The appalling vista revisited: British justice reels from flawed forensics

Feicreanach and Bobbie Heatley look at the prospects for the peace process

Feter Berresford Ellis takes another trip to the 'Celtic twilight' zone

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Connolly Association: campaigning for a united and independent Ireland

party talks must include Sinn Fein

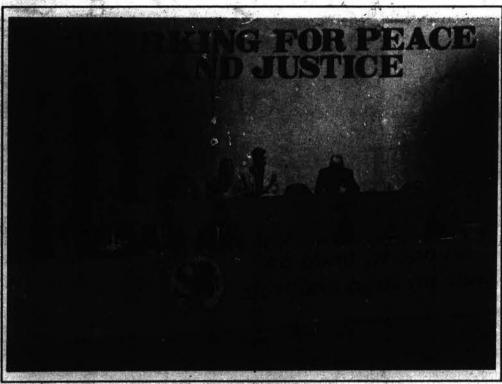
All-party talks Democrat reporter

he British government's response to Sinn Fein's nouncement that it is willing to sign up to the Mitchell principles - so long as everyone else does — has not been enthusiastic.

Although few, including the republican leadership, would have expected the British to welcome Sinn Fein into talks on June 10 in the absence of another IRA Mayhew's reaction was nevertheless little short of begrudging.

It is to be hoped that tuning their earlier strategy of formulating their 'next precondition'.

It is worth remembering exactly what Sinn negotiations Fein is prepared to agree to. The Mitchell Commission report sought reached in all-party the full commitment of negotiations and to reall involved parties to: democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues



ceasefire, Major and Talks without Sinn Fein 'not worth a penny candle'.

of all paramilitary organisations

renounce for themthey are not simply fine | selves, and to oppose any effort by others, to use force or threaten to use force, to influence the outcome of all-party

agree to abide by the terms of any agreement sort to democratic and peaceful entirely methods in trying to alter any aspect of that outthe total disarmament come with which they

might disagree, and urge known that Sinn Fein that 'punishment' killings and beatings stop and take effective steps to prevent such actions.

Although none of the above are remarkable, given the political developments that have taken election as a confidenceplace within Sinn Fein over recent years, the party's acceptance of the Mitchell conditions must be seen as its clearest commitment to the securing of a settlement by shattered into fragments political means.

Indeed, Adams made twisted metal and

was prepared to sign up to Mitchell back in January when Major decided to ignore Mitchell's main points in favour of a passing reference to the possible usefulness of an building measure, provided such a mechanbroadly was ism acceptable.

It was not, and within weeks the IRA ceasefire of splintered glass,

broken bodies that was ing could be addressed at Canary Wharf.

There can be no doubt that a renewal of the IRA ceasefire is both desirable and necessary if the current peace process is to stand any real chance of progressing the political agenda of Irish nationalists.

As a former adviser of talks without Sinn Fein candle'.

In addition, any talks that do take place must address the issues of prisoners, consensual policing, general demilitarisation and democratic rights, in addition to the key constitutional questions.

The British government must begin to show a willingness to embrace the process constructively if we are not to arrive at another impasse further down the road.

It is therefore critical that decommissioning does not re-emerge as a crude means to exclude Sinn Fein.

In this respect at least, Major's hint in a recent Irish Times article that the issue of decommission-

the beginning of the talks "without blocking negotiations" is to be welcomed. The possible introduction of a fourth strand of talks, as suggested by John Hulme, could prove a useful and acceptable mechanism.

Unionists will continue to rail against any the Irish Tanaiste put it, such moves and maximum unity between Sinn are 'not worth a penny Fein, the SDLP and the Irish government will be essential throughout the forthcoming period, as will the efforts and mobilisation of support in both America and Bri-

> Unionism is no longer the monolith it once was. Just saying no is no longer an option. Trimble and Paisley will undoubtedly try everything in their diminished - though not insignificant - power to put a block on a process that will inevitably lead to a further weakening of " their grip on the life of the Six-County statelet. So be it.

The tide of history is not marching their way. The task ahead is to ensure that this remains so.

INN FEIN'S announcement that it is prepared to sign up to the Mitchell Principles, as long as all other parties give a similar commitment, has given a welcome fillip to the prospects for restarting the stalled peace process - although, as yet unaccompanied by a second IRA ceasefire, it is difficult to see how the logic of Sinn Fein's commitment to Mitchell, and all that this entails, can point to any other outcome. The question is now surely one of timing.

The Connolly Association has never fallen into the trap of telling nationalists and republicans how to conduct their struggle for Irish unity and independence, but we would be failing in our duty as republicans and socialists if we did not restate our belief that political struggle provides the best method for pursuing these objectives, under the existing circumstances.

And, as our Dublin correspondent Anthony Coughlan rightly comments in his review of Mallie and McKittrick's revealing book about the background to the first IRA ceasefire: "The Irish people will not lightly forgive those who fail to recognise that the main line of natational advance is now through politics. A realisation of this amongst the IRA's volunteers remains the best hope for the re-establishment of the ceasefire and the IRA's full commitment to the totally unarmed strategy."

However, neither will the people of Ireland and Britain be forgiving of those in the British political establishment who fail to grasp this new opportunity to bring about a peaceful and lasting settlement to the conflict. Britain's immediate response to the nationalist and republican desire to enter into serious negotiations with all the parties to the conflict, including the British and Irish governments, will be critical.

Politically weak and ideologically bereft, Major desperately needs a policy success on Ireland if he and his fag-end government are not to be forced before the electorate wearing only a veneer of xenophobic nationalism and a fistful of failed policies.

The dangers are obvious. Within hours of Adams' statement on the Mitchell principles, Trimble warned that he would not hesitate to sink the Tories if the government showed any sign of 'backsliding' on Northern Ireland. To add to Major's problems, his own unionist backwoodsmen are becoming increasingly uncompromising.

However, news that 'new Labour' is preparing to adopt a more critical stance towards the government over the peace process is both welcome and long overdue. Yet it remains to be seen if this will amount to more than a half-hearted attempt at neutralising the political damage inflicted on Labour as a result of its bi-partisan approach to policy on Ireland and its aboutturn on the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The strength of feeling among Britain's Irish community resulting from Labour's decision not to oppose the renewal of the PTA was perhaps typified by a leading Irish commentator who remarked that there was no longer any 'Irish' reason for voting Labour. While the question of how the Irish community in Britain will vote at the next general election is undoubtedly more complex, new Labour has been warned that it cannot take the Irish vote for granted.

If new Labour is to retain any credibility over the Irish question, it must be prepared to speak out forceto stall or undermine the peace process. If Labour insists on maintaining its bi-partisan approach, it must be exercised progressively to face down the bigoted drums of Trimble and Paisley, and not to collude with Tory stalling and intransigence. This is the very least we demand.

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Anger at stamp issue Busy time for

An Post Jim Savage

JOHN BRUTON'S decision to insist on the issuing of a special stamp for the Royal Dublin Fusilliers displays a staggering level of indifference to the role played by the regiment in crushing the 1916 rising.

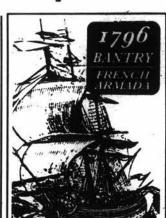
Involved in one of the most reprehensible acts of brutality in the aftermath of the rebel lion, the regiment were responsible for the execution of the pacifist Francis Sheey

By way of contrast, the Irish Minister for Transport, Communications and Energy, Michael Lowry, has been told to reject An Post's plans for a stamp to commemorate the bicentenary of Wolfe Tone's at-

Although the event took place in 1796, it would seem republicanism is enough to in these sensitive and 'politically correct' days.

The irony of the government telling An Post to commemorate soccer players, plants, lizards, fishing boats and British army mercenaries, while ignoring a major French expedition whose intention was to free Ireland from British rule, will be noted widely.

