

**IRELAND**

*Free State*

*or*

*Nation?*

**Diarmaid Ó Súilleabháin**

## "IRELAND — FREE STATE OR NATION?"

By Diarmaid Ó Súilleabháin

Certain recent events have given a sharper focus to what is probably the world's most historical malaise, that paradoxical condition known as Free-Stater. That such an entity (*sic*) exists there can be little doubt. Indeed it has a multiple existence in that its dimension (suitably suffering from a lack of Dimension!) is to be found not merely on a segment of a political map, not merely on a time-stained Treaty-page, not merely in the labyrinth that is post-1922 Irish history but in the minds and conditioned reflexes of our people.

The same mental attitude was struck and dominated by the ideology of separatism immediately after the Treaty. If we study the Treaty Debate of 1922, it is noticeable that in the main it had to do with Crown strictures and appendages such as the Oath of Allegiance, the 'ports' and the payment of annuities; the more serious and permanent issue of territorial division or partition would appear to have received only secondary attention. This strange lapse can in part be attributed to the erroneous belief that a promised Boundary Commission would review and adjust the Six County borderline. The said lapse may also be explained, of course, by the growth of a 'State' or 'Statelet' mentality or, if you like, contemporaneous polarisation North and South. In the South, partial self-rule, power and its trappings, a 'capital city', Dublin — all had been 'achieved' and could not be 'risks' by engaging the Northern forces of secession. In many ways the Six-County statelet was a mirror-image of the Free State itself, born of gun, bigotry and separatism. Henceforth Leinster House would not, to use a latter day Wilsonism, 'be seen dead with that lot up there'; the same held true for Stormont vis-a-vis Leinster House.

True, pious platitudes would be mouthed from time to time, especially at election time in the South, a sop to the Northern minority. Such placebos eased whatever remnants of national consciousness were left in Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. Labour ceased with Connolly in that respect, its national vision clouded, its virility and socialism castrated and debauched, a mere sounding board for merry-go-round political intellectuals, always prepared to wag as tail to the thin rump of any Free State coalition. Furthermore, the 1937 Constitution buttressed the Separating Line by carefully-made ambiguous references to the extent of the national territory and by subtle differentiation between *de facto* and *de jure* jurisdictions whilst inferring that the Southern ethos was Catholic Nationalism.

It was the erudite Dunne who stated in his famous work "The Serial Universe" that in "regressive time" the "observer" must be immortal. There is much in our history that haunts us as observers in terms of repeated sequences, in terms of recurring episodes and im-

ages, and in the frighteningly real quantum of 'past facsimiles', even allowing for the fact that we are of course mere mortals and hampered accordingly by fixity of viewpoint. Indeed this same 'fixity of viewpoint' may accord as charitable an apologia as one can muster on behalf of fellow-Irishmen who perpetrated exceedingly barbaric atrocities in the name of post-Treaty Ireland.

Nevertheless, and despite the mortal coils and frailties, any serious examen of the Ireland condition, especially that of today, will identify immediately the Free State Syndrome. Not of course that that particular condition is something new or startling. The truth of course is that Free-Statery has been with us now for over half a century, a chronic political disease, a sad anachronism in European terms. Black and brown may fade but blue still holds its hue! At no time since the mad-dogs of Generalissimo O'Duffy have the Blueshirt symptoms been more menacing or rampant than today. Daily and by judicial stealth, Cosgrave girds himself more constrictingly in the Franconian mantle. However, it is only quite recently that the real nature of this cancer has been made manifest. Indeed it might be said that it was only with the advent of a Civil Rights groundswell and Republicanism in the Six Counties that the focus on the Dublin Syndrome became clear and sharp.

For those who were born at the beginning of the century and had lived through the War of partial Independence, the ensuing Civil War left them in no doubt as to the machinations of the Free State most fearfully exemplified for those who opposed the Treaty in the persons of Blythe, Cosgrave, Mulcahy, O'Higgins and FitzGerald. That sordid chapter of our history contains very real terror and terrorists. No Irishman, in fact, no sane human being, can read Dorothy Macardle's "The Tragedies of Kerry" without a blush of shame. Here the monster, the veritable hydra that masquerades under 'Law and Order' is brilliantly exposed. When the Right wing loses its sanity and sense of common decency, be it in Spain, Portugal, Ireland, South Africa or Rhodesia, the hypocritical catch-cry is always the same: "Law and Order". But whose 'Law' and whose 'Order'? Certainly not those of God; certainly not those of civilised man. Herein perhaps lies the key to the 'silent aloofness' of the Francos, the Smiths, the Salazars and the Cosgraves of the world.

*De mortuis nil nisi bonum* cannot be afforded any accommodation neath the portals of history lest the like should ever happen again. Ours is a terrible immediate past too in the South. There was the judicial murder of four remand prisoners, Liam Mellows, Dick Barrett, Rory O'Connor and Joe McKelvey at Mountjoy Prison on the morning of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th, 1922. Scarcely a 'law and order' act, scarcely a chivalrous act, scarcely an act which could be said to have been in accordance with what is commonly held to be the greatest of all our historical utterances — the Easter Proclamation — which wisely admonished its would-be bearers in arms not to dishonour it by any cowardly or rapacious deed. This was an example par excellence and early in play of Free State expediency. This sad un-Irish savagery (up-dated recently by

the body-snatching of the remains of a brave Irishman, hunger-striker Frank Stagg) perpetrated by the Pale-powered Cumann na nGaedhal led to a completed series of 77 murders (some hold the count was 81) with the loud boast flung venomously and often "and we'd do the same again!"

Not that it was ever specified that they would engineer another "Ballyseedy" or a "Countess's Bridge" when the manhood of Kerry were seen fit to be turned into human bombs, suitably bound and chained. There was real terrorism here, a depravity far and beyond the execution of men in the frenzy of war. This was 'political education' not just down the barrel of a gun but in a gross and demoniac manner which had as its objective the shattering of the human person and psyche the better to impinge on the will and unbelieving imagination of the people or at least those who were deemed disaffected and Irregular. Not without certain reasons perhaps the nearest approach one finds in recent western history to this barbarity belongs to the seamy and murky abominations of the Falangists, the Nazis and Stalinists. It is a frightening thought to consider that such a horrendous chapter could be or has begun to be written once again. It certainly is no time for maintaining a cowardly intellectual silence or laissez-faire.

A cowardly silence there certainly has been in the groves of academe ever since Burntollet. No professorial voice has been heard even from the realms of the Humanities. Our university dons and students have been strangely silent while the great yellow British propaganda machine spewed forth in the best Big Lie tradition. Our learned clergy, with few exceptions, whilst if not coming out full-crozier length on the side of the Crown Forces, still helped Her Majesty's men magnificently by seeking to denounce, damn and diminish the I.R.A., chiefly by means of calumny and one-sided condemnation. Looking back over the letter columns of our daily newspapers, it is very noticeable that on the whole, those who refused to be Brit-blinkered were the older citizens, many of them veterans of the First War of Independence.

There must be something seriously wrong with the soul of a 'republic' where fear and favour shackle the mind and gag the voice. Even under such terrible regimes as those of Hitler, Stalin, Franco and Mussolini, the intellect always held out visibly and bravely on the side of the oppressed. This stunning silence from our creative and intellectual fields is difficult to understand and must surely give rise to much analysis and debate among sociological and psychological research-workers in years to come. It could well be, of course, that the 'bearna baoil' or Pass of Thermopylae passed, there will be a spate of scribes, apologists, and 'freedom' paperbacks.

