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Ukraine: The Turning of the Tide?

Kiev has launched by far its most successful counter-attack since the Russian Special Military Operation began on 24th February this year. The Ukrainians gained large swathes of territory in the North East around Kharkov that Russian forces were occupying and administering, as opposed to simply performing military operations on.

Does this constitute a turning of the tide in Ukraine?

The Ukrainian success has certainly made the West cock-a-hoop. General Sir Richard Shirreff, former British Army and Deputy Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, told an interviewer on *Times Radio* on 14th September:

“What we have seen is a masterclass in the operational art by the Ukrainians... This is a brilliant operation and the Russians are in a bad way and completely routed. The initiative has passed firmly to the Ukrainians... This all points to a collapse of Russia... a collapse in Russian morale which has been rubbish since the start of the war... I draw a historical parallel from what is happening now and what happened in 1917 when the Russian Army collapsed on the Eastern front before the Bolshevik Revolution... When morale collapses things can happen very quickly...”

The Ukrainians are not going to be beaten. They suckered the Russians... This was not opportunistic. Clearly the history will come out. You only achieve this sort of result if you really thought about it, planned it, you war-gamed it and rehearsed it and assembled the forces necessary to do it...

The West must double down... The Germans have been pathetic... Now is not the time to take the foot off the gas. We need to reinforce success. We need to give Ukraine the tools to do the job. If this momentum builds Ukraine will win quite quickly... If the West really takes the gloves off and ramps up support with weaponry, ammunition and logistics Ukraine can maintain the necessary pressure... Putin could behave like a cornered rat and lash out (with nuclear weapons) so NATO needs to be ready for it and the worse case—war with Russia. We need to totally mobilise for this war.”

This view – usually in more restrained form—has been parroted widely across the British media by its military analysts, presenters and those it selects to interview to reinforce the State narrative. The general opinion aired on the BBC, with great exuberance, is that the tide has turned in favour of Kiev, the Russians are hopelessly demoralised and it will all probably be over by Christmas, or before.

Ukrainians and American lawyers interviewed on UK media talked about the Russia leadership facing Nuremberg-style trials, paying Reparations to both Ukraine and the West and even facing territorial loss. It is sounding like what was done to the Kaiser’s Germany in 1919 is going to be done to Russia if certain people have their way. Only a very few of the interviewees have been more cautious and realistic about the events of the past fortnight.

Just a few weeks before the Ukrainian counter-offensive, Lord Richard Dannatt, former Chief of Staff of the British

Army, made a much more realistic assessment of the situation in Ukraine for *Times Radio* on 24th August. He said:

“There is a danger that Boris Johnson’s visits to Kiev gives them an optimism that realism does not suggest... Russia is not going to lose this war and I cannot see Ukraine winning it. At some stage this conflict will return to negotiations. The Russians will never go voluntarily and I cannot see how the Ukrainians will ever be strong enough to throw them out and the West will never mount a Kuwait-style operation to throw them out. Reality is going to have to be accepted and a new *modus vivendi* worked out with Russia left controlling part of Ukraine’s territory whether we like it or not... Zelensky has got to realise that he cannot throw the Russians out and has to start negotiating.”

This realistic view of Lord Dannatt was completely undermined by the euphoria that the Ukrainian counter-offensive produced in the West.

It also meant that the Russian Special Military Operation, in its present form, was finally seen in Russia as having exhausted its potential to resolve the conflict to the Kremlin’s advantage.

The present writer, in the course of the last 7 or 8 months, has been at pains to describe political, military and economic events in as realistic way as possible to aid understanding in the West.

At this point, therefore, we should carefully consider the various stages of this war, how it has developed and where it might go after the events of the last few weeks in order to see the context of what is happening.

Phase 1: Late February to Early April

Seven months ago, in late February 2022, the Kremlin ordered the Special Military Operation in Ukraine. It did so to prevent Ukraine’s admission to NATO and to head off a Ukrainian attack, using 50,000 troops, on the Donbas republics, which it believed was imminent. The Kremlin used Article 51 of the United Nations Charter to justify its pre-emptive action. Its stated objects were demilitarisation and “*denazification*” of the Kiev regime.

The Russians opened the operation in the North by launching a rapid thrust toward Kiev. Russian battalion tactical groups overran a great deal of territory but made absolutely no attempt to convert their occupation into permanent possession.

The Western media presented this as an attempt to capture the Ukrainian capital. That was utterly ridiculous. A national capital of 3.5 people with heavily guarded government and security headquarters, in which arms had been freely distributed to the civilian population, is unlikely to fall to a few thousand troops. Even if had been seized, how was such a force, even reinforced by tens of thousands more, going to administer, police and fight off insurgents and much bigger Ukrainian relief forces coming from other areas?

If this was meant as a lightning strike on the Ukrainian capital, aimed at decapitating the Ukrainian leadership, it failed. It encountered stiff Ukrainian resistance. That resistance was overcome after a few days by the Russians after some heavy losses suffered North of Kiev. Russian forces then began to envelop the Ukrainian capital with the intention of intimidating the Ukrainians into a quick settlement.

The decapitation strategy might have appeared to be a long-shot but it would have been understood that the alternative was a long grinding war in the East. So it was worth a gamble.

Perhaps the Kremlin believed a military coup could be triggered against the Kiev Government, or alternatively it would be forced into agreeing to Russia's conditions for an ending of the Special Military Operation. These conditions would have been the removal of the Ukrainian Army from the Donbas, the acceptance of Crimea as part of Russia, and the repudiation of any NATO association plans. Russia would retire to pre-February military positions.

Fiona Hill, former senior official under Presidents Bush and Trump, confirmed in *Foreign Affairs* that the US knew of the details of this deal and set out to prevent it.

This was presumably Putin's attempt to end the conflict in Ukraine, which had been building up since 2014 and which had reached a crisis point in early 2022, in the quickest and easiest way. It failed, however, resulting in 6 months of military conflict and the political/economic war on Russia by the West.

It failed for two main reasons:

Firstly, the West replied to the Special Military Operation with full political and economic backing and presented the Ukrainian Army with extensive military supplies, making it able to resist Russia's move to force an early decision in the war.

Secondly, when the Ukrainians appeared to be buckling at the Istanbul talks and seemed ready to agree to the Kremlin's conditions, and to a potential summit, they were discouraged from doing so by the West.

The Kremlin's hopes for a speedy end to the conflict were disappointed when Zelensky suddenly rejected all the concessions his negotiators in Istanbul had apparently been willing to make in the draft Istanbul agreement.

It was believed by both Russia and Turkiye that only refinement was necessary to make this agreement work to end the War. Witnessing the Western sabotage of this settlement made a strong impression on President Erdogan of Turkiye (a member of NATO), and his movement toward Moscow has been evident ever since.

In anticipation of an agreement with Kiev, Putin had ordered his forces to move back from the positions they had occupied on the outskirts of Kiev. However, following a phone call to Zelensky on April 2nd from the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and Johnson's unexpected visit to Kiev on April 9th. Kiev stonewalled.

Johnson communicated to Zelensky the message that, if Ukraine was ready to sign an agreement with Russia, Washington and London were not. Zelensky would be on his own, without security guarantees, if he signed a ceasefire agreement that made any concessions to Russia. This made an agreement impossible.

Zelensky acquiesced in the US/UK pressure for war and ended negotiations by making new demands that Russia could not accept.

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Russia's objective of achieving a swift settlement on its terms with Kiev failed because Washington did not agree to it. It wanted a long war to drain Russia of blood and treasure. Ukraine's role was as the battering ram in this objective. It would provide the blood and Washington the treasure. That was the bargain made between Zelensky and Biden.

Three days after Boris Johnson left for home, Putin stated that talks with Kiev had reached an *impasse*.

With the military thrust and enveloping of the Ukrainian capital having failed in its political objective, Russian forces began to be withdrawn from around Kiev and Kharkov to fight an extended war in the East aimed at demilitarising and “*de-nazifying*” Ukraine by grinding down the Washington-supplied forces.

However, while having failed to achieve its main political aim, the Russian military thrust toward Kiev had achieved the military objective of a feint, in allowing the Russians to make territorial gains, particularly in the direction of Kherson, while Kiev's forces were tied down in defence of the capital.

The Russian thrust convinced the Ukrainians to weaken their main field army, then fighting in the Donbas region, to bolster the defences of the capital and other prominent cities. After spending 5 weeks in the North, around Kiev and Kharkov, the Russians left as rapidly as they had arrived.

The West and Kiev presented this as a great victory but it wasn't anything of the sort—although it undoubtedly raised morale among the Ukrainians and reinforced the narrative of heroic Ukrainian resistance required in the West to drum up support for Kiev.

As a result of the operation in the North and the diversion of Ukrainian forces, Russian forces were able to drive toward Kherson and capture it on March 2nd, take Volnovakha on 12th March, Izyum on 17th March, and surround and pin down the Azov Battalions in Mariupol by the end of the month. The Azov forces hid in a formidable Soviet built bunker system requiring the Russians to devastate the city in order to neutralise them.

In the South the Russian thrust from Crimea was of a very different character to the operation in the North. Russian operations in the area between the southern sea coast and the Dneiper River took permanent possession of large population centres before installing friendly administrations within them.

This served to incorporate territories inhabited by a large number of ethnic Russians into what could be called the “*Russian World*”. Like the thrust on the northern Front, Russian southern operations encouraged the Ukrainian leadership to commit to the defence of cities, included the ports of Mykolayiv and Odessa, forces that might otherwise have been used in the defence of the Donbas region, where the main fighting was to occur over the next 6 months.

To make it clear: *The Special Military Operation* was never meant to be a Russian war on Ukraine. It was a strictly limited military expedition by Moscow aimed at changing Kiev's policy through intimidation using physical force in order to head off a perceived serious threat to Russia's security.

Phase 2: Mid-April to mid-August

After the Kremlin's failure to subdue the Kiev regime and force an early settlement over the course of the opening weeks of the War, a period of around four months of attritional warfare ensued in which Russian forces moved steadily but cautiously forward in the Eastern regions of Ukraine.

However, despite Western disinformation which saturated the media in the Anglosphere, it was clear that Moscow had very limited objectives in its *Special Military Operation*.

The most obvious evidence for the limited objectives was the size of the expeditionary force, which was capped at between 150,000-200,000 and never exceeded the size of the forces arrayed against it on the Ukrainian side, except in localised fighting.

At the outset, Ukrainian forces numbered around 250,000 front line troops with 900,000 or so reserves, volunteers and recent conscripts. All the time Ukrainian forces were being replenished and increased whilst the Russian expeditionary force was merely maintained at its set operational level.

Russian forces were mainly made up of Ukrainian-Russians from the Donbass (Donetsk and Luhansk) numbering around 50,000, the Wagner private group of ex-Russian soldiers and officers, and Kadyrov's 2000 or so Chechens.

Regular Russian forces employed in Ukraine consisted mainly of artillery/tank and aviation support for local assaults, and internal security forces used to occupy towns captured from the Kiev regime in Donetsk and Luhansk.

There is very little Russian infantry

in Ukraine. The main bulk of the Russian Army, probably around 80 per cent of its normal strength, remained in Russia, presumably readying itself for a full declaration of war or a possible NATO escalation if necessary.

