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Irish Humanitarian Assistance: Clinton Institute and the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs at Fordham University

Bringing together experts from academic, political and non-governmental associations in May this year, the Clinton Institute worked with the Institute of Humanitarian Affairs at Fordham University to organise a conference on the history and future of Irish intervention in humanitarian action. The event, which took place on Fordham University's campus in New York, sought to assess the contribution which has been made by Ireland in international humanitarian incidents throughout history.

Brendan Rogers, Director General of Irish Aid, gave a keynote address in which he reflected on 'the past, present and promise' of Ireland's role in humanitarian assistance. His dedication to the cause of humanitarian aid and Irish governmental responsibility in these areas was clear. He declared that "if we work together on these three fronts I firmly believe that within a generation we can eradicate acute malnutrition and we can seriously reduce the extent and impact of man-made disasters."

In a panel addressing the impact of the Irish legacy of famine and its connection to our current involvement in humanitarian assistance, Niall O'Dowd, editor of the *Irish Voice*, argued that it is important to remember Ireland's role in such emergencies in our current times of austerity. Other voices within the panel debated the overuse of the term 'famine' – with Cormac

Ó Grada (UCD) and US author David Rieff arguing that the term is too casually used, while Tom Arnold, the CEO of Concern, commended the ways the Irish government is working to devise new programmes to treat acute malnutrition.

Discussions also involved the changing roles and new challenges of NGOs and governments in humanitarian

of funding cuts on the UN, while Greg Gottleib of USAID argued for greater cooperation between public and private bodies in setting developmental goals. A final session focused on questions of education and philanthropy, with the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Fordham, John Harrington, speaking about Irish literary and cultural representations of humanitarianism, and Pat Gibbons (UCD), arguing for an interdisciplinary model in education as key to the development of humanitarian action. Loretta Brennan Glucksman, Chairman of the American Ireland Fund, helped to close the discussion by reflecting on the commonalities between philanthropy and humanitarianism such as the partnership work undertaken by Concern and the Gates Foundation.



From L-R: Dr. Kevin Cahill (MD), Mr. Brendan Rogers (Irish Aid), Mr. Greg Gottleib (US Aid), Mr. Amitabh Desai (Clinton Foundation).

assistance, with Amitabh Desai of the Clinton Foundation discussing the Foundation's role in meeting development needs in areas where governments were unwilling or unable to move forward. Others, including Kevin Cahill, MD (Fordham), discussed the impact

This event represented the first in a series being co-organised by the Clinton Institute and the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs, launching further collaboration between UCD and Fordham University in the field of Irish and US affairs.

Ireland & African America Conference

Organised by one of the Institute's current Ph.D. students, Louise Walsh, the Ireland and African America conference took place in March of this year. Conceived as a way to highlight the many interactions between Irish and African-American histories, from the slave trade to contemporary popular culture, the event also brought scholars from both fields together in a transatlantic exchange.



James Miller of George Washington University and Bruce Nelson of Dartmouth College.

Innovative and insightful talks focused on representations of Irish and African-American identity on film, stage and in literature, with particular pieces of work delivered on Isaac Nelson, the African Blood Brotherhood and the Easter Rebellion, and on Irish and

African-American cultural interactions in 1920s New York. Professor Luke Gibbons (NUIM) also gave a plenary lecture on representations of slavery in the controversial work of 19th-century Cork artist James Barry, drawing the discussion into the question of the power of the state and citizen's rights in more contemporary eras.

Special attention was given to the life and work of black abolitionist Fredrick Douglass, who came to Ireland in 1845, and particular sessions reflected on Irish national attitudes to race and the experience of being Irish in African-America. Professor Diane Negra (UCD) spoke in her lecture about ways in which contemporary Irish-American comedians Denis Leary and Kathy Griffin harness African-American tropes in order to bolster an Irish working-class identity, demonstrating the complexity of these intertwined ethnic identities.

The final plenary of the conference by Professor Eric Lott (Virginia University), "Before James Brown There was Jesus': Pop Messianism, Bono, Bruce and the Geopolitical Unconscious" can be seen on the Clinton website at www.ucdclinton.ie.