It is only fair to say that not all who fought and were satisfied with the terms of the Treaty partook in or even condoned such atrocities. Historians have to my mind been careful to avoid distinguishing between those who soldiered with Collins and those who bullied with Cosgrave. (Indeed the distinction is still alive within Fine Gael; only last week a Fine Gael supporter related to this writer how a Fine

Gael Councillor spoke of him as being a 'Collins man' by way of chiding). That there was a vital and vast difference in the calibre of these groups need scarcely be said.

Pre-Treaty Great Britain was the common enemy then and idealism, the yeast on which rebellion if not quite revolution fed; post-Treaty Ireland or Twenty-six Counties was the goal of the Truciliars, the majority of whom owed their partial Independence to the lives and wounds of other and braver men and women. Thus, the blindness and divisions began, the 'have and will hold the spoils of office', the entrenched Free State attitude. In this narrow and ignoble frame of mind the Unit was confused with the 26/32 fraction, the wheel of destiny being minus a segment with a misplaced hub for centre — the old Anglo-Irish metropolis of Viceregal decadence, Dublin, or more correctly "The Pale". When all is said and done the Free State is but a puppet edition of our country, a rump-end of the nation yet to be, Ireland, and as such "Eire" is a misnomer, a mere verbal pre-emption of the Britless country, "Eire-Nua".

Strange how few citizens bother to examine their country's amputee condition, accepting without question part as being whole. Of course, the cap was made fit, as in Yeoman '98, successive Free State Governments employing all the tools of State to blunt aspirations to complete freedom, the landed colons or so-called gentry enjoying much greater privilege than the 'mere peasant' — always a threat to authoritarianism. Police surveillance and oppression were the order of the day. In this respect Dublin learned fast and copied rather faithfully the English penal system, her code of laws, her left-over prisons, barracks, and even accepted the services of her left-over artillery, police and military personnel.

Orchestrating all Free State action, especially that of "security", was a colonial type Civil Service, many of whose principals favoured the British way and, indeed, in some instances, Britain herself. Bank officials, Local Government officials, not to mention financiers, ranchers, and big businessmen, had little difficulty in making a choice; traditionally, the more rabid supporters of Freestatory have all been well-heeled, a remark which also applied to Jack Lynch's own brand of Freestatory and its tacateers. Jails the Free State has had in abundance, Mountjoy, Portlaoise (Maryborough), Limerick, Curragh, Newbridge, Cork, Spike Island, Bere Island, Arbour Hill, whilst relying in extremis on the good offices of Pierpoint, the British hangman.

Firing-squads when used were drawn from the Free State Army and it is interesting to note that Army Tribunals have, in the past, been substituted for ordinary courts of law. As at present, Free State Governments have never trusted the jury system when convictions for political crimes were sought. Furthermore, the "directed summons" has on certain occasions been launched in the first instance by London, then Dublin.

From the outset Freestatory tended by its very nature to be totalitarian. De Valera, for all his romantic Arcadian Celtia, was possibly the first to realise that as matters stood materially and logistically, one had to join the system (under a different name) if one hoped

to rule in the Free State. Thus Fianna Fail was founded in 1926 and the political defeat of the Cosgrave Party engineered in the 1932 general election. The System or Free Statery lived on. Indeed, the greater Mr. De Valera inflicted defeat on the Free Staters, the closer he grooved into Freestatery itself. It may or may not be unfair to suggest that De Valera's constant good faith with, and the furtherance of the Irish language arose from some psychological need or counter-balance vis-a-vis his acceptance of the Free State formula.

As well as forming a new party, Mr. De Valera was forging consciously or otherwise a new self-image — that of a pragmatist rather than idealist. It is difficult to envisage a man of De Valera's ambitions and undoubted talents being content to remain perpetually in opposition having lost the 'initiative'. For him, the stony soil of principle had become a politician's waste-land. It was perhaps this particular perspective rather than any illusions of re-writing the Treaty from within Leinster House or Dublin Castle which led to the wrench from Sinn Féin. The latter's lone furrow had after all to be ploughed for over 50 more heart-breaking years before the same stony soil promised yield. (There are more than four green fields in Ireland's history!).

One of the important side-effects of the founding of Fianna Fail was the isolation of the old idealistic comrades who were not prepared to compromise in any way. Though few in number, these 'unrepentant Fenians' supplied by their steadfastness to the concept of a United Ireland an overall influence entirely out of proportion to their numbers. Many of them had to endure imprisonment not this time in Strangeways, Frongoch or Wormwood Scrubs, but in Free State jails governed by their erstwhile colleagues. This writer was suitably amused by a cell-stool carving in B-Wing Mountjoy, 1972 — it read "J.B. I.R.A. Westport 1923". Sad to relate, this museum-piece was lost in the Mountjoy Riot, 1972. Needless to say, having read that 50-year-old message, one became materially aware of the reality of divergence between distant comrades. Furthermore, one was immediately struck by the common-cause continuity which had somehow survived. Carved in wood, out of sheer boredom or for posterity, was the link-up which to a student of Irish history forges the very obvious chain which stretches from 1798 and through 1848 and 1867 to 1916 and 1969.

This steadfastness on the part of selfless and often nameless men is probably unique in terms of European annals. Even in the milieu of 'grab and take' opportunist politics, there were 'good men and true'. On the other hand, the late 'republican' majority joined up the incoming bandwagon, differing only in their proximity to first-class carriages. There was rich land for dividing, plum-jobs to be got, not to mention 'first-sub' medals and wrangled pensions. Not that all the freedom fighters proper of that period sought material recompense. Far from it! One of West Cork's bravest men, hero of Crossbarry and Rosscarbery told this writer how he looked down a New York soup-line in the Thirties' Depression and wondered what the hell the fight for independence was really for! At fifteen years, such

honesty leaves a deep impression.

Thus it was that the major chapter of Free-Statery was forged, not by men who proved themselves as worthy successors of Tone, Rossa, Clarke, Pearse, Mellows, Lynch and Brugha, to mention but a few of Ireland's dead (these men could no longer interpret their heroic deeds) but by later-day grafters who were not slow to sense the winds of change and join the new-lucre tide. Risk and dangers apart, these "gentlemen" might be fairly compared with Klondikers — no holds barred.

Perhaps it was the defeat of Cosgrave in 1932 which unmasked their "mercenaries" more than anything else. Minus their much vaunted "mandate" they turned Blueshirt and Fascist, epitomising the very essence of Free-Statery, a naked lust for power, a petite bourgeoisie mentality blind to nobler vistas, viperishly alive to nepotism, stock-piling and possessiveness. Now the fateful words of Mellows rang loud and clear: "It is a fallacy to believe that a Republic of any kind can be won through the shackled Free State. You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The Free State is British-created, British-controlled and serves British imperial interests. It is the buffer erected between British capitalism and the Irish Republic". How true these words are to this very day!

Save for a very thin veneer of 'Broy Harrier Republicanism' like fought like when De Valera opposed and crushed O'Duffy's gang in the Bohereen War of the Thirties. Now Mr. De Valera had become the centre of the broken circle, backed this time by a peasant-infused Pale. The umbrella-brigade had leared the Viceregal mores and mannerisms rather easily, not to mention the vacillations of the London fiscal system. It speaks volumes for the sagacity of De Valera himself that he stuck to the peasant image though others of similar rural origin had forgotten their feet of clay and had begun to live the bright city lights. There is a story worthy of De Maupassant or Ó Conaire concerning a petit-Rothschild of that period who in his halcyon field (sic) days graced his home with priceless pictures 'on loan' from the National Gallery. (Quite obviously Lane took the right turn!).