This meant that the Russians had to be very cautious and conservative in their limited offensives. These were characterised by large artillery barrages, aimed at destroying the extensive Ukrainian defensive fortifications, and then, when the Ukrainians had been sufficiently softened up and Russian casualties judged to be potentially minimal, ground forces were sent in to capture villages and towns.

This enabled the comparatively small Russian force, while avoiding high casualties, to inflict them on the larger Ukrainian defending forces at a much higher ratio.

It was also becoming clear, despite Western misinformation, that the Russians only had limited territorial ambitions in Ukraine. These amounted to securing the defence of the strategically important Crimea and its hinterland, along with the Russian-oriented regions of the Donbass, up to the area around Kharkov in the North-East.

By early July, with the fall of Sievierodonetsk, the Luhansk oblast/People's Republic had been practically secured for the Russian-Ukrainians, along with most of the territory of the Donetsk Oblast/People's Republic. That meant around 20 per cent of the former Ukraine was under Russian-oriented control.

No reinforcements were brought up by Moscow and progress almost ground to a halt by the end of Summer. Ukrainian forces were allowed to retreat out of cauldrons rather than any attempt made to destroy them.

It was speculated that Moscow's ultimate objective might include Odessa and Kharkov city. However, the limited size of the expeditionary force and the conservative nature of the Russian advance meant that, even if this were true, barring a sudden Ukrainian collapse, such objectives would be only undertaken in 2023 and when greater forces were brought to bear—if they ever were.

During the previous 6 months there had been no successful counter-offensives launched by Kiev's forces. Any movements forward by Ukrainian armed forces were into territory already vacated by Russian forces being redeployed to more strategic areas of the Front.

Instead the Ukrainians had ensconced

themselves in urban areas, among civilian populations, or in robust fortifications built up over previous years.

Eastern Ukraine, including the Donbas, has a lot of meandering rivers and small towns, and this is why the Ukrainians dug in and held the towns using local populations, whose allegiance to Kiev was questionable to say the least, as shields against Russian bombardment.

Therefore, by the end of the Summer the Kremlin, having withstood the West's economic war, and not being concerned too much with territorial acquisition, evidently thought it could grind away at Kiev's forces in a controlled, business-like war of attrition with time not being against Russia.

The only pressure to make further advances was the increasing supply of longer-range weapons to Kiev, such as the HIMARS. These were used by Washington to entice Russian forces to move forward, so as to engage in more risky and costly forms of warfare. That strategy would have necessitated the deployment of greater numbers of Russian forces in Ukraine.

Coupled with this were the sabotage operations in Crimea.

However, there was no evidence of a Russian response to these provocations.

It may even have been the intention of the Kremlin to attempt to Ukrainianise the conflict at this point, minimising Russian participation as much as possible; and to let the War go into largely static mode, with most of the territorial objectives having been fulfilled.

Death and destruction of Ukrainians are not a problem for the West *per se*—only in reducing their will to fight. And Russian deaths and destruction are the objective of Washington: to lure the Russians further and further onto the *glacis*.

In the course of the Summer, Kiev's forces concentrated on defending territory and looked largely incapable of any mobility in its offensive movement.

The pro-Russian commentators on social media were satisfied with the progress of the Special Military Operation and churned out daily reports of Russian victories, large Ukrainian losses and predicted imminent breakthroughs and the collapse of Kiev's forces.

The Russian MoD estimates of Ukrainian losses of 87,000 dead (Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation Sergei Shoigu claimed 62,000) and over 200,000 wounded pointed to such

a scenario—if these figures could be believed. (“Dima”, the Belarusian military analyst, has estimated these losses, probably more accurately, at around half these figures.)

Nevertheless, with Kiev's forces sustaining 10 times the losses the Russian forces were suffering, there was no way an effective defence could be maintained in the medium term.

There was one major voice of dissent—Scott Ritter, the former UN Weapons Inspector in Iraq, who has proved to be a substantial commentator.

Ritter, former US Intelligence, said in a May interview with Ray McGovern that the \$53 billion financial and military supplies the West were providing to Kiev was enabling it to assemble, train and equip a large army in the rear and this could be a transformative “*game changer*” in the conflict leading to a new reality on the ground.

For making this assessment, he was ridiculed and shunned by many of the pro-Russian element and ceased appearing on their channels.

However, Ritter proved to be, at least partly, correct. His view was that the Russians could not make substantial gains in the East against the formidable Ukrainian defences with such a limited ground force.

This lack of Russian deployment gave Kiev time to rebuild and increase its forces, with NATO training and equipment. In fact, it also allowed Kiev to keep a large part of its army and Western-supplied material out of the Frontline in preparation for a late Summer offensive. The small size of the Russian force enabled the Ukrainians to keep the bulk of their forces, and some of the best, outside the direct conflict zone, just as Moscow was doing.

As Ritter notes, by August the Ukrainian Army had become a NATO army, rather than a Ukrainian army armed by NATO. Operational and logistical planning for this Ukrainian NATO army was increasingly being taken over by Washington and London—making it much more effective and mobile than the previous force force, which had been built by Kiev over 7 years. It was working to a NATO strategic plan employing manoeuvre warfare for the first time.

While Ritter believed that the liberation of the Donbas—Russia's territorial objective of the Special Military Operation—was attainable, he reasoned

that Moscow's other two objectives—demilitarisation and denazification—were unachievable, given the size of its forces.

The fact is: *demilitarisation* had been a complete failure with the creation of a NATO army in Ukraine; and there was little prospect of *de-nazification* occurring through the overthrow of the Kiev regime and its ultra-nationalist core.

Phase 3: Late-August to ?

Pressure had built up on Kiev from both Washington and London to launch an offensive to show that Ukraine was capable of rolling back the Russian advance. Kiev had been provided with an impressive amount of weaponry by the West and the Ukrainian state was being entirely supported by Western subventions. Both Washington and London required a return for this outlay, particularly with the imminence of US mid-term Elections in November.

It was up to Zelensky to deliver something that would provide a PR boost before the Winter to demonstrate to an increasingly sceptical Western public which, particularly in Europe, was making increasing financial sacrifices to fund the war effort.

The propaganda effort could not indefinitely be relied upon to carry the Western public through the hardships in prospect, if nothing but slow defeat was in prospect for Kiev. The hyped-up minor successes of the Ukrainian forces, amplified by the Western media as “*turning points*”, were having decreasing purchase on public opinion. The “*miracle at Kiev*” story was looking increasingly fanciful and singular in the face of the one-way traffic on the battlefield ever since.

Kiev's forces launched a much-advertised counter-offensive in the Kherson area to the South in early September. It was beaten back in a few days with very heavy casualties being suffered by the Ukrainians—who had apparently deployed new recruits, who had been hastily trained in the UK.

Kiev's forces attacked across open terrain, where they were easily destroyed in vast numbers by the defenders of Kherson. Unusually, the casualties of as much as 15,000 (estimated 4,000 killed) were reported in the West, and influential newspapers immediately lowered expectations of Ukrainian military success. It was a substantial defeat in the most important strategic area, although news of it was buried by subsequent events elsewhere.

Another, smaller, Ukrainian amphibious thrust was made toward the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. This was also defeated by the Russians with smaller losses.

However, at the Izyum Front, east of Kharkov, which had been relatively static for months, the Ukrainians made a surprising and substantial breakthrough of more than 30km in a few days using a sizeable force of 30,000 men.

Here, in a long thrust, they encountered only light pockets of resistance from Luhansk People's Republic forces and small numbers of Russian Interior forces, who were speedily evacuated.

There was very little actual fighting and strategic withdrawals were conducted by Russian forces in a number of areas, including Izyum.

Izyum was a town which had been captured in March and was previously seen as strategically important by the Russians as the gateway to Slavyansk, but which, due to the impenetrable forests south of it heavily occupied by Ukrainians, had proved to be a *cul de sac*.

There were also territorial losses to the Russians near Balakliya and surrounding villages on the outskirts of Kharkov.

Later it was learnt that the Russians had been denuding this area of forces for at least a week prior to the Ukrainian counter-offensive in the area. Western satellites had presumably located the weaknesses of Russian deployment at this point and directed Kiev's forces there to take advantage.

This area was by then only composed of sparse, static, holding forces of local militias, internal security and others resting. Russian reserves were seen to be located too far away to arrive in time to stabilise existing lines, even if the Russians had desired to do so.

Ukrainian forces had been assembled for around a month in substantial number, so it was surprising that Moscow did not anticipate such a large thrust. Some Russian observers concluded that Russian forces were stretched too thin across a Front of well over 1,000 km and this was proof that the small expeditionary force of the Special Military Operation was inadequate to the military objective in Ukraine.

Others, engaging in wishful thinking, believed it was a carefully prepared trap to lure the Ukrainians onto the offensive where they could be dealt with more easily than in defensive positions, by reinforcements called in from Russia. A Russian

MoD statement backed up this theory.

In fact, it looks like the Russians simply chose to withdraw from the territory to preserve their soldiers for another day, seeing the big forces assembled against them. If they had not, thousands would have been lost and thousands more would have been paraded in Kiev as prisoners.

A fighting retreat was conducted and a new more compact defence line on the Oskl River and to the South was formed. Very few casualties were taken, whilst the Ukrainians were reported to have suffered a couple of thousand killed as they advanced, brought about by Russian artillery and aviation.

Kiev was quite willing to sustain heavy casualties in return for liberated territory and Ukrainians are undoubtedly willingly prepared to sacrifice themselves. In terms of territory, Kiev had reversed the Russian gains of four months in the Northern sector in only 4 or 5 days, yielding a PR triumph.

It appears that the Ukrainian counter-offensive in the North had not been launched to obtain such a great gain of territory and there was surprise in Kiev at the extent of the advance. It may have had more limited territorial objectives aimed at drawing in Russian reserves from the Donbass. But the speedy Russian departure, described as a "*regrouping*" by Moscow, was to do with Intelligence reports that a fourth and most important Ukrainian counter-offensive was about to begin from Ugledar, where forces of over 40,000 with large armoured divisions were being amassed. This was believed to be aimed toward the cities of Donetsk and Mariupol with the object of smashing the People's Republic of Donetsk and finishing the war.

Whether such a significant offensive takes place now remains to be seen. But it is probable that the Russians evacuated the entire region North East of Kharkov, leaving the Ukrainians with an extravagant gain in territory far beyond their operational objectives, to protect against such a dangerous eventuality.

Time will tell if the Northern counter-offensive was only a momentary Ukrainian territorial triumph. Kiev has used up as much as 40 per cent of its strategic reserves, built up over the Summer, in expanding around Kharkov. More forces will be required for the consolidation of this territory, which is close to the Russian border and could be threatened again quickly.

There have been more Ukrainian attacks since without the same success and Kiev is demanding even more supplies from the West if it is to repeat its success. Will the Ukrainian territorial gain blunt any major offensive planned in the more vital Fronts to the South and represent a tactical victory but strategic defeat for Kiev in the longer term?

