

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



BRITISH SPECIAL FORCES IN GAZA?

THAT BRITISH Tory politicians should call for a halt to British arms supplies to Israel is most unusual, coming as it does from those who normally support Israel regardless of whatever military atrocities they commit. Britain's support for Israel depends on it abiding by international humanitarian law, threatened UK foreign secretary David Cameron, most unusually. That the deaths of six of the seven aid workers killed by Israeli air strikes recently were Western is not unique, although it is not typical. But the anger of the British government with Israel is most unusual. Why so?



David Cameron

A spokesperson for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees could not explain when asked why comparatively so little attention was paid to the 175 of its aid workers killed by Israeli forces. The standard, racist explanation is that Palestinian lives are less important than white Europeans. But does this really explain media and government outrage in the UK?

The Phoenix recently reported that many British media outlets had published a raft of stories last October about the SAS being deployed on standby in Cyprus in case they were needed to rescue British hostages seized in Gaza. However, a sudden silence descended on the UK media, which was explained by the issuance of a D Notice (see edition 8/3/24).

From Ukraine to Afghanistan and Belfast, undercover special forces of the SAS and

other units of the British Army have been deployed in various civilian roles, often as community volunteers and the like. The description of World Central Kitchen personnel as aid workers is truthful but it is not the whole truth. They were in fact security workers on a contract for their employer, Solace Global. While they may indeed have been motivated by charitable ideals, their military history and that of the principals in Solace Global indicates an enduring relationship with Britain's armed forces.

One was Derek Chapman, who was reported in the *Guardian* as being a member of the SAS before he moved into private security work. James Kirby had been a sniper with the British Army in Bosnia and Afghanistan, and James Henderson had served with the elite commandos of the Royal Marines before working with private security firms in various hot spots. The three were regarded as having skills learned in Britain's special forces.

Solace Global's managing director of its maritime section is Paul Queen and his firm boasts that he began learning operational and other skills in the Royal Marines. Martin

Continued on page 4

SURPRISING TO see that, according to filings in the Companies Office for Morrison Private Settlement Trust Operations (MPST), the colourful Ben Gilroy has changed address from dreary Navan to sunny Albufeira in Portugal, as has fellow director Charlie McGuinness, previously of Tully in Monaghan, albeit to a different address on the Algarve.

Many moons ago Gilroy was the subject of a High Court order from Judge Robert Haughton preventing him from providing advice to others who found themselves before the courts. Although the MPST didn't feature prominently in the 2018 case – concerning a legal action by AIB against borrower Seamus McQuaid – it did get a mention when Haughton discussed Gilroy's finances.

The trust had claimed ownership of assorted valuable properties (the subject of charges by AIB) and the judge raised the issue of "fees" allegedly paid to the trust, with Haughton claiming that Gilroy had "probably" been in receipt of remuneration "in respect of his activities as a trustee".

The recent filings for MPST show that Gilroy and McGuinness each hold 50%. The good news is that at the end of 2022 the trust, which was set up to assist those involved in distressed assets litigation, was sitting on an accumulated surplus of €176,000.

GLENCREE'S NEW FACES

THREE MONTHS on from the appointment by the Department of Foreign Affairs of consultants to carry out a review of corporate governance at The Glencree Centre for Reconciliation, a final report is awaited. What has arrived is a new-look board, as a result of assorted exits and entrances.

It will be recalled (see *The Phoenix* 9/2/24) that there had already been rather a lot of coming and going on the board at the Glencree Centre – a charity that is funded directly by the taxpayer to the tune of around €½m a year, with a further similar sum from assorted not-for-profit entities.

Despite the turnover at board level, however, there is no sign of barrister Ciarán Toland SC, who was announced as chairman designate last November. It was shortly after this that a number of existing directors resigned and were immediately replaced by Denise Collins (installed as interim chair), Barbara Walshe and Mary Curtin. The three amigos had previously served on the board for 12 years, nine years and seven years respectively.

Last month, all three exited once again, as did fellow directors Niamh Darcy, Sean McGearty and Aisling McKenna. In their stead come half a dozen new arrivals, the most high profile of whom are former Irish Writers Centre director Valerie Bistany and ex-*Irish Times* director and all-round establishment insider Tom Arnold.

