers of her change of mind about Tom Barry's 1932 *Irish Press* article. On the other hand, her commentary is animated when identifying an anomaly in her opponents' position. She rightly points out that in 2004, when I (as she puts it) 'entered the fray', I asserted that the Kilmichael false surrender caused three IRA fatalities. Importantly, I did

<sup>85</sup> Barry 1932 letter in Meda Ryan, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*, Mercier, 2003, pp87, 424. Morrison (p131), it must be said, questions her own speculative assumption in the following confused manner, 'It also begs the question as to why The *Irish Press* would feel the need to revise what [Barry] wrote in the first place, particularly given that a very different account of the ambush had been published in December 1947'. This 'different account' reference, for readers who may (understandably) be puzzled, is to an article in a local newspaper, *The Kerryman* by local historian Flor Crowley. Morrison failed to establish that the *Irish Press* revised anything or why the *Irish Press* would be concerned about a previous account in a local newspaper by a third party, when they had a first-hand account by the ambush commander. *Irish Press* serialisation online here, <https://www.academia.edu/ 86621259/>; Barry 1932 article and Ryan citation of letter to editor here, <https://www.academia.edu/86638268/>.

<sup>84</sup> Eve Morrison, 'Kilmichael Revisited', p171, in David Fitzpatrick(ed), *Terror in Ireland, 1916-1923*, Lilliput, 2012.

It is not without interest to compare Mr. Beaslai's account of the Kilmichael Ambush with that given by Sir Nevil Macready in his *Annals of An Active Life*. Here are the two versions:

**General Macready:**  
"A particularly brutal outrage was carried out against a party of 16 Auxiliary police on Nov. 23, 1920. The party were met by a rebel in the uniform of a British soldier who told them that a lorry-load of soldiers a little way ahead had broken down. The Auxiliaries went at once to give assistance, were led straight into an ambush of L.R.A., many of whom were dressed in British uniform, and practically the whole party were killed or wounded by the first volley. The wounded were deliberately murdered on the road, being mutilated with axes, one man only escaping."

**Mr. Beaslai:**  
"The column of Cork No. 3 Brigade ambushed a party of 17 Auxiliaries, of whom only one, left for dead on the field, survived to tell the tale. The tale the survivor told was a tissue of lies. He asserted that the attackers were disguised in khaki, so that the Auxiliaries took them for a party of English soldiers, a ridiculous fable, and he absurdly exaggerated the numbers of the attackers, who totalled 27 men. What really happened on the occasion was that, after the fight had continued for a time, some of the Auxiliaries offered to surrender. When Volunteers advanced to take the surrender they were fired on; thereupon the Auxiliaries were charged, a hand to hand fight ensued and no quarter was given."

not assert that Tom Barry said it. Barry always noted two fatalities. Hart and later Morrison indisputably misread Barry's ambush narrative, to suggest that Barry reported three.<sup>86</sup>

The point becomes important in the context of ambush participant Jack O'Sullivan stating in his Fr Chisholm interview that Michael McCarthy was killed before a 'bogus surrender' episode. Morrison previously noted this as an example of a participant contradicting Barry's account. I pointed out that Barry never named McCarthy as a false surrender victim and, indeed, a 1941 account identified him as being shot beforehand. He always said there were two victims of the false surrender: that is indisputable. In 1949 he wrote, 'Two of [the IRA volunteers] might be alive today had I warned them of the bogus surrender trick...'; in 1974, 'the killing of the two Volunteers after [the false surrender], an act which, of course, had ensured the extermination of the Auxiliaries concerned'.<sup>87</sup>

After reading myself into the discussion, I noted this anomaly in Hart and then Morrison's position, that was shared also by Fr Chisholm. Instead of thanking me, Morrison argues that pointing out the error is an example of Hart's critics becoming 'more

<sup>86</sup> Hart, *Enemies*, pp22-3. Discussed in review, reply and response to Morrison's Kilmichael Ambush chapter in Fitzpatrick, ed., *Terror in Ireland* (2012), <https://www.academia.edu/1871818/> (p10), <https://www.academia.edu/1994527/> (p9).

<sup>87</sup> Tom Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, Anvil, 1989 [1949], p47; Tom Barry, *The reality of the Anglo-Irish War 1920-21 in West Cork: Refutations, Corrections and Comments on Liam Deasy's Toward Ireland Free*, 1974, p17.

# MICHAEL COLLINS

## CHAPTERS FROM HIS LIFE

By PIARAS BEASLAI (late Major-General National Army)

### STILL MORE TERROR

#### Aftermath of "Bloody Sunday"

### WHOLESALE ROUNDS UP AND ARRESTS

#### Collins Nearly Captured

#### THE "FLYING COLUMNS"

#### KILMICHAEL AMBUSH

Cork Examiner 28 September 1926

#### KILMICHAEL AMBUSH

On November 28th, 1920, occurred a historic ambush of Auxiliaries at Kilmichael, near Macroom, Co. Cork, which evoked deep wrath in England and heartfelt delight in Ireland. The column of Cork No. 3 Brigade, under the leadership of Tom Barry, the Brigadier, ambushed a party of 17 Auxiliaries, of whom only one, left for dead on the field, survived to tell the tale. Incidentally the tale the survivor told was a tissue of lies. He asserted that the attackers were disguised in khaki, so that the Auxiliaries took them for a party of English soldiers, a ridiculous fable, and he absurdly exaggerated the numbers of the attackers, who totalled 27 men. What really happened on the occasion was that, after the fight had continued for a time, some of the Auxiliaries offered to surrender. When Volunteers advanced to take the surrender they were fired on; thereupon the Auxiliaries were charged, a hand to hand fight ensued, and no quarter was given. When one considers the murders and outrages inflicted by these alien mercenaries upon a helpless population, and the persecutions and insults which the mothers and sisters of these Volunteers had to endure at their hands, it is easy to understand how general was the satisfaction at the results of the Kilmichael Ambush.

Cork Examiner 28 September 1926 (above), extract from Beaslai's *Michael Collins*; Irish Independent 9 November 1926, (left) from review of Beaslai's *Michael Collins*

convoluted, speculative and hypocritical with every passing year. Some of the dissimulations have been astonishingly brazen'. A good example, readers may agree, of obscuring discussion with *ad hominem* arguments.

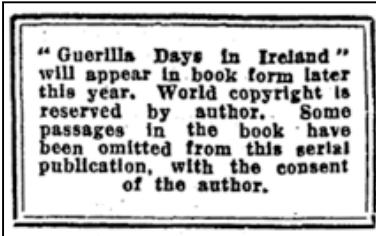
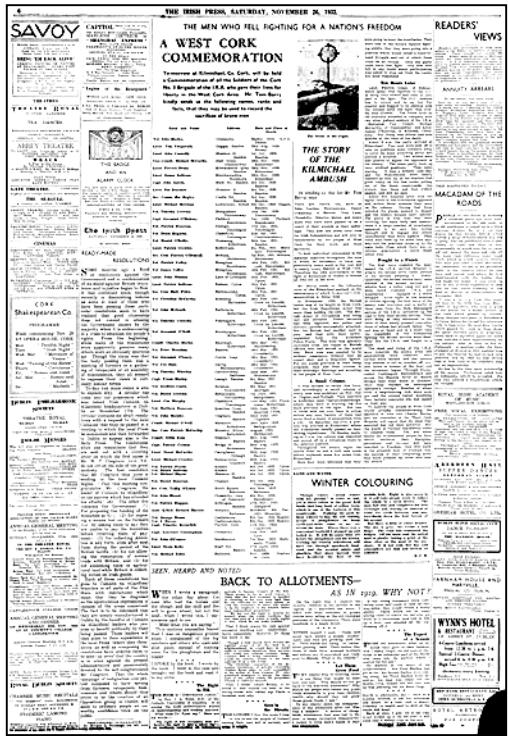
Morrison nuanced her position on this point in her book, 'Barry and [ambush participant] Stephen O'Neill accorded at least two, and sometimes all three, of the deaths to a false surrender by some of the Auxiliaries'. The observation is not accurate, which possibly explains why it is unsourced.<sup>88</sup> As noted, Stephen O'Neill stated two victims in 1937.

Morrison explains away her occasional misreading by arguing it was, 'the way Barry obviously intended it to be - that McCarthy, O'Sullivan and Deasy were all killed or fatally wounded by the false surrender'. She does not appear to consider asserting that Barry confused her from beyond the grave, arguably still manages to do so, 'convoluted' or 'speculative', or other stuff I hesitate to attribute to an academic colleague.

One remaining prop in Morrison's account, as also in Hart's, is a 'rebel commandant's report', allegedly by Barry, captured by Crown forces, that does not mention a false surrender.

There are problems with the typed document. It falsely asserted that Barry's troops were hiding from Auxiliaries, that the ambush was unplanned and that it occurred merely by chance, not something Barry would misreport to his superiors about the agreed, pre-

<sup>88</sup> Kilmichael Aftermath, pp114, 164. Niall Meehan, 'Examining Peter Hart', *Field Day Review* 10, 2014.



**Tom Barry, Irish Press 1932, 1948:** 1932 article on the Kilmichael Ambush (above left) in which reference to a false surrender was edited out, to which Barry objected. In 1948, in a 40-part serialisation of *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, Barry exercised control over excisions, as stated regularly (left). On 17-18 May 1948 (above right), Barry described the ambush, including a false surrender account. Below, text of Tom Barry letter in 1932 to *Irish Press* editor, protesting false-surrender omission. Eve Morrison's belief that it dates from the 1940s is demonstrably mistaken (from Meda Ryan, *Tom Barry IRA Freedom Fighter*, 2003). Serialisation available online, <https://www.academia.edu/86621259/>; Barry's 1932 article and letter extract at, <https://www.academia.edu/86638268/>

planned, operation. 32 fighters with 100 rounds of ammunition each is claimed when the correct figure was 36 fighters with 30 rounds of ammunition. Their disposition in three sections is also incorrectly reported. It leaves out Barry's additional Command Post group and six more fighters in an 'insurance group', disposed to tackle the possibility of a third Auxiliary lorry.

The 'report' asserts that 16 auxiliaries were killed, while one Auxiliary was 'wounded and escaped and is now missing'. Barry thought 18 were dead, 17 at the spot and one who disappeared 'down a bog hole'. He had no idea an Auxiliary was 'missing'. The 'report' asserted that 'P Deasy was killed by a revolver bullet from one of the enemy whom he thought dead' and that, 'our casualties were: One killed and two who have subsequently died of wounds'. Deasy was badly wounded in the stomach and died many hours later. Though Michael McCarthy was breathing, his head wound was so severe that most accounts, including Barry's, state that, alongside O'Sullivan, he was killed during the ambush.

In other words the captured 'report' combines mistaken information unknown to the British (the planned nature of the ambush, number of fighters, their disposition, amount of ammunition, Deasy being fatally wounded and surviving for a period, not 'killed') and correct information unknown to Barry (a 'missing' auxiliary who 'escaped'). Had Barry written the 'report', the equation would be the other way around.

Meda Ryan cited A.J.S. (Stephen) Brady, who

worked for a local solicitor's office. There, Auxiliary officers wrote accounts of engagements designed to secure maximum compensation in court for wounded auxiliaries or families of those killed. He told Ryan, 'I won't say how [a report] came about but it helped the families get good compensation'. Barry reported in his memoir being approached after the Truce for a report of the ambush, but refused to write one. That gives a context for Brady's discussion with Meda Ryan. It supplies also a basis for concocting a report. It poses the question of why Barry would have been asked for a report of the ambush, if the British already possessed the so-called 'rebel commandant's report'.<sup>89</sup>

These difficulties create a question mark surrounding the 'report' but not for Morrison. As with Barry's edited 1932 *Irish Press* article, it is deemed definitively Barry's view because a false surrender is not mentioned.

#### Fr Chisholm Towards Ireland Free authorship

Father John Chisholm's attempt to use his editorship of Liam Deasy's *Towards Ireland Free* (1973) to undermine Barry's account of the ambush (and Barry's response to that book), fed later into Peter Hart's Barry fixation, which, as noted, Chisholm evidently encouraged. That brings us to consideration of Fr Chisholm's role.

Fr Chisholm in his 2012 *Irish Life and Lore* interview asserted that he wrote and researched every word, from cover to cover, of *Towards Ireland Free*.

<sup>89</sup> Meda Ryan, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*, 2005, pp 75-83.



# Irish Life and Lore

## Recordings and Books

### Fr John Chisholm (b. 1922)



Fr Chisholm reported that the book, ascribed to War of Independence leader Liam Deasy, brother of Kilmichael fatality Pat Deasy, contained 'my perspective', because Deasy said he was 'no good at composition in school'. Chisholm said, 'I found I would just have to write it myself'. In dismissal of his contribution, Chisholm claimed that Deasy wrote, 'bits of notes ... about engagements with black and tans or with the auxiliaries or things, but they were scattered fragments really'.<sup>90</sup>

This may account for Tom Barry's surprise at the Deasy book's deviation from previous accounts of the War of Independence by a number of participant authors, including on the Kilmichael Ambush. In *The reality of the Anglo-Irish war 1920–1921 in West Cork*, a work now available online, Barry queried passages such as

... on New Year's Eve, Tom Barry and I were near Enniskane and we could not think of a better way of beginning the New Year than by assisting at Mass and receiving Our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion.

