

‘The further one gets from Belfast...’

A second reply to Jeffrey Dudgeon, by Niall Meehan

I am grateful to Jeffrey Dudgeon for replying on the contentious subject of the killing of thirteen civilians and four British Army personnel in West Cork in late April 1922. I am grateful also to *IPR* for facilitating the discussion.

Dudgeon ignored my remarks (*IPR* November 2011) on Peter Hart’s errors and misrepresentations concerning the 28 November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush. I do not know if that means he now accepts my argument. Dudgeon concentrates instead on vindicating Hart’s view of the ‘April killings’ in West Cork in 1922, seen as ‘emblematic’ of IRA attacks on Protestants during the War of Independence period.

In the course of his reply, Dudgeon attempted to demonstrate that Irish Republicanism is anti-Protestant, even though republican ideology and action ‘claim[s] to be non-sectarian’.

During the late 18th Century some Irish Protestants founded *The Society of United Irishmen* and a significant number, mainly Presbyterian, broke from an assumed allegiance to the colonial system of Protestant supremacy. This tradition of Irish Republican separatism was led by Theobald Wolfe Tone. It was influenced by the American and French Revolutions, the first uprisings in human history to be influenced by secular as distinct from religious ideology. The subsequent 1798 *United Irishmen* inspired rebellion failed and was brutally suppressed.

These Protestant republicans were considered caste traitors. The best-known modern example is the last Protestant Editor of the *Irish Times*, Douglas Gageby, who considered himself a republican in the Wolfe Tone tradition. According to Major Thomas McDowell, the newspaper’s then Managing Editor and a fellow Belfast born Protestant, Gageby was (as reported in 1969 to the British Ambassador to Dublin), ‘a renegade or white nigger’.¹

According to Dudgeon, republicans practice ‘(fake) non-sectarian[ism]’. It is in essence devious, a kind of Roman Catholicism of the fundamentalist Protestant imagination. This view requires empirical proof. Depicting most of the late April 1922 West Cork killings as sectarian and as part of a pattern is therefore important to Dudgeon, who is an Ulster Unionist. Since the Ulster Unionist Party cannot easily shake off accusations of consistent sectarian practice in Northern Ireland (because it is a fact), events like the April killings are a basis for suggesting that the competing Irish ideologies cancel each other out, while confirming a need for ethnic separation. It is a rationale for partition on the basis of sectarian equivalence, a familiarity that breeds contempt.

¹ The British Ambassador’s letter with this characterisation was found by Jack Lane of the *IPR* in 2003. It had been released in British archives in 2000 and was discovered then by the UCD historian Ronan Fanning who was reporting for the *Irish Independent*. Fanning kept the letter’s contents a secret from his readers, but decided later to send a copy to Gageby who then was ill (O’Brien, p. 267-8). The *Irish Times* refused to publish the letter when Lane supplied a copy in January 2003. It was then published in the *Sunday Independent* (26 Jan), where Fanning commented (2 Feb) on the letter’s importance, though without admitting that he had it all along.

I will look at this question of IRA sectarianism in two parts, first in terms of the April killings themselves, second with regard to whether they were ‘emblematic’ (Dudgeon’s term) of a consistent practice.

PART ONE – APRIL 1922

Three Protestant men disappeared in the early morning of 26 April 1922 in Ballygroman, that lay south of the Macroom-Ballincollig road, after one of the group shot dead an IRA officer. That seems to be cause and effect. However, three more were shot dead early on the 27th in Dunmanway, six were killed over 27-28 April (five around Ballineen-Enniskeane and one in Clonakilty). One more, the last, was shot dead early on the 29th. On the 28th the nearby Murragh Rectory was fired on and Rev’d Ralph Harbord was wounded. Other premises were fired on. Hotelier Richard Helen claimed he escaped his captors in Clonakilty. A Farmer, Richard Perrot, claimed he was not home when visited. Most of those affected were Protestant. The premises of a Catholic bar owner were fired on and a Catholic former RIC member claimed he escaped the attackers. Simultaneously, on 26 April at 1pm, after the initial Ballygroman event, three leading British intelligence officers and their driver were arrested nearby in Macroom. They were then executed and buried secretly. The seventeen killings took place in a short space of time within a confined area of West Cork. The perpetrators were never identified (see Meehan, 2011).

Dudgeon’s question as to whether ten of the thirteen civilian killings were sectarian is legitimate. However, his deductive reasoning is weak. On the basis that ‘evidence is slim so supposition is king’ he observed, ‘I guess the murder of [Roman Catholic priest] Canon Magner’ in December 1920 by a British Auxiliary (named Harte not ‘Hart’) ‘remained a hurt in the area’. Consequently, speculates Dudgeon, this ‘hurt’ was a factor in the late April 1922 killings. Maybe, maybe not. Not much to go on there.

Undoubtedly, sectarianism was a feature of Irish society at that time. The new state of Northern Ireland emerged on the basis of mass expulsions of thousands of Roman Catholics from their houses and places of work (plus ‘rotten prods’, aka socialists who opposed the expulsions), and large-scale killing directed by unionist forces. These actions were motivated in large part by anti-Catholicism, otherwise known as sectarianism (see Kenna). The state of Northern Ireland, in which unionists outnumbered nationalists by two to one, settled down to sectarian rule by one community over another (see Higgins and Brewer). The state collapsed in turmoil during the late 1960s. It lasted long enough to entrench resistance to reform within unionism and to engender an eventual point blank refusal by nationalists to again tolerate second-class status. A violent conflict developed, whose sectarian features British and unionist counter insurgency measures exacerbated (since that suited their political interests).

In early 1922 Michael Collins was faced as head of the new Provisional Government (set up under the Treaty with Britain) with a reinvigoration of sectarian attacks on Catholics in the emerging state of Northern Ireland; with belligerence from Westminster over failure to fulfil Treaty commitments; and with erosion of republican unity as a result of the Treaty. He didn’t want to re-fight the British, was prepared to confront unionism and hoped but failed to prevent internecine southern conflict over Treaty provisions. Collins, who was killed in a civil war ambush in August 1922, despised sectarianism. His death

during the southern civil war, and that war itself, probably prevented one between north and south (see Macardle, p. 704, 731-2).

It is reasonable therefore to explore whether a complementary or responsive savage sectarianism occurred down south, where Roman Catholics were in an initial majority of 94 to 6%. If we look at the question from the vantage point of the 1968-1994 Northern Ireland conflict and also reliance by post-independence southern governments on Roman Catholic ideology, it seems plausible to suggest that such might have occurred. In West Cork the Protestant population, mostly Church of Ireland, was larger than average. That is where the 'April killings' occurred, during a period of turmoil after the January 1922 Treaty split, prior to the June onset of civil war.

In these highly volatile circumstances with no established legitimate authority, in early April 1922 the British War Office decided in its wisdom to 're-establish[...] intelligence services in Southern Ireland' (in McMahon, p. 67). This was in violation of agreements between the two sides. British Army headquarters asked that field intelligence officers 'step up unobtrusive intelligence gathering' that, 'if it could be combined with a visit to friends or a fishing trip, so much the better'. Intelligence gathering ceased once official hostilities ended in July 1921. It had been based on a network of agents and paid informers within the civilian population.

Fishing for Intelligence

The War Office decision sowed the seeds of an intelligence catastrophe that temporarily suspended British evacuation from Southern Ireland (Hamilton, p. 162).²

On 26 April the southern based Sixth Division Brigade Intelligence Officer Lieutenant R.A. Hendy, acting on orders, 'wished to see the state of affairs at Macroom,... making the excuse of lunching with a mutual friend along the way' (in McMahon, p. 67). Two battalion officers, G.R. Dove and K.L. Henderson, plus Private R.A. Brooks, their driver, accompanied Hendy. All were in civilian attire. The IRA in Macroom became suspicious and arrested them. The officers explained, as advised, that they were on a fishing trip, but without rods or other necessary accoutrements. The intelligence officers had lunched *en route* with their 'mutual friend' in Farran that was near Ballygroman (Regan, 2012 a, p. 79). As we know, early that morning at Ballygroman an IRA officer was shot dead, followed by the disappearance of those held responsible, Protestant loyalist Thomas Hornibrook, his son, Samuel, and a former British officer, Captain Herbert Woods.

There was something unique about intelligence gathering in that particular area. It had been based on systematic informing by Protestant loyalists. We know this because the British Army's restricted circulation, *A Record of the Rebellion in Ireland in 1921 and the part played by the Army in Dealing with it (Intelligence)*, said so. The *Record* stated that Southern Protestants generally did not inform because 'except by chance, they had not got [information] to give'. Though this rationale for intelligence failure is self-serving, the analysis continued,

'An exception to this rule was in the Bandon area where there were many Protestant farmers who gave information. Although the Intelligence Officer of the area was exceptionally experienced and although the troops were most

² Peter Hart's page references, citing the same Hamilton edition, are wrong.

active it proved almost impossible to protect those brave men, many of whom were murdered while almost all the remainder suffered grave material loss.’ (in Murphy, 1998)

In other words, this exceptional group suffered as British allies from accurate IRA targeting (see Borgonovo, 2007, on IRA intelligence capacity). We may ask whether, in these circumstances after the Treaty-split, just before the civil war, information extracted from the British officers, or merely knowledge of their intent, placed this group in mortal danger?

This line of enquiry could not have emerged from Peter Hart’s 1998 book, *The IRA and its Enemies*, because he suppressed it at source.

First, Hart cited the *Record* on Protestants not having information, in order to reinforce his view that the April killings were sectarian. He suppressed the following sentence about the Bandon Valley exception, which eviscerated the point. Dudgeon consistently fails to address this unethical presentation of evidence by Hart.

Second, Hart suppressed information contained in his 1992 PhD thesis that IRA officer Frank Busteed claimed he ‘killed five to six loyalists, Protestant farmers’ at that time (p. 377). Hart’s 1992 thesis (p. 117-8) also stated that Busteed,

‘was involved in [killing]... three British officers in Macroom *and a massacre of Protestants in the early months of 1922.*’ (emph. added, NM)

Those last eleven words are omitted from the same sentence in Hart’s book (p. 100).

Third, the actual killing of the officers and their driver is almost a non-event in Hart’s narrative. Hart erroneously reported (combined with a mistaken reference) that three more officers were ‘released’ (1998, p. 280, n. 49) and also placed the doomed officers’ status as spies within inverted commas, in a generalised commentary on ‘conspiracy theories’ (*ibid*).

Though raised a Catholic, Busteed, whose father was Protestant, later became ‘an outspoken atheist’ (Hart, 1998, p. 248, n. 149). Censoring Busteed’s involvement in both sets of April Killings suppressed a connection with the officers’ execution and presentation of a non-sectarian explanation for the killings. A historian intent on proving sectarian intent would, naturally, find the Busteed evidence an inconvenience. It is difficult to see Hart’s excisions and failures as simply the product of misjudgement.

New Evidence

I originally drew attention to a possible connection between the civilian and military killings and Hart’s suppression of the Busteed evidence (Meehan, 2008a, 2008b). John Regan from Dundee University has produced new evidence on the connection. Regan critiqued Hart in a talk in TCD in October 2011 that Dudgeon attended. Regan’s findings are published in ‘The ‘*Bandon Valley Massacre*’ as a Historical Problem’ (2012b) and in summary in *History Ireland* (Jan-Feb 2012a).