Perhaps the government



'loyal subjects' for future stamps connected with the anniversary of the Bantry Bay expedition: Dr. Moylan, catholic Bishop of Cork who issued an urgent pastoral letter ordering his flock to oppose Tone and tempted landing at Bantry | the French and to continue to | pu show "gratitude, duty and Lovalty" to their sovereign king; White, the biggest landthat even the faintest whiff of owner in the area who was rewarded with a peerage in scare the coalition government | return for obtaining and passing on information, organising his tenants and establishing outposts in the

mountains. Other 'suitable' candidates could include Maurice O'Connell, the 'Liberator's' uncle, the Bishop of Limerick, or the bankers and traders of Cork, Galway and Limerick, who all demonstrated their loyalty to the British Crown.

Campaign for Democracy

Democracy debatee Democrat reporter

THE PERIOD since the initial IRA ceasefire has been busy and productive one for the belfast-based Campaign for Democracy.

During this time, the Camign has undertaken an ambitious lecture programme which has succeeded in stimulating debate across an increasingly broad crossection of the

Topics covered have in cluded the future of the peace process, Ireland and the British left, consent or coercion in the North, the contribution o women to Irish development affirmative action, and the Wexford Republic. The more favourable cli-

mate for debate created by the ceasefires, and the Campaign's ability to attract high quality speakers, including historian and journalist, Tim Pat Coogan, Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party, Queen's University lecturer Sam Porter, Fianna Fail's head | Telephone 0171 833 3022 of research Martin Mansergh,

historian Dr. Mary Cullen, Joe amison of the Irish-American Labour Coalition, and histoian and translator Brian Cleary, has ensured the pro-

The Campaign has been instrumental in securing the erection of a plaque in honour of the Belfast Society of United Irishmen in the city's Clifton Street cemetery, at which former Irish Times editor, Douglas Gageby, gave the oration.

The campaign is also involved in a broad-based committee working on a rogramme of events leading up to the anniversary of aniversary of the United Irishmen uprising in 1998.

Volunteers needed

Irish Democrat readers are needed to help in the Four Provinces Book-

Those interested should contact Gloria Findlay.

successful campaign, Patrick

The case of Patrick Kelly

throws into stark relief what

members of the European par-

liament have described as "the

transfer to a prison in the Re-

Prison Service to perpetrate an

systematically damaged their

Media silence has enabled

meant to turn them into supporters of Mrs. Breathnach's Labour Party!"

Education

Democrat reporter

strong criticism for proposing

to drop history as a compul-

sory subject from the junior

secondary school programme.

'Irish History makes people re-

publicans,' said one critic, re-

placing it with "Social Studies"

This is the latest example of

Forensic farce

THE HOME OFFICE was dee-

ply saddened recently. What

must have been, from its point

identifying traces of Semtex —

gave positive results to enable

have had 'limited efficiency'.

into Britain's main Forensic

Explosives Laboratory at Fort

machine which invariably

of view, ideal equipment for whether it was contaminated

order an independent inquiry the Birmingham Six's appeal.

Howard has been forced to family and gave evidence at dence.

Enda Finlay

Irish Labour, that fatal flaw in Fortunately the proposition its world view which has kept has aroused such opposition it on the political margins of that the minister looks like Irish life since the 1920's.

and it seems that due attention

was not given to checking

Ironically, the scientist

chosen to undertake the in-

conviction — was found to quiry, Brian Caddy, was a since 1989 may now have to be

HEADLINES

The appalling vista opens up again

identify traces of explosives in | boratory was dispelled by Ho-

bomb cases since 1989 is contaminated with Semtex. ward in typically arrogant fashion: "The chances that

The centrifuge was bought | there has been a miscarriage of

second hand by the laboratory justice are very small. But I

forensic adviser to the freed because of the prosecu-

wrongly-imprisoned Maguire | tion's reliance on forensic evi-

Halstead in Sevenoaks, Kent, ring because of the ineptitude | McBrearty was dropped be- | the highest score.

Labour downgrades Irish history lessons

The likelihood of further seven years ago when the con-

As it is only a mority of mind Irish students take rustory for It even induced Oxford's the Leaving Certificate, drop-Niamh Breathnach, one of the ping it from Junior Certificate anti-national history revisionwould mean its virtual disap- ists', to get together with Cam-Labour Party members of the Bruton coalition, attracted pearance from the secondary bridge's Brendan Bradshaw, school curriculum, leaving the next generation of Irish youth profoundly ignorant of what makes them what they are.

Educationalists everywhere regard history as a core subject of any education worth the name. A minister or indeed youth, deserves to be spurned the tragic anti-nationalism of out of political life.

being forced to change her

because the centrifuge used to of the Forensic Explosives Lacause it was admitted that ac-

don't want to take any risks or

Many lawyers and cam-

aigners believe that many of

the 38 people convicted of of-

fences involving explosives

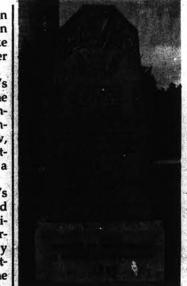
There were warning signs

miscarriages of justice occur- viction against Daniel quantity. Justice is not about

leave any stone unturned."

Roy Foster, leading light of the revisionism's chief critic, to attack the proposal jointly in a letter to the Irish Times.

Meanwhile, Fianna Fail's education spokesman has said that party will reverse the decision if the Labour minister persists in it. The secondary a political party perpetrating | teachers' union has also atsuch a wrong against Ireland's tacked the move and even Fine Gael is seeking to disassociate by the electorate and hunted itself from the Education Minister's anti-nationalism.



cidental contamination could

Despite this, Mr McBrearty spent 85 days in jail and was

subsequently served with an

It is estimated that at least

12 people may now have un-

safe convictions as a result of

this latest Home Office cock-

up. Yet again the British judi-

cial system takes a battering.

that the quality of convictions

is far more important than the

Mr Howard should learn

exclusion order, thus labelling

A suitable case for study? not according to the ministe

Patrick Kelly transferred at last

Political prisoners Moya Frenz St Leger

THE TRANSFER on 14 May of dying prisoner Patrick Kelly from Maghaberry to Portlaoise prison marks the end of a two tion to his plight.

Kelly's removal into Irish jurisdiction now gives him access to the consistent medical care for his skin cancer denied him in Britain.

Prior to his imprisonment, Kelly convicted at the Old Bailey in 1993 for conspiracy to cause explosives and the attempted murder of a policeman, had undergone surgery for his condition.

Shortly after his arrival at Full Sutton Prison a medical officer notified the authorities privately that his melanoma could reoccur. A year later no medical examination had held. His barrister, Tim taken place. Owens, told the High Court of

Fellow prisoners, concerned about his worsening condition, called for an independent assessment and urgent treatment for him. The response of the Home Office in July 1995 was to move him to the harsh conditions of a Special Secure Unit at Whitemoor prison. His continuing appeals for medical treatment went unheeded and he went 'on the

underwent the urgent oper-ation which Dr Shah had recblanket' in protest. At the end of August he was ommended five months

xamined and rushed for previously. It was too late. Sec- without the international argery to Peterborough Hosondary cancer had spread to pressure brought about by the pital where he was chained to his glandular system. In April this year, 140 TDs | Kelly might still be incarchis bed throughout his stay

and guarded by six uniformed and 30 Senators signed a peti- erated in the Whitemoor speofficers. He was then returned tion calling for Kelly's transfer | cial secure unit. Meanwhile, Dr to the inhuman conditions of to Portlaoise prison in the Re- Shah will monitor his condithe Special Secure Unit at public, and on April 22 Dr tionat Portlaoise and advise on

By mid Autumn, Labour haberry prison. MPs Max Madden and Jeremy At the beginning of May the Corbyn had managed to per- European parliament called suade the authorities to allow for his immediate transfer to Dr Amil Shah, Associate Pro- Portlaoise to be close to his serious abuse of human rights fessor of Medicine at the 'family. The motion also ad- of Irish prisoners" in Britain. University of British Colum- monished the British govern- Despite this, very little was rebia, to conduct an independent | ment to uphold the European | ported of his plight in the Britpanied by Eamon O Cuiv TD, Sentenced Prisoners. Shah visited Kelly in White-

his client's 'desperate situ-

Kelly was eventually trans-

ferred to Maghaberry prison in

the Six Counties in December

where he was kept separate

from other republican

prisoners and only allowed to

see his partner, Angela Rice,

In February this year Kelly

once a fortnight for two hours.