They are joined by Aidan Horan, James Bridgeman, Robin Hanan, and Geoffrey Corry.



Valerie Bistany

CONTENTS

- Affairs of the Nation 3. Fowl Emissions/
Northwind 9. Last Refuge 10. Print 12.
Pillars of Society 14. Young Blood 16.
High Society 17. Scenes/Sport of Kings 18.
Funnies 20. Moneybags 24. Briefs 30.

Published by Penfield Enterprises Ltd.

44 Lr Baggot St, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 661 1062 (No caller I.D.) Fax: (01) 662 4532

Printed by Boylan Web Ltd.

Colour reproduction by Typeform Ltd. ISSN 0790-0562

e-mail: goldhawk@thephoenix.ie



Jan-Dec 2018, 11,710

www.abc.org.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ireland €89, UK & Eur €99, INTL €125

Tel: (01) 661 1062 Email: admin@thephoenix.ie

Subscribe online: www.thephoenix.ie

All credit cards accepted

www.thephoenix.ie

CORRECTIONS: When errors occur, it is the policy of this publication to have them corrected in the immediately next edition.
Tel (01) 661 1062 or email: goldhawk@thephoenix.ie



Continued from page 3

Veale's title is operations director – risk, with Solace Global boasting that, “following a successful career... in the Royal Marines and UK Special Forces, Martin has worked as a security consultant and advisor to military units, governments and blue chip companies. After a period working in the Middle East, Martin took the opportunity to join Solace Global Risk as head of operations.”

Veale's blurb on the company website gives a clue to the relationship between Solace Global and various “military units” and “governments”, doubtless all western.

The three men who were killed by the Israelis were obviously engaged in security work protecting aid workers in Gaza. But the western world, and especially Britain, is full of private security firms staffed by former military and intelligence operatives in their countries' armed forces and these firms invariably retain links with state security forces. We may never know the precise relationship that their firm may have enjoyed with British state security and its interests in Gaza.

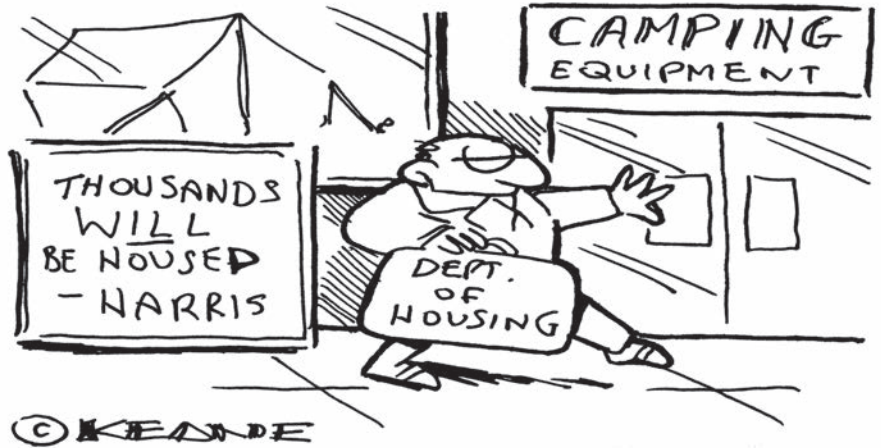
JOHN FITZGERALD'S DISMAL FORECAST

DESPITE ITS headline-grabbing effect, the report by John FitzGerald and Edgar Morgenroth, entitled Northern Ireland Subvention – Possible Unification Effects and predicting that a united Ireland would cost southern taxpayers tens of billions, got a cool response from some of the more discerning critics in this field. This would not be the first time that FitzGerald caused a stir with his distinctly pessimistic forecasts for a united Ireland.

One thumbs down this month came from a disturbing source, FitzGerald's old professional institute, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), where for some years he was its lead economist. However, the ESRI's current research director and economics professor, Dr Seamus McGuinness, delivered a harsh judgement on the subvention report, saying it was “static” and “unrealistic” in dealing with the manner in which unity would unfold.

