

RESPONSES TO JOHN DOLAN

The Church and The Republic

John Dolan writes (Echo, 16.10. 2021) that “*Dev is squarely blamed for turning the new republic into a Church state, and many of the religious scandals of the past 50 years have been laid at his door*”. This is a strange accusation against someone who led the ‘*excommunicated party*’ in the 1920s when the state was clearly set on its ‘*church state*’ direction by the Free State parties and which set the tone for decades.

De Valera can hardly be held responsible as he was not in power during that formative decade and not being superhuman he and his party could not redirect the state in another direction immediately on coming to power. That had to wait for the Party to do so in the 1960s.

John Dolan goes on “*Furthermore, his decision to turn inwards economically was disastrous for generations, and completely at odds with the outward-looking, EU-loving [sic!] modern Ireland*”. De Valera’s policies in the 1930s created the basic industrialisation and housing structure of the state when the rest of the world was in the Great Depression. Our economy boomed.

John Maynard Keynes came to Dublin to support de Valera’s economic policies (19 April, 1933). The simple reason being that it was the most sensible economic policy of the time. The UK itself had broken with free trade and introduced tariffs for the first time. De Valera did what the world was then doing. And he and his party changed when the world situation changed and joined the EU in 1973.

John Dolan does not seem to appreciate political context and some basic historical facts when commenting on de Valera.

Pat Maloney (Editor, *Labour Comment*, CORK), 23 Oct 2021

Our President and the NI Centenary

John Dolan (*The Echo*, 25/9/21) castigates our President for not attending the centenary event on Northern Ireland. The President’s action is quite understandable. What is Northern Ireland, and what is there to commemorate?

Nobody wanted a 'Northern Ireland' entity. Edward Carson, leader of the Unionists did not want it because he explained that he did not want to rule over Catholics.

Britain, when conceding separate statehood to the greater part of Ireland, retained six counties within the British state. But, unlike Scotland and Wales, Britain did not allow these counties to function within the actual democratic, party-political life of the state they were retained in.

Britain set up a subordinate system of government in those counties and insisted for its own purposes that they must have a separate political system of their own, apart from the state system.

This arrangement put Unionists in charge of local policing which meant essentially Protestants policing Catholics for decades. This began with Catholics being driven from jobs they worked at, homes they lived in and businesses they owned. This attempt at ethnic cleansing affected thousands and resulted in the death of 498 people. Victims also included "Rotten Prods", mainly socialists and trade unionists.

Think of it! The UVF, or their successors, were deliberately placed in control of Catholic streets, villages and townlands for fifty years!

Northern Ireland was therefore based on a permanent sectarian conflict which eventually led to a 28 year war and that has proved to be the only way of ameliorating the situation.

The system put in place satisfied nobody. It was deliberately designed to foster discontent in both parts of Ireland. And it was completely successful in this, leading to the deaths of thousands over 28 years.

The President could not in all conscience be seen to commemorate such a history and has had the moral courage to say so and act accordingly.

Pat Maloney (Editor), *Labour Comment*, 2nd October 2021