It would appear that in every country-born Irishman, there is a city call, suppress it as he may. Whether this is due to some atavistic trait, some unfulfilled desire in the Gaelic Celt to Normanise or equal the town-building feats of the Ostmen, it is difficult to say. This peculiarity may well be a post-Famine genetic graft, immigration sublimating in this case for emigration. What is important to establish however is the definite if gradual gravitation towards our towns and cities. This is especially true, of course, of Dublin or rather suburbia and satellite zones, i.e., the old Pale. Euphemistically, we referred to "The Capital".

Nobody seemed to ask: "The Capital of what?" Therein lies the classic example of Free State myopia. This short-sightedness or blindness was not quite accidental. Far from being an encumbrance, it proved for some a 'bountiful blessing'. Soon the gombeen man prospered at the crossroads because he successfully 'negotiated' the

democratic No. 1's at grassroots level, the electoral list being in the main 'in the books'; very often the gentleman who received the local mandate was a 'hang-fire volunteer' or worse still a bandwagon trucilier. Once the Chief gave imprimatur, the faithful followed.

Even a superficial study of the Cosgrave and De Valera governments will show that the real 'fighting' men of an earlier decade were in a minority. In many ways, this is the quintessence of Free-Stater — other men's wounds. Nor did these men chaff at not being selected. Very simply, they had fought the common oppressor, England, had followed the felon's track and did not seek either public acclaim or office by franchise. Ideologically, it was as simple as that — far too simple even for London's comprehension. And yet, it was a clear case of would-be politicians using the freedom-fighter's boots, a sequence being repeated at present by the S.D.L.P. in the "Ulster" of today. Needless to say, these political boots had in almost every case the full benediction of the Church. Bells, books and candles are as ephemeral as the rains and mists of Ireland!

Not that the false concept and political chicanery known as Free-Stater should be laid in its entirety at the door of our politicians. There were others equally culpable or even more culpable in that they pulled the puppet-strings. The Business Manipulators had arrived. Such narrow knaves cared little for Free State or Ireland, their vision being entirely limited to their Monday-trips to the local bank. Henceforth, there was a new native breed to be reckoned with — the great pound hand-shakers! Wrapped up, as were indeed their wives, in the fox, if not the mink, of petit bourgeois capitalism they crowed upon and ruled the Free State middens. Local boys made well!

Not that such knavery is new to our land. Indeed, it was all perhaps very understandable, very human, that a race which had been downtrodden for so long should at the scent of freedom, give tongue and seek and 'milk and honey'. Had Free-Stater been merely that it would quite possibly be regarded as execrable and cheap, but human nature being what it is, understandable. But Free-Stater was and is something more. Free-Stater by its very peculiar internal dynamic, by its debasing nature and dismal kinetic ensured that selflessness was eschewed and selfishness in terms of the national character firmly enthroned. The real evil of Free-Stater was, and is, that WE FORGOT.

That intrinsic evil at the core of Free-Stater lay, not in the packing of the judiciary, nor in the epaulettes of the Executive's 'favourite sons', nor in the Uncle Toms of an alien-briefed Civil Service, nor in the promotion of a revisionist teacher-force, nor in the living line of 'ridings' and 'sherriffery' from landlord-days, nor in the acceptance and re-posting of military 'tailored gentlemen', nor, for that matter, in black-clothed ranks of 'Mighty is Holy' nor in any other strata of 'Cumuppance' which might wag a finger at the 'awful deeds' of Connolly and Pearse. No, the intrinsic evil of Free-Stater is that the sons of the 'favoured sons' Forgot. But the Free-Stater preceded the Free State itself; the tune had long been played by the Bantry Band. It belonged to the Bishop Moriartys as much as it did

the Coholans, the common factor long since having nestled within the Empire multiple.

Patronage, as might be expected, soon became a fact of everyday life within the amputee State. The local bossman who shouted with Redmond for recruits 'to fight the terrible Hun', (his own sons safely in residence at Clongowes, Mt. St. Benedict or Glenstal) got suitable recompense if not quite the 'freedom of small nations'; in that merchant's home county a Guinness malting barley contract was the very remunerative bounty — still part of the family inheritance. At another extreme there was 'dole' and free bully beef. In between perks ranged from rate-collecting, secret-service, peace commissioners to the squireen who donned plus-fours and either passed or rejected scrub bulls and premium mares at snipegrass crossroads. And so the Aisling, the great and noble Easter dream of resurrection and freedom was soon buried — well and truly buried beneath the Free State's pots and pans. We, ourselves of late, have too forgotten! We, despite our tainery and balladry, have forgotten Ulaidh and her second-class citizens for over half a century. We pretended they did not exist.

That such change should afterwards cloud the vision proffered by the men of 1916 is, as I have stated already, understandable enough, a human weakness. As portrayed in the daily-life of the ordinary citizens, it shares a culpability and forgiveness common to the history-pages of many other countries. What is infinitely more culpable and far less easy to forgive is the fact that the so-called leaders of the Free State pretended that such a gross betrayal was not taking place, and that the weft and woof of nationhood were all in good hands, the fabric without cast. This pretence, for pretence indeed it is, was clearly, yeah cunningly, bolstered up, in the main, by focussing attention in the first instance on the economic development of the South (in itself, very necessary and highly laudable) whilst at the same time, blackening all those who sought the fuller development of the national ethos via social, cultural and political sovereignty. The rich man's joke of the century, the Common Market, was used, for instance, to this effect as smokescreen.

When cultural aspects were treated by Dublin, it usually transpired that Leinster House sought only to half-grasp the reins — just in case the "dynamite" set off wild horses galloping again. Small wonder then that we had the sham 'revival' — a coach-and-four of 'Gaelic' pulled by the State's children while the cabbies and footmen jarred on the brakes. In short, the cultural buck(et) carried to the Phoenix-well had for bottom a free state sieve — the foundling must not be 'strained'.

Ireland's history, however, is not unlike her skies where glowering cumulus suddenly gives way to the ice-pure blue, and sullen nimbus to fiery dawns and golden heather sunsets. Burntollet burst open forever the Free State bag of political tricks, the "republic" facade, and lent sharp focus to Free State amnesia. I mention the 'republic' facade because in the light of certain recent exposures re John A. Costello's after-dinner fit of pique in Canada in 1947, the term would appear

to have been lapsus linguae. It certainly has been made abundantly clear that any sincerely held aspirations Sean MacBride and Clann na Poblachta might have had towards a 32-County Republic were doomed to early failure because of the entrenched Redmondism of Dillon and Cosgrave.

The fact remains, however, the tail-wagging of those who sit in Leinster House when their Master's Voice is heard in London has been clearly highlighted since Bombay and Cupar Street. In ordinary circumstances the tails would have been discreetly masked, as in the past, by way of diplomat's bag and courier satchel. Revolution in British-occupied Ireland put a sudden end to all that. Gone were the 'gentlemanly' niceties, the Maffeyisms. The Free State veneer scorched, peeled off in places, and revealed in place of native oak a rather sodden pulpy pith. Soon the pro-Brit warp and grain, not to mention the knots and shakes of Free-Statery became all too apparent. Fifty years of carefully-grafted layers had not sufficed, or even taken — deep down, the old alien wound festered away. Suddenly the balloon had gone up on the Election Day patriots — the Vote-us-in-Republicans.