A request was lodged for a public. moor prison and was appalled delegation of the European by his conditions and recom- Parliament to visit Irish politi- the Home Office and the mended further immediate cal prisoners in Britain and the Six Counties to examine the infamous prison policy affect-In October, Patrick Kelly | conditions under which they | ing Irish prisoners which has won the right to seek a judicial | are being held. review of the repressive condi-

Campaigners believe that | physical and mental health.

Shah visited Kelly in Mag-

Donations to the Connolly Association and Irish Democrat March 20 - May 11 1996

M. Barry £1.50; S McKeever £12.50; R.H. £4.50; M.Sheehan £2.50; J. Bird £5; Joe Clark £9; Anon £1.40; T. Doody £10; O'Donohoe £2.50; C. Cunningham £5; D. McLaughlin £10; J McGrath £10; A. Walsh £10; M. Mace £7.50; S. Mason £10; C. Seifert £5; M. Moore £5; K. Matthews £15; M. Cleere £5; A Lenagh £5; Y. Boydell £5; J. Gibson £4; F.Rushe £10; M. McGuire £5; P. Evans £5; F.& J. Jennings £13; P. Latham £5; F. Small £15; P. Quin £5; G. Whitby £15; C. Dunne £200. CC £35.

Bankers' Orders £350.12 (2 months)

Lottery win for left library



 Mirror image of the Greaves and Jackson collections at the Working Class Movement Library in Salford

Democrat reporter

he Working Class Movement Library, Salford, established by Eddie and Ruth Frow, old friends of the orabilia by 1987 the collection Irish Democrat, has been attracted a constant stream of awarded £200,000 by the National Lottery to computerise he library's catalogue and p it on the Internet.

Researchers from around the world will eventually have instant access to this unique collection documenting 200 years of British labour history. The Library's Irish room contains Desmond Greaves's and Tommy Jackson's books, and land, the Working Class Movein Britain. The WCML holds more

than 30,000 books, periodicals and pamphlets, including papers or memorabilia on Iremajor collections on Tom Paine, the 20th century Left and a trade union archive, incorporating records dating from the 1740s. Many trade unions and political organisa-tions now deposit their records with the library.

Begun modestly 40 years ago by Eddie and Ruth Frow, lifelong socialists and trade union activists, their collection, included 10,000 books, 15,000 pamphlets and assorted memresearchers to their semi-detached home at Old Trafford.

Salford City Council event ually offered the collection, along with its founders, more spacious accommodation in a former nurses' home opposite the Salford Art Gallery.

Used as a research base by academics and postgraduates throughout the North of Engis continually up-dated, making it the best collection on Irish history and social affairs China, the US and other parts of Europe.

> ☐ If you want donate books, land, the British Labour Movement or the Irish community in Britain write to Eddie and Ruth Frow, The Working Class Movement Library, Silver Jubilee Nurses Home, 51, The Crescent, Sal ford M5 4WX.

WORLD COMMENT BY POLITICUS

Turning the tide

ree marketry, deregulation, privatisation have had an unchallenged ideologically free field during the past decade. And not just in Britain, but throughout the world. Everywhere the forces of the left have been in retreat. In the West, the principal reason has been the failure of the Labour movement to defend democracy and independence as embodied in the nation state. This stems from the left's traditional 'economism' and its tendency to concentrate on economic objectives and underestimate the importance of the key political ones. The prime political challenge of our times is the defence of democracy in the face of assaults of Big

A democratic state is the principal mechanism whereby social control may be imposed on private capital. Big Capital, on the other hand, in its lust to satisfy 'the furies of private interest', has as its main political objective the erosion of the democracy that has been achieved at national level through popular and labour movement struggles. Instead Big Capital seeks to hand over power to institutions like the Brussels Commission or the World Trade Organisation, whose structures are controlled by Big Capital. They are able to dictate to entire states and have no democratic input from ordinary people.

The support of the mainstream leadership of the West's Labour and social-democratic parties for Big Capital's central political objective has left democrats in . st countries without a political rallying point. Many have felt compelled, to look for a lead to the forces of Small Capital, such as the Tory Eurosceptics in Britain, who still see their interests as aligned to the Nation State. There are exceptions of course like the Left in Scandinavian countries and the communists in France. Their influence is increasing because they identify with the cause of national independence.

Another blow to the left has been the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. This was not caused by Thatcherism or the appeal of capitalist ideology, as Big Capital's propagandists have claimed. The East European changes were generated from within - by the pressures of the arms race, the mistakes of a governing elite remote from the concerns of ordinary people and the maintenance of an over-centralised system long after it had served the purpose of rapid early indus-

It was coincidental that the changes in Eastern Europe occurred at the same time that Big Capital was politically advancing in the West, having the effect of removing capitalism's ideological competitor on the European continent. They also removed one reason why western capitalist governments should seek to maintain their welfare states and simulate concern for achieving full employment - fear that otherwise their peoples might be attracted towards socialism.

There are now signs that the historical tide is turning. The ideological bankruptcy of 'free marketing' is becoming even clearer. One reason is the ravages of r nemployment. There are now four million out of ork in Germany, three million in France, 12% of the work-force throughout the Common Market. Even more important than that is the widespread lack of job

These are on part-time or contract working, liable to dismissal at short notice. Swathes of middle-class people in every western country are experiencing the insecurity and human angst that manual workers have always known. Middle-class people are worried also at capitalism's erosion of the Welfare State, which they, quite as much as the working class, have come to regard as essential to their lives.

Ideologically, Thatcherism and monetarism are retreating. This is important, for ideological victories al-ways come before political ones. That is why in Europe the struggle against the Maastricht single currency scheme is so important. One can confidentially predict that when that is defeated - though the battle may be long and complex - there will be a dramatic re-vival of economic Keynesianism across Europe. That, in turn will require the reassertion of national democracy and the re-establishment of the independence of individual national states. The main political question yet to be decided is whether it will be the forces of the left or of Small Capital that will lead this independence struggle in the various European countries.

Britain, 'Britishness' and

the Great Hunger of 1845

As the June 10 date for all party talks approaches, the Irish Democrat asks two of its contributors for their views on the future of the peace process



Bobbie Heatley: Downing Street's attitude will determine expedient in the present cir- A political campaign for legislature dominated by disengagement that is now hiswhether Ireland and Britain face a peaceful future

Laying foundations for the political defeat of unionism

logic of the 'unarmed strategy'

the Civil Rights Movement left

DEVOLVED institution

alism to grow stronger and

One of the major unionist

that para-military (IRA) de-

politically is the chalall-party talks. As political rea- would give a majority in the republicans will recognise that | And if a quarter of unionists | off in 1970. Equality of treatthese negotiations are not cannot be persuaded to aban- ment means the unionists can going to lead directly to a don Unionism just now, they no longer lord it over Cathunited Ireland. The current | can be won to take part in an | olics. It takes away the 'rabalance of political forces does | interim settlement. This is half- | tional' basis for the unionism not allow for that. Irish nation- | way towards abandoning the | of most unionists. That isolates alism and its allies are not yet | Union, and will impel them in | Paisley and the more bigoted strong enough. The opposing | due time to go further down | Orange elements. unionist forces are not yet the road towards genuine divided and weak enough.