The IRA captured the officers, apparently held them in Macroom Castle, before execution and secret burial in Kilgobnet. Free State authorities recovered and repatriated the bodies in September 1923 (*Sth. Star*, 15 Dec 1923, *Ir. Ind.*, 13, 14 Dec 1923). In his attempt to save the officers, Sixth Division Brigade Major (the later famous) Bernard

Law Montgomery, 'was evidently in a savage mood'. He met with IRA Commandant Dan Donovan, who was of no help despite intense British military pressure that led to an eyeball to eyeball confrontation with the IRA (Borgonovo, 2011, pp. 38-9; Hamilton, p. 163; see, 'Alarm in Macroom, British Military Display Follows Kidnapping', *Freeman's Journal*, 1 May 1922).

Donovan eventually conceded to Montgomery, 'it was done by some of the IRA at Macroom who had temporarily seceded from control' (Hamilton, p. 163). That seems improbable. According to Twohig (p. 337-8) the order for the arrest and execution of the officers came from IRA Brigade HQ in Cork, after telephone contact from Macroom second in command, Adjutant Charlie Brown. One of the officers was identified by Browne as having been involved in torture and killing of prisoners in Cork's Victoria Barracks during 1921 (*ibid*; Browne, p. 82). In addition, Frank Busted claimed that during a raid on his house two of the officers killed his mother by throwing her down stairs (O'Callaghan, p. 190). A significant memoir by AJS (Stephen) Brady, son of the Rector of Macroom, reinforces this perception. He observed that one of the officers had previously,

'trussed an IRA [prisoner] like a fowl, had a rope tied to his ankles, was thrown on the road and dragged behind an army vehicle at high speed to his death' (p. 196).

In addition, in a recently published volume on the Civil War, John Borgonovo noted that 'two of the officers, Lt R.A. Hendy and Lt G.R.A. Dove had been implicated in the torture and unauthorised killing of IRA prisoners' (2011, p. 38).

As applied to the civilian killings, however, Donovan's comment appears plausible. Possibly, an out of control IRA party used intelligence information obtained during the missing officers episode (or earlier) to target those assumed to be in league with British intelligence. In other words, the exceptional group identified later by *The Record*. Consecutive killings over three evenings on 27-29 April, moving from Dunmanway towards Bandon, with a short detour to Clonakilty, suggests a small organised group.

IRA Leadership Action

A horrified local IRA leadership immediately set out to halt the civilian killings by putting guards on the houses of those thought vulnerable. Stephen Brady's memoir details Charlie Browne visiting his father to assure him,

'nobody here would hurt you or anyone belonging to you. In case strangers may trouble you though, I'm going to put a guard on the Rectory' (p. 194).

The Rector thanked Browne and shook his hand. At a UCC seminar on 'Irish Protestant Identities' in honour of Joe Ruane (26 May 2011) the historian John A Murphy stated that his father was the IRA guard in question. On 28 April IRA Brigade Commandant Tom Hales distributed a 'military order' to battalion commandants threatening 'capital punishment if found necessary' to 'any soldier in the area' who 'interfere[s] with or insults[s] any person' or who did 'not... uphold[...] the rigid discipline of a military force'.

The local Protestant population's welcome for this initiative is confirmed by Brady's memoir and also by Church of Ireland clergyman, Rev'd JLB Deane (*Ir. Times* 10 Nov

1994). Deane noted that West Cork Protestants later voted for Fianna Fail TD Sean Buckley 'as a mark of gratitude and respect for what he had done [as an IRA officer] in 1922' to stop the killings. Deane supported previous correspondent Christoir de Baroid's assertion (3 Nov) that a 'maverick IRA group in south-west Cork' was responsible for the killings, that were 'stamped out immediately by the local IRA leadership'. Deane asserted, contrary to Dudgeon's view of a downtrodden population, that 'the community affected... had long since drawn a line under [the killings] and is living in harmony with its neighbours'.

We can't be sure that this is what happened. Those who killed the military personnel and the civilians did not advertise their responsibility, apart from Frank Busted. He told Ernie O'Malley about killing 'loyalists, Protestant farmers' (at that time) in the 1950s and the author of *Execution* (1974) about killing the officers and their driver during the early 1970s. Twohig (p. 343) records that in 1959 Tom Crofts, former Brigade Adjutant, and Browne, former Battalion Adjutant, asked him not to record the story of the killing of the officers, despite the passage of time. He complied until 1994. Other than that it was seen as a truce violation (though if that were the case the British officers were in violation also), he gives no reason.

Peter Hart's alternative narrative suppressed evidence in order to feed a story of sectarian republican practice that culminated in an apparently random civilian sectarian massacre. Some of Hart's PhD evidence did not support his IRA sectarianism conclusion and he left it out of his book. Other evidence was misrepresented. Dudgeon objects to my view that Hart wrote a sectarian history. The alternative is to term it fiction.

Another view put forward, due to the event's exceptional nature, is that the civilian killings may have been the action of *agent provocateurs*, guided by an increasingly hysterical Sir Henry Wilson. No evidence has been put forward in support of mainly English killers (presumably) who, in the course of their grisly Machiavellian endeavours, managed convincingly to mimic local accents.

PART TWO – A PATTERN?

Dudgeon observed, 'My interest is in assessing whether the Cork killings were part of a pattern of anti-Protestant attacks'. Indeed, Peter Hart portrayed them as the culmination of activity that began 'from the summer of 1920 onwards' (2002, p. 25). The April killings are, therefore according to Dudgeon, 'emblematic'. That can only be so, however, if similar killings occurred. Otherwise, even if sectarian, they are exceptional. Here, Dudgeon faces a significant obstacle, the testimony of southern Protestants. They refuted allegations of republican attacks on Protestants. The pages of the then Protestant *Irish Times* were littered with letters from Protestants rejecting northern unionist propaganda to this effect.

Southern unionists joined in the attack. It is not difficult to source the basis of southern unionist pique. They felt betrayed by Ulster unionists and their support for Partition under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. The southern unionist leader, the Earl of Midleton, was expelled from the Irish Unionist Alliance for proposing limited Dominion Home Rule in November 1917 and promptly set up the Unionist Anti Partition League (see Jackson, 1999, p. 233; 2003, p. 161, 181-5).

As the Anglo-Irish conflict developed, there were more immediate concerns. In December 1920, when K Company of the Auxiliaries (it appears a significant number of whom were from northern Ireland) burned Cork, they burned Protestant owned property. Similarly when Fermoy and Midleton were sacked and many creameries burned, Protestant owned property was often the target. A southern unionist from Bantry, Mr GW Biggs, wrote in response to Ulster Unionist leader, Edward Carson:

‘I feel it my duty to protest very strongly against this unfounded slander [of intolerance on the part] of our Catholic neighbours ... I have been resident in Bantry for 43 years, during 33 of which I have been engaged in business, and I have received the greatest kindness, courtesy, and support from all classes and creeds in the country.’ (*Ir. Times*, 24 Jul 1920)

Biggs’s substantial business was then burned down, by the police. His house was commandeered by the military, Biggs was forced to send his family to Dublin and went himself to live in a hotel. Previously mentioned Sixth Division Brigade Major Bernard Montgomery afterwards remarked, ‘it never bothered me a bit how many houses we burned’ and ‘I regarded all civilians as “shiners”’ (Hamilton, pp. 158, 160). Including, it seems, Mr Biggs.

A letter in the *Times* of London (30 Sep 1920) from John Annan Bryce, younger brother of a former Chief Secretary for Ireland, described what happened to Biggs and his business. Annan Bryce complained of a military threat to burn republican owned property if those of loyalists were targeted. He went on, ‘there is no justification for the issue of such a notice in this district, where the only damage to loyalists’ premises has been done by the police’. In further highly significant correspondence Annan Bryce also told of the arrest and deportation back to Ireland of his wife Violet for attempting to speak in Wales on British reprisal burnings and other atrocities (see correspondence in *Church & State* 86, Autumn 2006).

Strictly Strickland

Dudgeon observed that ‘pretty well every Protestant on the island was guilty of [the type of] helpfulness’ provided by Bandon Valley loyalists. Self-evidently, that is not the case. A more typical attitude is perhaps illustrated by this Cork episode:

One day [Cork Divisional Commander General Strickland] stamped into my father’s office and in his extremely rude, brusque manner said, ‘Look here Clarke, you are trusted by both sides: it’s your duty to give me information’. Father, looking him in the eye, calmly said, ‘I will *not* inform against my own countrymen. It is your duty to control the rabble your government has let loose on Ireland. Good morning’. Going purple in the face, the General stormed out, crossed the Mall to Grandfather’s office, and received virtually the same reply’. (Pyne Clarke, 1985, p.52-3)

According to another *Times* (London) correspondent (27 Jan 1921) Strickland’s proclamation threatening to prosecute those who withheld information ‘aroused protests from loyalists in the South’, as ‘it is [now] an offence to remain neutral’. This letter mentioned the fate of West Cork loyalist John Bradfield who was shot, having been

‘found guilty of having attempted to inform the enemy of the presence and movements of Republican troops’. A cousin of Bradfield’s was shot soon afterwards in similar circumstances. The final April killings victim fourteen months later on 29 April 1922 was a third Bradfield cousin (see Meehan, 2011).

Bradfield’s post Truce killing was regarded differently from that of his relations. Protestants protested the April killings, contrary to Dudgeon’s inane belief that they ‘kept their heads down’ on the subject. A Protestant Convention was held on 11 May 1922, two weeks after the April killings that packed out Dublin’s Mansion House. It resolved

‘We place on record that, until the recent tragedies in the County Cork, hostility to Protestants by reason of their religion has been almost, if not wholly, unknown in the Twenty six counties in which Protestants are in a minority.’

The participants, in condemning the April killings, were not prepared to make concessions to Ulster Unionist propaganda that set out to muddy the waters of responsibility for aggravated sectarianism in the new state of Northern Ireland. The Rector of Macroom told a British officer investigating the disappearance of the intelligence officers, ‘he personally had nothing to complain of as regards the way [the IRA] were treating him’ (Brady, p. 195).

Protestant Memoir

Memoirs and biographies by or about Protestants in West Cork are to hand. None mention a sectarian campaign against Protestants. The biography, by his grandson, of Jasper Wolfe, Crown Solicitor during the conflict (who represented the RIC at the inquest into their killing Cork Lord mayor Tomás McCurtain), cites Wolfe on rejecting the notion emphatically (Ungoed-Thomas). Wolfe, insisted afterwards that though he was subject to attack, this was not because of his religious beliefs, but rather due to his leading position within the British administration during a period of armed conflict. His grandson biographer recently expressed ‘surprise’ at allegations of republican or nationalist sectarianism. Jasper Wolfe had never raised them in often told tales of being,

‘kidnapped by the IRA, or attempts to shoot him, or of his house on the outskirts of Skibbereen being occupied by Republicans or Free Staters in turn. But I never heard any suggestion of sectarian hostility towards the Wolfes, whether from the I.R.A., from their Catholic neighbours, or indeed from any Catholics at all’ (2010).