Nor could it be said that wagging their tails before London was the obsequious and doubtful privilege of any one political party. All three Free State parties, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour have formed Governments in the Seventies, each turning its back on the North, each exceeding the call of duty from Westminster by sabotaging — nay seeking — to garrotte and obliterate all support for the minority be it spiritual or material. Lynch and the small print 'republican' party shivered the timbers of the De Valera ark and became engulfed in the money-troughs of the multinationals. Cosgrave was a Cosgrave and scarcely in a position to throw stones at mongrel foxes who in turn yelped about the ark of Redmond howling for 'law and order'.

Few were fooled; far from being "criminals" the civil law records and reputations of so-called 'subversives' gave the 'lawyers' the lie. The Keenans, the Cahills, the McGills, Bradys, Drumms, Mallons, Twomeys and O'Connells, to mention but a few, had as proud and proper a certificate of citizenship as any bloody Anglo-Norman of the Pale. When the chips were down, the plain people of Ireland held their own courts in their own wisdom in the recess of their minds and in their own quiet way shook their heads in disagreement. Irish men and women who ever suffered horrible privations in the cause of freedom were no mere mobsters — no riff-raff. It was in this deep judgement of our race that Corish (successor to James Connolly!) suffered the fate of a harlequin politician who foolishly tried to don the mantle of socialist republicanism. The man in him was simply missing — a mere 'Labour' mask.

Each party had in turn its henchmen, in terms of rabid anti-republicanism and equally rabid anti-nationalism. The names of Limerick's O'Malley and Collins will, for instance, never fall lovingly on the ears of the hard-pressed Northern minority, nor in the folk-memory of Republican Ulster. Their stab in the back, their petty

vindictiveness and lack of manly stature is deeply engrained, and no greasy smile from them will ever efface their treachery in the eyes and heart of the North. The very mention of their names acts as the lash of adrenalin to the Northerner's pulse. Little need be said about the FitzGerald-Cruise O'Brien-Cooney-Donagan ménage. Their acts of treachery speak daily for themselves. Free State clown-politicians that they are, they play to the whip of Empire; tiny men of the Pale, they hammer away at the ethos of their country, oblivious of the fact that a veritable grand circus of rogue politicians, spies, quislings and traitors have in the past generations used the same chipping-tools only to find the grey granite of race roll them inexorably back, Sisyphus-like.

Doomed men in all their stratagems, they, for cheap notoriety and transient possession of power, act out their buffoon anti-Ireland parts. Nowhere is this brand of Free-Statery more blisteringly exposed than in the Fenian folk-memory of the Irish abroad, especially in the sterling unwavering stand taken by the Irish-American people in this — the final freedom struggle. On the positive side it can be truly said that the quisling mouthings of Lynch, O'Brien, Cosgrave and FitzGerald in the United States have served only to steel our free people overseas to greater purpose, bonding them together against Brit and Seoinin alike, tellingly so in the Irish Caucus and Noraid. Even the Cosgrave-FitzGerald 'Rose and Shamrock' shenanigans in 1976 failed dismally : like Lynch they too funk'd the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York. Devoy and Rossa were Irishmen who never fawned on, or courted, the West British mind.

There is one aspect of the Free-Statery which above all others warrants close inspection — that of the 'Home Office' media. As is well known to old I.R.A. men the 'newspapers of the day' being almost without exception, pro-Establishment, fight a vicious and calculated fifth-column news-headline action, the fourth estate holding forth for "The Rest". The Free State press in general has been in the main for the 'attacking forces' thought to be for some strange reason "selective" and pro "security"! Not that this is anything new. For the "Irish Times" and the "Irish Independent" it was second time around the 'shoot the Rebels' course. Sad. These newspapers have left no stone unturned in the matter of vilifying Republicans. All the tricks in that old dirty game-bag have been used. Character assassination of Sinn Fein and I.R.A. leaders became the order of the day. One guttersnipe vitrioled himself out and retired to snipe-grass. Ego enormously deflated, the 'gentleman' is currently ridiculed as being the 'scholar' on the Free State fiver. Fair sow: fair farrow!

In the 'funny' Seventies, Middle Abbey Street and 'Dolly' Street clicked smoothly into 'Hot Lines' whenever the British Army wanted 'to leak' or 'cover up' a clear case of Episcopalian Tickle. The old pals' act all over again — same regiment sir! The Reverend Buchanan gave internment blessing once upon a time! Naturally the tone having been set in Dublin, the 'syndicated' provincial newspapers knowing how their bread was buttered took up the 'popular' stance — anti-republicanism, Aye Gawd Sir; It even reached 'Toorascale', the Erse

failing to report the death or 'obsequies' of Proinsias Stagg though very big on "An Dochtuir Roberts", "An Cairdineal Gracias", "Cotai Fionnaidh" and "Siochain agus Frithghiniúin" Well Bheull! Sticky people these O'Briens. All part and faithful parcel of the good old Free State mentality.

It is very doubtful if any media in the world ever slanted and 'manufactured' news better for 'forces of occupation' than did the 'Irish Independent' and the 'Irish Times' along with Cork's own 'Examiner'. In the case of the latter 'bad news' was nothing new either. All in all the print bred true! In many cases it reached the stage when a Republican sympathiser not to mention a "murderer" could not get even a fair-play letter published. There was, with the exception of the "Irish Press" and "Hibernia" complete 'newswar'.

The latest pathetic form of 'crawl' may be gauged from the 'banner-headlines' given to the 'doves' of 'Gardiner Place' who, when they once looked a slight threat to 'Law and Order' a few years back, received the same 'banner-headlines' by way of lash. It is rather gratifying to see the Dublin 'Security Force' Press Brains reduced to such poor trump cards. Horribly for the 'Boys O'London' the 'smear and confuse' Press campaign in Dublin has not worked. They forgot that the 'bloody Oirish' could read between the 'Little Fleet Street Orphans' lines! Truly the most pathetic effort at 'demoralising' and 'instant evaporation' of the I.R.A. were the Gaelic Pinkeens, complete with one-barrel biros.

Just as Colonel Sillitoe was paid 'tithes' in Free State print — 'our valued allies' — so too did R.T.E. 'drum up' for the General. Montrose has the doubtful distinction of being the first Quisling T.V. station in the history of the modern world. For long, of course, radio and television have been accepted here as extensions of the Establishment, retina and vocal chord. Both are undoubtedly powerful instruments for diffusing Government policy — a soporific potion and general anaesthetic when deftly applied to the national conscience. Indeed to render these potentials more effective, R.T.E. has, to all intents and purposes, been made a 'ward of court'. It is a well-known fact that R.T.E. personnel have been screened, intimidated, and limboed where necessary in the best Kafkaesque manner.

In some sad cases individuals have been reduced to intellectual impotency, moral castration, and a pronounced degree of schizophrenia. It is not uncommon, for instance, to hear radio/television personnel profess that they know they are pawns in the pro-British Dublin game, but that their hands are tied 'jobwise'. Nor is it uncommon either to hear the same salve being applied to the professional conscience by way of "whatever chance there is of slipping anything through the censor's grill, it is best aided by remaining 'inside'". I suppose they have an unfortunate point. Not all are that honest though. Certain Fiorghaels or Culture-Pushers of pre-1969 vintage have found that their new pro-Brit masks fitted very well, Thank You, and will now remain with them for the rest of their telly lives as 'face!' — weak-kneed establishment men rowing with every tide.