What the present balance of forces does realistically allow for however is an interim setprovided the pan nationalist wards an interim settlement on these lines must now become the strategic goal of Irish na-

ognise that unionists have no gress is a possible outcome of is not politically desirable and | it about. cumstance to embark on a pro- equality of treatment in the Six unionists, which was per- torically inevitable.

cess aimed at winning the tacit | Counties and for maximum | mitted by the sovereign British

A quarter of the unionists, plus the nationalist 40 percent, of the Republican Movement. North for a united Ireland. democracy

What is needed in the current period is for the SDLP and Sinn Fein to work towards a for however is an interim set-tlement that is capable of evolving towards a united Ireland in a generation. This is pable of new thinking among terim stage. It is needed to prolovalists and official unionists - vide an arena within Ireland alliance can be re-established so as to get a majority in the where the play of political and maintained. Working to- North for a progressive in- forces enables northern nationterim settlement.

This would isolate Paisley's unionism to be weakened. DUP and those in the OUP | Naturally there can be no queswhose minds are buried in the tion of restoring the old Storpast. Such a coalition for pro-

But it is important to be right to block Irish unification. | all-party talks, if the SDLP and | clear what Stormont was, apart | But that does not mean that it | Sinn Fein act together to bring | from just a building on a hill. Stormont was a devolved

support of a significant num- democratic rights there, is now parliament at Westminster to ber of them for ending parti- clearly the next phase of the abuse nationalists and cath-Irish national struggle. It is the | olics more or less as it liked for 50 years. Clearly there can be It means taking up where

If that position is realisticans playing a key role in such a body, alongside the SDLP, is it not logical and desirable from a nationalist point of view that such a devolved assembly should have maximum legislative and administrative powers, not minimum ones, or that it should be capable of evolving in such a direction

Is it not better to have more power in Ireland. under control of Irish people, than in English hands at Westminster, so long as that power is not open to unionist abuse.

If devolved and all-Ireland institutions were to be established which would advance nationalist gains, it would be a good springboard for inducing uture British governments to look more positively on moves in an all-Ireland direction, adopting the role of positive persuaders for the final end of partition, and the full British

Process demands positive response from London

Bobbie Heatley

the peoples of Britain and Ire- agenda to the Irish side. land will enjoy a peaceful and co-operative future.

While the possibility of a new IRA ceasefire and the ernment's objective of defeatemergence of an authentic ing Irish nationalism and become permanent, was depeace process continue to hang | democracy, particularly its | in the balance, the British gov- | paramilitary republican maniernment's handling of the orig- | festation, had not. Their aim: to inal post ceasefire period does | prevent the start of talks focusnot engender confidence.

The recent publication of an | of the dispute authoratative book on the Irish pedalled by the British politi- process after six months 'quar- ported by unionists. cal and media establishment
— including 'New' Labour —

Major failed to play a construc
Major failed to pl tive role in creating the condi- double act with Northern Ire- Northern Ireland elected astions for the initial IRA | land unionism to concoct pre-

Eamonn Mallie and David | a ig leaf for intransigence. Ac- | a part, provided that it was | McKittrick confirm that this cording to Mallie and McKitmomentous development was trick, sections of Torvism and even to some unionists. Yet, in the product of Hume and the British military, smarting deference to the Unionists, and Adams in conjunction with the from their failure to defeat the then Irish Taoiseach, Albert | IRA, pressed for an intransi-

The disarray within the weak, Major capitulated. British establishment caused by republicans response to the | civil and democratic rights had Joint Declaration - even after | been addressed, the unrealistic the original had been amended | demand of de-commissioning in favour of the unionist posi- IRA weapons was insisted tion - continued to be accept- upon in an attempt to split

Nevertheless, it demonstrated that the British, in col-

changed, but the British gov-

Even before critical human,

struggle was being waged had ing on the issues at the centre

Hence 17 months of stall-

gent approach. Politically an election.

Ireland, which would have aclusion with their Northern complished de-commissionish government will Ireland unionist appendages, ing and taken care of British determine whether or not set about pursuing a separate and Irish unionism's other distractionary pre-condition: the The ground on which the permanence of the ceasefire,

was ignored. violence, with its potential to liberately deemed insufficient grounds on which to allow Sinn Fein to take part in talks. When the position of the

undermined by the conclu- pable of delivering peace. sions of the Mitchell Com-Peace Process confirms what | ing, and the reneging on their | mission, Major simply ignored | duggery, the Tories then ac-Irish democrats have always | commitment to admit Sinn | its main recommendations and | claimed, that despite the lies | Fein to an implied political | set out yet another stall sup- | a reconstituted partitionist as-

sembly — a longstanding conditions which would act as unionist demand —could play broadly acceptable. It was not, facing important votes at Westminster, Major imposed

HOSE ATTENDING mass demonstrations believed that getting around able as a basis for an IRA pan-nationalism. The demo- the table to negotiate was the

such negotiations were not to de-commissioning of IRA at its final stage? be farcical, all parties to the arms remains the first item of conflict had to be present. Its any agenda. The Irish governinterest in stalling, the Tory | ment has attempted to reaslying' the election on the talks will be comprehensive, spurious grounds that it was with no such stumbling blocks. necessary in order to identify who should negotiate.

Major's response to this has been a deafening silence.

The way that the voting system has been devised is likely parties has indicated that it to ensure that those elected | will not sit down with Sinn grounders' who, since they |- despite its willingness to sit | opening date for talks on June have not been not active com- down with the PUP/UVF or 10. British government was batants in the war, will be inca- UDP/UDA who have not de- The Downing Street Joint

ceded to unionists demand for sembly in the North, a move ment and unionists have for which, in an effort to strike a this body, there remains every | compromise between two oppossibility that Sinn Fein will posing standpoints suggested

not cross its threshold. developments will guarantee phased in during talks. This is meaningful and comprehensive all-party negotiations. All that has been done is to delay in the Irish Times.

This is appletication and pessimism about the peace process which people here in Northern Ireland have come feel. negotiations a further five Whether or not this will be months while the prospect of an elected assembly has, as the Irish government warned, 'poured oil on the sectarian other included in the principle that nothing is in the prospect of the Belfast-based Campaign for Democracy.

ames'.
Other obstacles stand in the agreed, remains problematic. of activities, write to: Camway of talks. Whatever the outcome of the election, unionists

How can staged de-compaign for Democracy, clo 45 missioning take place as part of Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1.

cratic demand for the complete de-militarisation of Northern such negotiatic s were not to de-commissioning of IRA at its final stage?

question of a further IRA ceasfire. The organisation has ungovernment disagreed, 'justi- sure northern nationalists that doubtedly come under pressure in recent months to allow the politicians another opportunity to move the process forward. But, at the time of writing, despite increasingly nouncement is not expectedwill be packed with 'middle- Fein until the IRA is disbanded much before the proposed

commissioned and whose Declaration and the sub-Not satisfied with this skul- ceasefires are very conditional. sequent Framework Documents provided the basis for the IRA's last ceasfire. However it remains to be seen whether enough has been

require a far more positive and imaginative response from the British government if we are all not to be faced with the Furthermore, none of these commissioning could be widespread disenchantment, apprehension and pessimism

to the pre-existing nations of Other, against which Britain England, Scotland and Wales. and British identity were JOHN MURPHY Ireland was excluded from t his invented nationality of examines how Ireland's exclusion part of the British State after

other nations were.

the 1800 Act of Union as these

The 1707 Act of Union re-

tain'. North Britain was in-

scribed on maps, given to

France was Catholic, Britain

Protestant. France supported

the Catholic-leaning House of

Irish. If the invasion of the Ste-

would have put a French pup-

The Protestant elites of Scot-

land, Wales and England

joined together in defeating

France and laying the founda-tions of both the British Empire

pet on the British throne.

from the 'invented' British nationality contributed to the severity of the Great Hunger

☐ Famine funeral at Skibberee

england sent the Famine was how people at the time expressed the political essence of that apocalyptic event After all, Ireland in the 1840s was part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the most prosperous, civilised and developed State

union and solidarity had been concluded between the two islands when the College Green Parliament signed itself out of 1800 Act of Union. The London | Britain's rulers and its peoples direct rulers never regarded the Irish in the same light as the For 50 of those 130 years would never have accepted days abandoning its 'British-the Irish in the same light as the ross'? English, Scots and Welsh.