Had sectarian attacks on Protestants been a feature of their experience, the former Crown Solicitor, who also coordinated local loyalist compensation claims during the later 1920s, would have said so, surely.

If Dudgeon wishes to reject the testimony of fellow unionists, albeit southern ones, so be it. Dudgeon could take his cue from a loyalist Roman Catholic, John M. Regan, who transferred from the RIC to the RUC. His memoir observed, ‘the further one gets from Belfast the less sectarianism there is generally’ (in Augusteijn, ed, p. 78). Regan did not mention sectarianism as a factor while stationed in the south, but experienced it personally after transferring to what is now Northern Ireland.

Southern unionists were alienated from northern counterparts and increasingly estranged from the British government and its forces. British policy, not the IRA, attacked the material interests of Protestants. That, in the main, is what concerned them.

That is not to suggest that all Protestants were unionists (never mind active loyalists of the type the Bandon Valley appears to have produced). A significant number had, like Douglas Gageby and ANC counterparts later in South Africa, the status of ‘white niggers’. Dr Dorothy Stopford, a Protestant who went on to pioneer TB inoculation in southern Ireland, ministered to the injuries of IRA volunteers in West Cork and gave lectures on first aid to Cumann na mBan (the women’s IRA auxiliary, see O’Broin, pp. 167-72, 220-73). Could she have given her allegiance to such a force were it engaged in a pattern of attacks on co-religionists? Could her Aunt, the historian Alice Stopford Green, have provided a safe house for Eamon deValera and Michael Collins, and for meetings of Dáil ministers, if the Dáil was directing attacks on fellow Protestants? (*ibid*, pp. 157, 167-8) Could Erskine Childers, Robert Barton and Ernest Blythe have led republican resistance to British rule if such were the case?

Thus, there is no evidential support for a ‘pattern’ of sectarian attacks in the south against Protestants, as occurred in the north against Roman Catholics.

Southern Cocoon

After independence, southern Protestants were concerned that their relative socio-economic advantage be maintained. It was, so much so, twenty five percent of senior executives in banking and industry in southern Ireland in the early 1970s were Protestant. In the 2006 Census, Protestants generally were in possession of larger farms and disproportionately occupied higher status managerial, technical and professional categories (Meehan, 2010).

Protestant population decline in the South began in the 19th Century as Protestant privilege was eroded, penal laws were abolished and the British government attempted to ally with an emerging conservative Roman Catholicism. This occurred during a period of catastrophic overall population decline that began during and after the Famine of 1845-48. Relative Protestant population decline intensified in the period 1911-26, during the period of the First World War, War of Independence and Civil War, and its aftermath. Economic factors, combined with the decline of imperial economic and social privileges, the attraction of Empire and of the ‘Mother country’ itself, alongside some antipathy toward Irish nationalism and the sad state of the Irish economy during the 1920s, all probably played their part. UCC historian Professor John A Murphy, whose republican family roots are in West Cork, referred to the notion of Protestants being driven from their land and occupations in the 1920s as ‘Paisleyite myth mongering’ (*Sun. Ind.*, 4 Oct 2004; on this, generally, Meehan, 2010).

Far from being attacked, post-independence southern Protestants existed within a self-administered and largely beneficial cocoon. Conservative Irish governments got on with socially controlling the Roman Catholic majority, particularly its working class members and some occasionally bothersome artists and intellectuals, through the welfare agencies and ideological pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church. The same type of people affronted the rulers of Northern Ireland, where physical substituted for social control.

In the South religious affiliation does not generally affect everyday social intercourse. In February 2006 Kevin Myers, a supporter of Peter Hart's work, commented on a spontaneous and generally opportunist riot directed at police in Dublin's city centre. A loyalist 'Love Ulster' band parade for loyalist victims (some of whom served in the official security forces) was abandoned before it started and provided the catalyst. Myers wrote,

'the rioters know that the RTÉ journalist Charlie Bird was a Protestant, and accordingly beat the bejusus out of him?'

A response from *Times* journalist Eugene McEldowney appeared,

'I am indebted to Kevin Myers for the information that my friend and colleague, Charlie Bird of RTÉ, is a Protestant (*Irish Times*, February 28th). I have known Charlie for 34 years and until now this information had escaped me, largely because I never thought to enquire. Kevin obviously pays closer attention to such fine details than I do. But how fiendishly clever of the Dublin *lumpenproletariat* to have uncovered this same information. Now that he has raised the issue of a sectarian headcount, perhaps Kevin would use his investigative skills to give us a religious breakdown of the injured gardaí? ' (*Ir. Times*, 3 Mar 2006).

Before accusations of sectarian activity are made, either in newspapers or in history books, great care should be taken in the presentation of evidence.

Anti-sectarianism is in the objective interests of all Irish people. Understanding its political and social roots is an important part of recognising how to get rid of it. In the War of Independence and its aftermath Irish republicans were not involved in perpetuating sectarian politics in Ireland. Ulster Unionists sowed those seeds and eventually reaped a whirlwind.

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Dunmanway And Peter Hart

The death of eighteen people in the Dunmanway area of county Cork in the space of a few days in April 1922 and during a truce is remarkable. That 13 were Protestants and four from the British Army tells of a very active and effective military unit that credibly could only be the IRA.

There are a number of questions to be answered about the killings, in particular those of the ten Protestants in and around Dunmanway on 27 and 28 April? Who ordered them dead and why? And most importantly, assuming it was the IRA in some form was this sectarian murder? If not, why were they killed, particularly during a truce?

If the answer to the sectarian question is in the affirmative, it has serious consequences for modern assessments of Irish Republicanism which is why the killings have become so emblematic.

Common sense tells one the killings were the work of the IRA but every possible obstacle and mystification is being put in the way of such an assessment, not least by Niall Meehan and Brendan Clifford in the *Irish Political Review* (September and November 2011), and elsewhere.

I am no expert on Cork, its geography or demography, or the conflict in the area from 1919-23. My interest is in assessing whether the Cork killings are and were part of a pattern of anti-Protestant attacks by those who claim to be non-sectarian.

In an ethnic conflict—which is what the recent troubles in Northern Ireland and the War of Independence in its outworking were—the conflict is essentially, and becomes, sectarian. It is also, I have argued, exacerbated by those, on one side only, Republicans, being supported, particularly outside Ireland, as and because they are (fake) non-sectarian.

I would exempt the 1916 Rising from the charge as it was a strictly military action led in Dublin by idealist nationalists and socialists. One leader, Casement, however, if not sectarian, was deeply antagonistic to the Ulster-Scots, and anglophobic to boot. Pearse for another, in contrast, was keen to keep Ulster out of the Rising knowing the consequences if it was involved.

For that reason, having read, and been impressed in particular by Peter Hart's chapters 'Taking it out on the Protestants' in *The IRA and its Enemies* and 'The Protestant Experience of War' in *The IRA at War*, I have engaged in the dispute that has arisen. This is a dispute whose purpose, as Niall Meehan writes in *History Ireland* (Nov/Dec 2011), is to pick out "the col-

lapse in standards attendant upon support within the academy for the 'IRA sectarianism' thesis."

But the absence of such standards are more deep-seated on the other side. Nit-picking about Hart is corrosive but has to be based on a rigorous honesty. What we get instead is distortion, deceit and reliance on evidence that remains doggedly invisible and must be taken on trust. Faith is required.

Whatever Hart's errors and alleged deceptions about witness statements, he is no longer able to defend himself. He probably angled his outlook, as do all academics and writers, from a viewpoint, in his case that of an outsider antagonistic to needless violence, especially when unconvinced of the perpetrators' motives and propaganda, not to mention the unintended consequences.

The immediate background or spark to the killings is that in the early hours of 26 April 1922, a group of IRA men, led by Michael O'Neill, raided the house of Thomas Hornbrook at Ballincollig. O'Neill was shot and killed by Hornbrook's son-in-law. Shortly afterwards the three males of the household were taken away and executed.

On the same day, 26 April, four British intelligence personnel, three officers (Dove, Hendy and Henderson, and a driver, Private Brooks, were taken prisoner in nearby Macroom. They too were later executed. (For details see the website <http://www.cairogang.com/other-people/british-castle-intelligence/incidents/kilgobnet%201922/kilgobnet-1922.html>)

I presume, as do others, that their deaths are related but I am unclear if they were on the road because of the events at the Hornbrook house. Perhaps they had with them information about local Protestants or such details were extracted from them. Perhaps their execution only exemplifies a heightened blood lust at the time of their capture. None the less within hours of O'Neill's death the reprisals started.

The answer as to who carried out the Protestant killings is variously the IRA, maverick elements of the IRA, or the Brits. Evidence is slim so supposition is king.

Brendan Clifford in the *Irish Political Review* of September 2011 returns to a suggestion that Sir Henry Wilson "instigated the killing of a bunch of West Cork Protestants to create the appearance of a deadly sectarian chaos that would justify an Imperial restoration". This notion is given supposed backing by the involve-

ment of Sam Maguire, a Dunmanway Protestant and Michael Collins man in London, in Wilson's assassination there two months later. If Wilson did so instigate, he failed in every respect while managing in his remaining weeks to cover his tracks magnificently.

Imagined conspiracies can only be faced down with reasoned analysis and what evidence does exist. Just because the killings "served no apparent Republican purpose" however begs the question of a sectarian motive. You cannot prove a negative but this Wilson theory is not accepted even by Meda Ryan and other Republican writers.

Why do such killings happen? I would suggest that many of the recent Troubles killings in Northern Ireland, and some in the earlier period, occur because of heightened feelings such as vengeance, if not unconsidered rage and anger.

Relevant to the matter in hand is the fact that on 15 December 1920, in Dunmanway, Cadet Hart of the Auxiliaries had killed a Catholic priest, the elderly Canon Magner, and another man. Hart was later found guilty but insane, his mind having been lacerated by the Kilmichael killings a few days earlier.

I guess the murder of Canon Magner remained a hurt in the area and when Michael O'Neill was killed at the Hornbrooks' house a vengeful desire accentuated locally and a dreadful response was quickly set in train. That the area is significantly more Protestant than elsewhere in the south is of course relevant in terms of related motives such as economic jealousy, land disputes, anti-masonic feeling and religious hatred as well as the apparent absence of the local IRA leadership in Dublin.

One argument for the sectarian nature of the killings is the shooting of a young Church of Ireland curate, Rev Ralph Harbord, at his father's house in the Murragh area. Ralph's father Richard was the Murragh rector. Unsurprisingly, the Church of Ireland went silent on the matter. No accusation of sectarianism emanated from that quarter nor was ever likely to. In Meda Ryan's account (and thus in the Wikipedia article) Ralph Harbord was shot dead. Shot he was, but he did not die of his extensive and long-endured wounds, which could explain a little of the silence.

Hart deals with the other background causes well and convincingly. But it is on the matter of motive evidence that I have engaged most and where I wish to respond to Niall Meehan. He refers again to the question I raised of the list of Protestants which has been used to explain the ten

killings. I wrote of "trying to track down the mysterious and oft-quoted Black and Tan list of informers that Meda Ryan and Niall Meehan repeatedly use to justify the Dunmanway killings."