Gone are the days of 'Kevin Balladry' and pub Mother-Irelandry. True, the odd 'tear and the smile' breaks through betimes, though most of the 'alcopatriotics' are now kept well behind closed doors. Big Brother is on the prowl — always ready to ear-wig and pounce. Propaganda-wise, a broth of a job has been done for the Brits! The second War of Independence in occupied Ireland has been reduced to very simplistic terms allegedly for the benefit of the 'ordinary people' (late 'peasants'). On one side, at suitable elevation you have the 'security forces' who 'state', 'hold that' 'believe', 'deny' and are 'The Professionals' whilst on the other side, at suitable perdition you have the 'mere Irishry', 'bloody rebels', 'gunmen', 'savages', 'men of violence', etc.

Lord Howth and Lord Haw-Haw have quite a lot in common, give or take a Blueshirt, a Brownshirt, or Blackshirt. It is, of course, entirely possible in view of his press-release days with foreign embassies that the hint was dropped from yonder to have Cosgrave place Cruise O'Brien in charge of the West British Broadcasting Corporation, (W.B.B.C.) or, if you like, B.B.C. 3. (Your British statesman looks well ahead). Beaten on the field, the airwaves still remained intact. Placed under the microscope the 'Propaganda Game' appears frightfully 'British'. "News ludo or televise and be damned" is the general principle — 'Our (Army) version first, modified later if necessary, 'Denied' — never! .... Even the Irish language has been prostituted in this fashion: what is not palatable or 'nice' is 'put out' in Irish only. Talk about scissors and paste!

It is very evident that a total ban has been imposed on all Sinn Fein personnel, not only in the area of political comment, but also in matters pertaining to culture. No writer with Sinn Fein affiliations will ever find himself asked along to discuss his work or for that matter, modern Irish literature. Instead we have the Deans and O Faolains 'únfairting' away in English, as only they can! To cover up this cowardly form of censorship, certain little Celtic Gods have been spreading the rumour that our 'iriseoiri' (journalists) are the creative 'geniuses' of the day. A nice form of back-scratching this, as it ensures that certain Establishment 'journalists and friends only' occupy the television stage. Should Journalist X write his piece de resistance, "Daichead Bliain ag Fas", Journalist Y may conceivably review it in the editorial! Greatt Arrtt! The sickening thing about all this is the fact that all of these gentlemen are prepared to toe the Montrose line, whilst at the same time make great liberal noises about the Pluyschs and Solzhenitsyns of the world!

One other important aspect of the West British Broadcasting Corporation propaganda station is its constant propagation of the Northern Free Staters — the S.D.L.P. There can be no reasonable doubt but that the Fitts, Humes, Dalys, and Curries are seen by the Free-Staters as extensions of themselves since they have neither vote nor mandate in "Ulster". They dare not address the people of the North in public, a predicament which has sorely galled the isolationists in Leinster House. This predicament of not having the slightest

right or writ in the Six Counties has humbled the Cosgraves, Fitz-Geralds, Donegans, Cooneys, Lynches and Kellys, indeed, to the point of political impotence. No pretence — nothing they can say or do can relieve their eunuch condition — a possible reason for such fine 'resonance' and 'singing' in the best castrati tradition in unison with the 'angelic' choirs of Whitehall.

There can be no doubt about it, the Six-County condition and political milieu has clearly castrated the Free-State House of Parliament, and rendered it more subservient than was the House of Flood and Grattan. It is, of course, poetic justice that the Partition which Dublin accepted and still accepts, collaborating as they do openly with the forces of the Crown, has now become their Achilles heel. Already they have resorted to strong-arm tactics, and in the manner of the B-Specials, Taylors, R.U.C., now find themselves heading for Strasbourg on the charge of police brutality — again the Whitehall mirror-image.

Churchmen of all denominations and ranks receive good coverage, excellent fifth-columnists that they always have been. These pious persons trot out the usual platitudes, the age-old Empire-line, (wasn't there a *Te Deum* sung in Rome in honour of William of Orange's victory at the Boyne in 1690!). The British propaganda tags seem strange on 'holy lips' — "men of violence", "thugs", "murderers", "revolting", "inhuman", with an odd "crucifying Jesus", "doing the devil's work" and "nailing Jesus to the Cross" thrown in to take the Colonel Sillitoe look off things. Almost a low-key Kitsonian chant!

Precious little comes across the W.B.B.C. waves concerning Democracy or even Justice. Not a word about the fifty 'pious' years of brutal and cowardly Church and Free State silence. So hopelessly biased has Dublin Television become, it has already begun to suffer for having overplayed its hand in the dissemination of anti-I.R.A. propaganda. They have forgotten in the West British Corporation at Montrose that well over two-thirds of the Free State television audience has access to real British stations from which they receive a far better balance in current political matters at home. It is regrettable, but nevertheless true, that slaves and trustees when given rank and the shadow of office always seek to outdo Bwana. Fear is their trusted whip — to it they dance themselves paradoxically.

Political fear is a weapon which the Lynch-Cosgrave regimes have callously used time after time since 1969, shamefully exploiting mass apprehension and dark forebodings; they have on occasions barely pulled up short of Orson Welles brand of hysteria. The public mind has been carefully prepared by successive layers of the Big Lie Technique beloved by Goebbels and reminiscent of the Orwellian "Newspeak" — Government Misinformation Jargon (GOV-MIS-JAR). Dublin has, especially under the Congo-trained media-tactician, Conor Cruise O'Brien, pulled out all the stops and presses. O'Brien's personal contacts in British foreign embassies and among the lunatic 'thatchers' of the Monday Club have seen to it that the orchestra plays "Doomsday" while Conor wields his 'two states' baton. This was most evident during the political debacle known as "Sunning-

dale". Not that he is without fellow-travellers. Other war-pen merchants are Powell, Hailsham, Churchill ("no cigars") and, of course, our old friend Col. Sillitoe of Bishop Tickle and "Dirty Tricks" fame.

Be that as it may, the Lynch-Cosgrave "Reichstag Fires" are something else, something even more sinister. Their game is mouthing about "Civil War", a phobia which they carefully fired, fed and judiciously stoked at well-calculated intervals ever since the Brits began to lose ground in Ulster. This same is as old and deadly as the "Four Courts". Today, 'civil war' drumming-up is a cheap and sordid attempt at mass manipulation of the minds of "all the children of the nation", especially in view of the Fascist murders which attended the first Cosgrave Civil War, a chapter of our history carefully censored and almost entirely omitted even from senior school grades. Who, might we ask, were the 'men out to seek power by any and every available means'? Who having read of the shameful atrocities of the Civil War would seek a return to the same internecine butchery?

It would appear that only those who pass as politicians in Leinster House — there are no statesmen there — find a warped satisfaction in threatening 'immediate and terrible' Civil War, piqued as they are by their absence of tangible/visible involvement in the affairs of the Six Counties now that the die is cast by Britain in the matter of gradual disengagement, culminating in withdrawal. British withdrawal is the most dreaded conclusion the Northern impasse could reach in the minds of Free-State Politicians. A short analysis of the scare propaganda which has emanated from the Government Information Bureau — poets no less, and £17,000 per annum spoofers — will clearly show how the Cosgrave-Lynch regimes 'stir the people'. 'Sub-versives' how are you!