As Scott Ritter predicted, Washington has become increasingly active in Ukraine's war effort—that is now effectively a NATO war effort—focussed on the main weakness of the Russian Special Military Operation: its limited manpower. The thrust in the North was successful because it was a NATO battle plan, carried out with modern Western training and equipment and satellite surveillance. This was publicly admitted by the Chairman of the US *Senate Intelligence Committee*, Mark Warner, claiming Washington's vital contribution ("*and our friends, the Brits*") to Kiev's success. What is apparent is that the self-limiting Russian military intervention in Ukraine can be out-manoeuvred by Kiev's NATO army because Russia lacks the manpower to defend the large Front it was spread out across. So it has been forced to prioritise certain sectors as strategically vital and abandon others.

The most serious aspect of the Russian abandonment of this area is what happens to the civilians left there. Russian forces helped evacuate many civilians and large columns of refugees were seen heading toward the border with Russia.

In much of Eastern Ukraine the populace does not support the Kiev regime. It would have been quite happy to have settled down under an administration of Russian-Ukrainians protected by Russian forces. Many Russian Ukrainians have been disappointed with Moscow's attitude toward them for at least a generation. They consider themselves Russian and not really Ukrainian and feel that Moscow insists on them being called Ukrainian because it continues to see Ukrainians as brother Russians, despite evidence to the contrary—particularly since 2014. (The book *85 Days in Slavyansk* by Alexander Zhuchkovsky, provides a good insight into the views of Russian Ukrainians).

Kiev's forces regards these Russian Ukrainians as "*enemies within*" and there have been reports, even in the Western media, that the hunt for "*collaborators*" is first on the agenda of

Kiev's forces when they advance into any area vacated by the Russians. The Kiev regime's *State Bureau of Investigations* announced: "*The time of reckoning has come*". Locals have been sent texts asking them to identify "*traitors*" for punishment. Filtration of civilian populations is taking place and 15 years imprisonment is being implemented for any form of "*collaboration*".

Summary justice is more than likely in the circumstances. There is evidence that much of the killing at Bucha, outside Kiev, in March, was done by Kiev's forces conducting "*cleansing operations*" against "*collaborators*". This was aside from the Russian killing of captured local defence volunteers, widely reported in the Western media. Vitaly Kim, the Governor of Nikolayev, recently announced that special squads had been formed to hunt down and summarily execute collaborators. He declared that "*Traitors will be executed, it will be like that. And I am not afraid of this word.*"

It is likely that those executed by Kiev's forces will be presented by the Western media as having been killed by the Russians. Already a story about a mass grave of 400 in Izyum has saturated the Western media to distract from Ukrainian filtration activity. That 400 died in the battles for Izyum is hardly surprising and it would be normal practice to bury the dead in mass graves during wartime at the frontline.

But the presentation of misinformation to US and European populations—who have been carefully closeted from the realities of war for generations—in order to generate outrage, is everything to those who wish to control the narrative and prevent opposition to the War.

Phase 4?

In the West Russia is presented as a brutal totalitarian society ruled by an evil dictator. But, if the BBC is anything to go, by Britain has assumed a much more all-encompassing totalitarian character than anything that is in evidence in Russia.

The British party consensus is united behind an uncritical warmongering line. When there is no opposition within the British parties and political spectrum, there is unanimity of thought and information in the society. However, opposition does seem to be growing, if social media and the ordinary conversations of people are any guide, but it has no political outlet to make it of any consequence in the UK or in Europe.

Russia appears to be different. After reports of the evacuation of the North came through, much in evidence was a range of political views about the conduct of the Special Military Operation. It was openly on display in the Russian media, including discussion as to whether the limited Special Military Operation should give way to a full-blooded war in Ukraine.

The Western intention six months ago was to provoke an Opposition to Putin in Russia which would overthrow him and replace his administration with a pro-Western Government. However, the War has helped to nullify any pro-Western Opposition which might have existed, and it has generated a more hardline and leftist tendency that is less moderate than those who command the Kremlin.

There have been increasing demands that the Kremlin throw off the self-imposed constraints on its military activity—which seem to be in place to limit the conflict and avoid escalation with the West. The argument was that this was not just a war against a West-backed Kiev regime but a *de facto* war against NATO. It was said that War could not be waged on the cheap by a small expeditionary force. Ukrainian nationalist resilience and Western support had made that impossible went the argument.

Some of the suggestions aired on Russian TV included: destroying the infrastructure of roads, railways, tunnels and power stations used in the Ukrainian war effort that have so far been off limits to Russian air power; bombing Kiev's Ministries and Government buildings being used to direct the war; employing Russia's most advanced and destructive weapons in Ukraine; neutralising US and private satellites being used by Kiev; and bringing the fearsome Iranian drones that have defeated American air defences in the Middle East into operation. Ramzan Kadyrov, Moscow's Chechen ally, has called for changes in Russian strategy.

The Russian Special Military Operation has so far been characterised by comparative restraint. Targets for missiles, particularly West of the Dneiper, have been carefully chosen and precision is the name of the game. It is probable that the Russian notion that the Ukrainians are not really a separate people and that many might be won over from Kiev in the event of victory has deterred use of the US tactic of wanton killing of civilians in its "*shock and awe*" wars.

Putin ruled out any significant changes to the Special Military Operation in a statement made in Samarkand where the leaders of the free world (the world free of the United States) were meeting as part of the *Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*.

De-Dollarisation and Eurasian integration, outside of the US sphere of influence, were the main items on the agenda. Large infrastructure and trade deals were concluded involving Russia, China, India and others, opening up the prospect of great development across Eurasia. The Russian leader did not look like the leader of a state that was losing a war. On the contrary, he looked like a leader who was confident in the direction the war was going and which the world was now taking as a result of the war.

The spectacular Eurasian developments, enhanced by the sanctions regime against Russia, which stand in marked contrast with the economic meltdown afflicting the European economic aggressor nations, presumably buoyed Putin up with renewed confidence about what was being achieved in the wider world, where the bulk of humanity live.

The West was seen to be in decline through its willingness, with Ukraine, to be led by Washington as lambs to the slaughter while the greater part of humanity was making provision for a new future.

(It should be noted that Russia never wanted the suffering that Europe will experience. It had a good business relationship with the continent, which had been mutually beneficial and was intended to be of long-term duration. It was Washington, with a little help from the EU, which destabilised Ukraine and began the geopolitical war against the East that Russia has intervened in.)

Putin pointed to the "*sensitive blows*" which Russian aviation inflicted on the Ukrainians in mid-September which were "*warning shots*" that could be turned into more if the situation deemed it necessary. He was referring to the half dozen or so missiles that took out the Ukrainian power grid and the "*dam-busters raid*" that threw a further Ukrainian counter-offensive into chaos by the flooding of the Ingulet river basin around a logistical hub, sweeping away pontoon bridges and cutting off Ukrainian forces—which were subsequently slaughtered by Russian aerospace.

The limited attack on the power grid was simply a warning, shutting down

power in Ukraine temporarily. If Russia wished to cut off all power permanently in Ukraine to paralyse the country completely it undoubtedly could.

Any removal of restraint on the Special Military Operation would undoubtedly be seen by the US as an escalation of the conflict by the Kremlin, even though the US—in the shape of remarks by Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and his assistant, Victoria Nuland—recently announced a further Washington escalation, using the Ramstein US air base in Germany.

This event marked another stage in the War, raising the stakes with an American promise of high-precision missiles for Kiev. It is probable that, because the Kremlin realises an escalation will be taken advantage of by Washington to escalate on its side, that such a course has been avoided so far. As has been noted, it is in the interests of Moscow to minimise the conflict while Washington seeks to maximise it (short of nuclear exchange).

It is suggested that if Washington were to supply Kiev with longer range missiles—which the Kiev hot-heads could use against Russian territory, including Crimea—this would be viewed as an existential threat to Russia by Moscow. Putin has warned that such a move would make the US a direct participant in the conflict and Russia would act accordingly. Biden has promised to veto such a development but, short of a signed treaty, how much are US verbal agreements worth?

Undoubtedly Washington is engaged in Russian Bear-baiting. The objective is to continually raise the stakes and force the Kremlin to commit more and more forces to Ukraine, with the ultimate objective of goading the Russians into waging a full scale war on Ukraine. What happens then is anyone's guess, particularly what the US response would be if really substantial force is applied against Ukrainians.

Putin will be conscious of the fact that a general mobilisation could be unpopular in Russia and would disrupt the economy, which has shown great resilience in beating off the Western sanctions—turning them against their instigators in creating energy and cost of living crises in Europe that may still pay increasing dividends for Russia when “General Winter” makes an appearance.

President Putin looks at the bigger geopolitical picture—which involves

Eurasian development and a multi-polar world. And in this Russia is winning, at the time of writing. This development cannot be compromised as it is a much bigger prize than risking all in a big push on the Ukrainian battlefield against the West's instruments in Kiev.

However, the American commentator, Scott Ritter, estimates that a Russian force of between 300,000 and 400,000 would be necessary to break the Ukrainian will to fight in the coming Spring. If this is not deployed, the Kremlin would have to settle for stalemate. It is therefore most likely that there will be an enhancement of the Special Military Operation with greater recruitment of volunteer forces and deployment in Ukraine.

The Kremlin now has the political capital to expand the intervention if it so chooses. This might mean a change of status from 'Special Military Operation' to 'Counter-Terrorist Operation'—but perhaps not to War in the present circumstances. What that entails is unclear but it would probably be a widening in the scope and intensity of targeting within the territory of Ukraine and the raising of extra forces.

Putin and Stalin (again)

Despite misrepresentation and caricature in the West Putin is a conservative and realistic statesman who usually looks for the minimalist strategy for obtaining political objectives.

In an article written at the start of the Special Military Operation (*Glacis Ukraine: Putin versus Stalin?* in *Irish Foreign Affairs*, March 2022), the present writer made it clear that Putin was not acting in the way Stalin had and it was clear that the President of Russia wished to put distance between himself and the Soviet leader.

On 24th February, the day of the launch of the Russian military operation into Ukraine, Putin defended his decision to launch a pre-emptive strike against Ukraine in a televised address to the Russian people and referred to Stalin's caution before the Great Patriotic War:

“If history is any guide, we know that in 1940 and early 1941 the Soviet Union went to great lengths to prevent war or at least delay its outbreak. To this end, the USSR sought not to provoke the potential aggressor until the very end by refraining or postponing the most urgent and obvious preparations it had to make to defend itself from an imminent attack. When it finally acted, it was too late.

As a result, the country was not

prepared to counter the invasion by Nazi Germany, which attacked our Motherland on June 22, 1941, without declaring war. The country stopped the enemy and went on to defeat it, but this came at a tremendous cost. The attempt to appease the aggressor ahead of the Great Patriotic War proved to be a mistake which came at a high cost for our people. In the first months after the hostilities broke out, we lost vast territories of strategic importance, as well as millions of lives. We will not make this mistake the second time. We have no right to do so.”

Stalin, it seems, was even more conservative and cautious in war than Putin. But when Stalin waged war he knew that war against a formidable enemy had to be waged with the full resources of the State. If it was not, it should not be taken on.