Niall says he did "not justify the killing of the 13 Protestant civilians" and I accept that. However he explains what may have been considered, then, as justification by adding that a number of the Protestants "may previously been loyalist activists," whatever that means. Meda Ryan spoke of the dead's "disloyalty to the Republican cause by informing on their fight for freedom activities" (p. 212, *Tom Barry*). One is reminded here of the quote "Treason never prospers for if it does none dare call it treason."

There is confusion about the two lists (one in a diary), and the dossiers and documents found in the Dunmanway workhouse after the British evacuated. One item was published in the *Southern Star* in 1971 without the supposed informers' names although Niall has said, "*The publicity Peter Hart gained for his sensational findings caused a response in which the linked names from the Auxiliary diary were published in 2003*". I would ask where was it published and what were the names?

The other, "A British list of 'helpful citizens'" we agree is inaccessible. However I cannot agree it should ever be relied on, in the academy at least, until produced. I note also the phrase 'helpful citizens' is invariably and pejoratively later turned into 'informers.'

Niall Meehan states in his latest reply, "Having researched the 'helpful citizens' list prior to publication of Hart's research in 1998, Meda Ryan was ethically-bound in the context of Hart creating his sectarianism narrative, to report her findings in her 2003 biography, *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*. We have no reason to doubt her testimony in this regard. However since the list is not in the public domain, **those who question Hart's account, other than Meda Ryan may not rely on it. In my critique of Hart in *Distorting Irish History, One and Two (2010, 2011)*, I did not cite it.**" (my emphasis)

Meehan may not have cited the list in his *Distorting Irish History* critique but he has relied on it in other writing. In the *Irish Political Review* of March 2008 ("Some further questions about West Cork"), he challenged Hart's sectarian account by writing that "*The killings in late April 1922 in West Cork were not motivated by either land agitation or by sectarian considerations. Evidence from Brian Murphy (1998, 2006) and Meda Ryan (2003) sug-*

gests that the victims were shot because of their previous intelligence role on behalf of Crown."

This contradiction also calls into question his peculiar phrasing about Meda Ryan's ethical usage and her testimony that cannot be doubted. Ryan's reference on p. 448 of her Barry book simply mystifies, "*there is not an exact copy of lists*". She then states "*many of the names are in the Tom Barry papers*" without saying whether they are the supposed spies' names or those spied on. No detail or provenance is provided. Why?

As to Niall's challenge about whether "*the loyalist Protestants*" did or did not "*inform*", I can only add that I am sure that some on occasion did what they thought was right or proper in this respect. Most probably kept their heads firmly down even if they may have been chatty or on occasion helpful to the army or police who they believed still to be the lawful authority. Helpful does not necessarily mean provider of information.

By the standards of too many Republicans, pretty well every Protestant on the island was guilty of such helpfulness between 1918 and the present, and thus

liable to execution without trial on a sectarian whim or as the result of local gossip. Not to mention very many Catholics, right down to today in the north.

Niall Meehan ends with a flourish saying "*Hart wrote propaganda not history. Not an analysis of sectarianism, but a sectarian analysis.*" So there we have it, others, in this case a Canadian writer, can be accused of sectarianism by assertion and without evidence but not Republicans who killed Protestants. The problem is that he who accuses the other side of sectarianism usually wins the argument.

If the Dunmanway IRA actions were sectarian, it reduces the IRA war of the 1920s and that of the later Provisional IRA, in large part, to an ethnic dispute with sectarian outworkings, which it, of course, was. For the thousands of Protestants who fled in fear of their lives from Cork or later from the border areas and the west bank of the Foyle it was just that. It is plain, Republicanism which has lived off and prospered from a false prospectus of non-sectarianism, has everything to lose if these killings are what they appear.

Jeffrey Dudgeon

24th November 2011

'The further one gets from Belfast...'

A second reply to Jeffrey Dudgeon

I am grateful to Jeffrey Dudgeon for replying on the contentious subject of the killing of thirteen civilians and four British Army personnel in West Cork in late April 1922. I am grateful also to *Irish Political Review* for facilitating the discussion.

Dudgeon ignored my remarks (*Irish Political Review*, November 2011) on Peter Hart's errors and misrepresentations concerning the 28th November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush. I do not know if that means he now accepts my argument. Dudgeon concentrates instead on vindicating Hart's view of the "*April killings*" in West Cork in 1922, seen as "*emblematic*" of IRA attacks on Protestants during the War of Independence period.

In the course of his reply, Dudgeon attempted to demonstrate that Irish Republicanism is anti-Protestant, even though republican ideology and action "*claim{s} to be non-sectarian*".

During the late 18th Century some Irish Protestants founded *The Society of United Irishmen* and a significant number, mainly Presbyterian, broke from an assumed allegiance to the colonial system of Protestant supremacy. This tradition of Irish Repub-

lican separatism was led by Theobald Wolfe Tone. It was influenced by the American and French Revolutions, the first uprisings in human history to be influenced by secular as distinct from religious ideology. The subsequent 1798 *United Irishmen*-inspired rebellion failed and was brutally suppressed.

These Protestant republicans were considered caste traitors. The best-known modern example is the last Protestant Editor of the *Irish Times*, Douglas Gageby, who considered himself a republican in the Wolfe Tone tradition. According to Major Thomas McDowell, the newspaper's then Managing Editor and a fellow Belfast born Protestant, Gageby was (as reported in 1969 to the British Ambassador to Dublin), "*a renegade or white nigger*".

According to Dudgeon, republicans practise "*(fake) non-sectarian{ism}*". It is in essence devious, a kind of Roman Catholicism of the fundamentalist Protestant imagination. This view requires empirical proof. Depicting most of the late April 1922 West Cork killings as sectarian and as part of a pattern is therefore important to Dudgeon, who is an Ulster Unionist.

Since the Ulster Unionist Party cannot easily shake off accusations of consistent sectarian practice in Northern Ireland (because it is a fact), events like the April killings are a basis for suggesting that the competing Irish ideologies cancel each other out, while confirming a need for ethnic separation. It is a rationale for partition on the basis of sectarian equivalence, a familiarity that breeds contempt.

I will look at this question of IRA sectarianism in two parts, first in terms of the April killings themselves, second with regard to whether they were "emblematic" (Dudgeon's term) of a consistent practice.

PART ONE – APRIL 1922

Three Protestant men disappeared in the early morning of 26th April 1922 in Ballygroman, that lay south of the Macroom-Ballincollig road, after one of the group shot dead an IRA officer. That seems to be cause and effect. However, three more were shot dead early on the 27th in Dunmanway, six were killed over 27th-28th April (five around Ballineen-Enniskeane and one in Clonakilty). One more, the last, was shot dead early on the 29th. On the 28th the nearby Murragh Rectory was fired on and Rev'd. Ralph Harbord was wounded. Other premises were fired on. Hotelier Richard Helen claimed he escaped his captors in Clonakilty. A Farmer, Richard Perrot, claimed he was not home when visited. Most of those affected were Protestant. The premises of a Catholic bar owner were fired on and a Catholic former RIC member claimed he escaped the attackers.

Simultaneously, on 26th April at 1pm, after the initial Balygroman event, three leading British Intelligence Officers and their driver were arrested nearby in Macroom. They were then executed and buried secretly.

The seventeen killings took place in a short space of time within a confined area of West Cork. The perpetrators were never identified (see Meehan, 2011: references at end of article).

Dudgeon's question as to whether ten of the thirteen civilian killings were sectarian is legitimate. However, his deductive reasoning is weak. On the basis that "evidence is slim so supposition is king", he observed, "I guess the murder of {Roman Catholic priest} Canon Magner" in December 1920 by a British Auxiliary (named Harte not "Hart") "remained a hurt in the area". Consequently, speculates Dudgeon, this "hurt" was a factor in the late April 1922 killings. Maybe, maybe not. Not much to go on there.

Undoubtedly, sectarianism was a feature of Irish society at that time. The new

state of Northern Ireland emerged on the basis of mass expulsions of thousands of Roman Catholics from their houses and places of work (plus "rotten prods", aka socialists who opposed the expulsions), and large-scale killing directed by unionist forces. These actions were motivated in large part by anti-Catholicism, otherwise known as sectarianism (see Kenna). The state of Northern Ireland, in which unionists outnumbered nationalists by two to one, settled down to sectarian rule by one community over another (see Higgins and Brewer). The state collapsed in turmoil during the late 1960s. It lasted long enough to entrench resistance to reform within unionism and to engender an eventual point blank refusal by nationalists to again tolerate second-class status. A violent conflict developed, whose sectarian features British and unionist counter insurgency measures exacerbated (since that suited their political interests).

In early 1922 Michael Collins was faced as head of the new Provisional Government (set up under the Treaty with Britain) with a reinvigoration of sectarian attacks on Catholics in the emerging state of Northern Ireland; with belligerence from Westminster over failure to fulfil Treaty commitments; and with erosion of republican unity as a result of the Treaty. He didn't want to re-fight the British, was prepared to confront unionism and hoped but failed to prevent internecine southern conflict over Treaty provisions. Collins, who was killed in a civil war ambush in August 1922, despised sectarianism. His death during the southern civil war, and that war itself, probably prevented one between north and south (see Macardle, p704, 731-2).

It is reasonable therefore to explore whether a complementary or responsive savage sectarianism occurred down south, where Roman Catholics were in an initial majority of 94% to 6%. If we look at the question from the vantage point of the 1968-1994 Northern Ireland conflict, and also reliance by post-Independence southern Governments on Roman Catholic ideology, it seems plausible to suggest that such might have occurred. In West Cork the Protestant population, mostly Church of Ireland, was larger than average. That is where the "April killings" occurred, during a period of turmoil after the January 1922 Treaty split, prior to the June onset of civil war.

In these highly volatile circumstances with no established legitimate authority, in early April 1922 the British War Office decided in its wisdom to "re-establish {...} intelligence services in Southern Ireland" (in McMahon, p67). This was in violation

of agreements between the two sides. British Army headquarters asked that field Intelligence Officers "step up unobtrusive intelligence gathering" that, "if it could be combined with a visit to friends or a fishing trip, so much the better". Intelligence gathering had ceased once official hostilities ended in July 1921. It had been based on a network of agents and paid informers within the civilian population.

FISHING FOR INTELLIGENCE

The War Office decision sowed the seeds of an Intelligence catastrophe that temporarily suspended British evacuation from Southern Ireland (Hamilton, p162).

On 26th April the southern-based Sixth Division Brigade Intelligence Officer Lieutenant R.A. Hendy, acting on orders, "wished to see the state of affairs at Macroom, ...making the excuse of lunching with a mutual friend along the way" (in McMahon, p67). Two battalion officers, G.R. Dove and K.L. Henderson, plus Private R.A. Brooks, their driver, accompanied Hendy. All were in civilian attire. The IRA in Macroom became suspicious and arrested them. The officers explained, as advised, that they were on a fishing trip, but without rods or other necessary accoutrements. The Intelligence Officers had lunched *en route* with their "mutual friend" in Farran that was near Ballygroman (Regan, 2012 a, p79). As we know, early that morning at Ballygroman an IRA officer was shot dead, followed by the disappearance of those held responsible, Protestant loyalist Thomas Hornibrook, his son, Samuel, and a former British officer, Captain Herbert Woods.