Barry said he was not there and remarked also,

My friends over the years will note my piety, but, alas they will have to revert to their old opinions of me [...] At the time I was, of course, a firmly excommunicated man, by decree of his Lordship, Most Reverend Dr.

Fr John Chisholm claimed in 2012 *Irish Life and Lore* interview that he alone wrote *Towards Ireland Free*, not its ostensible author, Liam Deasy. Below, 2008 Chisholm letter to Ned Young's son John, falsely stating that he did not possess an interview with Kilmichael Ambush participant Ned Young. Chisholm asserted that a false surrender at the Kilmichael Ambush 'never took place'. Ned Young spoke of one in the taped interview Chisholm denied existed.

April 12, 2008.

Dear Mr. Young,

In reply to your letter of 10th, I greatly regret having to inform you that I have no recording of an interview with your father, though I remember him with affection as a man of real character.

During the summer of 1969 I travelled widely in West Cork to interview veterans of the West Cork Brigade and Cumann na mBan. Several of the persons I interviewed – and your father could have been one of them – said they would feel freer to speak if the conversation was not recorded, and so I have no tape-recordings in these cases. In the case of the men who took part in the Kilmichael Ambush of 28th November, 1920, there was a particularly sensitive issue. Tom Barry in *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, for his own reasons, gave an account of a "false surrender" on the part of the Auxiliaries which never took place. This became part of the accepted account of the famous ambush. As a result, some of the men who fought at Kilmichael were tight-lipped about the details, and some of them spoke about them only on condition that the tape-recorder was switched off. Your father, who was on the south west side of the road during the action at Kilmichael knew exactly what happened, but, as I mentioned, I have no recording of his account.

In 1970 RTB broadcast a programme to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Kilmichael Ambush and your father, among others, was interviewed. He was within an ace of letting the cat out of the bag! Tom Barry, who had been interviewed, was having kittens as your father spoke. A sudden interruption averted disaster just in the nick of time.

Later, when I was writing up the account of Kilmichael for Liam Deasy's book, *Towards Ireland Free*, Liam thought it would be wiser to avoid the question of the "false surrender" altogether, by putting in Paddy O'Brien's account. When the book was published in 1973, Tom Barry was furious!

In conclusion, I should mention that a short time ago, I gave all my tape-recordings of the West Cork Brigade interviews to Liam Deasy, junior, of Bandon. When playing them the voices sound as clear and fresh as they were nearly 40 years ago.

With all good and kind wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
John E. Chisholm.

John Chisholm, C.S.S.P.

Daniel Cohalan Bishop of Cork, about which decree Deasy is strangely silent. Outside the armed actions, the Bishop's decree was the most historical happening during all the struggle in West Cork.

Inclusions and strange silences such as these were consistent with retrospective attempts by a Roman Catholic priest to associate his church with the rebellion and to ignore public opposition from some bishops, Cork's Bishop Cohalan in particular.

Chisholm also appears to have doctored an account in *Towards Ireland Free* attributed to Kilmichael Ambush participant Paddy O'Brien. According to Chisholm, at Liam Deasy's insistence the book ignored the false surrender controversy, which included also ignoring shooting afterwards of disarmed Auxiliaries. In 2012 Chisholm protested that the deceit in the account published was the fault of yet another, since deceased, priest. Chisholm said he felt 'betrayed'. Yet, when Meda Ryan questioned Chisholm in 1998 on whether O'Brien spoke in the elaborate way in which he was depicted, Chisholm responded that Liam Deasy had given him a 'free hand' in composition. He stated further that, as he stood at the spot, he 'imagined' the book's account of an IRA training camp before the Kilmichael Ambush.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps Fr Chisholm utilised his

<sup>90</sup> Chisholm in *Life and Lore* interview. *Kilmichael Aftermath*, p96.

<sup>91</sup> Meda Ryan, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*, Mercier, pp57, 427(n78)

gift of reading souls.

Liam Deasy who had, unbeknownst to Barry, been seriously ill died the day Barry's 1974 riposte, itself delayed by a very long printer's strike, was published. Fr Chisholm was content then to represent the dispute as between Barry and the recently deceased Liam Deasy and not with his own formulations. Afterwards, when the controversy had blown over, Chisholm began complaining that his contribution was unrecognised. In *Green Tears for Hecuba* (1994), author Fr Patrick J. Twohig noted,

'Anybody can write a book'. The question is, did Liam Deasy do so? The publication says 'by Liam Deasy, Edited by John E. Chisholm'. Rev. Dr. Chisholm, of the Holy Ghost Order, who now lives in retirement with his mother, has assured the present writer that he did the job but was underrated by Mercier, and will not admit to being merely a ghost writer, not even a holy one.<sup>92</sup>

Chisholm may have felt again constrained when the Hart controversy arose post 1998, making it necessary to pitch Barry against Deasy once more. Fr Chisholm restated his true feelings in his, unnoticed until now, 2012 interview.

After publication of *Towards Ireland Free*, Fr Chisholm became custodian of the ambush-participant interview tapes. He permitted Peter Hart to listen, though gave differing accounts of the circumstances, before eventually placing them in Eve Morrison's hands. He refused possession to Liam Deasy's daughter Maureen, giving them instead for a period to Deasy's nephew (also called Liam). Maureen Deasy's opposition to Chisholm's and to Peter Hart's views may have been factors in that decision.<sup>93</sup>

Chisholm's reporting over time of what tapes he possessed was consistently inconsistent. He informed television producer Jerry O'Callaghan he had just one Kilmichael participant interview, with second last ambush survivor Jack O'Sullivan. In 2008, when John Young asked Chisholm for a copy of an interview with his father Ned Young, Chisholm responded emphatically,

I greatly regret having to inform you I have no recording of an interview with your father, though I remember him with affection as a man of real character. ... I have no recording of [Ned Young's] account.<sup>94</sup>

Chisholm observed that Young may have spoken off the record and implied it was because he did not wish to discuss the Kilmichael Ambush. Chisholm wrote that a false surrender 'never took place', plus that Ned Young 'knew exactly what happened' (see letter illustrated page 18).

<sup>92</sup> Patrick Twohig, *Green Tears for Hecuba*, Tower Books, 1994, p376.

<sup>93</sup> Maureen Deasy, *History Ireland* online letter 2013, in *Veteran's relatives on the 28 November 1921 Kilmichael Ambush*, AHS, 2020, at <https://www.academia.edu/44579836/>. Fr Chisholm to Maureen Deasy, 21 September 2007, copy in author's possession.

<sup>94</sup> Father John Chisholm to John Young, 12 April 1998, copy in author's possession, as illustrated.

This stance was to change. On page 159 Morrison noted,

In June 2011, [Chisholm] rang me out of the blue to say that he had found another tape in his attic.

The attic tape contained Ned Young's interview. In it, Young referred twice, on the record, to a false surrender at Kilmichael. As noted, Peter Hart ignored that Young utterance in his ambush account. It was also, it should be emphasised, omitted from Chisholm's *Towards Ireland Free* narrative. Chisholm avoided the false Surrender by inserting instead a nondescript account credited to Paddy O'Brien. That account was itself altered, quite possibly and despite his denials, by Chisholm.

We have Eve Morrison to thank for bringing some of these matters to our attention in 2011, as my recording of her TCD talk on Kilmichael confirms, though she remains a firm believer in Chisholm's varying explanations of his behaviour. Chisholm can be heard on the recording explaining in a Q&A session to TV producer Jerry O'Callaghan, his memory lapse concerning the lost Ned Young tape. In 2012 UCC's John Borgonovo concluded not unreasonably that 'Chisholm's partisanship and inconsistencies have polluted this evidential well'.<sup>95</sup>

It cannot be excluded, in light of Jerry O'Callaghan and John Young's experiences, that Fr Chisholm may even have withheld crucial Ned Young passages from Peter Hart. In a letter to Maureen Deasy in 2007, Chisholm asserted, 'I let [Hart] hear some passages I selected from the tapes I had. [...] I did not give him possession of, or access to, the tapes'. Dr Morrison may again be in a position to elucidate, given her familiarity with Hart's research notes.

Returning to the introductory point about UCC historians hearing an 'unsanctioned recording' of Morrison's 2011 TCD talk, this may account for Fr Chisholm's alarm. They heard Morrison's reproduction of part of Ned Young's Chisholm interview, in which Young addressed a false surrender event.<sup>96</sup>

### Conclusion

There are other aspects of the Morrison work with which I could take issue and perhaps will, depending

<sup>95</sup> John Borgonovo, 'Review article: Revolutionary violence and Irish historiography', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. XXXVIII, n150, November 2012. Eve Morrison took particular exception to this article and, instead of challenging it, over an extended period persuaded IHS editors to insert an 'apology'. In his *Irish Literary Supplement* (Fall 2022) review of Morrison's Kilmichael book Paul O'Brien mistakenly stated that the 'apology' 'acknowledged an unfair attack on Morrison's integrity'. That is not so. It derived from disagreeing with Borgonovo's observation, 'Morrison provides little evidence for her assertion that Barry invented the false surrender story, and then convinced his colleagues to maintain a fifty-year conspiracy of silence about it'. IHS rules offer a right of response to an offended party. That is what should have happened here.

<sup>96</sup> Jerry O'Callaghan, Fr John Chisholm, exchange at Eve Morrison talk, TCD, 26 October 2011, recording in author's possession. Fr Chisholm to Maureen Deasy 21 September 2007; Fr Chisholm to John Young, 12 April 2008, copies in author's possession.

on further discussion. Morrison's research flaws stem from attempts to defend Peter Hart's methodology, leading to hasty, often ill-thought-out, dismissal of critics. It is not the fair-minded, objective, overview initial reviewers, perhaps unfamiliar with the detail of the debate, claim.

No substantive criticism of Peter Hart's approach is successfully challenged by Morrison. Caricatures and inadequate representation of those criticisms is combined with a failure of research, not least her seeming unawareness of Father John Chisholm's 2012 assertion that he alone wrote *Towards Ireland Free*.

Morrison's claim that criticism of Hart constitutes an attempt at censorship has no basis. Refusal by the *Historical Journal* to permit John Regan a response to Ian MacBride's criticism demonstrates attempted censorship of alternative academic research. Hart's censorship of *The Record of the Rebellion*, plus his and Father John Chisholm's censorship of Ned Young's references to a Kilmichael false surrender,<sup>97</sup> means that such allegations should be considered with exceptional care by Hart's defenders.

In addition to her book on Kilmichael, Morrison spoke twice on that subject at the TCD Contemporary Irish History Research Seminar, as noted in 2011 and also in 2022. Latterly, Morrison accompanied her narrative with criticisms of those with whom she disagrees, not least the author of this critique. She said at one point, according to a report of her remarks,

It looks like Niall Meehan is not here, which is a pity because I would like to have asked him a few questions.

She continued, incongruously,

Arguments about Hart's work [are] not history, it is info wars, ... its anti-knowledge, it relies on censorship and active attempts to silence people... There is nothing left-wing or progressive about this at all.<sup>98</sup>

Why Morrison might wish to interrogate me if that is her opinion is mystifying. In addition, I was not aware that historical research was required to be left wing and progressive. As it happens I like to think mine is, but clearly it does not pass the Morrison test. Whose does, I wonder? Peter Hart's?

The extent to which TCD, that hosted, encouraged and inadequately examined Peter Hart's research, can withstand alternative views is measured by the fact that a request to Seminar convenors to host a response to Morrison's claims was rebuffed. Research students and those interested in this period of Irish history are being done a disservice, in favour of a one-time TCD PhD student who produced a preferred, though inadequate, reading of Irish history.

I hope Dr Morrison finds here answers to questions she said she wanted to ask.

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<sup>97</sup> With the possible caveat (see previous discussion) that Fr Chisholm may not have divulged access to Ned Young's false surrender utterances.

<sup>98</sup> Personal communication.

## Appendix

Correspondence on recording of 2011 Eve Morrison talk on Kilmichael Ambush in Trinity College, cited in Morrison's *Kilmichael: The Life and Afterlife of an Ambush*, Merrion, 2022

### Eve Morrison 7 January 2012

Niall,

I understand that you have a recording of my 26 October Kilmichael paper. I don't understand why this was done without my permission, as you know very well that it should have been sought. At the seminar the chair took the additional precaution of making it clear that there was to be no recording of proceedings.

Father Chisholm and Liam Deasy allowed me to play the Young and O'Sullivan interviews in good faith, and on the explicit understanding that it was for the purpose of my talk alone. I went to some effort to secure their trust, and this may well have jeopardised any possibility of the Chisholm interviews becoming more widely available to others in future.

Neither you, nor anyone else, has any right to have, use or disseminate that recording in any way. I ask that you return it to me immediately, and to supply a list of anyone else you have sent it to as well.

Yours sincerely, Eve Morrison

### Niall Meehan 9 January 2012

Dear Eve,

Are you sure Deirdre McMahon asked that there be no recording of your talk? I didn't hear her say this and I spoke to others today who don't remember such a statement either. A recording is of assistance, in case of doubt. I attach Deirdre's short intro and the start of your talk where you correctly identify Peter Hart's view of Tom Barry as a liar. No mention of a problem with recording (apologies for extraneous distracting sounds of pens dropping, people coughing, etc). I'm pretty sure I started recording when Deirdre started talking and she didn't talk for long, as you were the main event.

