



Members of the Irish Defence Forces pass the GPO during the military parade to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising 90th anniversary.

PHOTO:LEON FARRELL PHOTOCALL IRELAND

... 11th ... 16th ... had been successful and

What would have happened if Michael McDowell's grandfather had been successful and there had been no Rising and Easter week had not happened? Answer in one word: Scotland

Back from visit to loony world of revisionism

In the weeks before Easter, I attended a political cabaret at Craw Daddy in Dublin's Harcourt Street. It was an entertaining and illuminating night. Anchored by David McWilliams, the evening was a huge success.

It was funny, iconoclastic, intelligent and enjoyable. Visit langerland.com to see their take on the Rising. Hilarious. Their animation on the Rising spliced with the A-Team had the place in hysterics.

Apart from seeing Councillor Killian Forde acquit himself very well against Eoghan Harris during the on-stage debate, I got to think about the lunacy of the revisionist world view.

A key component of their view is that 1916 was a huge mistake. That home rule was on its way and that we would be in better shape today as a society if Patrick Pearse had stayed in bed and James Connolly had stuck to organising workers.

Harris' view is that, essentially, his grandfather was wrong to participate in the Rising.

Redmond was right, Pearse and Connolly wrong.

That, essentially, the 1916 conspirators snatched a backward religious state on a partitioned island away from the jaws of a peaceful home rule Ireland.

After the Great War, fought for the rights of small nations,

In the 26 Counties, we are, as David McWilliams would have it, "a full-on nation". David McWilliams' nation ends at Dundalk but, within the Dublin city-state where he is a resident wise boy, he is correct.



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Redmond would have delivered.

The question is a genuine one. What would have happened if Michael McDowell's grandfather had been successful and there had been no Rising?

What would the island be like today if Easter Week had not happened?

If the editor were pressing me to answer in one word, I would pick this one: Scotland.

Scotland did not rise up in arms against England, despite very similar social conditions and a history of being conquered, planted and annexed in earlier centuries.

Today, Scotland has a meagre measure of home rule. Enoch Powell was, of course, absolutely correct. "Power devolved is power retained."

Today, Scotland is still owned by Westminster, and

Scotland's population is declining.

In the 26 Counties, we are, as David McWilliams would have it, "a full-on nation". David McWilliams' nation ends at Dundalk but, within the Dublin city-state where he is a resident wise boy, he is correct.

When I discussed with him the main thesis in his book *The Pope's Children*, his essential view was that to gauge the reasons for the economic success of the 26 Counties, he was unequivocal: "Follow the people and follow the money."

His view is that the economy, which boils down to record levels around the Dublin city-state, is benefiting from a late baby boom that coincides with the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979.

In Scotland, where the Pope visited three years later, the opposite is true.

The figures, compiled by National Statistics, show that:

- The total population of Scotland is projected to fall from 5.11 million in 2000 to 4.93 million in 2025;
- The number of children aged under 16 is projected to fall to 78 per cent of its 2000 level by the year 2025;
- The number of people over pensionable age is projected to rise by 15 per cent to nearly 1.1 million in 2025. (Without allowing for the change in the pension age of women from 60 to 65 be-

tween 2010 and 2020, the number of people over pensionable age would have increased by 36 per cent between 2000 and 2025.)

Quiet simply, Scotland with home rule in Britain is declining. People are leaving. Those who are left are getting older.

I visit Scotland regularly to see family there. The place has no spring in its step.

The 26-County state is at the top table in Europe.

What is said or done in our name may be an issue of contention — for example, the use of Shannon to make war on Iraq. However, the key thing is things CAN be done in our name.

1916 made that so.

It is strange being in the same company as Garret FitzGerald but, just this once, I'll agree with him.

1916 salvaged our respect as a nation. It was the price of freedom. We owe so much to the men and women volunteers of Easter week.

To see where we would have been without the Rising, we only have to look at the land of Connolly's birth.

That country's young men are still lifted off the dole queue to go and keep the oil companies' peace in Iraq.

The Scottish "parliament" has no say in what foreign adventure Tony Blair will send the Jocks to next.

It is not often I find myself agreeing with Garret FitzGer-

ald. He believes that his father was correct to be "out" in 1916.

I similarly believe that my father's clan in Mayo were also right to be there when the odds seemed impossible and success a delusion.

When my grandmother's brothers returned from Frongoch prison camp, the political landscape of the entire island was changed — utterly.

Today, the people of the 26 Counties are in control of their political landscape in a way that is beyond the people of Scotland or, indeed, those of the North. 1916 is the reason for that.

The revisionists wish us to suffer from collective amnesia on that.

It would be crass folly if we followed them into denial.

*Phil Mac Giolla Bhain is a writer and freelance journalist based in Donegal. Glasgow-born, he was active in Irish community affairs in Britain throughout the 1980s and 1990s. He has practised and taught social work and holds degrees from York University, Swansea University and the Open University. Since being in Donegal he has written extensively on the issue of young male suicide. Last year his first play *The Flight Of The Earls*, which dealt with the issue, was performed at the Balor Theatre in Donegal.*