“This mini-industry of estimating subvention... really makes no sense in terms of the reality of how a transition around constitutional change has to happen and has to be managed and planned for,” said McGuinness.

An equally wounding source, financial guru Cliff Taylor at the *Irish Times* – where FitzGerald has been a regular columnist for a century or two – was also unenthusiastic or at best agnostic. Taylor regards the subvention argument (the cost to Ireland of replacing UK subsidies) as one dimensional



and says the report “explicitly does not look at the wider economic impact of unification”. Taylor also points to other reports that predict “tens of billions in economic gains” that would result over seven or eight years, although he also says they might be optimistic.

FitzGerald wrote a strongly partitionist article in the *IT* five years ago headlined, “Irish unity poses greater risks to Northern Ireland than Brexit does”.

The newspaper simultaneously published a report co-authored with Morgenroth – entitled The Northern Ireland Economy: Problems and Prospects – on which FitzGerald's article was based.

The report predicted that a united Ireland would see living standards in the republic fall by 15%.

The latest ‘subvention’ report by FitzGerald and Morgenroth was published by the Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA), which describes itself as an international think-tank but which, despite its portentous title, is not an academic body.

It does, however, know all about subventions. Its founder, Brendan Halligan, devised an ingenious revenue-raising scheme, whereby each government department was requested to donate to the institute and the annual sums, which began at IR£1,000 circa in the early 1990s has since reached the level of at least €10,000 pa and much more from some departments. Banks and corporate bodies also contribute to the IIEA, which exists to promote EU federalism.

Unity in Europe but not in Ireland, it would appear.



John FitzGerald

JOYLESS JUNIOR JENN

IT'S A long way down from pre-breakfast delusions of becoming taoiseach to not even making it into Cabinet but that has been the career curve travelled by Jennifer Carroll MacNeill recently. Jennifer, however, must have known when she made the

first of several early morning phone calls soliciting leadership support within hours of Leo Varadkar resigning that she was likely to pay a price for such over ambition.

Apparently not, as junior minister Jenn was described by smirking colleagues as smouldering with resentment at Simon Harris's failure to appoint her to Cabinet. That she was given the plum job among the juniors as minister of state for European affairs did little to mollify her and she was quite unable to hide her pique at not being catapulted into Cabinet proper by the new Taoiseach. But Junior Jenn's colleagues were equally unimpressed with the south Dublin diva's sulk, given her failure to appreciate that her new job is the best of the rest after senior ministers.

One of the chief responsibilities of the minister for Europe is attendance at a relentless stream of meetings in Brussels and elsewhere, involving meetings with serious leaders across the globe. So it was interesting to note that, while previous ministers for Europe invariably accompanied the taoiseach on trips to Brussels, Junior Jenn did not travel to Europe with her Taoiseach last week.

This is a pity as Harris had lined up various meetings with such as EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen and others to discuss recognition of Palestine. Carroll MacNeill made it her business to revive the Oireachtas Ireland-Israel parliamentary friendship group and she followed this up by founding a similar Oireachtas parliamentary friendship group.

Not much has been heard about these inestimable groups since their foundation two years ago and presumably the minister will have little time for them now that she is in charge of Europe.



Jennifer Carroll MacNeill

TUBS TOUTS NEW PODCAST

Books are my great passion

Even when RTE keeps you off them

THE PHOENIX

SUBSCRIPTIONS: (01) 661 1062

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION

IAN O'DOHERTY'S
BAD YEAR

LAST DECEMBER the *Independent's* lovable columnist, Ian O'Doherty, wrote about what he described as "maybe the worst year of my life" but it doesn't appear that things are getting much better, with the dreaded taxman registering a judgment against the media company co-owned by O'Doherty and his missus, PR queen Sarah Gallagher.

Ian didn't tell his readers exactly what had made 2023 so forgettable but maybe his significantly reduced profile in the *Indo* had something to do with his sombre mood.

Certainly, the newspaper's owner, Mediahuis, appears to have adopted a strategy of less is more when it comes to O'Doherty, who has found himself reduced to a single measly column a week, having been a near permanent fixture in the paper Monday to Friday, including a weekend column in the Saturday 'Review' section.