On the night of the Bill Bombs (Christmas 1972) for instance, Premier Lynch addressed the 'nation' on television; Dublin had been bombed. He stressed that the bombs had been 'planted' by 'evil men in our midst' and that the Offences Against The State (Amendment) Act (opinion Clause) then before the house was designed to remove the said 'evil men' from our society. Lynch never named any particular group, just 'evil men' — the Home Office Paddy-tag for the I.R.A. His Master's Voice! When the 'evil men' were apprehended, one a top-ranking British Intelligence Agent, Wyman, the other a Garda traitor, Detective Crinnion of C3, both were given 'safe conduct' direct from the Special Criminal Court to London! So much for 'evil men' in our midst. As matters transpired, Free State prosecutor Barrington was not allowed to have access to police evidence because of all things, 'matters of security' — Dan O'Connell would have been amused. Shortly afterwards, anti-I.R.A. propagandist Lynch suffered from 'political amnesia' and a bruised heel.

Again, the Friday Bomb Scare 1973 is a classical example of how a fascist orientated state instils fear in the minds of the people the better to syphon off political sympathy from Republicans. On this occasion, the hunger-strike of Republican prisoners, Joe Cahill and Pat Ward in Mountjoy Prison had reached crisis point. Fearing that they would die and that the worst would befall the Free State, the

Big Lie Technique was immediately put into action. A newsflash had it that 'a bomb would go off on Friday in Dublin'. Just that. One bomb. It had the desired effect — it kept people worried and took their minds off the hunger-strikers who were at death's door. So much for 'nice institutionalised violence' and 'men of peace'!

Next we had the famous "Assassination Plot" which if not quite a 'Guy Fawkes' could still be termed a 'popish plot'! The thinking behind this "Big Lie" was not unlike that of 'Oriel House' in the 'Twenties. The alleged plot to assassinate "certain Free State Ministers" came hot on the heels of the Feakle Talks, where the Rev. Arlow and other Northern churchmen met Provisional leaders for discussions. Naturally the Free State Government was sorely stung over this event, just as they were over the R.A.F. Airlift of I.R.A. chiefs to Chequers. Some bad news was wanted and fast! Suddenly Free State Ministers were going to be assassinated, no doubt by 'evil men'. How awfully predictable this empty scare-mongering. How stupid, too, considering that armed British agents, already sleeping in the South could simulate "Evil Men" and give substance to the 'Wolf'. Or would this 'accident' too be considered 'valuable anti-I.R.A. propaganda' in high places? There is that little snag attached to this particular 'move' especially when the 'friendly Brits' are armed and about!

More recently we had the political police warning the people that they might receive letter-bombs or even parcel-bombs. "The people", mind you, nothing more defined than that. Strangely enough this 'message' came out one day before certain Dublin lawyers and a Special Criminal Court Judge received such mail. Of special importance here was the time lag (or start) of one day, also the dragging in of the name of the people — "people are warned, etc". Highly consistent this inculcate "fear in the people" technique. Its main weakness would appear to be, however, that no allowance is made by the propaganda witch doctors for the people's intelligence.

Quite recently, film-actor and man-of-the-world, Richard Harris, summed Free-Statery up rather well: "The only thing I want to say about Ireland is political. Irish governments' subordination to the British Government is deeply offensive. When you take on a middle-class attitude to life, as in the Republic today, it imprisons you. If the Republican fighters were in some other country they'd be called heroes. It's easy to blame the men who take up the gun, but I blame inept, uncivilised politicians who force them to do so."

Next came the unequivocal "British Troops Out" from leading English historian, Professor A. J. P. Taylor, much to the disgust of Free State politicians and interviewer Liam Hourican, who, when he tried to put words into the eminent historian's mouth, got 'small boy' cuffing for his troubles. Professor Taylor did not mince his words — "Great Britain has always been the cause of the "troubles" in Ireland . . . it is the British presence in Ireland that has created the past Irish problems and is helping to continue the present problem . . . what we have now is the incipient civil war . . . I am by no means convinced that there would be civil war on an enormous

scale ... it happened before in the South in 1922 and in India ... there will come a day when British people will not be prepared to go on having young people killed for a cause which doesn't concern them in the slightest .... for most British people intolerant Protestantism has been dead for years past and anyone who has it is not British in our sense .... Enoch Powell is a minority of one ... I don't accept that withdrawal will necessarily lead to a very bloody Civil War .... extremists are proved in the end to have taken the right line ...."

Certainly not Mr. Hourican's finest Free State hour! "Many people, including I think the Irish Government, would be dismayed at what you say ..." But of course, Mr. Hourican, history is catching up fast with the "immediate and terrible civil war" scaremongers in Leinster House who can scarcely tag Professor Taylor with their "men of violence", "subversive" little "law and orderisms". Slowly but surely it has begun to dawn on Free State politicians that their "faithful allies" for over half a century have their trunks, scabbards and helmet boxes well and truly packed. A new era has dawned after 800 years of alien rule. No amount of Free State propaganda or cells, walls or steel bars can stop the march of the nation. A new day, a new Ireland is here.

And not before its time. For too long this same new or de-Britishised Ireland was conveniently shelved and as far as Dublin was concerned cynically wrapped up under Articles 2 and 3 of De Valera's constitution. Henceforth Dublin thought, planned and ruled as if a Britless Ireland belonged to the realm of 'patriotic ardour' — a myth-concept. How else for instance could Free State Premier Lynch formally sign the contract of E.E.C. membership in the same room and at the very same time as did the British Prime Minister Edward Heath? Indeed Mr. Lynch had the added ignominy of having to wait while Heath changed suits after the ink-throwing Fraulein incident. And to think that Heath on that very occasion signed on behalf of England or even Great Britain but very deliberately and expressedly on behalf of the United Kingdom which of course included Six Counties (Antrim, Down, Derry, Tyrone, Armagh, Fermanagh) of Ireland. In a way, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 which preceded the Civil War was signed all over again in Brussels in January, 1972.

Taking into account that all this happened in the middle of the final Northern struggle for Freedom, Fianna Fail and its then leader Lynch along with multinational financial cohorts could scarcely be seen to have been too worried about a "new Ireland". Where then was the political foresight or even savoir-faire of Professors Lynch and O'Donoghue — big cogs (or plugs) in the Lynch 'think-tank'?

Indeed so abjectly acquiescent had the political will of the Free State become that nobody bothered to ask — not even the Dublin Press — why it was that such a visible and concrete close link-up stance was portrayed as Heath and Lynch signed 'cosily' in tandem into 'Europe'. Was it sheer gaucherie and lack of political and diplomatic style that witnessed the signing away of an integral part of one's own country, the purloined North East, not now as some

vanquished general with army demoralised and capitulating (Mr. Lynch had his own form of anabasis!) but rather in the more favourable and calculated light of trade-contracting and 'economic' union? The French, to name but one European nationality, have a name for it — trahison. Yes, the Lynch katabasis makes for interesting history study. What if future young students of mathematics should refer to the "Heath-Lynch" intersectional set!

That was all of course before the word "Devolution" became mediased. Yet history will surely question relentlessly this formal British aspect of our then much-vaunted 'entry into Europe'. The wisdom of such intercourse in terms of economic and sociological principles is quite another matter. Professorial silence since — church mice have orchestral resonance by comparison — is not quite good enough. The exact implications not merely of our economic entanglement but more importantly still our dominion entanglement and state-status both designatory and territorial remains to be formally examined and evaluated. Much retributory work to the new and integrated Nation Ireland remains to be done Messrs. Lynch, Whitaker and O'Donoghue if only by hindtit hindsight.

Fianna Fail, or what is left of it, is having a strange crisis of 'conscience'. Sensing a 26-County election and possible 'victory', the worm is fast turning full. 'New Ireland' squeaks are being heard daily from strange and unexepected quarters. In truth, Fianna Fáil is turning coat so hard that now they can appear to swallow palatably not alone the Sinn Féin Federal or canton solution but can preach on its merits as if it were the small-print 'republican party's' very own brainchild.