Stalin is often criticised in the West for his handling of the Great Patriotic War and these criticisms have filtered through to Russia since the time of Khrushchev and particularly since it became capitalist. But the Red Army reached Berlin as a result of Stalin's handling of the War and took hold of half of Europe, creating a powerful defensive barrier for Russia against the West for a couple of generations.

Perhaps Stalin did not know how and when to start wars but he sure knew how to finish them!

In 1941–45 Soviet citizens defended the homeland with their lives, at very great cost. And it was not just Russians but Belorussians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Armenians, and Ukrainians who also did so. Would citizens of the Russian Federation, imbued with the capitalist materialist mode of existence, be such staunch defenders?

Should Putin have invaded Ukraine or waited it out for a NATO attack—sacrificing the Russian-orientated Ukrainians of the Donbas? That question will only be answered by the outcome of the war. Certainly Putin, having made his decision in February, has every interest in playing it out to the end. And Washington, which was very pleased with itself in achieving Putin's military intervention in Ukraine, will most probably continually raise the stakes in the attempt to turn the Special Military Operation into a full blown Russian war.

The Western advance to the East to liquidate Russia as a functional State was originally the project of Hitler. The thought of it disabled the British Prime Minister, Chamberlain, who realised that

it might result in the Soviet Union repulsing such a move and rolling it back, right across Europe. Chamberlain's hesitation is now termed "appeasement". The *Catholic Bulletin* in Ireland made the same calculation when it predicted in bold letters: "STALIN WINS" at the outset of the war.

Hitler's project was popular among many Eastern European countries and they assisted him in eradicating the Jewish presence in their midst with great enthusiasm, clearing the way to Russia for his forces, which many joined. These countries, along with Britain, are now the strongest supporters of Kiev. Britain, under Churchill, delayed the US from launching the liberation of Europe for two years, in the hope that Germany and Russia would both exhaust their population stock on the Eastern Front in the meantime.

During these two years much of the Jewish population of Eastern Europe was annihilated.

Hitler's project of dividing and disintegrating Russia was taken up by the Western Allies in 1945, after they had finally reached Berlin. The West, in fascist or democratic form, is intent on reducing Russia—whether it is Socialist or capitalist democratic—to a disintegrated mess.

The democratic ideology has been an effective bond to rally the Russophobe East Europeans in the drive to the East. Europe's leaders have taken enthusiastically to the project, even though it spells economic suicide for their countries.

Is Putin going to allow Russia to be reduced to a mess again, after he gave two decades of his life in reviving it? That is unlikely, but maybe now he is thinking again on Stalin!

Scaling Up!

On 21st September Putin announced the calling up of the Russian reserves (300,000 potentially), and referendums have been announced across Russian-held territory in Ukraine. Just before the beginning of the Special Military Operation, the Kremlin recognised the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples Republics. If these are now incorporated into the Russian Federation, along with the two other occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporozhe, Moscow could upgrade the Special Military Operation significantly under the new legal status.

Ukrainian attacks on these territories would be regarded as attacks on Russia

itself. Such a change became imperative with the increase in Kiev's artillery bombardments of civilians in Donbass.

The call-up of the reserves is unlikely to make a difference at the Front Lines for around 3 months. There may be a calculation in the Kremlin that the Ukrainians will not be ready for a great offensive until then. However, Kiev are pressing the presently limited Russian forces heavily across the long Front and breakthroughs are a distinct possibility in the coming weeks. Perhaps the Kremlin announcement may hasten an offensive from Kiev's forces before the Russian lines are reinforced.

According to the BBC, after explaining the partial mobilisation and referendums, Putin said:

"If the territorial integrity of our country is threatened, to defend Russia and our people, we will use all means we have. This is not bluff. The territorial integrity of our motherland, our independence and freedom will be secured, I repeat, with all the means we have."

The Ukrainian counter-offensive may prove to be a turning of the tide in the War after all.

Scott Ritter was asked what happens now. He chose to contrast the Russian

Special Military Operation with what the US did in Iraq, to explain what he thought Russia would do, if it emulated an American war:

"I helped plan and implement a war—against Iraq, Operation Desert Storm. We initiated it with a strategic air campaign. We took everything out. There was no electricity in Baghdad, no electricity in Iraq. We blew up everything. That's how you do it. We blew up the bridges, we blew up the roads, we blew up the trucks, we blew up the trains. We blew up the political decision making centres. If we thought you were in a bunker, we blew up the bunker. We blew everything up, everything. We did that for 6 weeks and then when we rolled in it took us a hundred hours to get the Iraqis to surrender. They were the 4th largest army at the time and we killed 100,000 of them that quick. We could have killed 30 or 40,000 more if we had kept the war going another 24 hours. It was an annihilation... A one-sided fight.

Russia has tied its hands behind its back. When Russia decides it will no longer self-limit what you will see happen to Ukraine is what happened to Iraq. It will be one-sided, it will be devastating, it will be total... You are not going to get Zelensky being able to broadcast to the West and meet foreign officials again. Those days are done... It's going to be a completely different reality."

Roger Cole, *Peace and Neutrality Alliance*

Press Release, 2.9.22

Irish Defence Forces should not participate in the War in Ukraine

Ireland may now contribute a small number of military personnel to train Ukraine's military following an agreement reached by EU ministers to establish a multilateral training mission.

The proposals were agreed at a meeting of EU ministers in Prague this week, which was also attended by ministers from Ukraine and Moldova.

Minister for Defence Simon Coveney called the agreement to establish an EU training mission the "next phase of military support" for Ukraine in its fight against Russia. He said Ireland "would like to be involved" and would provide practical support for the mission.

Roger Cole, Chair of *Peace and Neutrality Alliance*, stated, EU ministers meeting in Prague are under constant pressure from the US/NATO to agree to ever increasing military spending despite

the growing public anger and increasing awareness of the geopolitical interests in prolonging this war. "*Back home again Minister Coveney tries to confuse and distract us all with yet more of his legal interpretations on such terms such as 'military neutrality', 'the Triple Lock', and now we are being told that training Ukraine's military does not mean we are a 'participant in this war'.*"

PANA is opposed to sending in military personnel to advise or train Ukraine's military, and instead we campaign that Ireland as a neutral country should be using our membership of the UN Security Council to promote peace here in eastern Europe, by advocating a ceasefire and UN-chaired negotiations and so end the slaughter in Ukraine now.

Tom Crilly,
Communications Officer, PANA

Pat Muldowney

The Ladies' Land League 1881-1882

This article is about the activities of a dozen young women in their teens and early twenties, living in a district of a square mile or so in south Co. Waterford during an eight month period of the late 19th century, setting their activities in the context of the events of 1870 to 1900. It views them as an arm of an alternative government which was suppressed by Charles Parnell.

The first half of 19th century history consists of Daniel O'Connell and Catholic Emancipation, followed by the Famine. The second half consists of the Fenian Rising ("Revenge for Skibberreen") which failed, followed by Parnell (who sort of succeeded), and something or other about Boycotting, which succeeded in turning rackrented tenant farmers into owner-occupiers through a confusing mish-mash of Leagues, initials, land acts, splits, political parties, and British administrations or governments.

(We come across initials such as INL, INF, AFIL, UIL, IPP — that's Irish National League, Irish National Federation, All for Ireland League, United Irish League, Irish Parliamentary Party. And a lot more, each one competing with, and more or less opposed to, one or more of the others.)

Fortunately we don't have to worry now about all those initials and splits since they are superseded by what happened later, in the twentieth century, when we went back to only two sides: Us and Them. The fight for freedom went into pause mode around 1870 (entering, essentially, the splits/initials/boycott period) and resumed around 1910. From that point, the 1916 Rising grew out of a late 19th/early 20th century Gaelic Revival of sports and language. This was followed in turn by the War of Independence, and freedom.

And that might be that—unless you happen to read this magazine and related publications which, unlike the lazy stan-

dard histories, track the detailed twists and turns and byroads of political life, such as the *Veto Controversy*, which empowered the Catholic Church. And also the political work of Mallow-born William O'Brien, who undid the shambles created by Charles Stewart Parnell, set the latter aside, and prepared the ground for the independence movement.

One such byroad is the *Ladies' Land League*. This was short-lived — eighteen months or so of 1881-82. But the preceding Land League was itself short-lived, from 1879 to 1882. And the fate of these two organisations sheds some light on the Parnell disaster, and how it was superseded by a revived Fenianism—that's the Fenianism which was defeated and discredited a generation earlier, and for which Parnellism was supposed to be the remedy.

Believing that British rule was not capable of reform, the Fenian strategy for independence was to engage British forces in battle and drive them out.

Isaac Butt was a reforming unionist who deplored English misrule. From 1870 he sought to use Irish political representation in the British parliament to achieve, not independence, but Home Rule. Where Butt failed, Parnell succeeded in uniting some of the Irish MPs behind a parliamentary strategy of obstruction—which had been invented and initiated by MP Joe Biggar.

Charles Stewart Parnell was handsome and commanding and had a posh Anglo accent. Biggar was an uncouth, ugly hunchback with a thick Belfast accent. By the late 1870s Parnell was the leader (the 'Uncrowned King') of a movement called *The New Departure*. This is described by Michael Davitt:

"Parliamentary obstruction had captured the popular imagination in Ireland. Biggar and Parnell, with the able assistance of Messrs. O'Connor Power and O'Donnell, had

bearded John Bull within his legislative citadel. They had exhibited both pluck and resource in vastly unequal contests with enraged opponents, and had scored in several encounters by debating savage punishments inflicted on soldiers and marines in the strong light of parliamentary criticism, winning a recognition from even their enemies of the reasonableness of their exposure of a degrading brutality in the English army and navy. Obstruction did even better work than this. Mr. Parnell's little party, led in this instance by Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, had laid bare the dishonest policy by which Shepstone and Sir Bartle Frere had conspired to destroy the independence of the Transvaal. The cause of the Boers was pleaded in the British House of Commons by Irish members with an earnestness, ability, and courage which impressed even hostile public opinion, while the exposures which were made of the duplicity with which England's representatives in South Africa had cheated the Transvaal of its liberty and deceived the people of Great Britain had no little part in shaping Mr. Gladstone's subsequent policy, which led to the ultimate adoption of a course consistent alike with reason and justice after the stern lesson of Majuba Hill.

This work of Mr. Parnell's small following gave intense satisfaction to the Irish people. The leader who was thus gradually displacing Butt had, on the other hand, earned the frenzied hostility of the British press. He was denounced, maligned, threatened; so much so that numerous London Irishmen, including extreme nationalists, were ready to form a body-guard for the obstructionist leader to protect him going to and coming from the House of Commons, against the open threats of certain papers. All this tended to strengthen his popularity and to increase his power in Ireland.

He had successfully defied the House of Commons, with the newspaper world as an audience, and had trampled upon its dignity. Ministers and politicians assailed him and his tactics. English editors howled at him and English mobs menaced him, while the American press, remembering his blood-relationship with the republic, hailed him as an Irish member who had at last found a means of making John Bull 'sit up' even within his own parliamentary household; and this was the young leader who made his appearance in the arena of the Anglo-Irish struggle

at the time when a new departure was to be evolved from the policy and party of Isaac Butt."