If the Famine had happened anywhere in Britain, its government would never have been able to hide behind the Stewart, as did the Catholic supposed laws of political economy to justify the laissez-faire, do-nothing policies that had succeeded in 1745, it

Vital reading for trade unionists worldwide

Latest issue: Corporate codes of conduct - Neil Kearney of led to one million Irish people dying and another millon being expelled from the country during the Hungry Forties. British public opinion would not have tolerated it.

In her brilliant book Britons, the forging of the nation 1707-1837, historian Linda Colley Scots and Welsh abandoned 0171 498 0611 England's union with Scotland well out of submerging their and Victoria's advent to the own national identities in the throne, Britain was created as artifical identity of 'Britishan artificial 'nation', an extra ness'. political dimension tagged on | Ireland too was a Great

If the French were the 'Britishness', although legally enemy without, the Irish were and formally she was as much the enemy within. Linda Col-Protestantism and Crown surley describe the grafting of an vives today only as an archaic artifical British second identity, a pseudo-nationality and nationalism, onto the aboriginal national identities of Engvived the ancient Roman word 'Britain' as a political term. lish, Scottish and Welsh with Scotland became 'North Briscarcely a reference to Ireland.

hotels and later to regiments and railway lines. But Ireland HE OTHER nations never never became 'West Britain' in identified with Ireland as anything except a derogatory sense. Hence, by inevitable 'British' polity. Ireland was Government's most heinous consequence, the Famine, whose ultimate political cause of landless tenants whose inis to be found in Linda Colley's digenous elites had been exterminated a century before, not so long identified with. England, Scotland and coopted into the ruling elite of was Catholic. In the 18th and world empire as the Scottish

early 19th centuries political and Welsh elites had been. Hence the indifference of ment in the development of Britain's rulers in face of the British identity and ordinary Great Famine; the welcome by, people's sense of 'Britishness'. British statesmen to this fortui-In the Britain of those days | tous 'Act of God' which helped supposedly eternal compact of | Protestantism was a real politi- | clear the estate of Ireland for cal power. Its supremacy was their benefit; and the simian guaranteed by the Hanoverian caricatures of the Victorian carroyal succession. One thing toonists, which depicted the selves with the best traditions Britain stood for was frequent | Irish as both causing and de- of their 'protesting' foreexistence and embraced direct | war with France. France was | serving their own brutalising | fathers. What better ideologithe Great Other against which | poverty.

Britain was at war with France.

depredations of the Famine if the potato-destroying blight had occurred in Yorkshire or in Today Britain's own sense

or Welshmen, any more than

they would have tolerated the

of 'Britishness' is on its last legs. British Protestantism is now dead as a political force. Anti-Catholicism is historically redundant. The monarchy is busy rapidly discrediting itself. The empire has disappeared. Appeals to British patriotism no longer strike a chord with people whose rulers tell them that their future lies in being 'good Europeans'.

It is an ironic coda to Linda Colley's history that the sense throwback among Ulster

Unionism preserve an outof-date sense of 'Britishness'a fossilised relic - which the peoples of Britain themselves have almost wholly abandoned. It increasingly looks an absurdity to the residents of Britain itself.

Telling Unionists the facts an equal within the new of the Great Famine, the British Catholic, subordinate, a nation offence in Ireland, should help them appreciate the historical misdeeds of the State they have

The Famine anniversary Wales were Protestant, Ireland a United Kingdom to run a leads into the bicentenary of 1798, the culmination of the and the impact of the French Revolution on Ireland, in which Ulstermen played a

Both anniversaries have particular relevance to Northrediscover and align themcal alternative have they after British public opinion all, when Britain itself is these

INTERNATIONAL UNION RIGHTS

Journal of the International Centre for Trade Union Rights Vital reading for trade unionists worldwide

the International Garment Workers' Federation asks: are they a sham? - Workers unite against banana multinationals in Latin America - GAP in El Salvador, Plus many other features - worldwide news - ICTUR reports and activities

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shows why this was so. She shows how in the 130-year period she examines, between turies they did materially very : enclose £___

Post code:

Democrat letters

Church veto raises its ugly head...again

AWAY BACK in 1934 Frank Edwards was sacked from his teaching job in Mount Sion school in Waterford because he would not resign from the Republican Congress. To add insult to injury, a letter was sent to him by the then Archbishop of Dublin saying that he would not be employed in any catholic school in Ireland.

The Department of Education has once again given the Church a veto on the employment of teachers on grounds of religion in any school under the supervision of the Catholic Church.

This applies to the vast majority of schools in the Republic. This appalling decision has been made by a Labour minister. I thought that reactionary and sectarian views were buried and forgotten long ago. It looks as if they are to be resurrected once again.

CS gas bolsters indiscriminate power of police

MORE THAN 25 years ago, a British soldier fired a canister of CS gas which landed at my feet and exploded its contents. It was meant to try and disperse a group of protesters in the Bogside area of Derry who were demanding an end to military abuse of their civil rights. Instead it landed about 200 yards away in my direction and immediately erupted in a mass of fumes which had me coughing and retching in a fit of convulsion.

A kindly Bogside mother, living with her children nearby rescued me from the situation, which was tragically all too familiar to her. She bathed my streaming eyes in, I think a solution of water and mild vinegar and then told me her personal story of Ulster tragedy which made me quickly see my own distress as being very tri-

The reason for this tale is simply to warn that while we all want to combat crime, the plan to arm the police with CS gas is giving indiscriminate power to discriminating people.

Arthur Milligan

Politicus wide of the mark

POLITICUS WAS way off mark with her/his piece on new alliances in last month's Democrat. Pat Buchanan may have won some working-class support in the US for his attack on Clinton's 'sell-out' to Nafta, but he did so as a right-wing demagogue. US workers have far more to gain from an anti-monopolyalliance with Mexican workers than the likes of Buchanan and his ilk.

The millionaire James Goldsmith sounds 'interesting' because he represents a section of British capital that does not go along with the European Union line and, frankly, because we like to hear our enemies criticised by their own. Goldsmith attacks trans-national corporations not for their super-exploitation of wage labour, but for their lack of national allegiance. This is dangerous stuff.

History is littered with demagogues who use left-sounding phraseology to win working-class support for regimes that then proceed to act solely in the interests of their big-business sponsors: Hitler's Nazi's were 'national socialists'; Britain's Oswald Mosley had a promising career as a left-wing Labour politician.

Old alliances may be breaking down, but the basic pol-itical and economic facts of life that divide capital from labour - they own it, we don't - remain the main

Hackney, London

Photo: David Granville

modern Irish nationalism.



☐ Adams: centre stage in the quest for peace.