Only a mere handful of years ago such political foresight and nation-structuring was deemed to have been 'highly subversive'. Indeed that very cogent and original Manifesto "ÉIRE NUA" which outlined and treated of the Federal Ireland solution was cynically considered by the puntóirí (£ men) to be 'dangerous' and 'impracticable', the poundsmen of nation in this instance belonging to all Free State political parties. This mindless rejection of the only 'common ground' feasible solution to the Orange and Green impasse, the very white centre-piece of the Tricolour, by Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Labour reactionaries shows beautifully how closed and crab-like the Leinster House mind really was and is and how dangerously impoverished.

Dublin, politically speaking, still suffers from a surfeit of Castle-reagh Unionism. European or not, her political awareness and structuring (always paltry in itself at statesmanship level), is obviously still under the pulse and shadow of London. By a strange twist of irony the Unionists in "Ulster" may yet 'break the connection' more swiftly and more cleanly than did the South. One cannot but be aware that the Leinster House will is all too often decided by cross-channel diplomatic not lying low at the bottom of some nameless attaché's bag. Were it not for Britain's run-down economy and her own declared lack of will or ability to subdue resurgent Ulster, there would be no serious mention today of a "New Ireland" in the political dens of the South. Too well and too long have our political dynasties

and churchmen in the South seen to it that we were insula in insula — an island within an island.

Perhaps certain bandwagon journalists and pious ecclesiastics might with profit examine the doors and hinges of their own minds in this respect especially when they unilaterally and naively condemn "violence". On the night of December 10th, 1976, for instance, a Mr. John O'Callaghan of R.T.E. read an apologetic British Army type script concerning the so-called re-deployment of Crown Force S.A.S. without as much as batting an eye-lid. (Already it should be remembered that these Thug-Troops' presence in South Armagh had been requested by 'certain gentlemen' in Leinster House). Mr. O'Callaghan had obviously forgotten Her Majesty's dirty tricks Brigade's history despite the murder of Peter Cleary, Patrick McElhone, Michael Green to name but some of the Kitsonian-type political murders in occupied Ireland. R.T.E. must surely recognise these modern Auxies and Black and Tans? White-washing such Crown Force Criminals is strange business for a Dublin television network. Well might Mr. O'Callaghan of R.T.E. and his like be asked if he is acting as a "mouthpiece" (his very own word for the late Máire Drumm) for "persons unknown" in the Murder Triangle? Such "persons unknown" are commonly known collectively for their 'cloak and dagger' intrigue, as well as 'sectarian' murders, as S.A.S.

However, one might find solace in the degree of direct approach and urgency which the Brits have been forced to employ as part of their "Operation Cover-Up". Despite what the Lady Wicklows and Joan Baezs of the hitherto care-less world might say, the instant peace-movement hippy world may well have a rose in its hair. Our beautiful flower people! In fact they may even wear a hidden thistle and leek. Our 'very peaceful' Brits... Come to think of it very few 'peace movements' had their origin in Trafalgar Square or in Berlin for that matter.

One welcomes any examen of the mainly Anglo-Saxon predatory disease known the world over as Imperial Violence. The histology of this peculiar Anglo-Saxon malaise known as violence should prove enlightening. In the main the pathological patterns of Anglo-Saxon violence can always be traced back to 'the Ruling Class'. Physical violence the world over is a very British thing — the direct spawn and spill-over of conquest, proselytism and racialism. A vicious combination to be sure and despite the origins of Darwin a retrogressive King-Ape step. Queen to this sad peculiarly induced British colonial human condition is mental oppression and too, of course, the more sinister if somewhat more subtle, violence of Studied Neglect — the infamous Lansdowne-Brookeborough syndrome bridging two centuries. Yet no Southern politician, no Bishop nor 'peace'-mover is prepared to dig down deep into this Brit-root cancer glibly referred to as "violence". What of the centuries of well-heeled chicanery and grossly inhuman neglect? No number of Nero-like guitars can strum our troubles away. The roots run deep. As always it would appear that those 'charged with the responsibility of ruling' had blindly or otherwise presumed that the all too obviously dying Tree of Democracy

had somehow phoenix-like roots; micawber-like the Facade would hold out. For this stupidity they have paid the inevitable and extraordinary price.

Not that all are prepared to see things in this light. For many a 'seat in any forum' foreshortens their perspective. Their cliché : "There's no use talking about the past now" is always within easy reach. So too of course, is the hand-me-down Stormont II — at least in the tiny minds of those who would patch and quilt again and settle at any price. Sir Brian and friends !

In this respect one can feel sad for those who are sincere about Peaec in Our Land, those who are above fronting for any power or persons. How truly sad to see our Free State politicians flirt with the honest emotions of these people. Let it be said, loud and clear, that these politicians see in the Peace Movement an instrument towards 'calming the Realm' rather than a harbinger of Justice and thereby equanimity and solace.

It is patently clear that unless now the Irish nation and all its people be left to themselves in the matter of patterning an all-Ireland structure of government there can be no peace or settlement. Such political motivation alone can lead to maturity and stability and finally to a truce and lasting détente between differing traditions and communities. Patch-work peace methods indifferent to the cause of Justice may window-dress, hiding the wounds and festerings — they cannot possibly heal.

Mention of peace and justice brings us to the political and judicial climate which now obtains in the Free State. In many ways the Free State has kept a step ahead of Britain's statutory repression and legal strictures, a point well made by Northern Secretary Mason recently when referring to the muzzling of the media in the Free State and Cruise O'Brien's own brand of filing-cabinet censorship. In view of certain aspects of his own past there was something very ironical about the late liberal O'Brien admitting to keeping files of "certain letters" to Dublin newspapers.

Perhaps it is in their penal codes and prison systems that the Dublin Government is clearly seen to be guilty of such gross excess. Certainly as matters stand political prisoners in Portlaoise Prison share a common degree of grim inhumanity with those who are suffering in the labour camps of Siberia or in infamous Franco-type dungeons. Suffice it to say that conditions in Portlaoise Prison are every bit as desperate and degrading as those which obtain in Her Majesty's Concentration Camp at Long Kesh and are exceeded in savagery only by the abominations inflicted on Irish Prisoners of War in Great Britain itself.

Nowhere in Western Civilisation today are prisoners subjected to full physical search several times each day, a practice which can only be described as sadistic and nauseating. Since these daily body-searches entail probing the rectum with surgical gloves as used by warders where is the voice of the Catholic Church, its priests, bishops and Cardinal, so strident elsewhere on the matter of violence and offending the dignity of the human body? Here again, with certain

reverend honourable exceptions, we are face to face with the cowardly Irish Catholic morality double-think.

No amount of Government or bureaucratic whitewashing can conceal however the Fascist tactics being employed at Portlaoise Prison, Dachau. Only very recently did a discharged political prisoner tell by obscene reference to genitalia and the riling of prisoners of war by strip-search sadists. If Justice Minister Cooney thinks he can crack the Republican ethos by his Mandango methods — 'worthy of darkest Africa' — he should think again.

The declaration of a State of Emergency in 1976, the holding of a prisoner for seven days in a "suitable place" without trial and the proposed abolition of granting bail coupled with such draconian legislation as the Offences against the State Act and the Emergency Powers Act all point very clearly to a mini-police state. Tragically it would appear that Dublin whilst ignoring the root-cause of The Troubles is quite prepared to push to further conflict and possible civil war by trying to crush effects.