At previous seminars a few attendees (I am personally aware of four, besides myself) put recording devices on the seminar room table, including, if I am not mistaken, Eunan [O'Halpin], who has a more modern version of my Zoom recorder (it is black if memory serves). Did you ask him? As appears to be usual, no discernible permission was sought from the speaker for recording those events. That appeared to be the norm. One of the regulars told me after the Gerard Murphy talk that he has quite a collection of recordings. He asked me immediately after your talk if I had a recording and to send a copy to him as he had not managed to record it. I arranged for that to happen.

Your talk was in different surroundings in a larger room. You addressed the audience assembled before you from a podium in conventional public meeting style. I held my recorder plainly visible in my hand for a time, then placed it on the seat beside me and monitored my recording with a visible white earpiece. In those circumstances, I was not aware if they recorded as they had done previously. It was perfectly plain what I was doing and no one objected or appeared to think it odd. Eunan was standing slightly behind and to my left I think, so should have had a good view.

Had I not recorded the talk digitally, I would have made accurate notes, though that would have been more tedious, but the effect would be the same. Is there a problem citing what you said at the public event?

See you on Wednesday evening. Should be a good night.

With very best wishes,

Niall

### Eve Morrison 10 January 2012

Niall,

a) Eunan asks permission to record all of his seminar speakers beforehand. He had my permission to record my paper on my behalf. No-one else did.

b) The chair asked the one person she noticed recording to stop doing so during the meeting. Just because you were not noticed, does not give you the right to record without prior permission.

c) I repeat, you have no right to disseminate, quote from or use that recording in any way. Please return it to me, and let me know to who else you gave copies.

Eve

### Niall Meehan 11 January 2012

Dear Eve,

Thank you for now agreeing that there was no prior announcement about recording. I would appreciate an apology for the suggestion that I recorded you when requested not to do so.

Could you indicate at what point of the proceedings Deirdre McMahon indicated to another individual that she/he should not record? Is this recorded by Eunan? I didn't notice it on my recording and obviously was not aware of it at the time.

I may at some point cite what was said at the meeting, which was a public event. I have perfect recall of the elements to which I may wish to draw readers' attention. I typed up a draft of the salient points soon after your excellent talk. You will remember that you generously responded to two emails in which I sought clarity over a couple of issues. If there is an aspect of the matter to which you do not wish me to draw attention, perhaps you might let me know what that might be. I will consider any points you may care to make.

You now agree that there was no general prohibition on recording and you are now also aware that it has been common practice at previous seminars.

If you think there should be a protocol in place, with regard to recording, perhaps you might put it to the seminar organisers and suggest that it be attached to notices of future talks. I will have no problem in agreeing to any reasonable proposal in this regard and I am sure that goes also for others who recorded seminars in the past. Speakers might be asked in advance if they have any objection to their remarks being recorded by those who come to listen.

With all best wishes, Niall

### Eve Morrison 12 January 2012

Dear Niall,

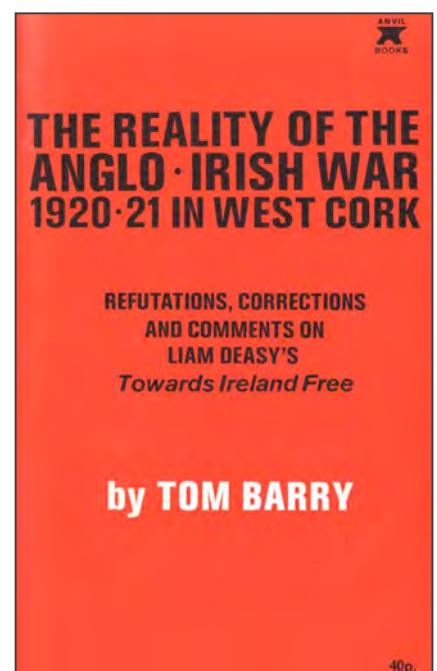
The established protocol at CCIH seminars - and generally - is to ask the speaker's permission to record in advance. You did not do that, nor did anyone else apart from Eunan. I am the one who is owed an apology and, in light of your information, from at least four people.

Under normal circumstances, as long as this established protocol is observed, I have no problem whatsoever with a paper of mine being recorded. In this instance, as stated in previous emails, I am very concerned that illicit recordings of the excerpts I played from the Chisholm tapes will jeopardise future access to them.

You can refer to my paper and points made in a general way, but please do not quote directly from - or further disseminate - the excerpts from the Chisholm recordings.

Best,

Eve



**Tom Barry 1974**  
*Towards Ireland Free*  
 critique, authorship of  
 latter claimed 1994,  
 2012, by Fr John  
 Chisholm. Available  
 online at  
 academia.edu.

40p.

# Ethnic Cleansing from Bosnia to Belfast via West Cork

*How Peter Hart's revisionist research was influenced by and then made use of by unionist propagandists*

Here, I attempt to show that Peter Hart's ethnic cleansing observations, with regard the IRA in Cork in the early 1920s, most likely derived from 1970s to 1990s unionist propaganda in Northern Ireland. It was driven also by news reports of actual ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. I show that Hart paid scant attention to the actual views of 1920s southern Irish Protestants. A large proportion of those who expressed opinions rejected unionist claims that they suffered sectarian persecution. Despite Eve Morrison's claims in her recent book on the Kilmichael Ambush, Hart's views were influenced by British and unionist propaganda.

## Ethnic Cleansing

In his 1996 essay, 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland', Peter Hart asserted that IRA attacks on Protestants 'might be termed "ethnic cleansing"'. The April 1922 killings of thirteen Protestant civilians in West Cork were, Hart observed, the 'worst of all' example of the phenomenon. He continued, 'All the nightmare images of ethnic conflict in the twentieth century are here'. He referred, without evidence, to,

... the massacres and the anonymous death squads, the burning homes and churches, the mass expulsions and trains filled with refugees, the transformation of lifelong neighbours into enemies, the conspiracy theories and terminology of hatred. Munster, Leinster, and Connaught can take their places with fellow imperial provinces, Silesia, Galicia, and Bosnia as part of the post war 'unmixing' of peoples in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Hart cited as support for these assertions his then forthcoming *The IRA and its Enemies*. Though it did not use the phrase, that book's depiction of IRA violence was immediately associated with the term 'ethnic cleansing'. One of those who did so in 1998 was British commentator Geoffrey Wheatcroft in the *Sunday Independent*. He had already, in 1993, referred to 'the IRA's unstated but unmistakable policy of ethnic cleansing', post 1969 in Northern Ireland. That commentary appeared while the

<sup>1</sup> Peter Hart, 'The Protestant Experience of Revolution In Southern Ireland', in Richard English, Graham Walker (ed.), *Unionism in Modern Ireland*, Gill & Macmillan, 1996, pp92, 97 (n68).

*Sunday Independent* continually attacked Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) leader John Hume, for talking with Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams. On that day, 8 August 1993, a controversial cartoon, widely interpreted as depicting Hume with blood on one of his hands, was published. It appeared in the newspaper on at least three occasions.<sup>2</sup>

Hart's 1996 essay also referenced the 4 May 1922 edition of the *Irish Times*, but without specifying an article.<sup>3</sup> However, the paper that day *denied* the validity of Hart's argument. It advertised the 11 May 'Irish Protestant Convention, to Condemn Sectarian outrages and Intolerance', that focussed primarily on anti-Catholic northern unionist violence.<sup>4</sup> It was denied also that day in reports of Church of Ireland Easter Vestry meetings in Kildare and Meath, 'unanimously endors[ing]' the Convention resolution. Another article reported 'drastic action' by the Limerick IRA against 'cowardly and unjust' 'anonymous persons' who sent 'threatening messages to local Protestants', the opposite of Hart's claim. In South Donegal Protestant property owners reportedly ignored warnings 'ordering them "to clear out"'. Their 'apprehension', notwithstanding, this also is not evidence of IRA ethnic cleansing or indeed of any IRA involvement. British policy and that of its allies, saw to it that Irish society suffered serious sectarian tensions. There is little robust evidence that the IRA also promoted them.

The phrase 'ethnic cleansing' emerged into general usage during 1991-2 in the former Yugoslavia. It was used to describe the actions of Croat and Serb armed forces targeting each other's populations, and Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>5</sup> The term described a form of genocide in which 'the deliberate, systematic attempt to wipe out a particular population' is based on their perceived ethnic identity.<sup>6</sup>

Wars in the former Yugoslavia may have influenced Hart's adoption of ethnic cleansing terminology in 1996. It

<sup>2</sup> Associations between Hart's 1998 book and 'ethnic cleansing' are in: Geoffrey Wheatcroft, 'Ethnic cleansing in the Free State', *New Statesman*, 10 Jul 1998; Eoghan Harris, 'Cork's ethnic cleansing exposed in masterpiece', *Sun Times*, 4 Apr 1999; Fergal Keane (twice), 'Mr McGuinness has opened the way to truth', 'A timely reminder of the Irish Republic's brush with a kind of ethnic cleansing', *Ind (Lon)*, 5 May 2001, 28 Sep 2002. Wheatcroft in 1993, 'Blind to the obvious', *Sun Independent*, 8 Aug (reprinted from *Spectator*, Lon.). The cartoon appeared also on 3 Oct 1993, 20 March 1994.

<sup>3</sup> He cited similarly, minimally, the 2, 19, 27 May *Irish Times* editions, plus on 13, 15, 17, 22 Jun, 8 Jul 1922. Note absence of 3 May edition, containing Protestant Convention resolution, plus 12 May Convention report.

<sup>4</sup> There was time to revise Hart's 1998 book narrative to rectify this mistake. For instance, identifying initials of interviewees in the essay, p96, n30-3, 34-9, 43 were changed for the subsequent book. Also, a reference in 1996 to a 'massacre of 14 [Protestant] men in West Cork' (p92) implies that an additional, fictitious, victim originating in Hart's PhD thesis had not yet been identified and excluded.

<sup>5</sup> For example, '5,000 Muslims, held hostage in Sarajevo', 'More than a million driven from homes in Yugoslav civil war', *Ir Times*, 21, 23 May 1992; 'Nazi purge' fears rise in Bosnia', *Ir Ind*, 23 Jun 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Mann, 'The Dark Side of Democracy: the Modern Tradition of Ethnic and Political Cleansing', *NLR*, 235, May-June 1999, p22.

is likely, however, that the post-1968 Northern Ireland conflict also exercised a substantive effect. That is because the ‘narrative of “ethnic cleansing”’ became a ‘unionist buzzword’ during the 1990s and substituted for the previously favoured term, ‘genocide’.<sup>7</sup> Unionists characterised IRA attacks on local Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and RUC recruits in border areas as ethnic cleansing attacks on Protestants.<sup>8</sup> In August 1992 *Irish Times* security correspondent Jim Cusack applied the term locally. He noted that at the start of the Troubles ‘in the early 1970s’,

Large sections of [Northern Ireland’s] urban population underwent a process of intimidation and eviction that was similar to the “ethnic cleansing” process in the former Yugoslavia.

Cusack did not mention that, as in the early 1920s, nationalists, overwhelmingly, were targeted. It was officially estimated that in the period July to September 1969, 1,820 families in Belfast fled their homes, 82.7% Catholic. In addition 5.3% of all Catholic families were displaced as compared to 0.4% of Protestants.<sup>9</sup>

Social science attempts to apply the term to IRA actions in Northern Ireland created methodological difficulties. That is partly because the scale and intent of post-1968 republican violence paled in comparison with the Balkan conflict. By the end of 1991 the considerably shorter Serbo-Croat war,

... caused 18,000 confirmed casualties ... and some 14,000 missing ... probably dead. Refugees numbered 703,000 [with] some 100,000 dwellings ... destroyed or damaged.

During seven years before 1993 in Fermanagh’s border regions, where allegations of IRA genocide and then ethnic cleansing of Protestants were promoted, six casualties were inflicted.<sup>10</sup> Over 1969-94, that is 25 years of the ‘Troubles’, in Fermanagh 110 in total were killed: 43 from the locally recruited UDR, RUC and Royal Irish Regiment (RIR), 21

<sup>7</sup> Eric Kauffman, *The Orange Order, a Contemporary Northern Ireland History*, OUP, 2007, p132; Henry Patterson, ‘Sectarianism Revisited: The Provisional IRA Campaign in a Border Region of Northern Ireland’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, v22, n3, 2010, pp350-1; Graham Dawson, ‘Ulster-British Identity and the Cultural Memory of ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ on the Northern Ireland Border’, in Brocklehurst, Phillips, eds, *History, Nationhood and the Question of Britain*, 2004, pp359-60. Newspaper examples: ‘Communities near Border ‘in jeopardy’’, *II*, 29 Apr 1993; Victoria McDonald, ‘Loyalists ‘ethnic cleansing’ victims, Amnesty told’, *II*, 26 Sep 1994; Toby Hardnen, ‘Ethnic cleansing’ victims await signal to return’, *Irish Independent*, 29 Sep 1994 (first publ., *Daily Telegraph* (Lon.)). For the previous (pre ‘ethnic cleansing’) articulation, Kevin Moore, ‘Genocide Irish Style’, *Sunday Independent*, 27 Mar 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Patterson, *op cit*, 2010, p351.