Meanwhile, members and former members of the Fenian movement were having a rethink:

"The feeling within the Home Rule League and in Mr. Butt's party in 1878 in favor of a more vigorous policy, encouraged by what were believed to be the results of obstruction, was coincident with a similar movement inside revolutionary circles. Both were protests against stereotyped negative methods of hoping to free Ireland from English rule. Both these progressive tendencies were due to the growing intercourse between our people in Ireland and their race in America. The Irish in the United States were steadily climbing upward socially and politically. They were being inoculated with practical ideas and schooled in democratic thought and action. American party organizations were training them for an active participation in public life, and in proportion as they lifted themselves up from the status of mere laborers to that of business pursuits and of professional callings did they find the opportunities and means of taking an active part in the government of cities and States. These experiences and advantages reacted upon opinion in Ireland, through the increasing number of visitors, letters, and newspapers crossing the Atlantic, and in this manner cultivated the growth of more practical thought and purpose in our political movements at home.

There were both a need and an opportunity for a new departure if we were not to see all our energies dissipated in academic discussions upon Home Rule once or twice annually in the House of Commons and in periodical state trials of the victims of informers in Ireland. Both these prevailing policies combined could make no practical headway for want of a definite and an agreed objective, while the still latent antagonism between the Fenian organization and the constitutional movement neutralized the potential capacity of each and was calculated to make both ridiculous. Mere conspiracy had nothing to offer to the mass of the Irish people except the experiences of penal servitude and the records of the abortive rising of 1867. It did not lessen the hold of England upon Ireland in any material way, though the spirit of patriotic sacrifice shown by numbers

of young men who cheerfully went to prison in the cause of freedom gave a valuable lesson of fidelity to the ideal of Irish nationhood. Beyond this no more tangible results followed or could proceed from principles tied down to a policy of hopeless impotency; principles which, if only put in action in a wider field of public effort, would exercise a far greater revolutionary influence and power in the contest of nationalism against the forces of English domination in Ireland.

Fenianism in 1878 took little or no note in its ideas or aims of Irish landlordism. Its only hope lay in the advent of some great danger and difficulty for England [such as war with America, Russia or France]. Many of its members believed that the sons of landlords would, in such an event, possibly be won over to nationality by learning Davis's poems or reading Meagher's speeches. These convictions were honestly held by some of the leaders, for in revolutionary as in other creeds no belief has a stronger hold on a certain class of mind than a faith in what is impossible of comprehension to the limited cognizance of the human understanding. An Irish republic to be won by the swords of Irish landlords' sons was as Utopian a dream as to look for the advent of a prosperous Ireland through the kindly concern of an altruistic England" (From Michael Davitt's: *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*).

The Irish economy was an unfeasible land-rental economy based on letting, subletting, sub-subletting and so on, without security of tenure. By the late 1870s another 'perfect storm' of crop failure, price collapse and evictions was brewing. A great famine was looming in the west, with eviction-at-will amounting to a death sentence for many more, as in the 1840s.

We hear little of it because, unlike the 1840s, the disaster was averted. But how?

In 1879 the Land League organisation was formed by Michael Davitt, with the support of many veteran Fenians on the ground, and Charles Parnell agreed to be its President.

After the Fenian collapse, splits and back-stabbing, this erasure of splits and division (the New Departure) invigorated the Irish communities of the United States (also Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand), and auxiliary campaigns raised large amounts of money for famine relief, including aid for the evicted.

Deaths on a massive scale were averted by an extraordinary mass movement of Irish overseas.

There was self-help in Ireland, such as the *Nun of Kenmare*. As in the 1840s famine, the Irish 'Government' was on the opposite side.

The American effort was spearheaded by Parnell's mother and two of his sisters: Delia Stewart, with her daughters Fanny and Anna Parnell, who had gained organising experience in the Women's Auxiliaries of the Franco-Prussian War and the American Civil War, on the French and Federal sides respectively. And, unlike the 1840s, the Great Famine of 1879-80 was averted, and the fight against landlordism commenced.

Like the Fenians, the Land League was male. The 'Government' outlawed it and, like evictions-at-will, there was imprisonment-at-will by the Liberal administration or government of Gladstone.

In response, Davitt proposed that the Ladies' Land League as it existed in the USA be organised in Ireland with Anna Parnell in charge, in order to carry on the work which had been done by the imprisoned men. Despite misgivings, Anna agreed to this. With a strong head office team in Dublin, hundreds of local branches were formed all over the country. The work of one such branch in a small coastal area of south Co. Waterford was described as follows:

"No sooner was the Ladies' Land League established in Carbally than those young girls set about organising with an energy and thoroughness remarkable in ladies who had no previous training in such work. Had there been a branch of the Land League in the district they would have seen something of the methods of organising; of how to do things; of how to conduct meetings and organise collections; they could have gone to their fathers or brothers for instructions in difficulties, and they would have had reliable and experienced guides to advise them. But, as has been seen, there was no branch in Carbally and seldom any of the men attended the monthly meetings in Tramore. ...

...They immediately started a collection, and in a week they had collected £17 in the chapel area; they sent £10 of this to the Political Prisoners' Fund and £7 to the head office of the Ladies' Land League. A separate collection was made for each of these two objects. By the end of December they had made out and published a complete list of all subscribers, and that list is before me as I write. It is a revelation to go through that list, see the names of those who

subscribed to those collections, and note how few are left in Carbally today. The descendants of some are still there, but in many cases whole families have completely vanished. ...

... All this reminds us that we have no complete record of all that women have done to aid the achievement of Ireland's independence. We find reference to the work of the women of Limerick in the 1691 period; we know that they acted a big part in '98—the name of Mary Doyle at New Ross is immortal; we know that they carried arms and ammunition in '48 and '67, while in our own day the name of Cumann na mBan has shown that the patriotism of the women of Ireland has intensified rather than receded. When the day comes to make that record of women's work for Ireland, the names of those Carbally girls will be found therein ...

...
These young ladies next applied to the head office of the Ladies' Land League for material to build a house for Tom Morrissey, the Ballygarron evicted tenant.

... But considerable difficulty arose as to where the house would be built should the materials arrive. They dared not build it on any property or land owned by Mr. Carew of Ballinamona Park; should a tenant of another landlord allow the house to be erected on his farm, then he would invite the unwelcome attention of his own landlord. It required a great deal of moral and even physical courage for any tenant to allow a Land League Hut (as those dwellings were called) to be erected on his farm.

His wife was equally national, and therefore as fearless as he was; probably far more so, and no doubt gladly acquiesced in what was really an act of open, clear, unmistakable defiance to the landlord combination. Reader! honour the memory of a gallant family in days of trial and danger. It is men and women such as Michael Corcoran and his family who have kept alive the Irish nation to today; fifty years ago they were the most national family in Carbally, and have left the whole district a memory of which to be proud.

No doubt some of his friends told Michael Corcoran that he was fifteen different sorts of a fool to do as he did and bring himself so prominently under the notice of the landlord, but the names of such people will never be preserved in the story of Carbally. Such of them as have passed away are forgotten already, but that of Michael Corcoran's will stand out as a glorious episode in the records of that out-of-the-way parish which forms the eastern shore of Tramore Bay. The story of the Land

War will live in Irish history while the names of Parnell and Davitt are remembered, and the names of Michael Corcoran and his daughter, Maggie, will live in the chronicles of Carbally while a Carbally man or woman honours a brave and unselfish act.

The application of the Carbally branch of the Ladies' Land League for timber to build a hut for Tom Morrissey was favourably entertained at the head office; in due course the timber to erect the hut arrived by train at the Waterford railway station, and arrangements had already been made to convey the timber to the site of the house on Michael Corcoran's farm.

The members of the Carbally branch of the Ladies' Land League had a couple of waggonettes with horses decked in ribbons and flags flying from standards fixed at the front of the vehicles; a concourse, variously estimated at from 100 to 300 farmers' carts, arrived at the railway station, and among them was Mr. John Corcoran (he was usually called Jack Corcoran), the son of the man who had given the plot on which to build the hut. Some three or four years ago he passed on to join the majority of those who were present on that occasion. Two Waterford city bands turned out unsolicited and played the enormous procession through the town. Finally the procession of waggonettes, farm carts, and people marched through Ballytruckle, on to Ballygarron, passed Morrissey's old homestead, and so to Kilmacleague, where they deposited their precious loads of timber at the appointed place on the lands of Michael Corcoran. This occurred on or about February 15th, 1882, and on that night the cow-houses, stables, out-offices, etc., at Morrissey's old homestead were burned to the ground. Thus, within nine months of Morrissey's eviction not a house or out-office that he knew was left standing intact at his old dwelling-place—they had all been given to the flames, a fitting end, some will say, to houses that had sheltered for so long a generous Irish family whose race was now run." (Matthew Butler, Waterford News, 1935. See more about this branch in: <https://sites.google.com/view/land-league-in-carbally/home>

A spectacular memorial to the Carbally branch has recently been erected.)

This kind of work was replicated all over the country. Here is an assessment by its organiser and leader, Anna Parnell, in her book *The Tale of a Great Sham*, written in 1907 and first published in 1986, having failed to find a publisher in the intervening 80 years:

"When the famine of 1879-80 became a certainty, there seemed to be no lack of energy and decision amongst the Irish in choosing their part. One result of the new parliamentary party had been to create some conspicuous figures, or rather to make a number of figures conspicuous, who otherwise would have been almost unknown, and therefore quite unable to conjure up a new national organisation in a hurry, according to the requirements of such an emergency as famine. Moreover, this conspicuousness was permeated by a flavour of success. Thus the foundation of the Land League was facilitated in October 1879, a date which proved afterwards to have a curious importance, as it marked a novel episode in Irish history.

For from that time till the present day there have always been two governments in Ireland, one English and the other Irish, in some sense a veritable Home government. The Home Rule League [of Isaac Butt] never attempted any of the functions of a government, but the Land League took on itself a good many of them at once, and all the Nationalist societies or leagues that have followed since in an unbroken stream, have taken up the same position, more or less. ...

...I have spoken of the Land League as stepping at once into the position of a government. This they did by their action in view of the approaching famine. In old times the duty of a ruler to protect his subjects from extermination by hunger was taken for granted. When Joseph had interpreted Pharaoh's dream to him, Pharaoh did not talk about political economy, or disturbing the balance of economic conditions, or of the laws of supply and demand, but passed at once to the question of meeting the evils foreshadowed by Joseph, whose advice he promptly and successfully acted on. That it was only the business of a Pharaoh he was doing he had no doubt. It is rather interesting to compare the ideas of that old Pharaoh and those of Queen Victoria regarding the obligations of Sovereigns. Certainly Queen Victoria had not Pharaoh's power, but she took her Sovereignty very seriously, and seemed to believe that she counted for much more than she actually did in her government, evidently taking a personal pride in the long chapter of infamies perpetrated by her country during her reign.

When O'Connell saw a famine approaching, he ran to the English government for help, something like a sheep appealing to a wolf to protect her lambs. The Young Irelanders wrote

poetry. The Land League went neither to the English government nor to the muses, but set about trying to stop the famine themselves. As rulers are those who rule, they became from that moment a government de facto. Had they only continued as they began perhaps now [written in 1907] there might be only one government in Ireland, and that one not English."