Dr. Andrew Sanders Launches *Times of Troubles*

Dr. Sanders, the John Moore Newman Research Fellow in Diaspora, Conflict and Diplomacy at the Institute, has recently launched his new book, *Times of Troubles: Britain's War in Northern Ireland*. The book represents the first academic study of the British Army's Operation Banner in Northern Ireland (1969-2007), the single longest deployment in the history of the army. It explores the question of how a liberal state responds to armed threat from within its own borders and how it should respond. It considers how the state should define the rules of engagement for its troops and, if such operations become definable as war, how it may affect those who are called up.

Providing insight into how British military operations developed over the course of the late-twentieth century,



Times of Troubles shows how the British Army adapted its strategy from the post-war mind-set of the late 1960s towards one more appropriate for the challenges of a new century. The book is published by Edinburgh University Press.

Ph.D. Student Profile: Javad Alipoor

Iranian Ph.D. student Javad Alipoor decided to come to the Clinton Institute to pursue his doctoral research following advice from a number of American Studies experts. "I received my bachelor degree in Political Science and Islamic studies and an M.A. in International Relations from Imam Sadiq University of Tehran," Javad explains. He went on to achieve a second Masters' degree in American Studies from the Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran, where his interest in US foreign policy developed.



PhD student Javad Alipoor

Javad's doctoral research project, "US Foreign Policy towards Iran in the Post-9/11 Era: Soft Power Perspectives," is an interdisciplinary exploration of American foreign relations influenced by Joseph Nye's "soft power" theory. Javad explains his interpretation of this theory, which focuses on how, after the events of September 11th, 2001, the US "was forced to pay more attention to the non-material aspects of power" in the region. This interpretation guides his investigation of US engagement with Iran through international broadcasting, social media, public diplomacy, and citizen-based diplomacy, including the work of US broadcasts in the Persian language such as the VOA Persian News Network and Radio Farda. "The main goal of this research is to investigate these approaches and programs," says Javad, who focuses particular attention on satirical socio-political shows such as "Parazit" and "Radio PasFarda." Javad's decision to relocate to Dublin to pursue his research has paid off, he believes. "I think that studying in UCD and living in Dublin will be a memorable part of my academic and personal life."

Media and the Arab Spring

The role of the media in the uprisings in the Arab world in the recent past caught the attention of the world, and this conference, organised by the Clinton Institute in April this year, reflected a determination to focus a scholarly gaze on this role. The conference also involved representatives from the media itself, including journalists, media analysts and filmmakers from the US, the UK, France, Belgium, Egypt, and Tunisia.

The conference addressed questions of the images and digital culture of the Arab uprisings, with one panel reflecting on the legacies of anti-colonial struggle in these images. A plenary talk given by the Tunisian writer Kamel al-Riahi discussed the power of satirisation

Current Ph.D. Research Projects at the Institute

Javad Alipoor 'US Foreign Policy Towards Iran in the Post-9/11 Era: Soft Power Perspectives'

Madhi Bahmani 'US Public Diplomacy Towards Iraq'

Adrienne Hawley 'Modern American Religions in Ireland: the Strategies and Effectiveness at Gaining Irish Converts'

Brian Hurson 'City of Broken Angels: Fragmentation, *Noir*, and the Black Dahlia Case in the Collective Memory of Los Angeles'

Ben Miller 'Expatriate Encounters: William S. Burroughs and the Transnational Configurations of National Literature'

Geoffroy O'Connor 'Pursuing Investment: American Investment in Ireland'

Martin Russell 'Diaspora Strategies and Conflict Transformation: Irish America and the Northern Ireland Conflict, 1968-1995'

Mical Russo 'Staging Death: Memorial Photography in America'

Louise Walsh 'A Comparative Analysis of the Harlem Renaissance and the Irish Literary Revival'



Left to right: Liam Kennedy (UCD), Ayman el-Desouky (SOAS, UK), Caroline Rooney (University of Kent), Scott Lucas (University of Birmingham), Rita Sakr (UCD), Michael Graae (photojournalist), Joseph Massad (Columbia University), Mary Fitzgerald (Irish Times)

and the work of novelist Taher Ben Jelloun. An afternoon conversation between the Institute's Liam Kennedy and photojournalist Michael Graae deliberated the challenges of representing revolution, demonstrating with a number of powerful images taken during the uprisings in 2011.

