**Sunday Independent**

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**KENNY SPEAKS TRUTH TO PAPAL POWER ON BEHALF OF PEOPLE**

**by Eoghan Harris**

But, hark! a voice like thunder spake,

The West's awake! the West's awake!

True, Enda Kenny did not speak with Thomas Davis's voice like thunder. But his words fell like a thunderbolt, followed by a forked lightning of illumination that lit up the Irish historical landscape, past and present, and showed us a far better future.

Like Bach's great Lutheran hymn Wachet Auf! (Sleepers Awake!), Kenny's speech called on the Roman Catholic officer class to wake from their sleep of the spirit. But it went on to warn them that if they cannot reform their religion, they must still live by the laws of the Irish Republic. Accordingly, its implications went far beyond the issue of child abuse which it formally addressed

Kenny's revolutionary speech was not simply a rebuke to the Vatican. It called for reform of the Roman Catholic Church, confirmed that Home Rule did not mean Rome rule, and returned the word "republic" to the Northern Protestants to whom it originally belonged. Like all great speeches it had good authority, slew a sacred cow, and spoke the truths that set us free.

By good authority I mean that only someone like Kenny, himself a practising Roman Catholic, could have taken on his own side and survived. By speaking from inside the fold he gave the rest of the Irish Roman Catholic flock the courage to show the door to the bad shepherds. But he was not the only Catholic layman to give a lead last week.

Another was the philosopher Mark Dooley, whose newly published Why Be a Catholic? courageously confronts what must be done if Catholicism is to survive as a religion of redemption. And while I think of myself as an atheist -- something that distresses my devout Protestant friend David Norris -- I found Dooley's book free of special pleading.

Unlike some Catholic apologists, Dooley does not perfunctorily acknowledge the suffering of children before rushing on to defend the church: he dwells on the horror of what has happened. But when he finally turns to reform of the Roman Catholic Church, he makes sense. A priest, he tells us, is not merely a social worker with a collar. He has to be first and foremost a holy man.

Growing up as a Roman Catholic, I met many holy priests. But their good deeds were shadowed by the Roman Catholic Church's abuse of power since the start of the last century. And to Kenny's speech, I could almost hear my own generation going back over a long list of the crimes of the Roman Catholic Church, most of them caused by an obsession with sex.

The Ne Temere decree of 1908 which attacked "mixed marriages"; the crawthumping Eucharistic Congress of 1932; the blocking of Noel Browne's Mother and Child Scheme in 1950; the boycott at Fethard-on-Sea in 1957; the arrogance of Archbishop John Charles McQuaid; the campaigns against contraception and divorce; and finally the revelations about child sex abuse.

Kenny's speech also slew a sacred cow, more precisely a Papal bull, more precisely still a Papal bully, namely the Vatican's praetorian guard and its pretension to a global remit. By rejecting that remit in the Irish Republic, Kenny rescued the word "republican" from any taint of Rome, and freed it up for future use by Northern Protestants.

The speech should also encourage southern Protestants to follow Bishop Paul Colton's lead in putting their heads firmly above the parapet of public life. This must go beyond engaging in empty ecumenical gestures. Southern Protestants should seek an accounting for the sectarian actions of southern Catholic nationalism between 1908-1922.

The Ne Temere decree of 1908 saw the Roman Catholic Church get into the marriage bed between Catholics and Protestants.

That evil decree, which deprived Protestants of marriage partners, was followed by enough sectarian actions by the Old IRA to cause the exodus of thousands of Irish Protestants after the War of Independence, and contributed its own tribal quota to the general loss of almost one-third of our Protestant population.

The Balkan war showed us how little it takes to frighten people from a village in which they have lived for centuries. Whether Irish Protestants left because of a bullet in the post, a billeting on their family, or an insult in a pub makes no difference. They were told in many ways they were not wanted and they left.

Bishop Colton's diocese of Cork suffered severely. Last week Sandra Murphy, in the Daily Mail, recalled that the IRA terror that claimed 73 Cork Protestants' lives in the 1921/22 period also touched the Musgrave family, which is today involved in the Superquinn takeover.