ANTHONY COUGHLAN reviews The fight for peace: the story behind the and stupidity led them to information that should interish government. Irish peace process by **Eamonn Mallie and David** McKittrick, Heinemann,

Wharf bomb. Reading it people on both occasions. should be a political education for any British person inter- | concede that there are still un- | important: for example the key | nationalist consensus. It is this | long time.

for those British government story. But the main elements how governments tell lies all ministers whose complacency | are here, along with much new | the time, particularly the Britwaste the 18 months of peace est anyone who seeks to follow between those two dates.

Dublin source as saying: "The British didn't know why the

tells the story of the years | would happen in 1994, and he | may be significant: for | at the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis leading up to the IRA was as shocked as everyone example the terms of the mov- held soon afterwards which ceasefire of August 1994 and else at its sudden end. His goving appraisal of political possitold reynolds he should get its subsequent breakdown ernment was completely let bilities given by the late Paddy back on side. with last February's Canary down by its own intelligence McGrory, the nationalist solici-

Keeping pace with the frantic

pace of Anglo-Irish relations

role of the Redemptorist Father Alec Reid of Clonard Monas- keeps John 'unionist' Bruton in voting behaviour in tery, Belfast, in acting as an in- line, despite his wavering. termediary trusted by the The Irish people will not

and there is the full text of Sinn Fein's 'total unarmed strategy' paper of summer 1994, a pri- the IRA's volunteers remains vate internal document of the | the best hope for the re-estabrepublican movement, as well | lishment of the ceasefire and as the text of personal letters | the IRA's full commitment to | the divorce referendum and sent by Taoiseachs Haughey and Reynolds to Prime Minis- which history is now calling Supporters of the

It is surely unprecedented for | international context of the confidential correspondence peace process, something between prime ministers to which has largely made it appear so soon in the public possible: the shift in Britain's omain. Presumably the strategic interests in Ireland authors got the letters from the | brought about by the end of the Irish politicians themselves. cold war, and the shift in its Dick Spring — or maybe his advisor Fergus Finlay — contributes startling leaks. By giving their stories they have | London. made the book a true insiders' guide to the peace process.

One of the valuable things with John Hume in Derry. ested in affairs, and above all | told aspects to their fascinating | in the book is the way it shows at the end of the road is Irish

The authors recognise the what is without doubt the most | popular momentum generated The book quotes a senior progressive development in by the peace process. When Al- Europe without borders, Eu- ment elections, two bert Reynolds lined up with Some of the new informa- John Major to distance himself ceasefire started and don't tion is minor, if piquant: for from Hume-Adams following example Haughey's advisor the Shankill Road bomb in Oc-John Major did not believe | Martin Mansergh going to see | tober 1993, it was the surge of HIS IMPORTANT book a complete IRA ceasefire Enoch Powell in 1988. Some grassroots support for Hume

> Almost instinctively, it tor, to Gerry Adams in the seems, the people of Ireland re-The authors readily spring of 1994. Some clearly is alise the potential of the pan- Irish politics you will get for a

A realisation of this among

One strength of the book is

Hume was right, of course.

pendence. One should have no

rope's nations become prov-

down the road through the

logic of the peace process, it

will find it easier to establish

real independence thereafter,

ropean peoples struggling to re-establish their lost national

democracy.

Still, if Ireland is united

its authors' awareness of the

lightly forgive those who fail to There is new data too on the recognise that the main line of Sinnott, MUP, £17.99, nternal tensions in the SDLP, national advance is now 339pp through politics.

T IS in some ways unfortu-

Supporters of the new the divorce referendum that alunrepresented in the Dail.

West by-election.

For republicans the results were better: Sinn Fein outpolled the Progressive Democrats and the Labour Party starting to pay the price for reviving Fine Gael's political for-

The scope of Sinnott's book unity without Irish inde- is impressive, covering six general elections, eight refillusions on that score. For in a erenda, three European parliacounty-wide local elections and a presidential campaign.

Goldsmith

Based on a lecture given by James Goldsmith to a Sorbonne audience of Sorbonne audience of 2,000 postgraduates, this book is a must for those interested in national and international political affairs.

Organised in question-andvague nor abstract when dealing with many of the complex problems facing the developed

Socialists and nationalists

Debate around issues like these mean that progressives today have to be much more

The poll

voting behaviour in elections and referenda since 1918, by Richard

nate that this exceptional book was published before

ight-wing party, the Christian colidarity Party, claimed after most half the electorate was

The electoral test of this did not bear them much fruit: they polled a derisory 768 first-preference votes in the Dublin political interests exemplified

by the 'Europeanism' of the dominant policy-makers in whose 19 per cent slump indi-This gave London a common bond with Dublin and cates that they may well be What the peace process offers | tunes.

by himself side by side with the other Eu-

The Trap, James This is the best £9 read on Goldsmith, Macmillan

inswer format, it is neither world today.

nions on class issues, nationalism, world 'peace and situation of Irish travellers in feminism. They must face the challenge presented by people like Goldsmith, and must dethe outset is: what are the le- cide whether they agree or dispriority given to the Traveller | nuclear power, global free

Who should rule Europe, Brussels or national parliaments? What should be done about the secret and powerful tempts to analyse recent developments in their unionism by extending it into conclusion, albeit written be-

alert and sophisticated.

position

I had a first cousin called Arthur McBride, He and I took a stroll down by the seaside, A-seeking good fortune and what might betide, Twas just as the day was a dawning. Then after resting we both took a tramp We met sergeant Harper and Corporal Cramp

Arthur McBride

He says, 'My young fellows, if you will enlist, A guinea you quickly shall have in your fist, Besides a crown for to kick up the dust, And to drink the King's health in the morning. Had we been such fools as to take the advice, The wee bitter morning we had run to chance, For you'd think it no scruple to send us to France, Where we would be killed in the morning.

Besides the wee drummer who beat up for camp,

With the rowdy dow dow in the morning.

Arthur McBride is an anti-recruiting song from Donegal. This version was collected by PW Joyce in his native Limerick in the early 19th century and printed by him in

He says 'My young fellows, if I hear but one word, I instantly out with my sword, And into your bodies as strength will afford, So now, my gay devils take warning. But Arthur and I, we took in the odds, We gave them no chance to lunge out their swords, Our whacking shillelaghs came over their heads, And paid them right smart in the morning.

As for the wee drummer, we rifled his pouch, And we made a football of his rowdy dow dow, And into the ocean to rock and to roll And bade him a tedious returning. As for the old rapier that hung by his side, We flung it as far as we could in the tide, 'To the devil I bid you,' says Arthur McBride. 'To temper your steel in the morning.'

A New Song of the Taxes

The advent of VAT and farm subsidies has made this humorous song closer to reality than the author antici-

All you men an' maidens come an' listen to my song It is something short and comical, It wont detain you

Go where you will by day and by night, the town or country through' The people cry and wonder what with us they mean to

No wonder people grumble at the taxes more and more, There never was such taxes in Ireland before.

They're going to tax the farmers, and their horses, carts and ploughs,

They're going to tax the billy goats, the donkeys, pigs They're going to tax the mutton, and they're going to

tax the beef, And they're going to tax the women if they do not try

They're going to tax the brandy, ale and whiskey, rum

They'll tax the tea and sugar, the tobacco, snuff and They're going to tax the fish that swim and all the birds

that fly, And they're going to tax the women that go drinking on the sly.