Irish Times foreign correspondent Mary Fitzgerald opened the second day of the conference, examining her experiences covering the different uprisings, and elaborating on some of the challenges faced by journalists in such situations. An afternoon plenary lecture by Prof. Caroline Rooney (Kent) and

Dr. Ayman el-Desouky (SOAS) engaged with the visual and verbal media of Egypt's political transformations, reflecting on the roles of aura, rhythm and the sacred in such communication. A panel dealing with the concept of filming revolution dealt with amateur video, You Tube, and the online reporting of Gaddafi's capture and death. The conference was brought to a close by Prof. Joseph Massad of Columbia University who harnessed Machiavellian theory to consider the relationship between Arab rulers and their people, with reflection on the role of US foreign policy in light of these links.

Newly-Minted Clinton Institute Ph.D. holds Graduate Show

Dr. Fiona Hackett, a Ph.D. student with the Clinton Institute for the past four years, celebrated passing her *viva voce* at the end of May. Dr. Hackett's work is, remarkably, the first practice-based Ph.D.



Dr. Fiona Hackett (centre) with her joint advisors, Prof. Liam Kennedy and Dr. Justin Carville (IADT).

within the College of Arts and Sciences in UCD, involving the preparation of a body of creative work alongside the more traditional research component. Accordingly, Dr. Hackett hosted an exhibition of her photographic work in the UCD Research Building, showing work from her project, "Terra Incognita: Photography, Seismology and the Imagining of Southern California."

Inspired by Southern California's geology, the photographs shown in the exhibition were of earthquake epicentres, while also showing the people who live in and around the seismically active landscape of that part of the world. Dr. Hackett's work ties the concept of seismic uncertainty to the lived experience of uncertainty, showing through her photographs the story of contemporary life pursued on an unsettled continent. Images from the exhibition can be found on Dr. Hackett's own website, www.fionahackettphoto.com

Semester Abroad Student James McManus Reflects on his Time at the Clinton Institute

This year saw the third year of the Semester Abroad programme at the Clinton Institute, hosting a new group of students from universities in the United States. The programme, which is designed to offer visiting students an international perspective on their home country, offers undergraduate teaching at the otherwise postgraduate institute. This year, we asked one of the visiting students, James McManus, from Fordham university, to speak about his experiences over the semester.

“My grandparents are from Cavan and much of my family still lives there, so I had always planned on studying abroad in Ireland. I’m an American Studies major back in the states, so the Clinton Institute seemed like a natural fit for me academically.” James didn’t have too much trouble fitting in at UCD or in Dublin — “Being a relatively small city, I started to feel comfortable and at-home in Dublin pretty quickly. When I first arrived I spent many afternoons walking around the city centre, absorbing the culture and learning my way around. One day, about three weeks after I arrived, I was on Leeson Street and a woman from New York asked me for directions; I remember being surprised that I knew



Clinton Institute Semester Abroad student James McManus

how to direct her.”

It seems that it was the opportunity to focus on familiar topics — for an American Studies major — in a new way that most challenged and impressed James, as in the module “America Abroad” run by Dr. Barry Shanahan. “We discussed the literature of American outsiders and related it to our own experiences as temporary expatriates and strangers to Irish society. Even though I had already encountered a few of the texts we read in my American classes I understood and experienced them in a

completely different way after studying them from the abroad perspective.”

Speaking for his group, James concluded that “studying in Ireland allowed us to view American Studies through a lens that wasn’t tinted by our own nationality, teaching us to approach our own history and social issues with a newfound honesty and sense of context.” Such insights are valued by the programme organisers, and the Institute looks forward to welcoming a new group of Semester Abroad students in the coming academic year.



Speakers at the Fight Against Hunger conference, Tom Arnold (Concern), Niall O’Dowd (Irish Voice), Prof. Cormac Ó Gráda (UCD), and David Rieff (author).

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(University of Leicester)

Upcoming Events

17th November

Conference: “The United States and Northern Ireland: The Diplomatic Perspective”

November 2012 (date TBC)

Clinton Institute & US Embassy debate: US Presidential Election 2012

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