<sup>9</sup> Jim Cusack, ‘Thousands fled homes because of intimidation’, *Irish Times*, 28 Aug 1992 (see also note 15). Farrell, 1980, p263; Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, Profile, 2005, p626. Reticence in acknowledging specifically unionist oppression of Catholics is observed also in Liam Kennedy’s observation: ‘The largest forced population movements occurred in the period 1969-72 when more than 30,000 Catholics and Protestants fled their homes’. Liam Kennedy, ‘Repartition’, in Brendan O’Leary, John McGarry, eds, *The Future of Northern Ireland*, Clarendon, 1990, p161.

<sup>10</sup> Dawson, *op cit*, 2004, pp359, 361.

from the British Army.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps reflecting these concerns, in 2010 historian Professor Henry Patterson, from the University of Ulster politics department, ‘reject[ed] current attempts to label [IRA actions] a form of “ethnic cleansing”’.<sup>12</sup> In 2011 he contributed similarly, ‘The narrative of ethnic cleansing misses the point’. He cited Colm Tóibín’s observation,

I read as much as I could about [south Fermanagh]. I discovered certain things that were useful and interesting. One suggested that the IRA were picking off the only sons of Protestant farms in Fermanagh, that turned out not to be true.<sup>13</sup>

As a supporter of the revisionist project, Patterson’s objection to the term was partly, ironically, based on Peter Hart’s faulty claims:

Fermanagh did not experience the wholesale forced emigration of Protestants that occurred in West Cork during the War of Independence (1919-21) and which Peter Hart has chronicled.<sup>14</sup>

However, in an example of how revisionist research may sometimes adapt to political imperatives, in 2013 Patterson revised and reversed his presentation of the subject. His book, *Ireland’s Violent Frontier*, asserted that ethnic cleansing claims expressed ‘an emotional truth’. The term appeared six times within the book’s concluding seven pages and was used by those promoting interest in the book.<sup>15</sup> In partial recognition of conceptual and evidential difficulties, Patterson at one point cited a British Army officer on ‘ethnic cleansing over a long period... [that] can go largely unnoticed’.<sup>16</sup> However, as noticed, unionists regularly promoted the non-existent phenomenon.

In 2011 Patterson cited Graham Dawson’s 2004 research as, ‘one of the few pieces of academic work which address the experiences of border Protestants’. Significantly, Dawson admitted that:

The potency of this [ethnic cleansing] narrative derives not from the accuracy of its analysis of the conflict, but from its interweaving of psychic and political imperatives.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Susan, McKay, *Northern Protestants, an Unsettled People*, Blackstaff, 2000, p215.

<sup>12</sup> Patterson, *op cit*, 2010, p337.

<sup>13</sup> In Henry Patterson, ‘Border violence in Eugene McCabe’s Victims trilogy’, *Irish Studies Review*, v19, n2, 2011, p166.

<sup>14</sup> Henry Patterson, ‘War of National Liberation or Ethnic Cleansing: IRA Violence in Fermanagh during the Troubles’, in Brett Bowden, Michael T. Davis, eds, *Terror: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism*, U. of Queensland Press, 2008, p242.

<sup>15</sup> It appeared also three times over the book’s first 196 pages, Henry Patterson, *Ireland’s Violent Frontier: The Border and Anglo-Irish Relations During the Troubles*, Palgrave, 2013, pp2, 23, 43, 193, 194, 197 (thrice), 198. See the previously cited (in note 9) Jim Cusack, ‘IRA engaged in ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Protestants along border’, *Sun Ind*, 24 March, 2013. Cusack observed that Patterson’s book ‘assert[ed]’ that the “ethnic cleansing” of Protestants living in Border areas over 20 years of the Troubles was a “tool” [utilised by the IRA] to stop unionists coming to a political accommodation’. It did not state that.

<sup>16</sup> 2013, p193. Referred to by Conor Cruise O’Brien in 1992 as ‘ethnic cleansing of a creeping variety’, in Alan F. Parkinson, *Ulster Loyalism and the British Media*, Four Courts, 1998, p27, n68.

<sup>17</sup> Henry Patterson, ‘Border violence in Eugene McCabe’s Victims trilogy’, *Irish Studies Review*, v19, n2, 2011, p163. Dawson, *op cit*, 2004, p365.

In other words, it was propaganda. Dawson even suggested that in 1969 in Belfast, nationalists 'might claim with most justice to have been 'ethnically cleansed''. His analysis was replete with phraseology such as, 'mythic cultural memory', 'psychic ... political dimension', 'subjectivities or psyches of Protestants and unionists', 'psychic and emotional realities', 'psychic effects', 'psychic value', 'psychic energy', 'psychic disturbance', etc.<sup>18</sup> At one point Dawson asserted that to,

... deny or marginalise the cultural memory of 'genocide / ethnic cleansing' would be to contribute of the social exclusion, the psychic disturbance, and the crisis of belonging [of unionists].

Patterson, from the University of Ulster, said that 'revisionism' within Irish historiography is 'an attempt to purge it of political partisanship in the service of a nationalist or unionist project'.<sup>19</sup> In practice such research tends to identify alleged nationalist 'myths', whereas unionist 'emotional truth[s]' with little evidential basis are, it seems, endorsed.

Irish republicans rejected accusations of ethnic cleansing during the post-1968 Troubles. Ironically, given its use in anti-republican polemics and within revisionist academic research on republican activity, in 1994 a loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), endorsed the concept. Inspired by the prospect of a 'Bosnian situation', ethnic cleansing was for use in a 'doomsday situation', so as to create an 'ethnic Protestant homeland' (See *Irish Times* report, 17 January 1994, right). Roman Catholics remaining within 'homeland' frontiers would suffer one of three unpalatable fates. They would be 'expelled, nullified or interned'. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) spokesperson Sammy Wilson called the proposals 'valuable', as they 'contemplat[ed] what needs to be done to maintain our separate Ulster identity'.<sup>20</sup> DUP leader Ian Paisley remarked in his usual slipped-cog sectarian manner,

Romanism and republicanism have practiced genocide of the Protestant population and ethnic cleansing in Ireland for generations but this is not the Protestant way. Nevertheless, if forced, Protestants will fight to reserve their freedom and heritage.

Previously and conversely, at the 1993 Parnell Summer School in County Wicklow, Wilson had adopted a pose in

<sup>18</sup> Dawson on nationalist ethnic cleansing, *op cit* 2004, p361. For 'psychic' terminology, pp356, 357, 361, 362, 363, 365, 366, 367, 368, 370.

<sup>19</sup> Dawson, *op cit*, 2004, pp370-1. Patterson, *op cit*, 2007, pxi.

<sup>20</sup> Gerry Moriarty, 'UDA Gunmen jeer after shooting five in Belfast bookies', *IT*, 30 April 1993; Suzanne Breen, 'Anger at UDA plan for 'ethnic cleansing'', *Ir Times*, 17 Jan 1994. Wood, 2006, p185. Alan Murray, 'Loyalist Doomsday plan revealed', *SI*, 16 Jan 1994. Paul Connolly, 'UDA doomsday plan wicked says Mayhew', *Newsletter*, 17 Jan 1994.

*In Two Ulsters*, 1986, QUB's Liam Kennedy published a repartition plan; analysis later used in UDA proposals to ethnically cleanse Roman Catholics from an 'ethnic Protestant homeland'. The Democratic Unionist Party welcomed the UDA plan. Kennedy's cover illustration, from John Derrick's *Image of Ireland, a Discoverie of Woodkarne* (1581), conveys contemporary British racist and sectarian imagery, 'describing the state and condition of the wilde men in Ireland, properly called Woodkarne': 'Marke me the Karne that gripes the axe fast with his murd'ring hand, Then shall you say a righter knave came never in the land'. Since Kennedy's analysis does not delve that far back, the unexplained front-page illustration may also illustrate Kennedy's perception of Irish historical continuity.



line with southern liberal opinion:

Mr. Wilson said he wasn't opposed to nationalism, but acquisitive nationalism was disastrous. He instanced Hitler, Yugoslavia and Ireland as places [sic] where nationalist divisiveness led to bloodletting and ethnic cleansing.<sup>21</sup>

Support for ethnic cleansing motifs were at that time, the summer of 1993, gathering pace in unionist areas of Belfast.

A warning poster appeared, designed to keep straying Protestants in line. It stated, 'A Protestant health warning. Drinking in a Roman Catholic pub can seriously damage your health', and concluded 'Think before you drink'. One year later, on 18 June 1994, unionist paramilitaries shot dead six Catholics watching a World Cup match in a pub in Loughinisland, County Down, that was frequented usually by both Catholics and Protestants. In July 1993 buttonhole badges with the slogan, 'Ulster needs ethnic cleansing' appeared alongside the aforementioned posters. Police sources reported that 'The loyalist paramilitaries have been talking for some time about so-called 'ethnic cleansing'', with a view to utilising it. Instead of criticising unionist ethnic 'divisiveness' Sammy Wilson voiced agreement.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, the 1994 UDA plan drew heavily on a 1986 study, *Two Ulsters, a Case for Repartition*, by Queen's University economic (and revisionist) historian, Liam Kennedy, who combined political and electoral opposition to Sinn Féin with endorsement of Peter Hart's 'brilliant' analysis.<sup>23</sup> The research, 'printed in Northern

<sup>21</sup> Valerie Cox, 'Irishness' of unionists debated', *Ir Ind*, 17 August 1993.

<sup>22</sup> Jim McDowell, 'Loyalist warlords threaten Protestants', *Cork Examiner*, 5 Jul 1993.

<sup>23</sup> Conference infiltrated, *News Letter*, 26 April 1997. Liam Kennedy,

# Anger at UDA plan for 'ethnic cleansing'

From Suzanne Breen, in Belfast

THE publication of plans by the UDA which foresee three Northern counties being handed over to the Republic and the "ethnic cleansing" of Catholics in other areas in a "Doomsday situation" has been described as "a very valuable return to reality" by the DUP. [Two Paragraphs excised here, NM]

The document discusses taking large sections of the Catholic community hostage as "bargaining chips" for the release of Protestants "trapped" west of the Bann.

The objective would be to "establish an ethnic Protestant homeland". There was media speculation last night that a former member of the British army may have helped draw up the plans.

The DUP's press officer, Mr Sammy Wilson, said: "While some will no doubt denounce and ridicule their plan, nevertheless it shows that some loyalist paramilitaries are looking ahead and contemplating what needs to be done to maintain our separate Ulster identity.

"While I have always been careful never to threaten a Bosnian-type situation in Northern Ireland, it is clear that others foresee such a possibility. It is unfortunate that Ulstermen are now having to contemplate such dramatic and radical action.

Ireland at the Queen's University of Belfast', envisaged grant-aided voluntary population movements based on sectarian headcounts, resulting in separate 'British' and 'Irish' Ulsters, each retaining residual minorities of between 16 and 20%. The latter would enjoy 'generosity tempered by political firmness': advocacy of further constitutional change would be incompatible with public sector employment; election candidates would be required to take 'oaths of loyalty'. 'It could represent', Kennedy remarked, 'a final settlement'.<sup>24</sup>

Political scientist Michael Mann defined this practice as a 'coerced assimilation', that is sometimes a precursor to actual ethnic cleansing. Kennedy's peaceful goal, he said, envisaged two new states with 'around 80 percent composed of one ethnicity'. It was a 'solution' achieved violently in Yugoslavia during the 1990s. In the unlikely event that Kennedy's mini-balkanisation were attempted in Ireland, using whatever required degree of 'firmness', and were it to succeed (perhaps more unlikely), the north of Ireland would then have comprised (to use again Mann's framework) not one but two ethnically cleansed, 'ethnacracies'.<sup>25</sup> The UDA included maps of ethnically cleansed areas similar to Kennedy's originals, two of which were reproduced in an extensive *Sunday Independent* summary of the UDA's proposal. When this unstated debt to his research was drawn to his attention, Kennedy accused the UDA of 'plagiarising' and 'manipulating' his maps.<sup>26</sup>

From 1995 the Orange Order operated a Protestants-only fund in Fermanagh, so as to prevent Catholics from buying land.<sup>27</sup> Somewhat incongruously, in the circumstances, the Order weaved into its use of ethnic cleansing terminology allusions to 'Republican 'pogroms' against Protestants' during the 1919-21 War of Independence. On occasion Peter Hart's research was cited.<sup>28</sup>

'Long War – Long March', *Fortnight*, n436, Jul-Aug 2005. Liam Kennedy, *Unhappy the Land, the Most Oppressed People Ever, the Irish?*, Merrion 2016, pp206, 264 (n93). See Christine Kinealy, *The Great Irish Famine, Impact, Ideology, and Rebellion*, Palgrave, 2002, p16, on Kennedy's 'revisionist' views.

<sup>24</sup> Kennedy, *op cit*, 1986, pp1, 57, 66.