They're going to tax all bachelors as heavy as they can, And they'll double tax the maidens who are over forty

They'll tax the ground we walk on and the clothes

that'll keep us warm, And they're going to tax the childer on the night before

They're going to tax the crutches and they'll tax the They're going to tax the bacon, bread and butter cheese

They're going to tax old pensioners as heavy as they

And they'll double tax young girls that go looking for a

They're going to tax the corn fields, potato gardens too, They're going to tax the cabbage plants, the jackdaws and the crows; They'll double tax the hobble skirts and table up some

But the devil says he'll tax them if he gets them in his

The Wreck of The Mary Jane

This is one of the many comic songs about wrecks and voyages. They usually carry a cargo of elephants' tails or something equally useful. They are a welcome break from the songs about lost battles and young men being hanged

Come you dry land sailors bold, That never went out in the rain, And I will sing in praise of the ship called Mary Jane. The Mary Jane was a one-mast ship, She was built in the town of Taghmon She carried a crew of a hundred and two, With a cargo of farmers' dung.

The captain he was a Dutchman, And he hailed from Barrack Lane, On board of the Mary Jane. The mate was a great navigator, And his nose was as red as a tart, He belonged to the Wexford Militia, And he knew every pub on the chart.

We had a French cook from Mullinavat, Pat Murphy was his name; And he was chief cook for spoiling the soup, On board the Mary Jane. The morning that we left Taghmon Our ship ran short of wind, So the crew had to get out in the wet, And everyone shove behind.

When going round by the Long Stone Cross, A terrible storm now blew, So we tightened her sails with a horse's reins, Next morning our cargo shifted, So the captain cried "We're done", But every man took a sprong in his hand, And went down for to turn the dung.

Next day we ran short of tobacco, We had not a bit in our bag; So when captain and crew had ne'er a chew, They started to "chaw the rag". So now we were short of lime-juice And the herrings wee so salt, The skipper he told our mate so bold. When he'd come to a pub to halt.

The mate he kept a sharp look out, For he was fond of a drop, When he saw the green light he shouted "Hold tight! We're into a doctor's shop." The Mary Jane took a stitch in her side, And so did the rest of the crew, So she went ashore at the doctor's door. And she never reached Timbuctoo.

PETER MULLIGAN'S **PEEPSHOW**

Revolution means change

- Journalist Chris Ryder, sacked from the Northern Ireland Police Authority, has proclaimed: "...The authority cannot call for parity with the Police and Magistrates Court Act in the rest of the United Kingdom if it is not prepared to introduce matching reforms to open authority meetings to the media and public, as they are in Britain. Authority members are not appointed to participate in a secret ritual." Following the sacking of Chris Ryder and police authority chair, David Cook, the authority issued a report entitled Everyone's police - a partnership for change which revealed that 98 per cent of individual submissions had called for greater police powers of arrest and detention. Only one per cent raised the issue of sectarian marches. Forty per cent of the organisational submissions were from Orange Lodges. Surprise, surprise.

CHANGE — Jurors in Northern Ireland will no longer be required to refer to the sovereign when taking the oath in a court of law. Northern Ireland is the last part of the UK to abolish this anachronism.

NO INCLINATION — "All the signs are that the republican analysis is that the Major government, with its slender majority in the Commons, has neither the inclination nor the strength to make any bold moves on Ireland." (David McKittrick writing in The Independent.)

JOBS — HIRE AND FIRE — The Department of Trade and Industry has announced that Harland and Wolff will build the BP/Shell floating production terminal, the world's largest, for the 'Loyal' satellite field. Chief executive Per Nielsen has said that the contract will save the jobs of the existing workforce. On the other side of Belfast, Shorts announced that there would be 300 compulsory redundancies, 200 voluntary redundancies and the sack for 540 temporary workers.

STATE TERRORISM — "Six hundred people were arrested under the PTA last year and not one of them was convicted of any offence. Without a Bill of Rights it is appallingly easy for the government to rush through such ill-thought-out emergency legislation which is far more likely to be used to harass the innocent than to catch the guilty." Statement issued by the General Secretary of Liberty, the National Council for Civil Liberties. Just 25 MPs voted against the renewal of the PTA in the British parliament recently. The number of people detained under the Act continues to fall as police realise they do not require special powers to detain suspects most of whom are either not charged or charged with unrelated crimes. Despite this, the Act is still utilised by some police forces as a means of 'trawling' and intimidating the Irish community. Thirty five exclusion orders under the Act were in force at the end of 1995 and while the order in respect of Gerry Adams has been revoked, five others have been renewed.

POVERTY: THE FACTS — From 1979 to 1993 the real costs, of Britain's poorest ten fell by 18 per cent, while the richest tenth enjoyed a staggering 61 per cent increase. A quarter of the population — 13 to 14 million people — live on less than half the average income.(Child Poverty Action Group report)

LAST WORD

"Whence does this mysterious power of Ireland come? It is a small, poor, sparsely-populated island, lapped by British sea power, accessible on every side, without iron or coal. How is it she sways our councils, shakes our parties and infects us with her bitterness, convulses our passions and deranges our action. How is it she has forced generation after generation to stop the whole traffic of the British Empire in order to debate her domestic affairs? Ireland is not a daughter race. She is a parent nation.

☐ Winston Churchill speaking about the Treaty on December 15, 1921. (Hansard, volume 149, col 182)

context. O Ceallaigh's book | dealt with amply satisfies this demand, and is a testament to logically

Dublin 6. £6.60, 216pp.

theless acceding to a neo-as-

cendancy stance". has done us a great service by compiling this quired politically is "not device by compiling this quired politically is "not debook. The often frantic and finitiveness and certainty, but

Sovereign state or crown sub- | Ceallaigh demonstrates how | democracy and equality.

jects? (1993), begins with an the Irish countered Britain's ENDA FINLAY reviews | analysis of the Downing Street | claim, via four key texts: the Britain and Ireland: Declaration, which for O Ceal- 1916 Proclamation; the Declasovereignty and nationality laigh "sets the current official ration of Independence by the by Daltun O Ceallaigh, benchmark". The problem re- First Dail 1919; the Constitumains however in finding a tion of the Irish Free State of for unionists "without none- tion (Articles 1,2 and 3).

The book concludes with a \22.00. summary of some of the key confusing pace of Anglo-Irish toleration". The quasi-historiarguments inherent in the relations in the last few years | cal claims of some of the more | peace process, such as consent, demands that somebody at- notorious 'scholars' in con- parity of esteem and the British

Laying bare British discrimination against Travellers

Rights for Travellers: a It is obvious from this ac- survey of local authority count that despite some subtle provision for Travellers in O Ceallaigh addresses the changes, Britain maintains London by the London vexed question of identity, suggesting that a bit too much Six Counties and has still to Irish Women's Centre, 59 ALTUN O CEALLAIGH | time is spent on analysing | make a decisive break from its | Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 0AR,

contemporary and historical antiquity are also suitably fore the ending of the IRA Fail councillor that the British capital, that there the EU? How can the West be dealt with.

The major part of the book is taken up with a detailed account of everlaining Particles of everlaining Parti structured arguments and concise research.

count of explaining Britain's laigh manages this because of cent Sunday Independent article headed Time to get tough on ter-tually excluded from the cur-This book, which expands | land and then to the Six Coun- | standing of the problem and | ror tinker culture, remind us of | rent debates about equality | and updates his earlier book ties since the Act of Union. O his long-held commitment to the widespread abuse suffered and justice. by Travelling people throug- EF

- hout Ireland. This timely and carefully compiled report examines the London.

The question to be asked at vels of services provided and agree with him on issues like population, and do they suffer trade, GATT, and intensive imilar levels of abuse? The report's conclusions

are depressingly unsurprising: It highlights that there is

Without understanding the past, one cannot comprehend the present or shape the future



Seeking historical beacons in the 'Celtic twilight'

light'. I have frequently made | Judea was part of that empire the point that without understanding the past, one cannot comprehend the present nor shape the future. This applies to the distant past as well as more recent events. To paraphrase Karl Marx, ancient history can hang like a nightmare on the minds of the living just as much as any other period of history.

For example, ancient Jewish history and culture certainly hangs like a nightmare on the minds of modern Christendom as much as it does on the worlds of Judaism and Islam.

