

# < Trácht – Comment >

## ANOTHER HOWLIN HOWLER

Labour Party leader (for the moment) Brendan Howlin is complaining about the inauguration of the President of Ireland occurring on the same day as the centenary of the 1918 Armistice. That brought to an end the inter-imperialist war in which tens of thousands of Irishmen were induced to perish fighting for the British Empire by the quisling John Redmond. Russia did not share in the victory as the one-time ally of the Tsar had been overthrown in a revolution the year beforehand. One cannot but have compassion for the Irishmen who thus lost their lives, but the event is an attempt to fudge the fact that the conflict was not one for democracy or a 'war for small nations' (what about Ireland?) but a reactionary contest among bourgeois and aristocratic forces. However, one does not expect much more from the fast fading Labour Party.

*31 Aug 2018*

## THE EPITAPH OF LABOUR

Last week, the respected and astute columnist, Noel Whelan, wrote in The Irish Times about talk of a merger of the SDLP with Fianna Fáil. There was an interesting agusín to his piece. In this, he revealed that he had been speaking to some senior members of the evaporating Labour Party and that they had mooted the possibility of LP also merging with FF. It is not altogether surprising that some of the anti-national and anti-republican Labour leadership should now think this way. Perhaps they could thus reclaim a few government positions. However, it is doubtful if the bulk of Labour members would go along with them, among whom there are many sincere progressives, especially in the youth wing. But, in the event of this happening, they have an alternative – join a genuinely socially radical party which is unapologetic in its upholding of the Connolly republican tradition, namely Sinn Féin.

*30 Aug 2018*

## THE NORTHERN INSURRECTION

Today's media are full of reports about analyses, conferences and release of State papers concerning the 20th anniversary of the peace in the north brought about in 1998 and the ending of 'The Troubles'. It is about time that we became more politically accurate.

'The Troubles' consisted of two parts: a PERIOD OF UNREST from the Divis Street incursion by the RUC in 1964 to the attempted pogrom of nationalists in 1969 by unionists, and then the NORTHERN INSURRECTION from 1970 to 1996 when the IRA engaged crown forces and unionist extremists. It has been said that it would have been better if the civil rights movement had simply been allowed to follow its path. However, the experience was that the movement was beaten off the streets by the RUC, and then the British army (which had no right to be in Ireland anyway) shifted from initially protecting nationalists to 'containing' them as it was easier to do so with a minority, most blatantly with the curfew of the Lower Falls. And unionist extremists continued their attacks. That is the explanation for the NORTHERN INSURRECTION of 1970-96.

*24 Aug 2018*

CIVIL RIGHTS 1968 IN THE NORTH

Do you apologise for this, Drew Harris?



*18 Aug 2018*

## IRELAND & THE COMMONWEALTH

The question comes up from time to time as to whether or not the Irish Republic should rejoin the Commonwealth. The basic republican reaction is negative because the organisation is headed not only by a monarch but a British one. Moreover, it is redolent of empire even though it consists of post-colonial countries and a few never occupied by Britain. The idea nevertheless is suggested as perhaps a means of contributing to reconciliation and facilitating the path to Irish unity. However, I have to say that, in broaching the matter with unionists in the north, there is little joy I have found in these regards. Some working class unionists have never heard of the Commonwealth and those further up the line who have state that the Irish Republic rejoining is of no relevance to any kind of rapprochement. If that is generally the case, it would seem that contemplating rejoining is just a plain waste of time. I also detect that some 'southerners' have a notion to the contrary due to their lack of familiarity with unionists. However, others may have had different experiences. But these are mine.

*12<sup>th</sup> Aug 2018*

## CROPPIES LIE DOWN

Alex Kane, former communications officer for the Ulster Unionist Party, writes in 'The Irish Times' (16-7-18) about Gerry Adams at an annual commemoration in Mullaghbawn saying that Sinn Féin would continue to demand a border poll on Irish unity, and states that this "was a particularly unhelpful comment – " Of course, it is never unhelpful for unionists to constantly call for the maintenance of the union with Britain in perpetuum. Sensitivity towards unionists is to be observed, while insensitivity towards nationalists is to be discounted. This is nothing more than a modern and euphemistic version of 'croppies lie down'.

But it does not stop there. A typical accompaniment to this opinion is the tired criticism often made about our national anthem. A short while before Kane's comment, Andy Pollak (ex-Centre for Cross -Border Studies) trotted out in the same newspaper (14-6-18) the usual denunciation of the "militaristic, anti-British Amhrán na bhFiann". Others would see this as an historically proud expression of the heroic and militant resistance to British imperialism during the course of winning independence for the twenty-six counties. One trusts that citizen Pollak does not scrutinise too much the words of the Marseillaise, otherwise he might have an apoplectic fit.

*23 July 2018*