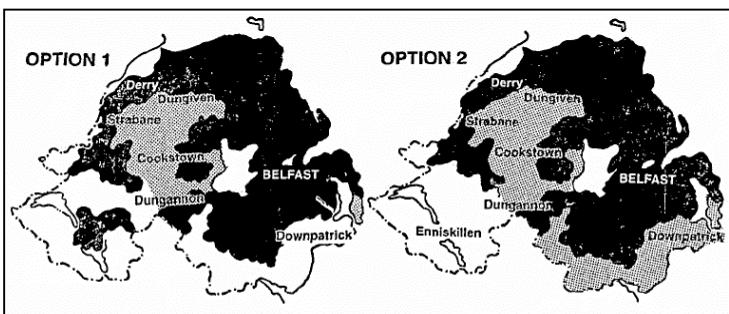
<sup>25</sup> Mann, *op cit*, 1999, pp22, 41.

<sup>26</sup> Ian S. Wood, *Crimes of Loyalty, a History of the UDA*, Edinburgh UP, 2006, p184. Alan Murray, 'Loyalist Doomsday plan revealed', *Sun Ind*, 16 Jan 1994. Mark Simpson, 'UDA has stolen my maps', *Belfast Telegraph*, 17 Jan 1994. Dick Grogan, 'Protestant Homeland plan condemned', *Ir Times*, 18 Jan 1994.

<sup>27</sup> Barry McCaffrey, 'Concern at Order link to dubious land firm', 'Document links Order to property company', *Irish News*, 11 Nov 2004. It was reported that the Order's linked Ulster Land and Property Company spent £1.46m up to 2002 and hoped to have raised and spent £5m by 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Patterson, *op cit*, 2011, p165. Dawson, *op cit*, 2004, pp367-8. See also, continuing the cycle, Gerry Moriarty, 'From sashes to sambas?', *Ir Times*, 17 Jun 2006:

Drew Nelson, grand secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, ... visited a local history group... in [Dunmanway] ... 'On the wall I saw a timeline of all the events that had happened around the War of Independence in west Cork... But what was obviously missing was the massacre of Protestants that took place ... [in] Dunmanway, in April 1922'. He had gleaned this information from Peter Hart's book *The IRA and Its Enemies*.



OPTIONS 1 & 2 outlined in the Loyalist Doomsday plan, showing the minimum (1) and maximum (2) territory they feel they could hold in a unilateral repartition. The black area represents existing Loyalist territory. The grey area represents existing nationalist territory that could be seized through 'ethnic cleansing' and held. The white areas would be ceded to the Republic



UDA proposals (*Sunday Independent* 18 January 1994) and, below, Liam Kennedy plan (1986, p59)

For these reasons, Hart's 1996 adoption of the term to describe IRA actions in the 1920s may therefore have been prompted by parochial influences. In turn, loyalists adopted his research to justify harsh measures against Roman Catholics in the present. As Colm Tóibín observed in 1993, the 'revisionism' of 'Foster and his fellow historians... [was] useful, not for its purity, or its truth, but its politics', a usefulness Hart's work served also. Paul Bew of Queen's University Politics Department, contributed in 1996 a further example, in what purported to be an expert critique of Neil Jordan's feature film *Michael Collins*, on the War of Independence IRA intelligence leader:

... 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.

Such 'fears' appear based on a combination of propaganda and misinformation, some contributed by historians.<sup>29</sup>

### Protestant Divisions

Returning then to the early 1920s, it is possible to argue that members of the South's Protestant minority, now isolated from their northern brethren by a Partition that the former never wanted, had reasons to conciliate the majority in the Irish Free State, by denying they had been victimised by Catholic-Nationalist sectarianism. What is implausible, however, is that Peter Hart was therefore somehow justified in ignoring entirely an explicit denial of his own

In a letter, the author noted the Orange Order's use of Hart's research. Hart responded, 'I have never argued that "ethnic cleansing" took place in Cork or elsewhere in the 1920s - in fact, quite the opposite'. I then noted that he had so argued, 23, 28 Jun, 3 Jul 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Colm Tóibín, 'New Ways of Killing Your Father', *LRB*, v15, n 22, 18 Nov 1993; Paul Bew, 'History it ain't', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Oct 1996. Bew's dim view of the film compared it with 'fascistic art'.

hypothesis made in 1922, after the April killings, by the largest and most representative body of southern Irish Protestants. The 11 May Protestant Convention in Dublin opposed violence against Catholics in Northern Ireland. The Convention resolution's final version noted the West Cork April 1922 killings, but asserted that southern Protestants had not previously been subject to sectarian hostility. Yet, Hart's non-treatment of the Convention seems entirely in character with his overall approaches to, and his misuses of evidence, concerning both the Kilmichael Ambush and the tragic events of April 1922.

Hart's allegations that IRA actions in 1919–22 were driven primarily by bitter sectarian hatred of Protestants surely required robust evidence and analysis. This would be true for PhD research originating in any academic institution. In TCD, which nurtured Hart's research, contrasting views of the subject were available during the 1920s.

The Rev'd John Henry Bernard, whose family was from Co. Kerry was 'a convinced unionist'. As Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin he supported the execution afterwards of leaders of the 1916 Rising: 'this is not the time for amnesties and pardons, it is the time for punishment swift and stern'. He later 'argued against the general [British] pardon' for 1916 fighters and others who were interned. In 1918 Bernard privately instructed Church of Ireland clergy to cease publicly opposing a failed British attempt to impose conscription.<sup>30</sup>

Appointed TCD Provost from 1919 to 1927, in 1924 Bernard said something different. He 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.<sup>31</sup>

One might expect that Provost Bernard, reminiscing afterwards as a unionist unafraid of expressing his opinion, would have lamented IRA sectarianism had he believed it to be a republican motive during 1919–22. Bernard's views in fact mirrored others often expressed within the southern Protestant community, and so, arguably, Hart should at least have considered them to be important if not authoritative.

Alternatively, TCD's first Lecky Professor of Modern History, from 1914–1939, W. Allison Phillips published *Revolution in Ireland* in 1923. Its analysis reflected Hart's later research. Phillips interspersed allegations of republican persecution of 'Protestants, and obnoxious

<sup>30</sup> R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland, 1859–1969*, RKP, 1975, p108. F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890–1939*, OUP, 1979, p103; Andrew McGrath, 'Just War in the Irish Context: the Response of the Irish Churches to Republican Armed Force, 1916–1921', *Identity Studies*, v3, 2011, p30. The Rector of Castledermot, Kildare, Rev'd Henry A.D. Barbor, was so instructed: see, 'Protestant Clergyman and a Nation's Rights', *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Apr 1918; ADD MSS. 52783, J. H. Bernard Papers, British Library, Manuscripts Room (I am indebted to Jack Lane for recovery of this information).

<sup>31</sup> 'The Church of Ireland since Disestablishment', *The Review of the Churches*, v1, n1, 1924, in *IT*, 14 Jan 1924.

people generally', in addition to ex soldiers and former RIC personnel, with assertions that, 'foreign communists[,] notably Polish and Russian Jews from Glasgow... and committeees of the Third International... in [Ireland's] principal cites' were 'sowing unrest'.<sup>32</sup> A Hart PhD thesis note (p170, n47), accompanying citation of Phillips' description of IRA recruits ('shop assistants and town labourers'), contains:

Phillips was involved in the British Intelligence effort in Ireland, and had access to the RIC's files in 1921.

The observation is not in Hart's book (139, n41). Phillips' combination of prejudice and paranoia was typical of loyalist accounts and of British propaganda. In Hart's research, political irrationality was ascribed instead mainly to the IRA and to the Catholic population generally.<sup>33</sup>

Protestant views similar to Provost Bernard's were commonplace during 1919–22 and easily available to later historians, not least at the 11 May 1922 Protestant Convention. In 1921, for instance, a US fact-finding delegation reported a Limerick Methodist minister asserting that Wesleyan ministers 'entirely ridiculed' the idea that southern unionists were in danger. A Protestant businessman from the same city commented that Protestants were 'more fearful' of Crown forces than of 'Sinn Féiners'.<sup>34</sup> The previously cited experience of Bantry's leading trader and southern unionist, G.W. Biggs, demonstrated why. Opposing Ulster Unionist claims in the *Irish Times* on 24 July 1920, he wrote,

I feel it my duty to protest very strongly against this unfounded slander [of intolerance on the part] of our Catholic neighbours... I have been resident in Bantry for 43 years, during 33 of which I have been engaged in business, and I have received the greatest kindness, courtesy, and support from all classes and creeds in the country.

After publication of the letter, Black & Tans burned down Biggs' substantial business premises and British military commandeered his home, forcing Biggs to send his family

<sup>32</sup> W. Alison Phillips, *Revolution in Ireland 1906–1923*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Longmans, Green & Co., [1923] 1926, pp259, 268. Remarkably, an allegedly notorious Glaswegian Jew featured in another propaganda account, *Tales of the RIC*. Additionally, the later discussed C.H. Bretherton also reproduced pro-British anti-Semitism. Robert Tobin, *The Minority Voice: Hubert Butler and Southern Irish Protestantism*, OUP, 2012, p33, cited Phillips on Protestant fears that 'a pogrom against them might erupt', a term Phillips did not employ. Tobin went on to cite Hart (1998) and Gerard Murphy's equally controversial research (*The Year of Disappearances*, 2010) on 'sustained violence against Protestants'. However, it is noticeable that the subject of Tobin's study, essayist Hubert Butler, an acute observer of Irish Protestantism and a severe critic of conservative Roman Catholic influences in southern Ireland, did not allege sectarianism on the part of the IRA. Instead, Butler observed, 'I became an Irish nationalist when I was very young', aged twenty in 1920, *Escape from an Ant Hill*, Lilliput, 1986, p95.

<sup>33</sup> See Brian Murphy, *The Origins and Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland in 1920*, Aubane-Spinwatch, 2006, and also Murphy on Hart's editorship and censorship of *British intelligence in Ireland, The Final Reports* (1992), discussed also in previous essay.

<sup>34</sup> In a comment to the *American Commission on Conditions in Ireland, Interim Report*, 'Supplemental Report, the Religious issue', 1921, p115.

to Dublin while he went to live in a hotel.<sup>35</sup> As noted in the previous essay, in the London *Times* on 30 September 1920 John Annan Bryce, a younger brother of a former British Chief Secretary for Ireland, noted what had happened (see letter, left).<sup>36</sup>

Aside from Biggs and Annan Bryce, southern Protestant alienation from British forces may be gleaned also from Olga Pyne Clarke's observation concerning her father's and grandfather's clash with the British Army in Cork during December-January 1920-21.

One day [Cork Divisional Commander General Strickland] stamped into my father's office and in his extremely rude, brusque manner said, 'Look here Clarke, you are trusted by both sides: it's your duty to give me information'. Father, looking him in the eye, calmly said, 'I will not inform against my own countrymen. It is your duty to control the rabble your government has let loose on Ireland. Good morning'. Going purple in the face, the General stormed out, crossed the Mall to Grandfather's office, and received virtually the same reply.<sup>37</sup>

Strickland's efforts came after the burning and looting of Cork City Centre by Crown forces on 11 December 1920, and a consequent switch from unofficial to officially sanctioned reprisal burnings in January 1921.<sup>38</sup> John Borgonovo's analysis (2006) suggests that Strickland's attempts to recruit Protestant informers, such as Olga Pyne Clarke's kinsmen, were countered by the IRA targeting those persuaded to do so during the early months of 1921. It appears that Strickland's attempts to polarise local communities, and the actions of forces under his command, increased Protestant alienation from British policies and actions.

On 27 January 1921 the *Times* (London) Cork correspondent reported 'many' loyalist protests against Strickland. They complained, 'it is now an offence to remain neutral' (report, page 28). The fate of West Cork loyalist John (aka Tom) Bradfield was described. He was,

... found guilty of having attempted to inform the enemy of the presence and movement of republican troops.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Biggs's fate was noted in David Hogan (*pseud.*, Frank Gallagher), *The Four Glorious Years* (1953), p115, a book otherwise cited by Hart (book, 205; thesis, 261). Biggs expressed a widespread view, as expressed in the *Irish Times*. On 10 June 1920, one self-styled 'Loyalist' observed that the deteriorating situation was causing 'many southern unionists to seriously contemplate espousing the cause of Sinn Fein'. They could hardly have done so if the IRA was shooting Protestants on a sectarian basis.

<sup>36</sup> For Annan Bryce letters, House of Commons questions, editorials, see *Times* (Lon.), 30 Sep, 8 Oct, 1, 2, 4, 9, 12, 16 Nov 1920, summarised in Eamon Dyas, 'The Crown's Campaign Against Protestant Neutrality in Cork During the Irish War of Independence', *Church & State* 86, Autumn 2006, at, <http://www.atholbooks.org/archives/cands/csarticles/bryce.php>, accessed 5 Sep 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Olga Pyne Clarke, *She Came of Decent People*, Pelham, 1985, pp51-52.

<sup>38</sup> Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic*, Wolfhound, 1937, pp423-4.

<sup>39</sup> Bradfield's fate is featured also in a song, performed by David Fitzpatrick at the 2013 Magdalene College Cambridge Parnell Lecture, Justine McCarthy, 'Lecturer ballad 'insults' victims of Dunmanway', *Sun Times* (Ir ed), 17 Feb 2013.

It is clear that there were distinctions among southern loyalists and unionists (both Protestant and Roman Catholic) and within the Protestant community itself. Southern Protestant opinion was split, and there appears to have been an active minority who identified both with British military policies and with contemporary actions by northern unionist forces. Clearly, for security reasons, such people did not advertise their activities, but it appears that their stance was more or less understood. The difference may be illustrated in reports of two meetings

Under the headline 'Pogrom Denounced' (illustrated page 28), the 29 April 2033 *Southern Star* reported a 'largely attended meeting of the Protestants of various denominations in the [West Cork] 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.

