[Published in History Ireland’s edition of March 2012 without last two paragraphs with reply from Busteed’s grandson in the May/June issue.]

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Dear Editor,

John M. Regan in *History* IRELAND (January/February 2012, pp. 10-13) commits the same elision/omission, for which he condemns Peter Hart, when he writes, “Initially, Hart said that the 1922 West Cork massacre was what might be called ‘ethnic cleansing’.” This phrasing appears on p. 237 of Hart’s 2003 book ‘*The IRA at War’.*

He then details some evidential changes and omissions by Hart and asserts that “on this spurious methodology rested Hart’s claims of ‘ethnic cleansing.’” However he does not explain his use of the word ‘Initially’.

This he omits to do because Hart a little later in that book (p. 246) definitively declares that “what happened in southern Ireland did not constitute ethnic cleansing,” and then explains why. So there is no doubt of his real and full view. Usefully, Hart added that the conflict in the north also fails his ethnic cleansing test.

So Hart is not guilty of a charge of calling the massacre ‘ethnic cleansing’. What then of the ‘spurious methodology’ or textual changes that underpin a non-existent claim?

They refer particularly to Frank Busteed whose involvement in the Cork massacre Regan says moves in Hart’s thesis from the main text, is then relegated to a footnote, and, in his first book, disappears.

Busteed may no longer get a mention as a participant in the Dunmanway killings but he does get indexed on eight pages of the ‘*The IRA and its Enemies’* (1998) with his ancestry and frequent military exploits well detailed.

Regan says Busteed was an atheist with a Protestant father and with siblings in the British Army. True. This is meant to explain Hart's increasing difficulty with a Protestant IRA man explaining his consequent textual marginalisation. But also true and critical are the facts that Busteed's father died when he was two, and he was raised a Catholic by his nationally-minded mother (as Hart says on p. 248) while the British Army brothers were brought up by a Protestant relative.

Busteed was simply not a Protestant so there is no reason for elision or any deliberate omission.

The execution of the four British intelligence officers at Macroom[[1]](#footnote-1) and whether there was a connection to the subsequent massacre of ten Bandon Valley Protestants remains a mystery to this day. It certainly confused Hart who on p. 280 of ‘*The IRA and its Enemies’* deals with the massacre and the four deaths, mistakenly footnotes an erroneous news report of three officers being released. However he cannot be accused of ‘ahistorically’ hiding a connection of which he had no knowledge especially as he puts all these items on the same page.

I noted Mr Regan’s remark about the IRA at the 28 September 2011TCD meeting that “they too can be sectarian.” However he added, without offering evidence, that “the Dunmanway informers belonged to a secret anti-republican organisation.”

This explanatory notion is based on the missing list of supposed informers that nobody is allowed to see. Let us at least agree to it being produced.

Yours sincerely

Jeffrey Dudgeon

1. http://www.cairogang.com/other-people/british/castle-intelligence/incidents/kilgobnet%201922/kilgobnet-1922.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)