

Aubane Historical Society
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Editor
The Southern Star

Sir,

WHAT IS THE WEST CORK HISTORY FESTIVAL?

On a number of occasions I have attempted to engage Simon Kingston of the West Cork History Festival in discussion. I encouraged him to broaden out from repetitious advertising of revisionism, particularly in depicting West Cork during the War of Independence. I treated him as well-meaning if foolish in his approach.

I now see I was sadly mistaken.

Simon Kingston's recent *'The Critic'* review of Kevin Myers' memoir reveals a fully paid up member of the outer-edge Eoghan Harris / Kevin Myers / Ruth Dudley Edwards school of pro-British Irish 'history'. See <https://thecritic.co.uk/issues/april-2021/the-bracing-blast-of-a-dissident/>

Myers is held to represent "a draught of fresh air in the often conformist fug of Irish journalism... [who] pointed to the direct connection between the savagery of the Provos and the "physical force" tradition of earlier Irish republicanism". Furthermore, Myers "made a major contribution to the deconstruction of the image of the noble "Old" IRA and its valiant fight against the evil Brits. Notwithstanding the efforts of useful idiots like Ken Loach, a much more honest account of the Irish revolution had emerged, including its grubby, sectarian, elements." Myers engages in "skewering the furious quietism of the Southern Protestants of later decades ... personified here by the *Irish Times* editor Douglas Gageby."

Unfortunately for Mr. Kingston, Kevin Myers, Eoghan Harris and their historian of choice, the late Peter Hart, are discredited. The notion of a 'sectarian IRA' exists only in the minds of true believers, for whom facts constitute (to quote Eoghan Harris) a form of 'media masturbation'. Myers and others condemn southern Protestants for not joining in their fantasy history. Protestant republicans like former Irish Times Editor Douglas Gageby are treated with furious venom.

I am pleased that the Aubane Historical Society was in a position to present an alternative more objective view of the War of Independence for festival goers. We distributed "The Embers of Revisionism", by Niall Meehan and Brian Murphy, at the first festival. We followed up with a debate that took place on the *Southern Star* letters page, initiated by Tom Cooper, and other

material. It is available from the Society and is also online. Unlike the witterings of our over-promoted opponents, our analysis meets objective tests.

One final point, Mr. Kington originally claimed that the Festival was run by a broad though unseen 'Committee'. I was sceptical. I am therefore also pleased that Mr. Kington admits in his Myers review that "My wife and I run the West Cork History Festival".

Yours etc.,

Jack Lane
Aubane Historical Society