

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



GAS AND MIRRORS

A WHOPPING 40% of global warming to date is due to methane emissions. This gas is extremely potent, with a warming impact per molecule 84 times greater than carbon dioxide

One of the largest sources of methane is ruminants such as cattle and sheep and Ireland's hugely oversized livestock herd is a major source of these greenhouse gases.

The industry has tried to downplay the inconvenient impact of methane, including various efforts at promoting accounting systems that paper over its negative effects.

But the agri-industrial lobby appears to have struck gold, with a brilliant new concept called 'no additional warming'. In simple terms, rich countries like Ireland that are already major methane polluters should be given a free pass on historical emissions and instead



Marie Donnelly

judged only on not doing even more damage.

This patently disingenuous method has been adopted by the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC), the independent body charged with providing the state with objective, science-based guidance on climate issues. In June, CCAC chair Marie Donnelly told an Oireachtas climate committee: "Our analysis on the agricultural side is a technoeconomic one that is basically the Teagasc marginal abatement cost curve."

In other words, the CCAC depends on Teagasc, an agency dominated by dairy industry interests, for guidance on how to cut emissions from this very industry.

As Goldhawk has previously reported, Teagasc has been repeatedly denounced for its pro-industry stance, including its ill-advised endorsement of the so-called Dublin Declaration, a meat industry PR stunt slammed by international researchers.

The recent publication of bombshell research led by UCG found the new "temperature neutrality" model peddled by the CCAC and Teagasc undermines Ireland's climate ambitions and risks "locking in global hunger".

Lead scientist Dr Colm Duffy said: "It protects the status quo for wealthy countries while placing an unfair burden on poorer, food-insecure countries, limiting their ability to grow their own food systems."

Why would the CCAC undermine its independent status by promoting a

manifestly unjust and flawed methane accounting system? The answer is that it gets its guidance on agri issues from Teagasc, which is an *ex officio* member of the council.

An independent evaluation in 2020 of the CCAC (see *The Phoenix* 6/3/2025) warned that Teagasc's involvement on the CCAC was "blurring the lines between independent expert and stakeholder", and recommended it be removed as a council member. This advice was ignored.

This sleight of hand around how we account for methane will, according to the CCAC, allow Ireland to pump out an extra 9 million tonnes of carbon in the early 2030s. RTÉs George Lee bizarrely presented it as a "big academic row among climate scientists...who are at loggerheads."

This is hardly the case. The CCAC's position is in fact political and has no real backing from actual climate scientists.

THE BUSINESS Post had a front-page hatchet job by former government press secretary and oil exploration industry lobbyist Mandy Johnston on the 'sandal-clad' Greens. Hardly a cliché gets left behind, from the "Land Rover-driving green vote" to green bins and snails. Johnston omitted to mention her own angle as an industry lobbyist, in a piece wittily headed "Time to weed out Green policy". Ironically, her huffy umbrage at progressive environmental policies only serves to underline the enduring success of the last Green-tinted government.



MINORITY RULES OK!

LIKE MANY aspects of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), policing hasn't worked out as intended. Admittedly, policing wasn't part of the GFA text because it would have been a deal breaker so it was left to a Policing Commission chaired by former Conservative politician Chris Patten.

Unionists owned the RUC. It was their police force designed to uphold their unionist sub-polity. At the time of the GFA, it was 90% Protestant. Patten resolved to make the new Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) reflect the population divide. His main way of achieving it was to establish 50:50 recruitment of Catholics and Protestants.

Everyone knew it would take a long time to reach an acceptable balance, which stupidly the Irish government accepted was a unionist majority of about 70:30, a ratio unionists had proposed in 1922. Yet by 1998 the community divide was 60:40 and heading rapidly towards a Catholic majority, which arrived in the 2021 census.

Unionists hated the 50:50 recruitment stipulation. When Labour was defeated

in 2010, the DUP insisted on the new Conservative northern secretary ditching the provision, which he did in 2011. Catholic/nationalist recruitment stalled and then went backwards. In the latest recruitment round, just over 17% were Catholics. Soon there will be a minority policing the majority.

In April, SDLP MP Claire Hanna wrote in the nationalist *Irish News*: "The optimism and possibility of the Patten reform has ebbed away, through neglect by inadequate resourcing, failure to deal with the past, weak authority of the Policing Board and the persistence of operational and cultural relics within the PSNI." That's a pretty damning critique of the PSNI.

She also blamed the failure to deal with legacy as a major reason for the drop off in Catholic recruits. She said legacy was "constantly pulling resources and headlines back to the past... Truth and disclosure are blocked and the hostile environment compounded by PPS [Public Prosecution Service] decisions in relation to Operation Kenova."

The PPS failed to accept any of Kenova's recommendations to prosecute in the notorious British Army spy Stakeknife case.

The culprit is the British government, which has blocked proper examination of the past largely due to the nefarious

role of MI5 and British Army undercover units and their murderous conspiracies with loyalist terrorists, usually sanitised as 'collusion'. Despite promising to repeal the infamous 2023 Legacy and Reconciliation Act, Starmar has done nothing because of opposition in his

party to prosecutions of former soldiers. Labour veterans minister Al Cairns, a former Royal Marines commando, has threatened to resign if veterans are prosecuted for murder.

Hanna said: "The acid test is getting legacy right, based on the needs of victims and survivors, not the protection of perpetrators. The temptation to 'draw a veil' is a mirage."

She called for a review of policing. Some chance.

There has been total silence from Dublin on all of this for years, despite Iveagh House and the Taoiseach's Office knowing well what's been happening.

Figures now suggest Catholics make up 32% of the PSNI and this is falling, but this 32% includes Catholics from England, the Republic and even eastern Europe. PSNI civilian staff are 79% Protestant, while just under 90% of serving officers live in unionist districts and 80% of applicants to the PSNI live in unionist districts.

Not what the GFA intended.



Claire Hanna