Separately, he lost his column with the *Irish Daily Star*.

Happily, Iano has been able to pick up assorted other gigs and he continues to pop up as a commentator on issues such as 'snowflakes', woke culture etc. For example, Newstalks Kieran Cuddihy recently wheeled the hack on to his *Hard Shoulder* programme to discuss "the right to be offensive", with Ian predictably telling the host: "There's nothing that really offends me."

O'Doherty's journalism also features in outlets in the UK, including the *Spectator* (natch), where he pontificated this week on "the real reason Ireland is going to recognise Palestine". The Tory rag's readers were informed that the move "is the latest way for the government to punish the Israelis", with Ian adding for good measure: "Ireland is a cold house for Israeli Jews".

Meanwhile, since September last, public relations consultant Gallagher (who started



Ian O'Doherty

out in O'Leary PR back in the 1990s) has held the high-profile position of head of communications and engagement at Gaisce – Michael D Higgins's annual presidential awards for young people who complete certain challenges.

Before that, she worked on marketing for the Women's Mini Marathon for seven years.

Back in 2015, Gallagher and her outspoken journo hubby incorporated a "media consultancy" company called Cloisters Media Ltd. The Tereure-based couple are the two listed directors here and each holds a 50% stake.

According to the last accounts filed, Cloisters was sitting on accumulated losses of €18,000 at the end of 2022, following a deficit recorded for the 12 months of €30,000. Nevertheless, short-term creditors, "including tax and social insurance", were owed €134,000, up from €95,000 at the end of 2021.

It is not clear how the two busy media players managed to overlook the tax status of their loss-making company but last month the Revenue moved to register a judgment against it for a paltry €16,300.

This could turn out to be another forgettable year for poor Ian.

CATHERINE MARTIN'S
€7M HEADACHE

ARTS AND culture minister Catherine Martin came in for (yet more) criticism this week as a result of her ongoing failure to appoint a chair to the Arts Council, which has a budget this year of no less than €134m. Fans of Goldhawk will be well aware of how long it can take Martin to fill vacancies on arts institutions but there is also another issue relating to the Merrion Square Mafia that may have been distracting her.

Kevin Rafter, who had been appointed chair in June 2019, 'pulled a Robbo' at the end of last year when he opted to jump ship early in order to undertake a six-month sabbatical gig as a Fulbright scholar at Boston College.

Goldhawk is sure that, by the time he departed, the DCU academic was familiar with the car crash of an IT project that has started to ratchet up huge bills on Merrion

Square, way in excess of what was originally budgeted for.

Arts Council clients have been regularly informed for some time now that a new IT database system is in the offing. This is to replace the existing, much-derided and clunky system and provide a more streamlined online applications process for funding for the hundreds of client organisations and individual artists who are assessed for grants on an annual basis by the council.

The project dates back a number of years and while no one will tell Goldhawk how much taxpayers' money is involved, it is understood that an initial €2m was greenlighted after the initial sanction by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in July 2019.

Since then, there have apparently been quarterly "liaison meetings" between the Arts Council and Martin's mandarins "at which ongoing programmes are discussed, including the progress of the IT applications system".

Those meetings are presumably pretty short, given that there has been sod all "progress" to report, with the project having been the subject of redesigns. In the meantime, the meter is ticking at quite a pace, adding millions to the initial planned spend.

Goldhawk understands that a Grant Thornton consultant has now estimated that the finished product could be at least another three years away and the budget could yet top €7m. Given the council imposes very strict conditions in relation to the drawdown of grants by its clients, this is not a good look.

What any new chair of the Arts Council (as well as the six ordinary members still to be appointed) will want to know from director Maureen Kennelly is how the project has been managed, given the council's own lack of expertise in the IT area.

According to the arts department, it continues to be updated on the project, while the Arts Council had nothing to say about the budget for its IT upgrade but did admit that the existing user experience "is not good".

Furthermore, in relation to the so-called "transformation programme" that started nearly five years ago, "we are very disappointed for a variety of reasons this is not in place. We are engaging with the original contractors in relation to possible redress."

Watch this space.