In my youth, when I was a more avid reader of The Bible than I am now, I was always intrigued by a line from Maccabees 2 — one of the books of the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. The story of Maccabees is the story of the Israelites' struggle to free themselves from the empire of the Syrian kings and reclaim their independence. It refers to a battle between Israelites and Celts at Babylon in the time of Senna-

In 175 BC Antiochos VI Epi-

sudden urge to indulge in the generals of Alexander the what some will doubtless | Great, succeeded to the kingcall a trip into the 'Celtic twi- dom and empire of Syria. and he treated it harshly. He ordered the looting of the temple in Jerusalem, erecting an altar to Zeus there, and set forth some decrees to Hellenise the Jews, trying to destroy their language and culture. We seem to have heard it all be-

> Insurrection broke out led by Mattathias of the Hasmonaeans and his five sons: John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan. It is this struggle that is told in the books of Maccabees. Maccabees 2 is an epitome of the five books of the history of Judas Maccabaeus — the name means 'Hammer' -- written by the Hellenised Jew, Jason of Cyrene sometime about 124

It was not until 141 BC that Simon Maccabees achieved a troubled independence for Israel which lasted 75 years until the Romans marched in. But the war between the Syrians and Israelites had its high points. One of them was when Judas Maccabaeus defeated a Syrian army at Modin and liberated Jerusalem. The occasion

MAKE no apologies for a phanes, descendant of one of was marked when he rebuilt the temple destroyed by Antiochos, and instigated a Jewish feast of dedication called Chanukkah.

Before the battle, while Judah was rallying his troops, he addressed his men to encourage them to fight. There were only 6,000 Israelite 'freedom fighters' opposing four or five times that number commanded by the Syrian general Nicanor. The reference is 2 Maccabees 8, v 19-20. And this is what caused my surprise and confusion as a youth.

HAT, I asked myself, was a Celtic army doing at Babylon? Of course, it springs to mind that Galatia, on the central plain of Turkey, was once a Celtic country, established by the Celts in their furthest eastern movement in 278 BC and Paul of Tarsus, in his famous epistle, was writing to a bunch of Celts.

But the reference says the battle took place in Sennacherib's time. Sennacherib was king of Assyria in 705 BC. He is even mentioned in the Book of Kings (Kings 2, chapter 18, v 13). Now this is far too early a date to put the Celts in Babylon

We certainly know that from the 4th century BC, war bands of Celts hired themselves out as mercenaries, especially to the Hellenic kingdoms. Celtic cavalry pulled the Spartan chestnuts out of the fire at the battle of Mantinea in 362 BC when

What, I asked myself, was a Celtic army doing in Babylon?

Sparta was fighting Thebes. And they certainly fought for the Syrian kings from the 3rd Century BC.

Stephanus of Byzantium, for example, tells us that among the Celtic mercenaries in Syria's army fighting the Israelites during the Maccabees period, were contingents from the Senones of Cisalpine Gaul. The name means 'venerable ones' for the Gaulish sen, which means old, is the same as sean in Irish and hen in Welsh. All that visibly remains of the Senones is their chief town in northern Italy - Senigalia, or Senones Gallia — just north of Ancona.

Could the Old Testament have been in error? Not if you hear Ian Kyle Paisley tell it.

Could Jason of Cyrene have truly been talking about an earlier Celtic army who were in Babylon at the time of Sennachrib in the late 8th century? Certainly some archaeological sites in eastern Europe do testify to the fact that the Celts were in the area by the 7th or 6th centuries, but I think we should have heard more evidence if there had been a Celtic army in Babylon at this time. Besides, the reference to the Macedonians is a give-away. I think we are talking of a battle in the 3rd century when the Syrian kings were fighting the Macedonians as well as the Is-

EARING IN mind where the Celts were at this time, one could now go back to the story of the arrival in Ireland of the sons of Milesius Easpáine — Latin for the Spanish Soldier - better known in Irish as Míl and sometimes as Golamh or Galam. The story is one of the great myths of the invasions of Ireland given in the Leabhar Gabhála whose earliest surviving texts we have in the 12th Century Book of Leinster. Now just how much of a myth in this

Myths are usually stories based on real events.

What do we know of Mil? We know that he was an Iberian Celt. Well, there were plenty of Iberian Celts about in the ancient world. Iberian Celts fought for Sparta as well as for Carthage. We are told that Míl's proper name was Gomlamh and in some texts this is given as Galamh — now that sounds just the sort of name a leader of Celtic war bands would and did use -'spear-hand'.

We are told that he went to century BC, the Celts were settled along the borders of the area which ancient writers allotted to the Scythians. Indeed, some Celts had settled well into Scythian territory, even along the Dniester River and southern Poland. No problem about an Iberian Celt and his war band making that trip.

We are told that Mil was made a commander in the Scythian king's army and wound up marrying his daughter, a lady named Seang. He had two sons by her — Donn and Aireach. Seang died and Míl fell out of favour with the king who planned to kill him.

So Mil gathered his sons and his war band and made his way to Egypt. It was a big warband for we are told he made the voyage in 60 ships. He took service with the Pharaoh, a pharach called Nectanebus, becoming an officer in his army and marrying his daughter, Scota.

After a while, having fought with Persians and Ethiopians, Míl grew restless. He heard that his own country, Celtiberia, was being attacked by Carthaginians and so he gathered his war band and sailed home. The story of how Mil, his wife Scota, and his many sons and their followers, went to Ireland is well known. Míl died on the journey but his wife Scota landed in Ireland and was killed by the Dé Danaans in Kerry, where she is said to be buried. His sons were victorious and settled in Ireland. We are told that their progeny became the Gaels of Ireland.

Now this has been dismissed over the years as no more than a myth. That the Egyptian connection was no more than a Christian monk, centuries later, trying to make some nice Biblical connection. Is this just pseudo history or is there something more to it?

There were many wandering Celtic war-bands in the centuries BC and that fact that Míl was a Celtiberian, that he should serve in the armed forces of the king of Scythia and then those of the Egyptian Pharaoh is, historically, entirely acceptable.

If the story were written by Christian monk merely trying to make a Biblical point, why choose the name Nectanebus as that of the Egyptian Pharaoh, and father of Míl's wife Scota?

There were two Pharaohs of Egypt named Nectanebus. The first reigned in 380-362 BC and the second from 360-343 BC. If someone was making a Biblical point, then the Israelite bondage in Egypt would be the linking period but that took place one thousand years before the reign of either Nectanebus and the name of Rameses I or II would have been more likely to be used.

But Nectanebus fits our story very well. Firstly the Persians of King Cambyses (525-522 BC) had invaded Egypt. Nectanebus I had thrown out the Persians in 380 BC, restored Egyptian independence, fighting both Ethiopians and Persians exactly as in our story of Mil. Both Nectanebus I and II recruited mercenaries to help them reform Egypt and re-Scythia. Certainly by the 7th | build the sites such as Karnak, Luxor and Sakara.

It was, indeed, during the reign of Nechtanebus II that Carthage, the capital of a Phoenician empire, began to extended its trading links in Iberia (Spain) and assert its power over the Celtiberians. At the same time Darius III of Persia invaded Egypt and ruled there from 335-332 BC, when Alexander of Macedonia conquered Egypt.

When Alexander died in Babylon it is recorded that an embassy of Celts arrived in the

Another piece of evidence putting the story of Mil at this period is archaeological evidence that places the appearance of a Celtic La Tène culture being introduced at this time. It could well be that Mil was a real person. The story of his adventures and the settlement of his war-band in Ireland came to be one of the great creation myths of the Irish nation. It is amazing what glimmers of historical light flicker when you feel your way through the 'Celtic Twilight'.