The newspaper also began reporting the April killings that day. Hart's analysis 'remained

## REPRISAL THREATS. NOTICE BY CIRCULAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—On September 16, at 9.45 a.m., a lorry full of soldiers from Bantry stopped in front of the Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff, where I have been staying since August 19. The manageress went to the door and was handed by a soldier an envelope addressed in handwriting "The Manageress, Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff." It contained an unsigned and undated slip worded as follows:—

In some districts loyalists and members of his Majesty's forces have received notices threatening the destruction of their houses in certain eventualities. Under these circumstances it has been decided that for each loyalist's house so destroyed the house of a republican leader will be similarly dealt with. It is naturally to be hoped that the necessity for such reprisal will not arise and therefore this warning of the punishment which will follow any destruction of loyalists' houses is being widely circulated.

I at once sent a copy of this notice, mentioning the circumstances, to General Sir Nevil Macready, and said that, as it was contrary to his recent proclamation against reprisals, I presumed it was issued without his authority or knowledge. I received, to my surprise, the following reply:—

Sir,—Sir Nevil Macready asks me in reply to your letter of 16th instant to state that he is acquainted with the distribution of the notices, a copy of which you enclosed.—Truly yours, WILLIAM RYCRIFT, Major-General i/c Administration, Ireland.

G.H.Q., Ireland, Parkgate, Dublin, 13th September, 1920.

On the 17th inst. I wrote a similar letter, with copy of the notice, to the O.C., Bantry, asking that, as on the night of August 15 the large garage of this hotel had been burned by the police who had also threatened to burn the hotel itself, he would give an assurance against further molestation. I gave him as special reason for protection that the present proprietress had acquired the hotel in 1918 for conversion into a convalescent hospital for officers, that it was the first such hospital in Ireland, and that with the title of "Queen Alexandra's Home of Rest for Officers," first under the Red Cross and afterwards the Dublin Command, it had—she being commandant—housed hundreds of wounded officers, while the only return for her pains and expenditure of many thousand pounds, which both the Red Cross and the War Office refuse to repay, had been the burning of the garage. To this letter I received the following Gilbertian answer:—

To J. Annan Bryce, Esq., Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff. In reply to your letter of September 17, 1920, addressed to O.C., Barracks, Bantry. It appears that slips similar to the one to which you evidently refer are being distributed about the country. On investigation I find that an officer of my battalion picked one of them up. This officer having seen similar slips in Bantry and other places thought it would be a good thing to hand it in to one of the hotels in Glengarriff as he passed through. As yours was the most convenient, being close to the road, he put it in an envelope and addressed it to the manageress and handed it in as he passed.

L. M. JONES, Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding Troops, Bantry and commanding 1st Battalion The King's Regiment. Bantry, September 20, 1920.

I also wrote to Sir Harmer Greenwood, but have received no reply. It will be seen that neither Sir Nevil Macready nor Colonel Jones disavows the notice, and that Colonel Jones makes no answer to the request for an assurance of non-molestation.

I may add that there is no justification for the issue of such a notice in this district, where the only damage to loyalist premises has been done by the police. In July they burned the stores of Mr. G. W. Biggs, the principal merchant in Bantry, a man highly respected, a Protestant, and a lifelong Unionist, with a damage of over £25,000, and the estate office of the late Mr. Leigh-White, also a Unionist. Subsequently, in August, the police fired into Mr. Biggs's office, while his residence has since been commandeered for police barracks. He has had to send his family to Dublin and to live himself in a hotel. Only two reasons can be assigned for the outrages on Mr. Biggs, one that he employed Sinn Feiners—he could not work his large business without them, there being no Unionist workmen in Bantry—the other a recently published statement of his protesting—on his own 40 years' experience—against Orange allegations of Catholic intolerance.

The July burning was part of a general pogrom, in which a cripple, named Crowley, was deliberately shot by the police while in bed and several houses were set on fire while the people were asleep. A report was made to Dublin Castle by Mr. Hynes, the County Court Judge, who happened to be on the spot for quarter sessions. Questioned in the House of Commons, the Government refused to produce this report on the ground that production would not be in the public interest, which means—as Parliamentary experience teaches one—that it was damning to Government.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
J. ANNAN BRYCE.  
Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff, County Cork,

## REBELS IN BRITISH UNIFORM.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

CORK, JAN. 26.

New facts concerning the execution by a "Republican Court-martial" of a Protestant farmer named John Bradfield, on his farmstead, near Bandon, Co. Cork, last Monday, show the terrible position in which loyalists in the martial law area are placed.

Under General Strickland's proclamation they are required to give information, under pain of prosecution, of facts which may be within their knowledge of arrangements for ambuses, carrying of arms, and so forth—in short, it is an offence to remain neutral. Yet if they give such information they incur the risk of rebel vengeance. This state of things has aroused many protests from loyalists in the South of Ireland, who point out that, if it became known that they intended to comply with the Government's order, their lives would not be worth 24 hours' purchase. On the day before his death John Bradfield was visited by six men in military uniform, ostensibly officers of his Majesty's forces, who questioned him about the movements of Sinn Feiners in his district. What information he gave, if any, is not known, but it is now stated that his visitors were Republicans masquerading as British officers, and the unfortunate man fell readily into the trap laid for him. After he was shot, a note was found pinned to his clothing stating that he had been shot following a Court-martial held on the previous night, at which he had been found guilty of having attempted to inform the enemy of the presence and movements of Republican troops.

## POGROM 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. Fairorother, 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.

Above, *Times* (Lon), 27 January 1921.

Loyalists mobilised as informers targeted by IRA. Below, *Southern Star* 29 April 1922. Protestant resolution, Schull, West Cork

basis of British rule and its outworking at that time in Belfast

Fourteen Clonakilty Select Vestry meeting participants included 'F. & R. Nagle' and an 'R.J. Helen'. The latter proposed the motion. Helen, a later admitted loyalist informer, re-reported that shortly afterwards he escaped from IRA captors during the April Killings. While the exact identity of the two Nagles is uncertain,<sup>40</sup> a Robert Nagle was shot dead during the April killings. His father Thomas

<sup>40</sup> No 'F' Nagle lived in Clonakilty in 1911 according to the census, which may indicate a misprint of 'T' for Thomas. The other 'R' Nagle might, if not Robert himself, have been older brother, Richard, aged 24, or one of three other Richard Nagles within the 'Clonakilty Urban' area in 1911, see census online, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Clonakilty\\_Urban/Barrack\\_Street/379109/](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Clonakilty_Urban/Barrack_Street/379109/), accessed 30 Sep 2022.

silent' on this West Cork Protestant opinion and on the subsequent highly important 11 May Protestant Convention resolution.

By way of contrast, a Clonakilty Church of Ireland Select Vestry met on 20 April 1922. Its resolution testified to 'extremely good feeling and friendship ... always existing between the Protestants and Roman Catholics in this parish and district'. Unlike in Schull, the resolution did not condemn anti-Catholic violence 'in the North of Ireland'. Clonakilty's resolution instead condemned, in an anodyne manner, 'murders and violence, or crimes of any kind, especially when committed under the name of religion'. The statement marked a reluctance to accept prevalent southern Protestant opposition to northern unionist activities. The resolution does not constitute evidence of activity on behalf of British forces.

However, compared to the Schull meeting outcome, it is indicative of ambivalence toward the historically sectarian

claimed he survived by hiding in a cupboard. Robert Nagle was aged sixteen and a half in April 1922. He appears to have been targeted alongside his father due to his work in the post office, a hive of espionage activity for both sides. Thomas Nagle's later compensation application contains a claim that 'the raiders declared that they had come to murder Nagle and two of his sons'. It appears also from the report of Robert Nagle's inquest that his killers targeted him specifically, in addition to his father.<sup>41</sup> Another brother, Henry, claimed he had been ordered by the IRA to leave Mountmellick, Queen's County (now Laois). He did so after April 1922.<sup>42</sup>

The terms 'Protestant' and 'loyalist' were clearly distinguishable (the latter description not confined to Protestants). In 1997, Trinity College historian, Professor R.B. McDowell, stated, in relation to the April 1922 killings, 'armed bands shot down a dozen Protestants, several of them well known loyalists'. McDowell, a Protestant unionist, lived through the period.<sup>43</sup> Of six compensation claims from reported April killings survivors that Hart saw, four of them referred only to 'loyalists' under attack. In the other two claims, Rev'd Ralph Harbord referred to 'Protestant loyalists', while the self-admitted informer Richard Helen referred to 'the massacre of Protestants' before he detailed attacks on 'loyalists'. William Jagoe, who claimed his premises in Dunmanway were shot at, was typical. His account reported that in the early morning of 27 April 1922,

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Nagle, CO/762/5/6; 'Clonakilty inquest, story of midnight shooting', *Cork Examiner*, 1 May 1922. In "Something of the Nature of a Massacre": The Bandon Valley Killings Revisited, *Éire-Ireland*, v49, I3-4, Fall/Winter 2014, Bielenberg, Borgonovo, Donnelly, suggest that Robert Nagle was shot in substitution for his father (2014, p55, Robert misnamed 'Richard' in n194). The evidential record appears to suggest otherwise. They also suggest that John Bradfield's death on 29 April was a substitute killing, in that case for his brother. On this basis, plus their understanding that James Greenfield was shot due to his being alongside John Buttiner, Bielenberg *et al* view these killings as sectarian. However, since they also agree that 'the majority of the ... victims appear to have been loyalists outwardly hostile to the IRA', the evidence may point to guilt by loyalist rather than Protestant association. Because the intended victims may not have been capable of discerning a difference between religious and political identity does not necessarily mean their killers, however much they may have escaped from military controls, viewed matters similarly. This article contributes much new evidence, including some very well founded interpretations and insights. However, the article fails to point out Peter Hart's censorship of the Record of the Rebellion, while it cites the evidence in the Record Hart distorted. Agreement with 'Peter Hart's conclusion that the killings were sectarian' (p57), even if viewed, contra Hart, as exceptional, does not flow from the evidence adduced. In part that evidence suggested pro-British activity on the part of some victims. The lowest common denominator amongst the victims, Protestantism, does not necessarily mean it was the highest common factor in their demise. That is the category mistake Hart made in the first place.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Taylor, *Heroes or Traitors, Experience of Southern Irish Soldiers Returning from the Great War 1919-1939*, Liverpool UP, 2015, p70. Taylor's research on southern Irish veterans of World War One undermined Hart's suggestion that the IRA persecuted this group. Taylor found that the IRA welcomed ex-service personnel. Apart from those few identified as working with British forces, they were 'not specifically targeted', p78.

<sup>43</sup> R.B. McDowell, *Crisis and Decline, the fate of the Southern Unionists*, Lilliput, 1997, p127.

... an armed gang visited the town and murdered three well-known loyalists. Several other loyalists escaped... On the next night 5 other loyalists were murdered.<sup>44</sup>

These categorisations appear to place the April killings within a pre-existing political frame of reference. That is not to say that this framework was not challenged.

In October 1920 a claim of sectarian persecution was made in a motion at the Dublin diocesan Church of Ireland Synod. It 'reaffirm[ed] loyalty' to King George and 'deplor[ed]' the,

... unhappy campaign of murder and terrorism which has deprived loyal citizens in the South and West of Ireland of the support and sanction of the ordinary law; and hereby calls upon the General Synod to take such steps as may appear to it desirable to secure protection for the lives and property of Churchmen who are subjected to injury and intimidation for their political and religious opinions.

There were initial attempts to rule the motion out of order. In an effort to save his text, the proposer, Rev'd T.C. Hammond, retreated. He did not wish to imply that 'acts of violence' were confined to one part of the population and conceded,

It was a matter of very deep regret to many of them that associated with the campaign of terror there were some, happily only a few, who regarded themselves as members of the Church of Ireland.

After this grudging though significant admission (in which a Protestant republican was thought a contradiction in terms), Hammond then claimed that the motion's 'loyal citizens' included members of 'the Church that had secured the allegiance of the majority of the people'. Even that was insufficient. There followed a series of backtracking amendments, one of which proposed to 'deplore the unhappy campaign of murder and terrorism in the South and West of Ireland'. A Brigadier-General Crosbie from Cork could not accept this 'invidious distinction' and 'the aspersion that was cast upon the South and West of Ireland'. 'The North is far worse than the South and West', he said. The Fermanagh-based Earl of Belmore then interjected, 'Not the North-West, but the North East', with its post-July 1920 anti-Catholic pogroms. Eventually, a motion deplored, simply, the 'unhappy campaign of murder and terrorism in Ireland' was passed, in which culpability was open to interpretation.<sup>45</sup>

An *Irish Times* editorial noted that 'delet[ion] of the passage which referred to persecution on religious grounds' 'showed... a wise recognition of facts' and affirmed, '[t]here is no evidence... that Southern churchmen have been persecuted merely on account of their religious opinions'. The newspaper noted agreement on the point from the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Gregg, an avowed loyalist.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Ralph C.V. Harbord (CO/762/58), Richard James Helen (CO/762/33), William Jagoe (CO/762/4), James McCarthy (CO/762/13), William Perrot (CO/762/121), Thomas Sullivan (CO/762/175).