An Irish government? The British Government had its Imperial Army and the all-encompassing paramilitary Royal Irish Constabulary. What did the Ladies have?

The Fenians had guns and failed. But the Land League, Men's and Ladies', had overwhelming popular support. It was a mass movement of civil society, seemingly unstoppable. As in the Carbally branch, the Ladies' League in particular functioned as independent, disciplined and well organised citizens, with policies, budgets and implementation—something which had never occurred before.

They were brought down, not by Britain, but by the 'Uncrowned King', Charles Parnell. Joe Biggar once asked the question: "Does anybody know Parnell's politics?" In the process of being released from jail by Gladstone in 1882, Parnell issued an edict called the *Kilmainham Treaty*. Essentially, this declared the ending of the Land League, with all future effort to be in parliament-ary representation, in alliance with Gladstone's Liberal Party, which would deliver both Home Rule and land reform.

The Irish MPs consented to this, as did Davitt. In America Fanny Parnell died suddenly of natural causes. Anna Parnell withdrew to private life in England and never spoke to her brother again.

The reason given by Parnell was wastage of funds by the Ladies, in particular by their emergency housing programme for evicted tenants—mostly American funds, raised mostly by the Ladies' League in the USA. Parnell wanted this money exclusively to promote a parliamentary alliance with Gladstone. He already had personal control of £10,000 (a million or two in present-day money) donated by Cecil Rhodes.

(Parnell also complained of violence and "outrages". Anna had performed a citizen's arrest of the Lord Lieutenant, the physical embodiment of Queen Victoria, by seizing the horses of his carriage

in the street and demanding to know why he had demolished her emergency housing. On the other hand, Fanny's poem *Hold the Harvest* might be considered incendiary.)

Anna Parnell spent a lot of time in the Ladies' Cage in HoC [The ladies' viewing Gallery] when her brother Charles Stuart made his reputation and when the two were close in 1870s.

Unlike Charles Stuart, Anna was razor-sharp and I wonder what she contributed. She wrote "*Notes from the Ladies' Cage*", but they are hard to get.

Also she dumped Charles Stewart almost 10 years before Davitt & Co. did.

(Being a gentlewoman must have been a big disadvantage after she was driven out of politics.

She seemed to rule out more straightforward ways of scraping a living—waitressing, cleaning, etc etc. So was extremely poor.

There used to be newspaper ads looking for money for relief of such ladies.

Anna was not cut out to do what they were bred for—make a suitable match involving money &/or status.)

Sequel

Under the name, *the Plan of Campaign*, Land League activity was renewed in 1886 by William O'Brien. This in turn was wrecked in 1890 when Parnell refused to comply with Gladstone's demand that he step down temporarily from Irish leadership in order to regularise his relationship with the wife of another Member of Parliament. In contrast to the 1882 Kilmainham Treaty, the line now was the direct opposite—the Irish movement would never be dictated to by English parties or politicians.

This line was attractive to a dissident element of Fenianism. Which was useful to John Redmond when William O'Brien brought about a merger of the Irish parliamentary representatives with the seemingly ineffectual Parnellite remnant in 1900.

Parnell/Redmond were finally 'proved right' when Home Rule was enacted in 1914. Except that they were 'proved wrong' and comprehensively discredited in 1915 when the Liberals were wiped out through their mishandling of the Great War they had initiated, leading to the crushing of Home Rule forever when UVF loyalists captured control of the British Government!

Anna Parnell returned briefly to support Sinn Féin. She died in a drowning accident in 1911. If she had lived until 1915 she could have said: "I told you so!"

Meanwhile, many of the dozen members of the Carbally branch had become the mothers of the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan members of 1919-23.

This group of a dozen girls in their 'teen and twenties, independently of all traditional authority figures, conducted their business openly and accountably and according to proper procedure; with policies, budgets, implementation, officers, rules and minutes. By conducting themselves as citizens they established citizenship as a norm, and nothing less than citizenship was acceptable after that.

Further information

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cfH2tJU0IXsZl4Xkc9riRlXBluhY1s8R6TKqy-XTJjY/edit?usp=sharing>

The Tale of a Great Sham:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15nZzIH10qiZNcGDhk5Wn-vaGTeRcPmilyNZQA3cbjQ/edit?usp=sharing>

The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland:

<https://archive.org/details/falloffeudalism00daviuoft>

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cfH2tJU0IXsZl4Xkc9riRlXBluhY1s8R6TKqy-XTJjY/edit?usp=sharing.com>

Stephen Richards

Part Two
Cry Freedom, Hebridean Style

Hebridean Finale

Readers will remember how in March 1883 three of the four recalcitrant crofters from Glendale in Skye had been arraigned before Lord Shand at the Court of Session in Edinburgh on the charge of contempt of court for having flagrantly disobeyed the interdicts, or injunctions, which had issued from the local court against trespass on the lands at Waterstein. The flagrance lay in the manner in which the contempt had been demonstrated, by physically resisting the constables and messengers-at-arms who had arrived in the district in mid-January 1883, armed with their visible signs of authority.

Flowery Beds Of Ease

Three of the men, John Morrison, John McPherson and Donald MacLeod had achieved their day in court. The fourth, Malcolm Matheson, was still at sea with the Royal Naval Reserve, and presumably oblivious to his pending fate. But if they were expecting to be given a platform to vent their grievances in this elevated forum they were to be disappointed. They were all found guilty on the facts, and there was no defence which they could possibly have advanced that would have changed the judge's mind. Lord Shand handed down a sentence of two months' imprisonment for each of them, Matheson in absentia. There were mutterings from the public gallery, turning to cheers as the men were led from the court, to Calton Prison.

In the event their ordeal was not too arduous. Soft beds were provided for them, abundant reading matter, and their meals came from a local restaurant, while they were serenaded nightly by local bagpipers.

During their Elysian confinement matters were not standing still in the outside world. The scandal of the black-letter legal response to the desperation of the crofters was raised in the House of Commons by Donald Macfarlane, who was at that time Nationalist MP for Carlow—subsequently, however, elected as the first Catholic Member

for Argyllshire, representing the newly-formed Crofters' Party. Macfarlane (1830-1904) was himself Scottish, as his name suggests, from Caithness, and had a background as a merchant in the tea and indigo trade in India. Carlow was about to lose one of its two seats in the *Redistribution Act* of 1885, so Macfarlane was able to eye up this alternative path to the House. He held his Argyll seat, on and off, until 1895, by which time he had been knighted.

Rumblings At Westminster

As of March 1883 there was still no Scottish Secretary, nor a Scottish Office, so Macfarlane's protests were directed to the Home Secretary, William—later Sir William—Harcourt (1827-1904). Harcourt is one of the forgotten figures of the late Gladstonian era and, if the chips had fallen differently, might have ended up as Prime Minister, instead of Rosebery, in 1893. He served as the party leader in the Commons, and was later briefly overall party leader, which I hadn't realised. Most of what little knowledge I have of him comes from Leo McKinstry's biography of Rosebery, from which he emerges as a choleric figure. From an aristocratic Tory background in Nottinghamshire, he achieved classical distinction at Trinity College Cambridge—where he was one of the early Apostles—became a Peelite kind of Tory, and then increasingly hitched his wagon to Gladstone's star. By 1866 he was a QC and by 1869 Whewell Professor of International Law at Cambridge. In the meantime, having become Member for Oxford in 1868 he started his ascent through the ranks of Office.

As Home Secretary at this same time he reacted "robustly" to the Phoenix Park murders with emergency legislation, and so was unpopular with the Irish Members, but a few years later he followed his leader into the Home Rule camp. Whether or not he could be said to be an ardent Home Ruler, Harcourt's radical sympathies were never far below the surface. Starting with a fairly deadpan response to Macfarlane, Harcourt then,

as Hutchinson (The Glendale Martyrs) recounts, "delivered his trump":

"I may, perhaps, be allowed to state what I have been frequently asked, and could not answer. The Royal Commission to enquire into the condition of the crofters and cottars has now been sanctioned by Her Majesty; and, with the permission of the House, I will mention the names of the Commissioners. The Chairman will be Lord Napier and Ettrick; and the other Members will be Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, of Gairloch; Mr. Donald Cameron, of Lochiel; Mr. C.F. Mackintosh, M.P; Sheriff Nicholson, of Kirkcudbright; and Professor MacKinnon. Mr. Malcolm McNeill, who recently visited Skye for the purpose of enquiring into the question, will be the Secretary."

Readers may recall some of these names from my last piece. Cameron of Lochiel appears for the first time, and we'll return to him later.

A Doubtful Morning Star

The Napier Commission has gone down as the morning star that heralded a new dawn for the crofting community. Possibly history has been too kind to it. But the promptitude with which it was set up and the expedition with which it reported are alike astonishing to us, living as we do in an era where it takes a year or two to decide to set up a Commission of Inquiry and another year or two to work out its remit, and to appoint its Chair—who (in the UK jurisdiction) is usually some distinguished Baroness with time on her hands.

Francis Napier himself was aged 64 and from a Borders family full of high achievers, with a lineage stretching back to the thirteenth century, to the first Earls of Lennox, "one of the Celtic royal families of Scotland and Ireland" (as explained in an article in *The Scotsman*). He himself, like so many of the Scottish ruling class of his era, had a background in imperial administration, in his case as Governor of Madras and, in 1872, for a short time as acting Viceroy of India.

Calum's Road

So the Commissioners travelled the length and breadth of the Highlands and Islands during the period from May to December 1883, sitting at 61 different venues and hearing from 775 witnesses, and their findings occupy five leather-bound volumes in the National Archives: a total of nearly four thousand pages. To give some impression of the exhaustive nature of their enquiries, I should quote an extract from another of

Roger Hutchinson's books, *Calum's Road* (Birlinn, 2008). The eponymous Calum was a MacLeod from Raasay, a mini-archipelago just to the east of Skye. Born in 1911, he died quite suddenly in 1988, while out with his shovel and wheelbarrow. He was a lean and wiry character who could turn his hand to anything and had been a farmer, lighthouse keeper and postman in his time—also a keen Bible student, and in his youth a prize-winning Gaelic poet. At his semi-retirement in 1967 he decided to devote his spare time to building a new road from the village of Arnish to the north end of Raasay, a distance of about two and a half miles. Years of dialogue with the Local Council at Inverness had been fruitless and so Calum bought a military guide to road construction for three and sixpence and set out to do it himself.

Not only does the road stand as his monument, but also a very playable tune, *Calum's Road*, composed by Donald Shaw the accordion player in the folk band *Capercaillie*. I assumed that this was a march, but it's actually a *strathspey*. It's easily accessible on YouTube, in several versions. [A *Strathspey* is a slow Scottish country dance for four or five couples. Its music, in 4/4 time. It is characterised by frequent use of the "*Scotch snap*", a short-long rhythmic figure that is equivalent to a 16th note followed by a dotted 8th note.]

Monsters Inc.