"John L Musgrave and his cousin, Stuart Musgrave Jnr, also a director, considered fleeing Cork if their lives became endangered."

Faced with the Old IRA's sectarian actions in the Bandon Valley, at Coolacrease and at Clifden Orphanage (to name only a few), some academic historians have reacted exactly as Catholic apologists did to the charge of clerical sex abuse. To borrow the words of Kenny's scathing summary, instead of hearing the sufferings of southern Protestants with St Benedict's "ear of the heart' they preferred 'to parse and analyse it with the gimlet eye of a canon lawyer".

Real republicans should be in the front ranks in publicising the sufferings of Irish Protestants in the period 1919-22. Because what happened frightened them into a forced amnesia about the actions of the IRA, and to politically keep their heads down. And that timidity, in turn, confirmed the fears of Northern Protestants that some subjects were taboo in the Irish Republic.

Even as committed an apologist for Irish republicanism as the Portadown Presbyterian George Gilmore found he had a breaking point. In a 1951 essay entitled 'The Republic and the Protestants' published in Sean O Faolain's The Bell, Gilmore listed public incidents which grated on his Protestant sensibilities:

"Presidential pledges of loyalty of 'the Irish people' to the Pope, lord mayoral pledges of the loyalty of the 'people of Dublin' to the Pope, of 'the people of County Dublin' to the Pope. Even the Congress of Trade Unions has pledged the loyalty of 'its' members to the Pope. When is a Portadown man an Irishman?"

Gilmore called on southern Protestants to object to their loyalty being pledged to a foreign power and concluded with these prophetic words: "If the influential leaders of Irish Protestantism did make such a protest, I have no doubt that a formula would readily be found whereby Irish Roman Catholics could emphasise their own religious loyalties consistently with recognition of the fact that something like one quarter of the Irish people have no such loyalty."

An old cliché claims all political careers end in failure. Political failure maybe, but not historical failure. Churchill, Gorbachev and Mandela are proof of that.

So even if Enda Kenny's government finally ends in economic tears, last week's courageous and cathartic speech will ensure him an enduring and honoured place in the history of Ireland.

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**DISGRACEFUL FORGERY CALLED THE DUNMANWAY DOSSIER**

**by Eoghan Harris**

Monsignor Denis O'Callaghan is another grey-beard loon. He came to the door of his Waterville holiday home putting on a doddery act for Paschal Sheehy of RTE. But my ear was trained by years as an RTE documentary producer and picked some evasive signals, so I rolled the tape back and listened again to the key passage.

Sheehy: "Do you feel guilt about that now? O'Callaghan: "Oh I do of course. Anyone who would not feel guilty about all, I suppose, the distress it caused so many people (fractional pause) my own bishop as well."

Clearly O'Callaghan can hardly wait to say sorry to the victims before rushing on to defend the bishop. As a former academic, he reminds me of the tenured species who barely register their regrets to Protestant victims in the period 1920-22 before rushing on to challenge the credentials of critics who put the Old IRA on the spot.

Just as O'Callaghan's first duty was to protect the children of the diocese who could not speak for themselves, so the first duty of academic historians is to protect past victims of the IRA who no longer have a voice. Like O'Callaghan, however, many of them look first to their tribal loyalties.

Accordingly, many academics keep collegial silence in support of colleagues who should have been called on to clarify their position on IRA atrocities such as the Bandon Valley massacre, the murders at Coolacrease, and the burning of Clifden Orphanage -- not to mention their failure to challenge the disgraceful forgery called the Dunmanway dossier, still used by ultra-nationalists to blacken innocent Protestants as spies.

These collegial collusions will be familiar to readers of Victor Klemperer's I Will Bear Witness: 1933-1941, A Diary of the Nazi Years. One of his most heartfelt entries, for August 16, 1936, is aimed at a fellow academic who lent support to the Nazi party. "I would have all the intellectuals strung up, and the intellectuals three feet higher than the rest; they would be left hanging from the lampposts as long as was compatible with hygiene."