There was something unique about Intelligence gathering in that particular area. It had been based on systematic informing by Protestant loyalists. We know this because the British Army's restricted circulation, *A Record of the Rebellion in Ireland in 1921 and the part played by the Army in Dealing with it (Intelligence)*, said so. The *Record* stated that Southern Protestants generally did not inform because "except by chance, they had not got {information} to give". Though this rationale for Intelligence failure is self-serving, the analysis continued,

"An exception to this rule was in the Bandon area where there were many Protestant farmers who gave information. Although the Intelligence Officer of the area was exceptionally experienced and although the troops were most active it proved almost impossible to protect those brave men, many of whom were murdered while almost all the remainder suffered grave material loss" (in Murphy, 1998).

In other words, this exceptional group

suffered as British allies from accurate IRA targeting (see Borgonovo, 2007, on IRA Intelligence capacity). We may ask whether, in these circumstances after the Treaty-split, just before the civil war, information extracted from the British officers, or merely knowledge of their intent, placed this group in mortal danger?

This line of enquiry could not have emerged from Peter Hart's 1998 book, *The IRA And Its Enemies*, because he suppressed it at source.

First, Hart cited the *Record* suggesting that Protestants did not have information, in order to reinforce his view that the April killings were sectarian. He suppressed the following sentence about the Bandon Valley exception, which eviscerated the point. Dudgeon consistently fails to address this unethical presentation of evidence by Hart.

Second, Hart suppressed information contained in his 1992 PhD thesis that IRA officer Frank Busteed claimed he "killed five to six loyalists, Protestant farmers" at that time (p377). Hart's 1992 thesis (p117-8) also stated that Busteed,

"was involved in {killing}... three British officers in Macroom *and a massacre of Protestants in the early months of 1922*" (emph. added, NM).

Those last eleven words are omitted from the same sentence in Hart's book (p100).

Third, the actual killing of the officers and their driver is almost a non-event in Hart's narrative. Hart erroneously reported (combined with a mistaken reference) that three more officers were "released" (1998, p280, n49) and also placed the doomed officers' status as spies within inverted commas, in a generalised commentary on "conspiracy theories" (*ibid*).

Though raised a Catholic, Busteed, whose father was Protestant, later became "an outspoken atheist" (Hart, 1998, p248, n149). Censoring Busteed's involvement in both sets of *April Killings* suppressed a connection with the execution of the officers and stymied the presentation of a non-sectarian explanation for the killings. A historian intent on proving sectarian intent would, naturally, find the Busteed evidence an inconvenience. It is difficult to see Hart's excisions and failures as simply the product of misjudgement.

NEW EVIDENCE

I originally drew attention to a possible connection between the civilian and military killings and Hart's suppression of the Busteed evidence (Meehan, 2008a, 2008b). John Regan from Dundee University has produced new evidence on the connection. Regan critiqued Hart in a talk in Trinity College Dublin in October

2011 that Dudgeon attended. Reagan's findings are published in *The 'Bandon Valley Massacre' as a Historical Problem* (2012b) and in summary in *History Ireland* (Jan-Feb 2012a).

The IRA captured the officers, apparently held them in Macroom Castle, before execution and secret burial in Kilgobnet. Free State authorities recovered and repatriated the bodies in September 1923 (*Sth. Star*, 15 Dec 1923, *Ir. Ind.*, 13, 14 Dec 1923). In his attempt to save the officers, Sixth Division Brigade Major (the later famous) Bernard Law Montgomery, "was evidently in a savage mood". He met with IRA Commandant Dan Donovan, who was of no help despite intense British military pressure that led to an eyeball to eyeball confrontation with the IRA (Borgonovo, 2011, pp38-9; Hamilton, p163; see, "Alarm in Macroom, British Military Display Follows Kidnapping", *Freeman's Journal*, 1 May 1922).

Donovan eventually conceded to Montgomery, "it was done by some of the IRA at Macroom who had temporarily seceded from control" (Hamilton, p163). That seems improbable. According to Twohig (p337-8), the order for the arrest and execution of the officers came from IRA Brigade HQ in Cork, after telephone contact from Macroom second in command, Adjutant Charlie Brown. One of the officers was identified by Browne as having been involved in torture and killing of prisoners in Cork's Victoria Barracks during 1921 (*ibid*; Browne, *The Story of the 7th*, 2007, 82). In addition, Frank Busteed claimed that during a raid on his house two of the officers killed his mother by throwing her down stairs (O'Callaghan, p190). A significant memoir by A.J.S. (Stephen) Brady, son of the Rector of Macroom, reinforces this perception. He observed that one of the officers had previously,

"trussed an IRA {prisoner} like a fowl, had a rope tied to his ankles, was thrown on the road and dragged behind an army vehicle at high speed to his death" (p196).

In addition, in a recently published volume on the Civil War, John Borgonovo noted that "two of the officers, Lt R.A. Hendy and Lt G.R.A. Dove had been implicated in the torture and unauthorised killing of IRA prisoners" (2011, p38).

As applied to the civilian killings, however, Donovan's comment appears plausible. Possibly, an out of control IRA party used Intelligence information obtained during the missing officers episode (or earlier) to target those assumed to be in league with British Intelligence. In other words, the exceptional group identified later by *The Record*. Consecutive killings

over three evenings on 27th-29th April, moving from Dunmanway towards Bandon, with a short detour to Clonakilty, suggests a small organised group.

IRA LEADERSHIP ACTION

A horrified local IRA leadership immediately set out to halt the civilian killings by putting guards on the houses of those thought vulnerable. Stephen Brady's memoir details Charlie Browne visiting his father to assure him,

"nobody here would hurt you or anyone belonging to you. In case strangers may trouble you though, I'm going to put a guard on the Rectory" (p194).

The Rector thanked Browne and shook his hand. At a University College Cork seminar on "Irish Protestant Identities" in honour of Joe Ruane (26 May 2011) the historian John A. Murphy stated that his father was the IRA guard in question. On 28th April IRA Brigade Commandant Tom Hales distributed a "military order" to battalion commandants threatening "capital punishment if found necessary" to "any soldier in the area" who "interfere{s} with or insults{s} any person" or who did "not... uphold{s} the rigid discipline of a military force".

The welcome of the local Protestant population for this initiative is confirmed by Brady's memoir and also by Church of Ireland clergyman, Rev'd. J.L.B. Deane (*Ir. Times* 10 Nov 1994). Deane noted that West Cork Protestants later voted for Fianna Fail TD Sean Buckley "as a mark of gratitude and respect for what he had done {as an IRA officer} in 1922" to stop the killings. Deane supported previous correspondent Christoir de Baroid's assertion (3 Nov) that a "maverick IRA group in south-west Cork" was responsible for the killings, that were "stamped out immediately by the local IRA leadership". Deane asserted, contrary to Dudgeon's view of a downtrodden population, that "the community affected... had long since drawn a line under {the killings} and is living in harmony with its neighbours".

We can't be sure that this is what happened. Those who killed the military personnel and the civilians did not advertise their responsibility, apart from Frank Busteed. He told Ernie O'Malley about killing "loyalists, Protestant farmers" (at that time) in the 1950s and the author of *Execution* (1974) about killing the officers and their driver during the early 1970s. Twohig (p343) records that in 1959 Tom Crofts, former Brigade Adjutant, and Browne, former Battalion Adjutant, asked him not to record the story of the killing of the officers, despite the passage of time. He complied until 1994. Other than that it

was seen as a Truce violation (though if that were the case the British officers were in violation also), he gives no reason.

Peter Hart's alternative narrative suppressed evidence in order to feed a story of sectarian republican practice that culminated in an apparently random civilian sectarian massacre. Some of Hart's PhD evidence did not support his IRA sectarianism conclusion and he left it out of his book. Other evidence was misrepresented. Dudgeon objects to my view that Hart wrote a sectarian history. The alternative is to term it fiction.

Another view put forward, due to the exceptional nature of the event, is that the civilian killings may have been the action of *agent provocateurs*, guided by an increasingly hysterical Sir Henry Wilson. No evidence has been put forward in support of mainly English killers (presumably) who, in the course of their grisly Machiavellian endeavours, managed convincingly to mimic local accents.

PART TWO – A PATTERN?

Dudgeon observed, "*My interest is in assessing whether the Cork killings were part of a pattern of anti-Protestant attacks*". Indeed, Peter Hart portrayed them as the culmination of activity that began "*from the summer of 1920 onwards*" (2002, p25). The April killings are, therefore according to Dudgeon, "*emblematic*". That can only be so, however, if similar killings occurred. Otherwise, even if sectarian, they are exceptional.

Here, Dudgeon faces a significant obstacle, the testimony of southern Protestants. They refuted allegations of republican attacks on Protestants. The pages of the then Protestant *Irish Times* were littered with letters from Protestants rejecting northern unionist propaganda to this effect.

Southern unionists joined in the attack. It is not difficult to source the basis of southern unionist pique. They felt betrayed by Ulster unionists and their support for Partition under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. The southern unionist leader, Earl Middleton, was expelled from the Irish Unionist Alliance for proposing limited Dominion Home Rule in November 1917 and promptly set up the Unionist Anti Partition League (see Jackson, 1999, p233; 2003, p161, 181-5).

As the Anglo-Irish conflict developed, there were more immediate concerns. In December 1920, when K Company of the Auxiliaries (it appears a significant number of whom were from northern Ireland) burned Cork, they burned Protestant-owned property. Similarly when Fermoy and Middleton were sacked and many

Creameries burned, Protestant-owned property was often the target. A southern unionist from Bantry, Mr G.W. Biggs, wrote in response to Ulster Unionist leader, Edward Carson:

"I feel it my duty to protest very strongly against this unfounded slander {of intolerance on the part} of our Catholic neighbours... I have been resident in Bantry for 43 years, during 33 of which I have been engaged in business, and I have received the greatest kindness, courtesy, and support from all classes and creeds in the country" (*Jr. Times*, 24 Jul 1920).

Biggs's substantial business was then burned down, by the police. His house was commandeered by the military, Biggs was forced to send his family to Dublin and went himself to live in a hotel. Previously-mentioned Sixth Division Brigade Major Bernard Montgomery afterwards remarked, "*it never bothered me a bit how many houses we burned*" and "*I regarded all civilians as "shiners"*" (Hamilton, pp158, 160). Including, it seems, Mr Biggs.

A letter in the *Times* of London (30 Sep 1920) from John Annan Bryce, younger brother of a former Chief Secretary for Ireland, described what happened to Biggs and his business. Annan Bryce complained of a military threat to burn republican-owned property if that of loyalists were targeted. He went on, "*there is no justification for the issue of such a notice in this district, where the only damage to loyalists' premises has been done by the police*". In further highly significant correspondence Annan Bryce also told of the arrest and deportation back to Ireland of his wife Violet for attempting to speak in Wales on British reprisal burnings and other atrocities (see correspondence in *Church & State* 86, Autumn 2006).

STRICTLY STRICKLAND

Dudgeon observed that "*pretty well every Protestant on the island was guilty of {the type of} helpfulness*" provided by Bandon Valley loyalists. Self-evidently, that is not the case. A more typical attitude is perhaps illustrated by this Cork episode:

"One day {Cork Divisional Commander General Strickland} stamped into my father's office and in his extremely rude, brusque manner said, "Look here Clarke, you are trusted by both sides: it's your duty to give me information". Father, looking him in the eye, calmly said, "I will not inform against my own countrymen. It is your duty to control the rabble your government has let loose on Ireland. Good morning". Going purple in the face, the General stormed out, crossed the Mall to Grandfather's office, and received virtually the same reply". (Pyne Clarke, 1985, p.52-3).