In this respect the Declaration of Emergency in the Free State is highly interesting. Certainly there was more behind this move than a gut re-action to the assassination of British Ambassador Ewart-Biggs. Other countries rarely, if ever, declare an Emergency on the assassination of a foreign diplomat. Could it be after all that in these monstrous legal strictures we see the Leinster House style "New" Ireland taking mishape. Are such grossly oppressive laws truly geared to the following political scenario:—

Brits decide (have decided) on physical withdrawal granting "Ulster" Independence along with Scotland and Wales over a period of some 10 - 20 years, making overtures meanwhile to Dublin towards a "Home Commonwealth" or "British Isles Economic Bloc" dressed up as a sub-region of the E.E.C. . . .

This would 'solve' several problems at once — the question of territorial waters and marine limits, binding even more closely the common fiscal bonds, would accelerate acculturation and Anglo-Saxon assimilation and above all, would present N.A.T.O. and the U.S.A. with a solid anti-Red Atlantic-Europe Front. It should be remembered that quite recently by sheer accident it was revealed that a late Free State Army soldier was training with a Para Regiment at a Royal Air Force station in England when killed. It should also be remembered that Minister for Foreign Affairs, FitzGerald admitted to having contact with a Watergate member of the C.I.A.

Could, therefore, the O'Brien-FitzGerald-Cosgrave "New" Ireland really be geared towards a Second Act of Union in thin 'federal' disguise? Norway, so suddenly concerned of late (quite obviously forgetting alike her own Freedom Fighters and Quislings) in purchasing 'peace' for Ireland might well be included in such 'Union' also. Norway it must be said, sent very few Kroners or 'peace movement people' to the Belfast homeless during the 1969 - '72 pogroms. Strange this NOBLE (stet) interest now!

All the more reason why the Irish nation and its people should hold

its guard-hand high. British 'withdrawal' in itself it should be remembered is no guarantee that Britain would cease to dominate this island. Vigilance and close monitoring during her post-withdrawal chessplay which predictably and in true cunning Brit fashion would range from financial wheedling, business control (choice central sites in Dublin and Belfast have already been snapped up for better times by large British consortiums), E.E.C. zoning and acculturation to physical N.A.T.O. commitments, would be the order of the day. Can our 'state' conscious Dublin politicians be seriously entrusted with the destiny of the nation or are they all too obviously McLuhan-fashion 'News to News' reactors? Can they at this stage shake off the grafted Free State persona and become their full-citizen selves? Future generations can best tell. As matters stand, it would however appear that for many Leinster House politicians their power base price is simply a 'somewhere in Europe' free airline ticket. They have it seems, unlike Auden forgotten the great Democracy of our patriot dead, and that they themselves are only passing by . . .

What Britain once procured by naked violence and brute leonine force she now and henceforth must assimilate by sullen stealth. This the realist Britannia II knows well. For this she has assiduously prepared her Bureaucrats, training, by her own admission, even her 'top' civil servants as Kitsonian agents — the Mason-Nixon line! Indeed the glibly elided 'Nor'en Oireland' may well be equated with the bumble of vulgar wasps.

Not of course that this would present any real problem if even a modicum of trust and fraternity leading to solidarity could be achieved between the many and varied political groupings North and South. Truly it is a time for entry into Ireland rather than anywhere else. Well might it be said, to paraphrase the Protestant patriot Davis: Gentlemen, you have an island!

The time has come for breaking down the many internal partitions, be they sectarian, cultural, educational or traditional. Ideally there would be a realisation of the momentous and historic importance of British withdrawal after some 800 years from this island resulting in a 'common front' the better to ensure a smooth transitional period. The bickerings and party political factions born of the Treaty in the 26 Counties would be forgotten and a worthy example set for our strife-torn people in the North.

A transference of religious emphasis from Catholic Rightism to Christianity in the South would mollify matters elsewhere and would not in the long haul go unrequited. There is need for magnanimity and amnesty since such are the founders of true trust. After all Dublin has had partial independence and self-rule for over 55 years now, yet the "thundering disgrace" incident leading to the recent resignation of President Ó Dálaigh was in itself mean and petty; redolent of Civil War bitterness it spoke volumes for political immaturity at even cabinet level in Dublin. Such shenanigans and marble-scoring bode little good for a "New Ireland" and serve only as an open scandal to the North at this juncture of our history.

We are now faced with the sad anachronism by which those who

hold that the principles of the First Dáil (1919) are the true and only correct expression of the Easter Proclamation are themselves held to be 'subversive' in the Free State. Indeed it is all too obvious that a rabid anti-republican clique bear more atavistic hatred in their hearts now than is imaginable after the passing of almost six decades. Bearing this in mind, it is quite possible that the concept of a New Ireland will founder in the Pale and flower in Shankill and Sandy Row. That the lesson of British infidelity has been painfully learned in occupied Ireland by our 'Loyalist' and 'Unionist' brethren was well put by John McKeague recently: 'on the road to Damascus'. Orange and green move forward towards completing and fulfilling the concept of a Britless Ireland equally shared and faithfully supported in the full development and ripening of her national ethos — a challenging yet glorious epoch — but what of Leinster House?

Nollaig, 1976

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Ó Súilleabháin.

# Diarmaid Ó Súilleabháin

Native of Eyeries, Béara, Co. Cork; domiciled in Gorey, Co. Wexford since 1955 where he teaches with the Christian Brothers. Nephew of Captain Seán Ó Driscoll who at the request of Terence MacSwiney organised the Volunteers in the Béara Peninsula in 1914, later fought with the I.R.A. (Béara Battalion) at Crossbarry and was O/C of first engagement after Knocklong — the taking of the R.I.C. barracks at Eyeries village.

Diarmaid makes no concessions when it comes to British Imperialism: "I have no desire whatever to place foot on British soil; I have never done so and shall never do as long as London pursues the role of tyrant and oppressor in my country. Any talents which I may have I shall always use to the best of my ability to expose England's cruelty and treachery.

"Certain creatures of the Free State are now desperate, knowing only too well that Freedom follows Struggle as dawn the night. I have written this essay to remind certain paypacket Leinster House politicians that they have a country, a separate island. They have no mandate from anybody to perpetuate their post-imperial West Briton posturings which can only lead to aggravation, added strife and very possibly a second civil war. They should think again and remember things past."

True to his word, this author almost alone among our literati has waged war on the British Propaganda Machine to such an extent that the darling of British Embassies, Cruise O'Brien, should see fit in 1976 to single out Ó Súilleabháin's letters to the Press for his 'Liberal' Censorship List.

A leading Irish author, Diarmaid Ó Súilleabháin's output ranges from novel and shortstory to poetry and drama for which he has received a record number of literary awards: Oireachtas prizes; The Butler Award U.S.A.; and the coveted and rarely bestowed "Irish Academy of Letters Award" for *An Uain Bheo*, the late Professor Máirtín Ó Cadhain being among the adjudicators. He is at present working on an Irish novel entitled *Guilty*.

Imprisoned by the Free State in 1972, in which same year he was a member of the Ard-Chomhairle of Sinn Féin, Ó Súilleabháin was tried and sentenced at Green Street on the very first day of the non-jury Special Criminal Courts, June 13th 1972.

Adjutant in B Wing, Mountjoy, during the May Riot: "To know and live in close confines with true Republicans, to listen especially to the old Fenian message of the Ulstermen is something I shall always cherish. (We were with them after all at Kinsale in 1601 and they with us at Dunboy!) The proudest chapter of my life — I felt unworthy of this honour."