Maureen Kennelly



"Yo! It's your TikTok T live streaming from The D with Vogue and Joanne!"



ROBERT NAIRAC RE-VISITED

ROBIN 'THE Jackal' Jackson, of the Portadown UVF, was the most notorious assassin of the Troubles. Virtually all commentators on those turbulent times believe he was a British agent, run by the RUC special branch. He was a key member of the so-called Glenanne gang.

Jackson led the UVF team responsible for the Miami Showband massacre in 1975. In December 2021, the British government paid £1.5m to the surviving members of the group and the relatives of those who perished. One factor in the collapse of the State's defence was the discovery of a document that placed Captain Robert Nairac, a British Army undercover operative, at the scene of the atrocity (see *The Phoenix* 31/1/20).

The state defendants in the Miami Showband case allege that the £1.5m payment was made without an admission of liability. This was nothing more than a face-saving exercise.

The UK police inquiry, Operation Denton, is presently looking at the activities of Jackson and the Glenanne gang, which encompasses the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in May 1974. The burning issue for the probe is whether any of them were British agents.

Unfortunately, Operation Denton has yet to re-interview Colin Wallace, a former British psychological operations officer who worked at British Army HQ in the 1970s. He has much knowledge of the gang (see *The Phoenix* 22/3/2024). The inquiry was meant to finish its inquiries in the spring and report next June.

Meanwhile, the families of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings are pursuing their action against the British state.



Robert Nairac

The Jackal was involved in that atrocity too. He drove the bombs used in the attack to Dublin. The British state brought an application before the High Court in Belfast seeking to have the action by the families struck out on a variety of grounds. The motion was rejected earlier this month.

It is perplexing that the UK threw in the towel over the Miami Showband massacre – led by Jackson – yet is fighting tooth and nail over the Dublin and Monaghan atrocity – also involving Jackson. All going well, the lawyers in the Dublin and Monaghan case will be able to produce the Nairac document, which shows the British captain was linked to Jackson and the Portadown UVF, when the hearing takes place.

In the legal action taken by the families and survivors of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, the NIO and MoD denied any involvement with the UVF gang in that atrocity. So they could hardly have admitted to the officers from Operation Denton that Jackson or any of his pack were British agents. Operation Denton, therefore, is unlikely to confirm that British agents were members of the Glenanne gang.

A new documentary on the atrocity, *17-May-74 Anatomy of a Massacre*, will receive its premiere at the Lighthouse Cinema in Smithfield, Dublin, on May 10.

GOING NUCLEAR IN IRISH SEA

IN RECENT years much has been made by various academics, media and politicians about Ireland's dependence on the Royal Air Force (RAF) for air defence. Independent TD and former Army Ranger Wing member, Cathal 'Gung Ho' Berry even went as far as describing the situation as a "national humiliation and embarrassment".

Strange then that the same voices, and even Gung Ho himself, have not drawn attention to other RAF activities in close proximity to Ireland.

A recent briefing document, released jointly by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Nukewatch,

describes how nuclear materials and warhead components for use in nuclear weapons are transported on 10 round-trip special flights annually by RAF C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft between RAF airbase Brize Norton in Oxfordshire and airbases in the US.

The RAF describes Brize Norton as "the largest RAF station" with over 7,000 personnel and contractors. Among other things, the station "provides rapid global mobility in support of UK overseas operations and exercises as well as AAR support for fast jet aircraft, both on operations and in support of UK Homeland Defence". The station's website advises the public to read its environmental policies and major accident emergency instructions. Here's why.