According to another *Times* (London) correspondent (27 Jan. 1921) Strickland's

proclamation threatening to prosecute those who withheld information "*aroused protests from loyalists in the South*", as "*it is {now} an offence to remain neutral*". This letter mentioned the fate of West Cork loyalist John Bradfield who was shot, having been "*found guilty of having attempted to inform the enemy of the presence and movements of Republican troops*". A cousin of Bradfield's was shot soon afterwards in similar circumstances. The final April killings victim fourteen months later on 29th April 1922 was a third Bradfield cousin (see Meehan, 2011).

The post-Truce killing of Bradfield was regarded differently from that of his relations. Protestants protested the April killings, contrary to Dudgeon's inane belief that they "*kept their heads down*" on the subject. A Protestant Convention was held on 11th May 1922, two weeks after the April killings, that packed out Dublin's Mansion House. It resolved—

"We place on record that, until the recent tragedies in the County Cork, hostility to Protestants by reason of their religion has been almost, if not wholly, unknown in the Twenty six counties in which Protestants are in a minority."

The participants, in condemning the April killings, were not prepared to make concessions to Ulster Unionist propaganda that set out to muddy the waters of responsibility for aggravated sectarianism in the new state of Northern Ireland. The Rector of Macroom told a British officer investigating the disappearance of the Intelligence Officers, that "*he personally had nothing to complain of as regards the way {the IRA} were treating him*" (Brady, p195).

PROTESTANT MEMOIR

Memoirs and biographies by or about Protestants in West Cork are to hand. None mention a sectarian campaign against Protestants. The biography, by his grandson, of Jasper Wolfe, Crown Solicitor during the conflict (who represented the RIC at the inquest into their killing Cork Lord Mayor Tomás McCurtain), cites Wolfe on rejecting the notion emphatically (Ungoed-Thomas). Wolfe insisted afterwards that, though he was subject to attack, this was not because of his religious beliefs, but rather due to his leading position within the British administration during a period of armed conflict. His grandson biographer recently expressed "*surprise*" at allegations of republican or nationalist sectarianism. Jasper Wolfe had never raised them in often-told tales of being,

"kidnapped by the IRA, or attempts to shoot him, or of his house on the outskirts of Skibbereen being occupied by Republicans or Free Staters in turn. But I never heard any suggestion of sectarian hostility towards the Wolfes, whether from the I.R.A., from their Catholic neighbours, or indeed from any Catholics at all" (2010).

Had sectarian attacks on Protestants been a feature of their experience, the former Crown Solicitor, who also coordinated local loyalist compensation claims during the later 1920s, would have said so, surely.

If Dudgeon wishes to reject the testimony of fellow unionists, albeit southern ones, so be it. Dudgeon could take his cue from a loyalist Roman Catholic, John M. Regan, who transferred from the RIC to the RUC. His memoir observed, "*the further one gets from Belfast the less sectarianism there is generally*" (in Augusteijn, ed, p78). Regan did not mention sectarianism as a factor while stationed in the south, but experienced it personally after transferring to what is now Northern Ireland.

Southern unionists were alienated from northern counterparts and increasingly estranged from the British Government and its forces. British policy, not the IRA, attacked the material interests of Protestants. That, in the main, is what concerned them.

That is not to suggest that all Protestants were unionists (never mind active loyalists of the type the Bandon Valley appears to have produced). A significant number had, like Douglas Gageby and African National Congress counterparts later in South Africa, the status of "*white niggers*". Dr. Dorothy Stopford, a Protestant who went on to pioneer TB inoculation in southern Ireland, ministered to the injuries of IRA Volunteers in West Cork and gave lectures on first aid to Cumann na mBan (the women's IRA auxiliary, see O'Broin, pp167-72, 220-73). Could she have given her allegiance to such a force, were it engaged in a pattern of attacks on co-religionists? Could her Aunt, the historian Alice Stopford Green, have provided a safe house for Eamon deValera and Michael Collins, and for meetings of Dáil Ministers, if the Dáil was directing attacks on fellow Protestants? (*ibid.*, pp157,167-8) Could Erskine Childers, Robert Barton and Ernest Blythe have led republican resistance to British rule if such were the case?

Thus, there is no evidential support for a "*pattern*" of sectarian attacks in the south against Protestants, as occurred in the north against Roman Catholics.

SOUTHERN COCOON

After Independence, southern Protestants were concerned that their relative socio-economic advantage be maintained. It was, so much so that twenty-five percent of senior Executives in banking and industry in southern Ireland in the early 1970s were Protestant. In the 2006 Census, Protestants generally were in possession of larger farms and disproportionately occupied higher status managerial, technical and professional categories (Meehan, 2010).

Protestant population decline in the South began in the 19th Century, as Protestant privilege was eroded, penal laws were abolished and the British Government attempted to ally with an emerging conservative Roman Catholicism. This occurred during a period of catastrophic overall population decline that began during and after the Famine of 1845-48. Relative Protestant population decline intensified in the period 1911-26, during the period of the First World War, War of Independence and Civil War, and its aftermath. Economic factors, combined with the decline of imperial economic and social privileges, the attraction of Empire and of the 'Mother country' itself, alongside some antipathy toward Irish nationalism and the sad state of the Irish economy during the 1920s, all probably played their part. UCC historian Professor John A Murphy, whose republican family roots are in West Cork, referred to the notion of Protestants being driven from their land and occupations in the 1920s as "*Paisleyite myth mongering*" (*Sun. Ind.*, 4 Oct 2004; on this, generally, Meehan, 2010).

Far from being attacked, post-Independence southern Protestants existed within a self-administered and largely beneficial cocoon. Conservative Irish Governments got on with socially controlling the Roman Catholic majority, particularly its working class members and some occasionally bothersome artists and intellectuals, through the welfare agencies and ideological pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church. The same type of people affronted the rulers of Northern Ireland, where physical substituted for social control.

In the South religious affiliation does not generally affect everyday social intercourse. In February 2006 Kevin Myers, a supporter of Peter Hart's work, commented on a spontaneous and generally opportunist riot directed at police in Dublin's city centre. A loyalist 'Love Ulster' band parade for loyalist victims (some of whom served in the official security forces) was abandoned before it started and provided the catalyst. Myers wrote,

"the rioters know that the RTÉ journalist Charlie Bird was a Protestant, and accordingly beat the bejessus out of him?"

A response from *Times* journalist Eugene McEldowney appeared,

"I am indebted to Kevin Myers for the information that my friend and colleague, Charlie Bird of RTÉ, is a Protestant (Irish Times, February 28th). I have known Charlie for 34 years and until now this information had escaped me, largely because I never thought to enquire. Kevin obviously pays closer attention to such fine details than I do. But how fiendishly clever of the Dublin lumpenproletariat to have uncovered this same information. Now that he has raised the issue of a sectarian headcount, perhaps Kevin would use his investigative skills to give

us a religious breakdown of the injured gardai?" (Ir. Times, 3 Mar 2006).

Before accusations of sectarian activity are made, either in newspapers or in history books, great care should be taken in the presentation of evidence.

Anti-sectarianism is in the objective interests of all Irish people. Understanding its political and social roots is an important part of recognising how to get rid of it. In the War of Independence and its aftermath Irish republicans were not involved in perpetuating sectarian politics in Ireland. Ulster Unionists sowed those seeds and eventually reaped a whirlwind.

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This correspondence is now closed. Editor

Crozier Antidotes For Hart Maladies

Last October 16th, the Irish edition of the *Sunday Times* carried a letter from Pierce Martin denouncing columnist Justine McCarthy for not bowing down before the myths created by a certain academic historian whom he lauded as "*the courageous and woefully denigrated Peter Hart, who cannot defend himself from a cold grave*". I find Martin's special pleading that Hart should be allowed to escape from critical analysis particularly hard to stomach, having spoken by the side of Frank Ryan's cold grave in defence of his reputation (see <http://irelandscw.com/org—RyanComm.htm> for that October 2005 commemorative oration) a week after the *Irish Times* had facilitated a very much alive Peter Hart in publishing his character assassination and sneering reference to "*Frank Ryan, the Republican saint / Nazi collaborator*". Character assassination of those lying in cold graves was very much part of Hart's stock-in-trade and became the means by which he established his academic notoriety. Hart even claimed to have conducted a "*live*" interview with some already in their graves!

Here I am concerned with Hart's character assassination of an Englishman, Brigadier-General F.P. (Frank Percy) Crozier, whose 1931 book—*A Word To Gandhi*—I discussed when refuting Fintan O'Toole's attempt to suggest a Widgery-style "*mitigating factor*" in his account of the 1920 Bloody Sunday massacre. (*Irish Political Review*, January 2012). Crozier's dedication reads as follows:

"To the experience and prophetic insight of my Grandfathers, F H Crozier, Esq, Honourable East India Company's Service and Madras Civil Service, sometimes Special Agent at the Court of His Highness the Maharaja of Vizeanagram, and Major W F Percy, for many years a Resident Magistrate in the West of Ireland, this volume is due."

Crozier was of the opinion that he possessed more than enough British Imperialist experience in his pedigree to write authoritatively on both Ireland and India. And this was only the icing on his own personal experience. Here is how Crozier recounted his resignation from the command of Britain's RIC Auxiliaries:

"When the British Government ordered me, in my 'patriotic' position of 'loyal' police officer, to condone crimes of violence committed by its patriotic, loyal, armed and uniformed servants, against defenceless and 'loyal' women in Ireland,

and I refused, telling the 'disloyal' elements to search for 'Patriotism' and come and tell me when they had found it, as I threw my letters of appointment into a dustbin, it was that British Government which was 'disloyal'—not I" (pp12-13).

"In February 1921 ... defenceless Protestant women of the shopkeeper class were looted by armed policemen near Trim. The officer in chief command of the Auxiliaries proceeded to the scene of the disreputable armed robbery, in order to administer justice. Some thieves he handed over to the *military* for trial. These were subsequently tried and sent to prison. Other men he sent back to England for Ireland's good. The Government sent the latter back to Ireland to duty because they knew too much and threatened to expose in the Press the truth about the burning of Cork! Later, certain of the men submitted to mock trial and were acquitted! England's honour was saved and, what was much more important, Cabinet jobs as well! Meanwhile the chief officer who went to Trim to enquire into the facts resigned in disgust on account of the condonation of police crime by the Government. During debates in the House of Commons and in answer to questions about the chief officer concerned and the Irish Chaos, many different stories were told in order to bolster up the Government and discredit Ireland. The writer was the chief officer! *He knows!* These things can happen more easily in India than in England. *The writer knows!* The ten commandments are inoperative in India in certain quarters. The eleventh—thou shalt not be found out—rules the day. The eleventh commandment ruled the day in the times of the 'Black-and-Tan' Coalition till they *were* found out, when the Coalition died" (pp95-96).

