



FRAGILE CONSPIRACY: How can the far right be to blame when the state, Bill Gates, George Soros, Hillary Clinton or any of the other popular supposed villains of the hour are controlling our minds?

Backward looking Irish far right want to recreate old state of biases

THE mobilisation of the far right in Ireland has been a strange episode to watch from afar. It has thrown up some very unlikely figures, some who previously existed on the fringes of society now awarded a platform via the internet, some who had a fall from grace and are using it to maintain relevance.

In America the swing to the right – and the kick-back to that – has seen that country divided as never before, neighbour turned against neighbour. The people are now the enemy who Trump seems determined to throttle into submission. Fixing the cause of unrest is always easier than subduing an uprising. Trump chose the latter. Fixing the huge inequality, disparity of distribution of wealth and the racial divide is not in the current president's purview, his votes gathered from division rather than unity.

This should all act as a cautionary tale to those of us watching a nation devour itself from the other side of the Atlantic. In Ireland the movement is less about inequality and seems more driven by egos. The leading lights in the far right, yellow vest movement include those who have been scorned at some point; people with means and privilege who seem obsessed by the lives of those who have nothing; those with an axe to grind against the state or simply society in general.

Rather than face the cause of that resentment, it's easier to lash out and place all responsibility for their own predicament onto others. For how can they be to blame when the state, Bill Gates, George Soros, Hillary Clinton or any of the other popular current supposed villains of the hour are

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controlling our minds?

The Great Replacement theory, that a new world order is plotting to replace us all with migrants from the developing world, is so fragile a conspiracy it doesn't stand up to even the slightest scrutiny.

Footage of desperate people making perilous journeys and crammed aboard unstable dingies or into the back of sealed lorries seems a very inefficient way for the new world order to conduct its business.

In reality at the root of the Irish 'patriot' movement is racism and a fear of a world that has changed socially so as to leave some baffled by their surroundings. Just as the English far right, the EDL, Britain First and

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before that the National Front dreamed of a post-war, white-only England, when Britannia ruled the waves, the Irish far right want a return to a world where church and state were as one; an Ireland where women were treated as second-class citizens, who were punished for having children and punished for not having them; a bleak, grey, awful Ireland that I feel no nostalgia for.

Whether their cause be immigration, abortion, same-sex marriage or, more recently, the right to not wear a mask, 'patriots' trek across the land with a camera phone in hand just waiting on a challenge they can upload for self-affirming attention.

Conspiracy theorists are impossible to reason with. When presented with facts they simply turn the facts into part of the conspiracy. They turn any criticism of their conspiracy into proof that there is a deep-state plot and anyone who disagrees with them is part of that. It is a rabbit hole that once down there's no coming back from.

It is easy to dismiss this movement as crackpots, far right loons, rabble. But that would be to feed it, create resentment and turn ordinary people into fodder for the far right.

Racism and sectarianism are two sides of the same coin, and both need confronted.

We of all people should know what it is like to live in and feel part of a divided society.

I want to live in a new Ireland, one where there is hope and equality, not one with cross-carrying racists calling the shots and trying to drag us back with them to a time best consigned to the history books.

ON THIS DAY

SEPTEMBER 10 1920

Battle of York Street

THE City Coroner, Dr James Graham yesterday resumed the inquest on the victims of the recent disturbances. Nine of the men were killed in city centre rioting on August 30th.

The first cases were those of John Thompson, Henry Hobson, John Coad, Samuel Colville and Adam McClean who were shot in York Street area on August 30th.

Mr Cecil Florde, KC said that most of these deaths occurred at the same time a little after 10 a.m. On the 30th August at about seven o'clock in the morning an attack was apparently made on shipyard workers when going to their work. This immediately led to retaliation and desperate fighting started. In the course of that fighting large crowds of people came up as unfortunately and stupidly tended to happen, and some of these people unhappily paid the penalty of their curiosity. Deaths might have occurred amongst the rioters but Counsel thought in the majority of cases they were not taking part in rioting but they were entangled in the mobs that were fighting and bullets directed at the belligerents struck them.

The police who were on the spot early tried to cope with the hostile mobs and to separate them but when the stone-throwing changed to rifle and revolver fire – and he might point out that service rifles were being used of the very latest pattern – the police sent for the military. An armoured car arrived about 10.30am. The shots that were fired were by the armoured car and when it arrived the firing by civilians was intense.

Lieutenant Munden, First Somerset Light Infantry said that when the armoured car arrived a pitched fight was in progress. Firing was going on and some of it was directed towards the car. The gunner was ordered to fire at people who were firing and did so.

District Inspector Ernest Gerity [RIC] said that at 9 a.m. he received information that there was rioting in York Street. There was a large crowd of people near the Metropole Hotel and they were kept back by a picket of the Norfolk Regiment. Firing was going on further up in the side-streets between York Street and North Queen Street. The most intense firing was from the southside of Great Georges Street at the foot of which was a large crowd of shipyard workers.

The victims of the 'Battle of York Street' on a normal workday morning included young men on their way to work. Most were killed by military machine-gun fire. The youngest was a 17-year-old boy, Henry Hobson from Cromwell Road, an ardent football fan.

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