<sup>45</sup> 'The Campaign of murder, Mr. Hammond's resolution, Appeal to General Synod', *Ir Times*, 19 Oct 1920.

<sup>46</sup> 'Churchmen and Politics', *Ir Times*, 19 Oct 1920.

The equally unionist and determinedly Protestant *Irish Times*, plus representatives of Ireland's largest Protestant denomination, surely would surely have expressed themselves differently had their experience of Irish life been different. The newspaper expressed this opinion consistently. In 1935, during a sudden outbreak of sectarian reaction, mainly in the west of Ireland, to reports of renewed attacks on Catholics in Belfast, that quickly fizzled out, the paper observed that,

... 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.

This *Irish Times* view was reflected in the unionist leaning *Church of Ireland Gazette*, whose contemporary reaction to the April 1922 killings included:

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.<sup>47</sup>

In other words, during the War of Independence Protestants as such were not targets. Interestingly, for a short period, the *Gazette* did allege republican sectarianism, but quite quickly publicly reversed itself. On 11 August 1922, the *Gazette* encouraged harsher Free State methods in the Civil War and accused IRA 'hooligan[s]' of an 'execrable desecration' of a Church of Ireland graveyard in Kilmacthomas, Waterford. The claim met with refutation from the Rector one week later, who observed that he had 'received nothing but respect' from the local IRA, with whom he disagreed. 'One or two hooligans' had 'pushed down' five gravestones, he explained, Thus corrected, by 13 October (in 'The Protestant's lot') the *Gazette* warned itself, in the guise of advising its readership,

'We would counsel our readers not to distort such incidents ... into symptoms of an organised campaign against Protestantism'.

If anything, in terms of sectarian claims, the shoe appeared to be on the other foot. Rev'd Hammond, who moved the Dublin Synod motion, was a leading member of the Orange Order<sup>48</sup> and was also General Superintendent of the proselytising 'Irish Church Missions (to the Roman Catholics)'. During 1921–22 the Connellan Mission, for which Hammond acted as Secretary, openly distributed a Protestant Truth Society pamphlet, *Rome Behind Sinn Féin* (a sequel to the equally imaginative *Rome behind the Great War*).<sup>49</sup> Despite his criticisms of Irish republicans and denunciations of Roman Catholicism, Hammond's

<sup>47</sup> 'Ugly symptoms' (editorial), *Ir Times*, 22 Jul 1935); 'The Southern Minority', *Church of Ireland Gazette*, 26 May 1922.

<sup>48</sup> In 1915 ('Dublin Diocesan Synod', *Ir Times*, 16 Nov), Hammond denied he was 'the leader of the [Dublin Diocesan Synod's] Orange section', but explained, 'I would be proud of the privilege if I were.'

<sup>49</sup> 'Injunction against *Rome Behind Sinn Féin*', *Ir Times*, 30 Jul 1921; 'Law reports, copyright law, action against missionary society', *Ir Times*, 22 Mar 1922.

organisation made no claim of IRA persecution, apart from the one rejected by Hammond's co-religionists.

According to Martin Maguire, minutes of the exclusively Protestant-unionist City and County of Dublin Conservative Workingmen's Club (1921-26), and of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants (1915-21), demonstrate 'no evidence of fear and terror'. He observed, 'Except for the inconvenience of the curfew, business was very much as usual'. Indeed, the Orange Order met openly in Dublin in 1920 to lament the eclipse of landlordism and to condemn 'the worst form of agitation that Ireland had ever witnessed... that of the Sinn Fein movement'. The agitation did not appear to preclude unhampered expression and publication of this opinion.<sup>50</sup>

Hammond's Irish Church Missions was opposed to Roman Catholics irrespective of what they did. In 1917 the organisation's annual meeting heard a protest against 'too many' 'not wanted' Roman Catholic chaplains serving at the front with the British Army. It was feared that,

When their true young men came home from the Front there would be a great many tinged with that religion (applause).<sup>51</sup>

The ICM in 1917 was the remnant of a significant group that during the nineteenth century attempted to convert the majority to Protestantism. It expressed its views openly, even as the old regime passed into the new. It combined attacks on the majority faith with a news task, socially controlling women who had children out of wedlock and catering for their offspring, while also dissuading Protestants from marrying Roman Catholics.<sup>52</sup> Such expressions and activity do not appear to have done the organisation much good but they did not, it also appears,

<sup>50</sup> Martin Maguire, 'A Socio Economic Analysis of the Dublin Protestant Working Class, 1870-1926', IESH, vXX, 1993, p51; 'Twelfth of July Anniversary, celebration in Dublin, law and order in the country', *Ir Times*, 10 Jul 1920.

<sup>51</sup> 'Irish Church Missions', *Ir Times*, 17 April 1917, also discussed, Chapter Twelve, pages 306-7. In Warren Nelson's 1994 in-house T.C. Hammond biography, apart from a fear of being unwanted in the New Free State, there is no discussion of an IRA campaign against Protestants (pp66-69). Nelson suggested, remarkably, that potential 'danger [to Hammond] lay in the fact that he was used by both sides as an intermediary', and that, due to a 'misunderstanding', Hammond was 'for a time on a "hit list"'. Reportedly, a republican who later became a Protestant evangelist explained that Hammond was saved due to his 'reputation for helping people regardless of their religion'. As noted, the *Irish Times* reported Hammond as a distributor of *Rome Behind Sinn Féin* (1921, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, republished in 2000 with a preface by Hammond admirer, Rev'd Ian Paisley), in a court case alleging breach of copyright. Hammond unquestionably raised the ire of devout Roman Catholics. He spared no effort insulting the 'Romish' church, in attempting to convert wavers and in parading successes publicly. He was ever vigilant also in detecting papist influences within the Church of Ireland (see Chapter Eleven). Hammond emigrated to Australia in 1935 where, in the mid 1940s, he accused an Anglican Bishop of importing Romanist 'ritualism' into a prayer book. In an ensuing legal challenge Hammond was accused, in turn, of inheriting from his homeland, 'an obviously anti-Roman Catholic complex and tends to find something Romish in everything he can', in Ruth Teale, 'The "Red Book" Case', *Journal of Religious History*, v12, n1, June 1982, p79.

<sup>52</sup> T.C. Hammond, *Marriage : my choice : what shall it be?*, Church of Ireland Printing Coo., 1937.

occasion it harm.

### 'The bogey of Catholic Intolerance'

A more commonly-held southern Protestant understanding was underlined by Lionel Curtis. He was British Prime Minister Lloyd George's imperial adviser and British delegation secretary during Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations in 1921. Curtis had been editor also of *Round Table*, the journal of a powerful group supporting imperial interests.<sup>53</sup> In a lengthy June 1921 *Round Table* article, 'Ireland', based on a recent tour, Curtis declared,

To conceive the struggle as religious in character is in any case misleading. 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.<sup>54</sup>

It is unfortunate that, since he did not cite them, Peter Hart apparently did not encounter Curtis's considered views. They might have helped answer Hart's curiously echoing questions fifty years later:

If a Protestant farmer was attacked, was it because of his religion, his politics or his land, or all three? Was personal spite involved? (thesis, 62; book, 320)

Curtis was also the first to publish (in the same article) an account of an Auxiliary false surrender at Kilmichael, only seven months after the ambush, which contradicted Hart's later interpretation of that incident.<sup>55</sup>

*Round Table* commented in June 1922 with reference to the April 1922 West Cork killings that,

Southern Ireland boasts with justice that it has been remarkably free from the purely sectarian hatreds that have come to characterise Belfast.<sup>56</sup>

This perception was treated as so self-evident that *Daily News* correspondent, Hugh Martin, confidently observed in 1921,

The bogey of Catholic intolerance in Ireland is no more today than a chimera kept alive to frighten political children with on this [English] side of the channel.<sup>57</sup>

*Irish Times* correspondent C.H. Bretherton, an English Roman Catholic loyalist cited with approval by Paul Bew, also secretly reported for the rabidly imperialist London daily, the *Morning Post*. His 1925 account, *The Real Ireland*, unwittingly reinforced a non-sectarian view of Irish resistance. Bretherton noted the following women,

<sup>53</sup> Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940*, Methuen, 1965, p90. Carroll Quigley, *The Anglo-American Establishment, from Rhodes to Cliveden*, GSG & Associates, 1981, p179. Quigley details Curtis and co-thinkers' attempts to maintain the influence of the British Empire and Commonwealth during the course of the twentieth century.

<sup>54</sup> Lionel Curtis, 'Ireland', *Round Table*, vXI, n43, June 1921, pp496-97; Mowat, *op cit*, p72, referred to this article as the 'most fair minded' of his sources, though it is in fact suffused with imperial condescension toward the Irish.

<sup>55</sup> Cited in earlier essay.

<sup>56</sup> 'The Brink of Civil War', *Round Table*, XII, n47, June 1922.

<sup>57</sup> Hugh Martin, *Ireland in Insurrection, an Englishman's record of Fact*, O'Connor, 1921, p205 (at academia.edu/6292615/, accessed 11 Sep 2022).

Mrs Erskine Childers asking [English journalists] to tea, and Madame Maud Gonne MacBride, and Mrs Stopford Green [giving them] a lively account of brutal British atrocities that they claimed to have witnessed.

The women were all Protestant. Bretherton's view was that the Black & Tans were an unjustly maligned force and that the 'Irish themselves' were one hundred times worse.<sup>58</sup>

Bretherton, who considered the Irish intellectually inferior, suggested,

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.

This was presaged by an observation that Dáil President Eamon De Valera's 'father was a Maltese Jew'.<sup>59</sup> The *Morning Post* wrote (29 April 1922) of the April killings,

The southern Irish native is a barbarous savage, with a strong inherent penchant for murder, which those responsible for him - his priests, his politicians and his alleged organs of enlightenment - have not only failed to eradicate from his primitive bosom, but have actually fostered.

Long time *Irish Times* journalist Lionel Fleming, son of the Rector of Timoleague in West Cork, noted that unharmed but fearful members of 'the gentry' who 'made their way instantly to England' became 'a powerful factor in ... anti-Irish propaganda by all the right wing newspapers'. Consequently, 'the stories of persecution multiplied and a warm hearted British public subscribed thousands of pounds to the Distressed Irish Loyalists Fund'. Fleming particularly singled out the *Morning Post* and Bretherton's contributions in this context.

Fleming wrote that the *Post*, 'or more probably Bretherton', later achieved a new low in stating that the burials of deceased Protestants 'had to be conducted secretly at dead of night', and that 'the sound of gunfire was so common that people no longer even bothered to turn round in the street if a volley was loosed off behind them'. Fleming noted that 'such absurdities would have been allowed to pass without correction' in the *Irish Times* during 1907-34 editor 'John Healy's day'. However, in 1936 Fleming and 1954-61 editor Alec Newman persuaded 1934-54 editor Bertie Smylie to 'counter-attack'. A leader by Fleming 'den[ied] very strongly that loyalists are being victimised'. He asserted that 'the ex-unionists' were ill served, 'by panderings to false sentiment' and were 'very well able to look after themselves'.<sup>60</sup>

Peter Hart's thesis (p374) reported the *Morning Post*'s 1 June account of the April killings the 'most reliable', but as 'partially reliable', in his book (p279). The influential newspaper had characterised the War of Independence as a Jewish Communist plot. So much so, it reportedly imparted

<sup>58</sup> C.H. Bretherton, *The Real Ireland*, A&C Black, 1925, pp24-5, 26-7.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, pp71, 73. For a discussion linking Bretherton's 'extreme expression of diehard racialism' to British fascist attitudes pre-Second World War, R.M.Douglas, 'The Swastika and the Shamrock: British Fascism and the Irish Question, 1918-1940', *Albion*, v29, n1, Spring 1997, pp61-2.

<sup>60</sup> Lionel Fleming, *Head or Harp*, Barrie & Rockliff, 1965, pp92, 168-9; 'Southern Loyalists' (editorial), *IT*, 22 Dec 1936.

anti-Semitic thoughts to William Joyce, who was said to have been a young (lucky to escape) pro-British collaborator in Galway during 1920-22. Joyce became a prominent British fascist. He remained also an ardent loyalist, hailing the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1934 as 'a precursor of fascism in Europe'. Joyce left Britain on the eve of World War Two. After this repeat of his 1922 'flight from Ireland', Joyce broadcast as 'Lord Haw Haw' for Hitler's Nazi regime. He was captured in 1945 and then controversially convicted of treason. He was executed by hanging in 1946 in Wandsworth Prison, London, by the government whose forces he had once fervently supported.<sup>61</sup>

In *The Republic, the Fight for Irish Independence* (2013), Charles Townshend, the external examiner of Hart's PhD thesis, queried southern Protestant assertions. He suggested, 'there is a problem taking [the 11 May 1922 Protestant Convention resolution] as unforced testimony'. He asserted,

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.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Mary Kenny, *Germany Calling, a personal biography of William Joyce Lord Haw Haw*, New Island, 2003, pp89-90; Douglas, *op cit*, 1997, p71, n50. Joyce's belief in 1934 was echoed that year in a speech to the Orange Order by northern premier Lord Craigavon, who considered fascism per se unnecessary as 'we have all we want here': 'We have the Orange Order, the Black Brethren [an elite section of the Order] and the "B" Specials, and they constitute all the fascism that Ulster wants', 'Fascism for North', *II*, 2 may 1934. See Conor Cruise O'Brien's similar view, in 1965, of Joyce's fate, 1988, p53. Galway, during the early Twentieth Century, reportedly contained one Jew, Douglas, p87. See, Jos. J. Togher WS 1729, that links Joyce with the Auxiliary shooting and disappearance of a Father Griffin:

In November, 1920, at about 2am, a person called to Father Griffin's house. He answered the door himself, and after a conversation with the caller in Irish, he departed with him on an alleged sick call. We were convinced that the caller (a tout for the Auxiliaries) was none other than William Joyce, later executed by the British after World War II for his activities as an announcer from Berlin Radio Station on behalf of Germany.