I am not here going to repeat the detailed refutations of Hart's character assassination of Tom Barry in respect of the Auxies' false surrender during the November 1920 Kilmichael Ambush, the most comprehensive being that by Meda Ryan. (See www.indymedia.ie/article/69172?&condense_comments=false#comment104437 for my review of Meda's 2003 biography, *Tom Barry—Irish Freedom Fighter*.) My concern here is with Hart's character assassination of Crozier on this issue, on pages 36 to 37 of his now long-discredited 1998 tome, *The IRA & Its Enemies*. Hart wrote:

"Barry's 'history' of Kilmichael ... is riddled with lies and evasions. There was no false surrender as he described it. The surviving Auxiliaries were simply 'exterminated'... General Crozier, after resigning and becoming a vocal critic of the Auxiliary Division and British policy in

Ireland, asserted that: *'It was perfectly true that the wounded had been put to death after the ambush, but the reason for this barbarous inhumanity became understandable although inexcusable ... Arms were supposed to have been surrendered, but a wounded Auxiliary whipped out a revolver while lying on the ground and shot a 'Shinner' with the result that all his comrades were put to death with him, the rebels 'seeing red', a condition akin to going mad'* (Crozier, *Ireland For Ever*, 1932, p 128). Crozier stated that *'I journeyed to Cork to find out the truth about this carnage, and as I was in mufti and unknown, learned a great deal, not only about the ambush.'* That a senior British police officer could have infiltrated the West Cork IRA to such an extent is simply incredible. It is clear that Crozier picked up this information—which certainly does have an authentic ring about it—after he had resigned and after he had become *persona grata* with Michael Collins. Much of the material in his book clearly came from this source."

Hart was calling Crozier a liar. But it would be wrong to consider this a case of the pot calling the kettle black, for there is no evidence to suggest that Crozier was lying and much convincing evidence pointing to the exact opposite. Contrary to another whopper of a lie on Hart's part, Crozier **never** claimed he had "*infiltrated the West Cork IRA*". Hart seems to have gone out of his way—whether through malice or ignorance or both—to obscure the fact that Crozier undertook not one but **two** investigations of Kilmichael. Crozier's conclusions from his **second** investigation were related as follows by Meda Ryan (my emphasis):

"Of significant importance is the testimony of Brigadier General Crozier, commander of the Auxiliaries from 1919 to 1920. He came to Ireland (**having resigned**) {in February 1921, MOR} '*as a civilian, at the request of Sir Hamar Greenwood to give evidence*' on the Kilmichael ambush. In his 'Unpublished Memoirs' (published posthumously by *The Kerryman* in March 1938) he wrote: *'I took particular care to enquire into this story of mutilation, as it appeared to me to be quite unlike the normal or abnormal act of Irishmen. The correct story I found to be as follows: The lorries were held up by land mines and the leading lorry was partly destroyed. The men were called upon to surrender and did so throwing up their hands and grounding their rifles. Each policeman carried a revolver in addition to a rifle. One policeman shot a Sinn Féiner at close quarters with his revolver after he had grounded his rifle and put his hands up. A hand-to-hand combat of the fiercest kind ensued, the butts of rifles, revolvers, crowbars being used, hence the battered condition of the police. When it is intended to kill a man*

with a butt—end there is no hitting him on the legs."

Ryan commented: "*This account clarifies that the 'false surrender' story was in circulation in the area shortly after the ambush, and was not fabricated by Tom Barry or anybody else later*" (Tom Barry, p81). Indeed, Crozier had previously made clear that the 'false surrender' story was already in circulation no later than two months after the Ambush, on the occasion of **his first investigation, undertaken a month before his resignation**:

"During the last month of 1920 the English people were horrified to read in their newspapers that a party of Auxiliary 'Black-and-Tans', about eighteen strong, had been ambushed by Sinn Feiners in County Cork and that all, save one man who had a miraculous escape, had been butchered to death, while lying wounded on the ground. The evidence against the Irish assassins and mutilators seemed complete. Corpses were found bearing many terrible wounds. The one survivor could not explain anything, as he was completely inarticulate from shock and wounds."

"*I knew the Irish well; I had spent most of my schoolboy holidays not very far from the spot where this dreadful massacre took place. I could hardly believe my ears when I was told the tale in a hospital in which I was incarcerated while suffering from serious injuries {from a road accident—MO'R}. Meanwhile, Parliament gloated and revolted over the foul deed, the Irish and the police being whipped up to further atrocities by the lies told. Following the reception of the news about Kilmichael, four unarmed Irishmen were brutally murdered in Dublin. I determined to proceed to the scene of the atrocity, unknown, unrecognisable and alone, to learn the truth, as soon as I was well enough to travel. I went to County Cork in January, unannounced. Staying in a small hotel, alone, I made enquiries and visited the scene of the disaster. {All emphases mine—MO'R.} What did I find? There had been an ambush—an act of war—in the martial law area. Some policemen had been killed and wounded, while the remainder surrendered, when suddenly a policeman in the act of surrender whipped out a revolver and shot a Sinn Feiner dead. The Irishmen, 'seeing red', killed all the police save one whom they thought was dead. That is the true explanation of the 'butchery' at Kilmichael. What I found out, the British Government could have found out. What I wanted to know—the truth—politicians had no wish to know" (A Word to Gandhi, 1931, pp93-94).*

What makes Crozier all the more credible and convincing is that he never pretended to have undergone a "gates of Damascus" Pauline conversion, with the

scales falling from his eyes all at once. Writing in 1931 of his **first**, January 1921, investigation of Kilmichael, he tells us exactly how he saw it at the time, concluding that there had indeed been an Auxie false surrender, while still believing that the Auxie corpses had been subjected to *post mortem* mutilation. It was only on the occasion of his **second** investigation, undertaken subsequent to his February 1921 resignation, that he concluded that allegations of mutilation also constituted a false accusation.

There is yet another issue where we might compare Hart and Crozier—how they would have responded to the following rhetorical question posed by Gerard Murphy in 2010:

"Certainly men (or women) sent in by Dublin Castle or British Military Intelligence could and should be described as spies. Similarly those members of the IRA or their families who volunteered information on their colleagues should be called informers. But should a loyalist such as Mrs Lindsay, who happened to notice IRA men preparing for an ambush and reported it to save lives (after informing the local priest to convey the message to the IRA and thus save lives on both sides) also be called a spy or informer, even though she was only being true to her own convictions?" (*The Year Of Disappearances: Political Killings in Cork 1921—1922*, pp63-64).

In 1998, in his "*Spies and Informers*" Chapter, Peter Hart did in fact write:

"Cork IRA officers routinely insisted that those executed were proven, convicted traitors. *We were careful that before a spy was shot it had to be a definite case of spying.*' (Sean Culhane). Some were indeed 'guilty', if only by IRA standards... Mary Lindsay did help give away the Dripsey ambush... The song—'Where the Dripsey River Flow'—refers to the betrayal of the Donoughmore Battalion column on 28 January 1921, which resulted in the death of one Volunteer and the execution of three others. The only '*son of Cromwell*' involved was a woman, Mrs Mary Lindsay ... Mrs Lindsay was separated from her Catholic neighbours by class, creed, loyalty, and a whole battery of myths and prejudices (including her own) which combined to form an insurmountable ethnic barrier. Frank Busted revealed some of these when he told her {and here Hart drew on the quotation attributed to Busted by Sean O'Callaghan in his 1974 book *Execution*—MO'R}: 'Listen you old bitch, you think you are dealing with a bunch of farm labourers, the men who will touch their caps to you and say 'Yes, Madam', and 'No, Madam'. Well, we're no bunch of down-trodden tame Catholics'..." (pp300 and 308-9).

They certainly weren't. And—despite Hart's suggestion through the manner of his characterisation in this Chapter—neither was Busted a Catholic bigot of any sort. Indeed, being gender- as well as ethnically-precise, it was none other than that same Frank Busted who was the only "*son of Cromwell*" involved—the exception that proved the rule, or not? Hart seemed to have forgotten himself, for, in an earlier Chapter, entitled "Guerillas", he had written (my emphasis):

"Frank Busted, a Blarney mill worker, joined the Fianna Eireann—the republican boy scouts—in 1910, under the influence of his ultranationalist mother. *Busted's deceased father had been a Protestant although Busted himself was raised as a Catholic and later became an outspoken atheist.* He moved up to join the Volunteers in 1917 ... Busted was soon elected as captain of the Blarney company and was also invited to join the IRB but was (he says) turned down because of local prejudice over his '*Protestant*' name. This did nothing to alter his militancy, however ... In late 1919 ... (Busted) took up arms full—time in his new capacity as vice O/C of the Donoughmore Battalion. From January 1920 on, Busted took part in nearly every ambush or barracks attack between Cork and Macroom, as well as numerous operations and executions with the city gunmen. When a battalion column was formed in November 1920 he was the obvious choice as commander, and he held the post until the Truce. His mother's death after a British raid only increased his passion for revenge, which he took out on a considerable number of suspected 'spies' and 'informers'... It was he who planned the Dripsey ambush in January 1921 ('a bit of a debacle'—Busted) and the consequent kidnapping of Mrs Lindsay and her chauffeur" (p248).

And how might Crozier have responded to Murphy's question? This is what Frank Crozier had actually written in 1931, under the heading of "*The Lesson of Muddled Murdering*":

"Mr Bell was a resident magistrate who had been specially deputed to carry out an investigation into Republican bank balances. As he began to know too much, he was dragged out of a tram-car and shot dead, in crowded Dublin, the assassins escaping in confusion... *But the real cause of the assassin's escape was that the population was beginning to revolt against the blood-lust policy introduced into Ireland by the descendants of Oliver Cromwell ...*" (My emphasis—MO'R).

"*Mrs Lindsay was a very gallant old British lady who died because of her patriotism to England. She was 'let down' by her Unionist friends.* Hearing of an ambush of police or soldiers by Sinn Fein rebels, she hurried off to warn the nearest police station. Finding out what this grand

old lady had done, the rebels caught her and shot her as an informer. They might have respected her age and kept her as a prisoner, but they said they had no prisons. There can be no half measures in rebellion, which can only be justified by success. The usual result of rebellion is either complete victory or a string of dead bodies hanging from the lamp-posts..." (My emphasis—MOR).

"In this case the British Government was entirely to blame for Mrs Lindsay's death. Demanding and expecting loyalty from her, she was shamefully abandoned. Loyalty begets loyalty, lack of honour and protection begets disloyalty; but who understands 'loyalty'? Between the gunmen of England and the gunmen of Ireland the 'loyalists' fell and suffered. It was foolish for 'loyalists' to 'talk' in Ireland in 1920 and 1921. It was madness to 'inform'..." (pp52-53. my emphases—MOR).