Anyway, Hutchinson travels back in time and gives copious extracts from the Napier transcripts as they relate to the Raasay and its small sister island of Rona. These exchanges I presume were not untypical of the goings-on in the Hebrides generally. Raasay had been particularly ill-served by a dreadful landlord called George Rainy (1790-1863), a son of the manse from Sutherland. He also turned out to be the uncle of a distinctly dodgy leader in the Scottish Free Church, Robert Rainy, whose oratory was likened to a shower of golden mist. From his early youth Rainy had been involved in Caribbean sugar plantations, particularly "*down in Demerara*", in British Guiana. This was all reliant on slave labour. The firm in which he eventually became a partner, Sandbach, Tinne and Company, was a Scottish concern, whose directors were known as the Rothschilds of Demerara.

With the abolition of the slave trade Rainy immediately was drawn to the Highland Clearances as his next big project, purchasing Raasay, Rona and Fladda from the Skye MacLeods in 1846, at the height, or depth, of the Famine, for thirty

five thousand guineas—presumably a small part of the proceeds of his crimes against the human race, and utilised to oppress even more of his fellow-men.

An aged crofter, yet another Donald MacLeod, testified to the Commission that Rainy forbade his tenants to marry, as an aid to depopulation. No doubt if Rainy was with us today he would be a foremost spokesman for the environmental movement.

One young man, a John MacLeod, who decided to defy the interdict was forcibly removed from his father's house and when he went to shelter in a sheep cot it was set on fire.

Reminiscing in his evidence to the Commission Donald MacLeod remarked:

"I don't remember the first removing [presumably under the MacLeod ownership] but I remember Mr. Rainy about thirty years ago clearing the fourteen townships, and he made them into a sheep farm, which he had in his own hands."

And as for the people, "they went to other kingdoms, some to America, some to Australia, and to other places that they could think of". He goes on to say, "yes, hundreds, young and old". And, as for the present, "the only occupants of that land now are rabbits and deer and sheep".

Question And Answer

In 1872 the Raasay estate had been sold on by Rainy's son to a George MacKay, who during his two-year tenure managed to evict six more families and increased the rent substantially for those that remained. There was one more intervening owner until in 1876 the estate was sold to Edwin Herbert Wood, "heir to a Staffordshire Five Towns' Potteries fortune" (Hutchinson). Under his suzerainty the emphasis shifted from sheep to deer. We are moving into the late Victorian age. The Queen had acquired the Balmoral Estate, and gentlemen liked to have a Highland or Island shooting lodge that they could retreat to in late summer and invite their buddies. So:

"Would you be satisfied if you got more hill pasture?" Charles Fraser Mackintosh asked Charles MacLeod in 1883.

"We would try to put up with it", said Charles MacLeod, meaning that it would be better than nothing. "Our lots are spoiled with game, pheasants and rabbits, so much so that it is not worth our while sowing our ground at all."

"Have you remonstrated against that to Mr. Wood?"

"Yes".

"What relief has he given you?"

"We got no relief, and the feeding-boxes for the pheasants are placed at the end of our arable ground."

"Have you liberty to kill rabbits or catch them?"

"No."

There then follows some discussion about the placement of the deer fence—which is preventing the tenants' cattle from accessing their own pasturage—and about the lack of a proper landing ground for boats.

Then we have Murdo Nicolson, "a 48-year-old crofter and fisherman of Torran", but originally from Fladda:

"Asked by Lord Napier if he and his neighbours supported themselves chiefly by fishing, he said, 'they do their utmost at the fishing but it will not give themselves enough to do to support themselves by fishing.' And 'there is such an amount of scrub bush growing on our crofts, and we are not allowed to cut it, and we are prevented by it from cultivating our crofts.'"

'Would you like to see all this pretty wood here about cut down?'

'The wood is not so pretty as that'.

'Is it not useful sometimes for different purposes to have a little bit of wood?'

'No. It is a source of loss to us every day of the year. The game shelter in the wood and spoil our crop and we get nothing for it.'

'Is your land good enough to grow heavy crops if there were no game?' (Cameron of Lochiel).

'There is no doubt it would be considerably better were it not for the game.'

'I suppose the game don't do any harm to the potatoes?' (Cameron).

'The pheasants and rabbits spoil the potatoes on us.'

'Do rabbits eat potatoes?'

'Yes, they do that indeed.'

"In contrast to the rest of the archipelago [said Donald MacLeod] nobody had ever been evicted from Rona. This was not an oversight and it was not mercy. It was because nobody voluntarily lived there. 'The people were not living in Rona at first at all. They were sent to Rona.'"

And here is John Nicolson of Doire na Guaile:

"Should I be here from sunrise to sunset I could not fully disclose the poverty of Rona. It is a place on which no man should expect to make a living. We are working on sea and land, both summer and winter, and spring—every quarter of the year—and after that we have only poverty."

Sheriff Alexander Nicholson asks John Nicolson why he would not want to follow so many of his contemporaries who had gone to America and Australia:

"But is it not a fact that there are men who went from Skye without a penny, who are now members of parliament and rich men in Canada and Australia?"

"I cannot know about that, but I have no mind to go abroad."

Jacobites And Other Scots

One can imagine these exchanges being replicated, with minor local variations, in nearly all the locations where the Commission sat. Not all the Commissioners were good actors. There is a kind of black humour in the air of bafflement as to why the remnants of this deflated, defeated, depopulated Gaelic society refused to wake up and smell the coffee and betake themselves to the lands of opportunity. If only they would do the decent thing and relieve their betters of the embarrassment of their presence, as lingering ghosts. And relieve the Government and the landlord class also of the need to address their all too palpable grievances. It's important to remember that, for the most part, this strategy of locking the natives away in their reservations and then trying to squeeze them out of the reservations was carried out principally by their fellow-Scots—and in many cases by their fellow-Highlanders. The Westminster administration had certainly been asleep at the wheel for the previous forty years or so, but its faults were mainly due to laziness and inaction, not active malice.

The name of Cameron of Lochiel has come up. I suppose this was a descendant of the famous Donald Cameron of Lochiel, who escaped to France after playing a significant role in the 1745 Rising, being wounded at Culloden, and having his castle at Achnacarry destroyed. For those familiar with D.K. Broster's *The Flight of the Heron* the name has a romantic aura. One of his brothers was executed, and another died in prison awaiting trial. The family estates weren't restored until 1784. One would have expected in light of this that the later Cameron of Lochiel (an MP as well as a nobleman) would have been one of the leaders of the reforming party, but not at all. The formerly Jacobite Highland chiefs were often not particularly good or considerate landlords. And there is no indication that the Stuart dynasty indeed, if it had been restored in 1715 or 1745, would have been any less assiduous than the Hanoverian administration in promoting the slave trade.

A Damp Squib

Be that as it may, if the Napier Com-

mission turned out to be a bit of a damp squib it was Cameron of Lochiel and Mackenzie of Gairloch who were chiefly responsible. In what Hutchinson calls a "timid" conclusion the Commissioners opined that:

"It may be that an occasion is approaching for a partial redistribution of occupancy, in which the extension of the crofting area will find a place. To us it seems that the moment is favourable for the intervention of legislation, by which an impulse may be given towards the consolidation and enlargement of small holdings".

To this end the "*crofting township*" (a concept not known to Scots law) should be "*endowed with certain immunities and powers, by which it may attain stability, improvement, and expansion*".

But this was all to be predicated on there being a consensus between landlord and tenant as to the way forward, and, says Hutchinson—

"even then only when a crofting township was provenly overcrowded, in which case the Government might offer grants to the landowner in return for creating more crofting land. The Commission rejected any notion of security of tenure for all but the tenants of substantial acreages, which excluded most crofters and all cottars".

It will be remembered that the cottar was a poor labourer or artisan with no scope at all to labour on the land, except maybe for a vegetable plot at the back of his "cot".

The more substantial crofters—those with some prospect that their labour wasn't in vain, paying more than £6.00 per annum—would be given 30-year leases, and everybody else would be encouraged to emigrate to Manitoba and New South Wales! The British Government has attracted some opprobrium for devising a plan to transport asylum seekers to Rwanda while their claims are being processed. But here we have a Royal Commission blithely recommending that the indigenous peoples of the Hebrides and West Highlands get out from under the feet of their more prosperous neighbours, abandon all the people and places dear to them, and launch out into what was then the wilderness of the far colonial lands. As Hutchinson comments, "there would have been no place for MacPherson or any of his neighbours [the men of Glendale] in Lord Napier's new Highlands".

A View From Olympus

This is what Cameron of Lochiel, the chief with the legendary name and Jacobite lineage, had to say:

"I would submit that not only is the proprietor likely to be a better judge than any other authority as to whether a township is overcrowded, but he is in a far better position to form an opinion as to the chances of success in an attempt to increase the area of the township, or to relieve the congestion of the population by the removal of individual tenants to other suitable places on his property.

"No one can have the same opportunities of ascertaining the inclinations of his crofters, their means or character. No one is better able to judge which of the crofters would be most capable of profitably occupying land which he might be in a position to offer them, while he alone possesses the requisite information to enable him to dispose satisfactorily of the crofts thus vacated...

"He might transport half a dozen carefully selected industrious families to some vacant sheep farm, perhaps ten miles distant from their former homes, and redistribute their crofts among the most deserving of those that remain, thus giving encouragement and hope to all on his estate, that by industry and perseverance, they may in turn rise from the lamentable condition in which many of them now are to that of small but independent land-holding families...

"It is hardly necessary to point out that such a result can never be obtained through any compulsory Act of Parliament which the ingenuity of legislators can devise."

The idea that the often absentee proprietors could ever attain such Olympian impartiality combined with such shrewd character judgment, even if they wanted to, is laughable; and, as for their stewards and factors, we have already seen plenty of examples of their vindictiveness. But, even if any of this Edenic state of affairs were ever a possibility, still, the idea of men and women being moved around and between landed estates like pieces on a chessboard is obnoxious to most of us now, and was indeed seen as such by many at the time.

At the other end of the spectrum there was Charles Fraser Mackintosh, whose ultimate fall-back position was wholesale land reform.

Hearts And Minds

But, while the Commissioners were

deliberating and then putting together their anodyne Report, the tide of discontent was rising again in Skye, which seemed to be in the vanguard of the revolutionary consciousness, even though most of the people there would have considered themselves to be conservative and God-fearing. Over the course of 1884 the disaffection was once again about to spill over into active insurrection. The Highland Land League was gathering strength and Michael Davitt was apparently on his way, but didn't make it at that time. Instead the American agitator, Henry George, "the prophet of San Francisco", arrived on the island, with Edward McHugh, whom we met previously, as his organiser; and in April James Shaw-Maxwell, the Glaswegian socialist arrived, accompanied by John MacPherson as his guide through Skye.

By the autumn rent strikes were under way again, not only on Skye but also Lewis. Once again a police expedition was despatched, this time to Uig in the far north of Skye, and once again the police were driven back; and once again there was an appeal for troops to be sent; and indeed they were sent, 350 of them. But, when the troopships arrived in November 1884 and the Marines were disgorged from them, if the locals didn't exactly welcome them with open arms, they behaved with the utmost decorum. Not one crofter broke ranks. They had been well warned by MacPherson and others to comport themselves with dignity and not to give any cause to the Powers That Be to ignore their claims. Not only that, but the islanders themselves perceived a distinction between the soldiers of the Crown, to which they were loyal in their own way, and the Inverness police, whom they looked upon simply as emissaries of the proprietors.