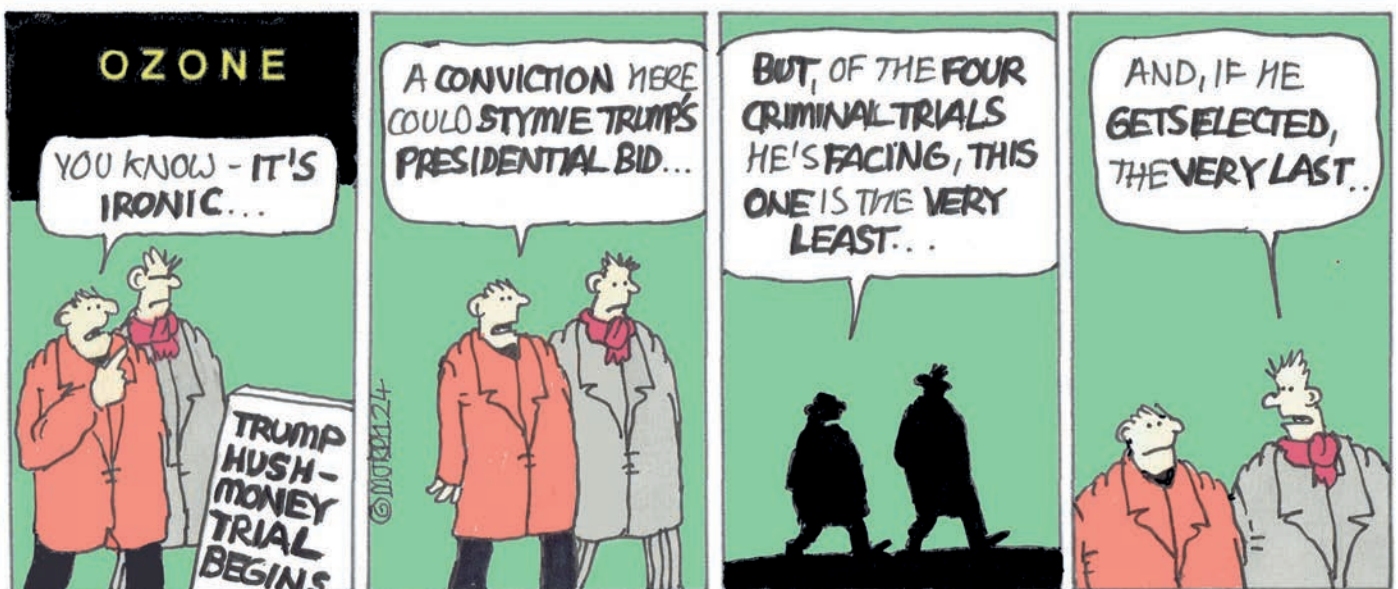
Cathal Berry

The CND/Nukewatch report outlines that special nuclear materials for use in Britain's nuclear programme are on board these flights including tritium, a radioactive isotope used in nuclear warheads; highly enriched uranium; a nuclear submarine reactor fuel and nuclear warhead component; and plutonium for warhead components.

When these special nuclear flights depart from Brize Norton they take one of two routes towards the Atlantic. Both routes, and the return trips, involve flying just to the south of Ireland, 25-30 miles off the Irish coast. While just outside Irish airspace, the flights are over Irish territorial waters and if an accident were to occur, it would pose a serious risk.

The report outlines how "both plutonium and uranium are flammable metals which burn easily if exposed to heat, creating a plume of radioactive smoke which is easily ingested. Tritium is a radioactive gas which is also flammable and can easily be incorporated in water and organic compounds, in which form it may be ingested. All three materials are carcinogenic."

Have our military enthusiasts and security experts nothing to say about this nuclear traffic in the Irish Sea?



**IF YOU NEED EFFECTIVE
RELIEF TAKE IT.**

IF YOU DON'T, DON'T



Brupro[®]
Cold & Flu film-coated tablets
ibuprofen 200 mg
pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 30mg
24 FILM-COATED TABLETS
Marketed by **ROWEX[®]**
Cold & Flu
TARGETS SYMPTOMS OF COLDS & FLU



Brupro[®] MAX
400mg Film-coated tablets
Ibuprofen
24 FILM-COATED TABLETS
Marketed by **ROWEX[®]**
TARGETED PAIN RELIEF
EASY TO SWALLOW



Brupro[®]
200mg Film-coated tablets
Ibuprofen
48 FILM-COATED TABLETS
Marketed by **ROWEX[®]**
TARGETED PAIN RELIEF

**AVAILABLE OVER THE COUNTER
EXCLUSIVE TO PHARMACIES**

ALWAYS READ THE LEAFLET.

Date of preparation: (11-21) CCF: 24572

Marketed by
ROWEX[®]