Reportedly, Joyce's complicity was established in 1922, after which he fled to England. As Togher put it, 'Had we had this information earlier, Joyce would have been executed'. See also William Staines WS 944. Joyce biographer Mary Kenny, *op cit*, pp69-72, referred to reports of Joyce's involvement in the Griffin killing as unsubstantiated. However, she did not have access to the Togher and Staines statements. Cormac Ó Comhraí, author of *Revolution in Connaught*, 2013, described Togher as 'a competent and level-headed intelligence officer', email communication, 18 Nov 2015. Kenny, 2003, pp158, 281-310.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Townshend, *The Republic, the Fight for Irish Independence*, OUP, 2013, p371. The phrase 'repressive tolerance' was famous for originating in a 1965 essay by Marxist critic of consumer capitalism, Herbert Marcuse. Townshend's observation did not source Lyons (*Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939*, OUP, 1979, p163), who in turn ignored Marcuse. Townshend instead directed readers to Chapter 50 (of 58) of Gerard Murphy's 'richly detailed (albeit often speculative)' *The Year of Disappearances* (2010). That chapter alleged that 6 unnamed, untraceable, though, paradoxically, 'well known and prominent', Cork Protestants were disappeared by the IRA on St Patrick's Day, 1922. No hard evidence was advanced. Instead the Peter Hart-inspired 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

Taking Townshend's point at face value, arguably it would be eccentric for the representatives of victims experiencing murderous treatment to deny their community's experience. Shooting people on a sectarian basis is clearly repressive intolerance. Logically, Townshend's view implies that the worse the treatment, the more likely that its victims would deny or disavow it. In theory, then, Lionel Curtis's statement that southern Protestants did not complain of sectarian persecution was evidence that it had occurred. In which case, surely the Protestant Convention would have ignored the April killings.

There is no compelling reason to believe that southern Irish Protestants evinced signs of such counter-intuitive behaviour when the Convention took place in May 1922. Rather, their representatives' view appears to have accurately reflected a settled understanding. Questioning that understanding or, in Hart's case ignoring entirely its expression by the Convention, may signify an adherence to a preferred reading of Irish history that is a product of ideology, not evidence.

While claiming to question nationalist mythology, Hart appears instead, and ironically, to have systematically dismissed and undermined the views of many, perhaps most, southern Protestant unionists. His analysis was essentially a rationalisation of sectarian 'ethnic' separation of Protestants and Roman Catholics in Ireland. It was in effect a justification of Partition, that was influenced by the political nomenclature associated with post-1968 violence in Northern Ireland. Hart referred later to republican and to loyalist 'paramilitaries' during the 1912–22 period, as 'a symptom of democratic and state failure... Full democracy was restored once ethnic sovereignty or security was secured'.<sup>63</sup> In other words, Partition was portrayed as a 'good' or 'best-case-possible solution' to intractable ethno-religious differences and hatred. However, republicans in northern and southern Ireland did not aspire to create a sectarian 'ethnic' state. Likewise, Northern Ireland was hardly a democracy in the 'full' sense. By contrast with the nationalists' goal, it was based on a sectarian identity claimed by unionists who comprised a majority in only four of Northern Ireland's six counties (in the province of Ulster's nine). The UDA's ethnic cleansing impetus in 1994 was in line with a broader northern unionist ideology.

Irish but more particularly Ulster unionists recognised that a system of sectarian privilege was threatened by majority rule even under British jurisdiction.<sup>64</sup> That is why

oppression or injustice by their Catholic fellow citizens'. This interesting 'detail' occasioned a 'speculative' observation from Murphy: 'for southern Protestants in general, suppression was the price of survival', Murphy, 2010, p272 (n62, p498). This is not reliable historical research and should not be cited as such.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Hart, 'Parliamentary Politics and the Irish Revolution', in Fearghal McGarry, ed., *Republicanism in Modern Ireland*, UCD, 2004, p39. John Regan commented in his *Ir Times* review, 21 Aug 2004, 'Northern Ireland?'.

<sup>64</sup> On the significant extent of sectarian, Protestant, control of aspects of the southern Irish economy subsisting into the twentieth century, see Campbell's path breaking *The Irish Establishment* (2009) and my review,

Ulster unionists successfully rebelled against Home Rule during 1912–14, even threatening a bloody Irish and British civil war to thwart the will of Parliament and of the great majority of Ireland's inhabitants.<sup>65</sup> Ironically, Hart was, in effect, imposing sectarian categories, more appropriate to Ulster Unionism, on Irish nationalist ideologies, in ways that made political sense only within an imperial or colonial context. That is why such categories endured in Northern Ireland.

To be sure, southern Irish society did become dominated by a Roman Catholic ethos, largely as a result of Partition and the cultivation of conservative forces after the Irish Civil War, but it did not become anti-Protestant. Pre-existing Protestant institutions were incorporated into education, health and social and moral welfare provision in a southern state that, quite remarkably, tolerated anti-Catholic employment discrimination within so-called 'Protestant firms'.<sup>66</sup> Southern Protestants and Catholics became subject separately to denominational social control, and arguably the main object of this architecture was the new Dublin establishment's control of the popular majority. In the popular imagination, freedom from imperial dominance was also freedom from religious persecution. For this reason institutional Roman Catholicism successfully associated with the new state in a manner institutionalised Protestantism, which opposed Irish independence and had developed historically on the basis of discrimination against Catholics, found problematic.<sup>67</sup> The Irish state forged an alliance of convenience with many of the southern Protestant community's leading institutions, although those institutions (and the elite that controlled them) had opposed Irish independence and had developed historically on the basis of anti-Catholic discrimination.

### Conclusion

Hart's conclusion that the April 1922 killings happened because Protestants generally constituted 'fair game' is not supported by evidence. On the contrary, Hart supported his published views only by ignoring or misrepresenting facts that contradicted it. In effect, Hart wrote a sectarian history that displaced Unionist and British responsibilities for sectarianism in Irish history. Hart placed responsibility instead on those who were the historic victims of imperial and colonial sectarianism, and who since the 1790s had sought a non-sectarian form of self-government. Indeed, that is why non-sectarian Protestants were, to T.C. Hammond's consternation, in republican ranks in small but significant numbers.<sup>68</sup> Had Irish republicanism during the

'Top People', *Dublin Review of Books*, 14, Summer 2010, at [www.academia.edu/242123](http://www.academia.edu/242123) (accessed 29 Jul 2014).

<sup>65</sup> See Alice Stopford Green's illuminating, *Ourselves Alone in Ulster* (1918), at [www.academia.edu/6294474/](http://www.academia.edu/6294474/) (accessed 11 Mar 2014).

<sup>66</sup> Discussed in detail in Chapter Eleven.

<sup>67</sup> See on Church of Ireland opposition to Home Rule, Andrew Scholes, *The Church of Ireland and the Third Home Rule Bill*, IAP, 2009.

<sup>68</sup> This included Sinn Féin Ministers Robert Barton and Ernest Blythe, as well as head of publicity Erskine Childers. Cork IRA Protestants included Sam Maguire from Dunmanway and transportation officers, the brothers Jim and Miah Grey (I am indebted to John Borgonovo for this latter

1916–22 period been sectarian, as in Hart’s depiction, this Protestant participation would have been unlikely

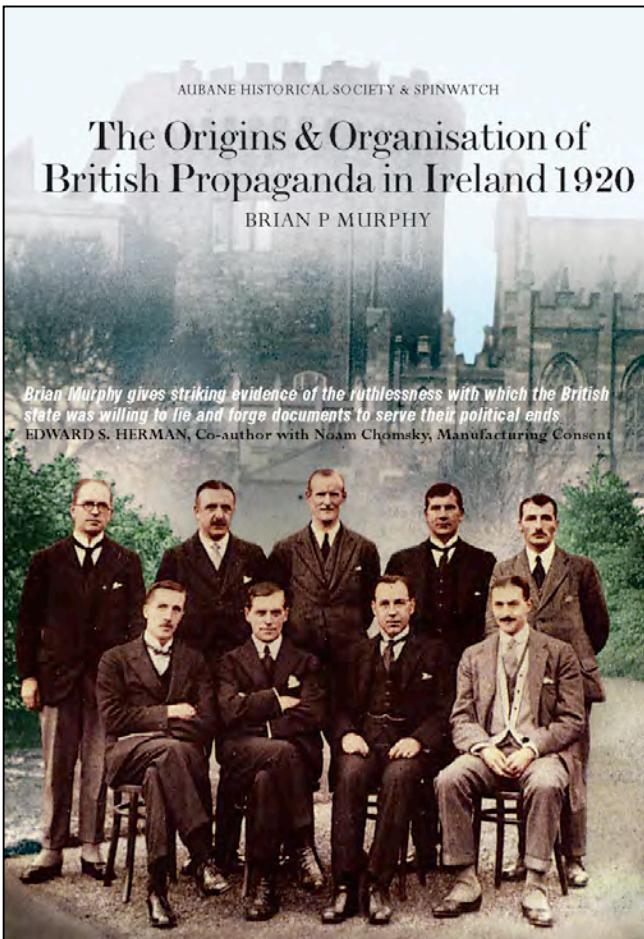
To paraphrase and reverse former Oxford professor Roy Foster’s dismissive phrase, Hart’s denial of the Irish historical record was merely revisionism with footnotes. Foster, a supporter of Hart’s analysis, concluded his ‘We are all revisionists now’ in 1986 with, ‘to say “revisionist” should just be another way of saying “historian”’.<sup>69</sup> The effort to normalise revisionism was an attempt to deny legitimacy to historians and historical interpretations which did not drink the revisionist kool-aid. The apparent success of the project led to the hubris that witnessed, shortly afterwards, the construction of Peter Hart’s PhD research, the failure to properly examine it in 1992 and an initial, largely-uncritical, celebration when it appeared in book format in 1998.

Despite the careful marshalling of evidence demonstrating the unreliability of Hart’s research and conclusions, recurrent attempts to rehabilitate it will appear. That is because, as both Colm Tóibín and Roy Foster admitted, revisionist history is, in part, a product of political imperatives. Those imperatives are drawn towards historical interpretations that undermine perceptions of Irish republican or anti-imperialist legitimacy. Though evidence is weak, institutional pressures are strong.

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information). See also, WS 1242 A.K. Wordsworth on ‘visits of IRA leaders to her home ... 1918–1921’; WS 394 Presbyterian Minister Rev’d J.A. Irwin on speaking with Eamon De Valera in the USA (a remarkable document); WS 632, Elizabeth Bloxam, who refuted tales of attacks on Protestants. See also: S.B. in *Limerick’s Fighting Story* on ‘The Honourable Mary Spring-Rice’, [1948] 2009, pp304–6; and Martin Maguire, ‘Harry Nicholls & Kathleen Emerson: Protestant Rebels’, *Studia Hibernica*, n35, 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Roy Foster, ‘We are all Revisionists Now’, *Irish Review*, v1, n1, 1986, p5.

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and  
Niall Meehan

Introduction by  
Ruan O'Donnell



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A CONTRIBUTION TO FÉILE AN PHOBAIL AUGUST 2020

BY NIALL MEEHAN

Kate Carroll was a Protestant who the

IRA murdered

A person of no social consequence, a

middle aged Protestant spinster

She was fined by a republican court

for making pollin

IRA men were intent on hounding her

out of business

The charge of spying was a

convenient rationale for executing an

obvious antisocial security risk

She pestered an IRA volunteer

She had amorous intent towards an

IRA man

She had a notion one might marry her

Was this really about spying?

You can argue that she was killed

because she was a nuisance to a man

You can argue she was killed because

she was a Protestant

She might be a spy, she might not

There might be some personal

grievance, there might not

This woman sent demented letters

again & again to the RIC

She gave information about rival pollin

makers, not about the IRA

A woman of feeble intellect

The most notorious killing of a

destitute semi-literate distiller

Her marginal status and intimate

factors contributed to her death

Under Irish nationalism's sanitised

surface was a sequence of dirty deeds

# 'She is a Protestant as well'

Distilling British Propaganda  
in accounts of the death of Kate Carroll in April 1921

Analysis of historical research by

Terence Dooley

Fearghal McGarry

Anne Dolan

Diarmaid Ferriter

Eunan O'Halpin

Marie Coleman

Brian Hanley

Tim Wilson

Contains the real reason why Kate Carroll in Monaghan was one  
of three women executed by the IRA between 1919-21



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SECTARIANISM PETER HART KILMICHAEL AMBUSH TOM BARRY



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plus MEDA RYAN and PAT MULDOWNIE



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