Hart and Crozier can also be compared in terms of their treatment of the issue of self-determination. Hart's only 'assessment' of the significance of Sinn Féin's overwhelming 26 County victory in the December 1918 General Election was his regurgitation of police reports and Loyalist cum *Irish Times* prejudices in his "*Youth and Rebellion*" chapter:

"Many—policemen and others—thought this rebellion of 'mere boys' was directed as much against parents and elders as against British rule. This idea first became a common theme of police and press reports during the by-election campaigns of 1917, beginning with North Roscommon in February. Dubbed a 'women and childrens' election', Count Plunkett's victory as an abstentionist candidate was widely attributed to the activities of those too young to vote... Roscommon also produced the first stories that 'young members of the farmers' families used stringent intimidation on their elders'. The generational divide had apparently widened even further by May, when the next contest was held in South Longford. One local newspaper warned Irish Party voters beforehand that 'some of the young members of your household may put obstacles in your way' (quoted in *Irish Times*, 7 May 1917), while the *Irish Times* (8 May 1917) reported that: 'the enthusiasm of the young element has reached such a point as to cause family friction in many households. Some refused to help their fathers on the land unless they exacted a promise to support Mr McGuinness (the Sinn Féin candidate), while daughters declined to pursue their domestic duties without laying similar toll.' These reports of the intimidation of fathers by their children continued unabated through to the general election of December 1918. As for the latter event (when, for the first time, 'boys' could vote alongside their parents), one breathless account had it that: 'the

young people (egged on by their curates!) ran it and actually, in many cases locked the old people into their homes so that they might not be able to attend the booths.' (EH Ussher, 'True Story', Representative Church Body Library (Church of Ireland). See also *Irish Times*, 19 December 1918.) However, exaggerated, such claims reflected a widely shared perception of Sinn Féin—and especially the Volunteers—as a youth movement, and an almost equally shared apprehension of what this meant" (p166).

Hart did nothing to modify anything quoted above that might possibly have been "*exaggerated*", not to mind present the evidence that directly contradicted the profoundly prejudiced panorama which he so colourfully presented. Another example of Hart's deep-seated dishonesty. One talent that Hart undoubtedly had was to grub through the details of press reports in order to come up with juicy quotations to bolster up his own prejudiced 'thesis'. It is therefore inconceivable that, in coming across the above quotations from *Irish Times* election coverage, he failed to read that paper's actual **analysis**. The *Irish Times* could not have survived as a mere expression of crude prejudice, pure and simple. Being the self-styled 'paper of record', it was also expected to provide some thoughtful analysis. Hart's very determined decision to suppress that *Irish Times* analysis, lest it disturb the thrust of his story-telling, was the action of an academic liar. In a profoundly enlightening opinion piece, entitled "*How Count Plunkett Won North Roscommon The Inner Story Of The Contest (By One Who Was Through It)*", the *Irish Times* reported on 8th February 1917:

"The significance of the contest is to be found in the light which it throws on the mind of rural Ireland at the moment. Here is a constituency where three-fourths of the electorate are peasant proprietors under the various Land Purchase Acts. They were never getting better prices for their produce, and they were never better off. The Post Office Savings Bank deposits and the local banks are eloquent proof of this. Yet 3,023 of these men record their votes for the candidate recommended to them because he was the father of one of the leaders executed in Easter Week."

The *Irish Times* report did indeed emphasise the role of young Republican activists during that Roscommon election campaign. But its analysis had nothing in common with Hart's crude caricature of it as some sort of Maoist-style Cultural Revolution undertaken by landless Red Guard youth against their peasant proprietor fathers. *The Irish Times* correctly

saw it as an unqualified National Revolution by the peasant proprietors themselves against British rule and the Redmondite Party that had been compromised by Britain's Imperialist War. That *Irish Times* opinion piece had opened with the sentence:

"Count Plunkett won North Roscommon on the anti-conscription cry and the appeal to the people's sentiments in connection with the rebellion of Easter Week." (My emphasis.)

And it ended with a set of conclusions designed to disabuse its Loyalist readership of any illusions about what direction the march of Irish democracy was taking:

"The result of the election is a portent. It means that, if Mr. Redmond's party join the Liberal soreheads by forcing a General Election, they will be swept out of three-fourths of their seats in rural Ireland by the same forces that carried Count Plunkett to victory in a place like North Roscommon, believed to be so peaceful and so free from Sinn Féin and the rebellion taint." (My emphasis.)

And what of Crozier? He was a military man who neither cited the 1918 General Election results nor used the term "*self-determination*". But he made clear that it was an Irish **majority** he'd been sent to suppress, and the term he used was "*self-assertion*". Of the two grandfathers to whom he had dedicated his 1931 book, *A Word To Gandhi: The Lesson of Ireland*, he wrote of one, Major W.F. Percy:

"My grandfather, a retired Army officer and a resident magistrate in Ireland for years, said of Dublin Castle, the seat of Irish misgovernment and immorality, so far back as 1884, '*This place must be blown up some day. It is the only way; it's too vile!*'..." (pp86-7).

The declared purpose of the book was to appeal to British public opinion to learn the lessons of Ireland and not repeat the same misjudgements in India with even more devastating consequences:

"The lesson to be deduced for India is that Englishmen, Scotsmen and Welshmen must insist that the Lloyd George folly in Ireland, the Churchill folly about Natal and Ireland ... and the Coalition folly in Westminster in 1920-21, is not repeated in 1931-32 in India, Delhi and Westminster" (p76).

"Mr Winston Churchill, who as a member of the Government once did much to bring about and prolong the trouble in Ireland and then rectified his mistakes, is now making more mischief in India" (p85).

"The Lloyd George-Winston Churchill mentality in Ireland in 1920-21 was bad enough. Winston Churchill in India would be even worse" (p67).

"The most crying need to-day is for

men who think as Mr Churchill does about India to be kept out of Parliament and public life" (p36).

Notwithstanding his unrealistic faith in the Treaty as a final settlement, Crozier's introduction undoubtedly packed a punch:

"The 'trouble' in Ireland—brought to a conclusion in 1921 by a belated agreement with England after years of strife—and the 'trouble' in India—not yet terminated—possess a common factor. Both 'troubles' arose from a mistaken view on the part of the English of what is really true 'Patriotism'. What most of us—I am not among them—consider 'Patriotism' to be, is far from what 'Patriotism' really is. This mistaken notion has caused rebellions, revolutions, wars, massacres, slavery and misery, and incidentally, the so-called 'Irish Problem', 'Indian Problem, and long ago, 'the Problem' which lost England her North American colonies ... 'Patriotism', derived from *patria*, country, and in its turn from *pater*, father, is supposed to denote 'Love of Country'. Left alone it no doubt does, but alas, it has not been left alone, as to it has been added a vastly different ingredient, 'Loyalty'. 'Loyalty' to what?... 'My country, right or wrong'... Very nice, no doubt, but entirely immoral, for no 'Government' can be always right and no 'wrong' can be ever right... The truth is, as Washington and Collins found out, as Gandhi is finding out, by guile of Governments, 'Patriotism' (cum 'Loyalty') has become a world religion in which flags, statues, war trophies, unknown warriors, war memorials, shrines, tombs, cenotaphs, anniversaries of victories and 'great days', graves, war gratuities, promotion, profiteering and the two minutes' silence are worshipped and bowed down to as were the golden images by idolators of old. In the face of this false worship, nothing matters! Wrong is Right!" (pp11-14).

Poppycock is not without an antidote! Crozier went on to begin his first chapter thus:

"There is some similarity between the struggles of Ireland and India for self-expression. Both countries were in turn occupied by England for gain. Both became 'planted'. Both became permanently entwined in the mesh of English economics and finance... The denial of self-expression in the constitutional manner by England led both countries into the paths of resistance, Ireland eventually finding her soul at the pistol's mouth ... The pistol's mouth in Ireland in 1920 and 21 (resorted to because constitutional methods had failed for forty years) spelt unrestricted red blood on both sides" (pp17-18).

Crozier, the British Army Brigadier-General, did indeed describe assassinations carried out as part of Ireland's War of Independence as "*murder*" (while fully

acknowledging IRA ambushes as military action), but—unlike Hart—he did at least recognise it as a War of Independence, backed by the will of the majority of the Irish people:

"Michael Collins ... succeeded because, although (he) stooped to undiluted murder, they (Sinn Fein) admitted the offence as the only possible way out, while the British Government, employing the same means as its adversary, not only denied its use but endeavoured to saddle Sinn Fein with the atrocities committed by its agents! ... Ireland denied none of the murders committed her men, but still objects strongly to being saddled with the murders of such well-known Irishmen as McCurtain (Lord Mayor of Cork), O'Callaghan (Mayor of Limerick), the ex-Mayor of Limerick and Father Griffin..." (pp20-1).

Crozier noted how elected representatives had been particularly targeted:

"During the 'Terror' in Ireland, while Irishmen were at the mercy of the 'Black-and-Tans', and the 'Black-and-Tans' were being murdered by Irishmen, and martial law was in force in Munster, the Mayor and ex-Mayor of Limerick were murdered in their houses, in front of their wives, at night, during curfew hours, by policemen disguised as Sinn Feiners" (p81).

"The Lord Mayor of Cork and other public men were murdered by the British Government's police in order that the world should be made to believe that Sinn Fein was divided—which was far from being the case—the wicked and intensely stupid deeds being publicly credited in the Press to the Irish People... The victim of the RIC gunmen's bullets was Lord Mayor McCurtain, a prominent Sinn Fein volunteer, a Republican and a Member of the Imperial Parliament, who never took his seat at Westminster. This man was done to death in his house, in the presence of his wife, by a party of policemen disguised as 'Shinners', in the dead of night... A coroner's jury brought in a verdict of wilful murder against the authorities. Of course the men who made up this murder party were transferred separately to different and far-away parts of Ireland... When the English people became shocked from time to time at news of the murder of a presumably harmless Irish policeman walking on his country beat far removed from strife, they naturally did not understand. Why should they? How were they to know they were merely reading of the gradual extermination of the Cork police murderers? Every one of the murderers or accessories to the murder was eventually accounted for, including a senior officer, who, having been hidden in the Isle of Man for some months, was murdered shortly after his return to duty in another part of Ireland, on his way from church. The murder of this officer, in a Protestant quarter, caused more loss of life and

considerable destruction of property. The murder of McCurtain by the police was responsible for the murder or death of dozens, perhaps hundreds, of other people, for the gradual extermination of each policeman murderer caused a huge reprisal, and so on" (pp21-2).

This was a British war against the majority of the Irish people, as Crozier concluded (my emphasis):

"In the martial law area in Munster, warning proclamations were issued by the competent military authority ... setting forth the penalties for 'harbouring' rebels, 'carrying arms' or 'assisting the enemy'. These repressive measures were penalties for acts of rebellion. The fact was lost sight of by the military that the innocent suffered and *the majority of the population of Munster was in revolt* ... 'Harbouring' was thus universal ... After an ambush in the martial law area, the competent military authority invariably burnt the cottage or cottages of peasants nearest to the scene of the disaster, despite the fact that the occupants might have known nothing whatsoever about it ... But the trouble did not end there. After the burning of a cottage worth, say, £500, the local Sinn Fein rebels invariably took up the matter and arranged their own reprisal! As the rebellion had degenerated into a clash between upper-class misrule and the lower-class population, it was obvious that the Sinn Fein bonfires would not be kindled in the home of a mere worker, but would be set going in the £10,000 mansion of a landlord, which is exactly what happened! If the truce had not become operative in the summer of 1921, the ever-increasing vicious circle would have gone on expanding indefinitely. The burning of the £10,000 mansions and the refusal of insurance companies to pay, had a great deal to do with the advent of peace in Ireland!" (pp73-4).

For anyone who has had the stomach to read—or re-read—Peter Hart, a subsequent reading of F.P. Crozier, for all his sins, certainly comes as a welcome breath of fresh air!

Manus O'Riordan

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