Indeed it was Sheriff Ivory who disgraced himself and the force for which he was responsible. Under the protection of the military, he proceeded to have summonses for contempt served on six crofters who had resisted the majesty of the law. They were then duly taken to the cells in Portree, despite the express prior disapproval of John Blair Balfour (Lord Advocate) and Harcourt to this course of action. MacPherson, knowing that the eyes of the administration at Westminster were upon him, managed to goad Ivory into some intemperate language, in the course of an extempore debate in Glendale following the arrests.

"Wouldn't you just like to get hold of me?" (MacPherson).

"Wouldn't I just". (Ivory).

"It's a good thing that you have no power to shoot any of us".

"You're quite mistaken. I have the power, and if I considered it my duty to give the order to fire, it would be obeyed."

Some suspects in other parts of the island managed to hide in the hills, but many others were apprehended and taken to Portree, where, later, charges against almost all of them were dismissed by Sheriff-Substitute Peter Speirs for lack of evidence.

Ivory's reputation never recovered, though he wasn't relieved of his duties. Donald Macfarlane and others made hay with all this in the Commons, to the annoyance and embarrassment of Lord Advocate John Blair Balfour. The late Victorians took the notion of the independence of the constabulary very seriously. I wonder what they would make of our present culture where officers are sent to harass and intimidate people for alleged "non-crime hate incidents", with the police being used as the storm troopers of the approved cultural narrative.

The last of the Marines didn't leave Skye till April 1885, and, according to the *Dundee Advertiser*,

"the Marines were heartily cheered as they left the quay, and replied by calling for cheers for the crofters".

Harcourt Steps Up

As well as MacPherson and Co., it seems to me that one of the heroes of the story of Highland land reform is Sir William Harcourt. He was exasperated by the non-answers provided by the Napier Commission. He took the view that the Commissioners would have been better to have confined their exertions to information-gathering and not bothered with conclusions if this was the best they could do. The Liberal Party was still heavily influenced by some of the old Whig landed interests, associated with the Marquess of Hartington and his ilk, but Harcourt wasn't among them. Here is Harcourt addressing the House on 14th November 1884:

"All I can say is, that though there are painful duties connected frequently with the Office which I hold, I have never exercised a duty which I considered incumbent upon me with more personal regret than when I felt myself under obligation to send a force to support the Local Authority in that part of the country..."

"I am the first to state and to feel that he employment of the Naval or Military Forces of the Crown in keeping peace in this country, or in any way aiding the civil authority, is in itself an immense evil..."

And, accordingly, when a few years ago there were disturbances in Skye, and I was pressed by the Local Authorities to send military there, I told them of my reluctance, and declined...

"Now, this hostility towards the police, this determination not to show to them that obedience and that respect for law and order which is common in other parts of England and Scotland, is itself a very serious symptom..."

"At the same time, I say that it is very necessary that all classes of the community—and I include in that the Police Committee of the County of Inverness—must understand that the Government cannot undertake to aid the police permanently by military force. And a state of things must be established in which the police must be able to maintain the public peace, and execute justice within their own territory. The Government make it clearly understood that in giving this support to the police it is as a subsidiary force... In my opinion, nothing can be a greater proof that there is something that requires a remedy than when you are obliged to employ a military force..."

"These notices of removal seem to me to be a source of irritation which is not to be justified at all. That there exists in these districts extreme poverty, in some parts borne for many years with extraordinary patience, I think everybody who is acquainted with those districts must be aware."

"Some people say—'Oh, the remedy for this is emigration'. Well, Sir, in my opinion, emigration is a very poor remedy indeed. I have myself no sympathy with a policy which improves a country by getting rid of its people... I, at all events, do not accept the policy of making a solitude and calling it political economy."

Political Economy

After riffing on Tacitus, Harcourt goes on to give an admirably concise account of how the actual political economy of the Highlands had evolved, presumably from the end of the Napoleonic era. This is a statesman with a hinterland, who had studied and thought about how things had got to where they were. I don't know if there is anybody in the House of Commons today, or the Dail, or Stormont for that matter, with such an acute understanding, or who could summarise the profound changes in our own economies post-1945. And this was the man who was Home Secretary for the whole of the United Kingdom, an English grandee, who had no particular Scottish, let alone Highland connections, yet he made it his

business to try to get to the heart of what was going on.

The original impulse for the Highland Clearances had been the realisation that sheep farming could yield significantly higher profits than the exiguous rents forthcoming from the toil of the crofting tenants. These landed estates didn't have to be a drain, they could be made to work as an economic proposition. They could be sold on by proprietors who had fallen on hard times and there would be English commercial interests or returning colonials who would be interested in buying them. There would be no more *noblesse oblige*. That is Harcourt's starting point. So he continues:

"After the sheep farm gave an enormous increase to the rent of the proprietor—an increase without absolutely any expenditure on his part—there was possibly never a better example of the unearned increment except that which I am about to mention....

"Then close upon the sheep-farming came the grouse-shooting rent, which was often, I believe, equal to the sheep-farming rent; therefore the proprietor found himself in possession of land which rose within a generation from being worth nothing at all to an enormously increased and valuable rental. In more recent years, in my own recollection, there was found a still more valuable thing than the sheep farm and the game rent, and that was the deer forest, over a great part of the county of Ross and a considerable part of the county of Inverness, in the place of both the sheep rent and the game rent.

"Well, what was the result of that? The result was, that while the rent value increased, the grazing of [the crofters] disappeared.

"Now, just consider what would have happened if, when these vast tracts of land were being turned into sheep farms or into deer forests, yielding, as they did, an enormous increment of rent, there had been a more moderate use of these powers—if, while thousands of acres were taken for these purposes, a few hundreds had been everywhere reserved for the small population of these Highland glens—why, it would not have destroyed the system of sheep farming at all...

"That, it seems to me, is a thing which might very reasonably and well have been done. We have heard in this debate, and evidence has been given, of townships losing the hills which they had before. Why should townships lose the hills? I have never heard of them having refused to pay rent, except under the influence—I was almost going to say of pardonable excitement...

"What has become of the crofters' black cattle? There is no doubt that they can look back to a time, which they remember themselves, or of which they certainly had a tradition from their fathers, when they had this land, on which they had black cattle, and which, having lost, they have become confined to that little spot in the strath, which when potato disease comes, or a bad season, is totally unable to sustain their existence."

Turbulent Times

1885 was a momentous year all round. Gladstone's Liberals were temporarily ousted in the General Election of that year, succeeded by the Tories under Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. But in the Highlands of Scotland it was a different story. 1885 was the first election in which the extended franchise under the Voting Reform Act of the previous year made its impact felt. The voting populations of the Highland constituencies, or "Divisions", as they were called in that era, had in some instances increased by six- or seven-fold. The Crofters' Party candidates made a virtually clean sweep of all the seats where they stood for election. That was how Donald Macfarlane found himself transported from Carlow to Argyll.

But, in the run-up to that election Gladstone, Harcourt, Balfour and the best minds in the party were focussing their minds on how best to frame a Crofting Act that would deal effectively with the present abuses and yet avoid unfortunate ramifications. Cameron of Lochiel and his confreres had been drawing support from the Whig landed interests south of the border and they came up with a trump card. In a unitary state, which the United Kingdom then was, how could there be a wholesale reform of tenant law in one part of the country which would not have the most immediate and dire consequences for the gentry of Lincolnshire, Norfolk, etc? It was conceded, then and later, that Ireland was in a sense a place apart, and reforming governments could get away with things there for which they would not be held to account elsewhere.

Half A Loaf

It was Gladstone who came to the rescue. He ingeniously adduced an argument somewhat akin to the land law doctrine of Presumed Lost Grant. Put simply, the legislation could be presented as not being based on the actuality of the conditions on the crofts or the needs of their inhabitants, but on the notion that the Government was simply reinstating the ancient liberties which the crofters had enjoyed in some

prelapsarian state. The same argument could be very plausibly advanced in relation to England too, where the peasants had lost their common grazing likewise, under the Enclosure Acts, but this point was studiously ignored.

When Harcourt brought forth his draft Crofters' Bill in March 1885 he was opposed by Hartington on the one hand, and on the other by the radical Joseph Chamberlain. This draft legislation expired in the furore of the election season, but was revived when the Liberals got back into government early in 1886, and passed into law in June, limited in scope however to some of the Highland counties plus the Hebrides. It addressed the most glaring injustices of the status quo ante: there was to be security of tenure, a nascent Lands Tribunal to assess rent, compensation for improvements, and the right for crofts to pass by succession. But, in relation to the vexed question land redistribution, it was so cautious and qualified by the principle of landowners' consent that the Crofters' Party voted against it.

In September at the fourth annual conference of the Highland Land Law Reform Association, John MacPherson was in fine oratorical form, as reported in the press:

"The Celtic race had the first claims on the British Government and the first right to possession of the country, for they were its aboriginal inhabitants. Their right was divine and they meant to stick to it, for they wished to live on the lands of their native country."

However frustrated MacPherson and the purists might be, the reality was that, intentionally or not, the Liberal Government had managed to defuse the ticking time bomb. The Reform movement was now divided, and in the election of July 1886 not one of the Members for the Crofters' Party managed to hold his seat, and the erstwhile MPs scattered to the four winds. Their seats were taken by Liberals. Charles Fraser Mackintosh, says Hutchinson, "was returned unopposed in Inverness-shire, but then surveyed the ruins of the Crofters' Party and joined the Liberal Unionist Party".

The Denouement

There was still some unfinished business. The rent strikes in some parts of Skye had continued throughout. This vexed the righteous soul of Sheriff William Ivory, who surely must appear by now to be some kind of pantomime villain, like the Sheriff of Nottingham. In a most egregious episode of *deja vu*,

Ivory, in September 1886, managed to persuade another Balfour, this time the great Arthur Balfour, a distant relative of the much more admirable John Blair Balfour, to send in a gunboat, and another detachment of Marines, to collect the unpaid rents. On Ivory's insistence, a smaller body was sent to John MacPherson's dwelling to arrest him in his bed. The other prize scalp was Rev. Donald MacCallum, a somewhat turbulent Minister, who was in due course taken to join MacPherson in the cells. Both were released without charge, but in MacPherson's case, not till seven days had elapsed.

This debacle led to an emergency review of rents by the new Crofters' Commission. Says Hutchinson:

"The Commissioners determined that every single crofter in the island had been at best overcharged and at worst rack-rented by his landowner. In some districts, such as Kilmuir and Glendale, the Crofters' Commission reduced rents by up to a third and cancelled two-thirds of all supposed arrears".

In the course of time Glendale came full circle. Rev. Hugh Alexander MacPherson, the youthful proprietor, died in 1901. The Glendale estate was then acquired in 1903 by the newly-formed Congested Districts Board at the knock-down price of £15,000.00, and, following a complex negotiation, and by way of government loan, a couple of years later it came into the ownership of the local community, as the first such instance. So, in the case of Glendale at least, the Crofters' Act conferred the freedom to achieve freedom.

I'm obviously deeply indebted to Roger Hutchinson for much of what has been said in this and my previous article. His book, *The Glendale Martyrs* (Birlinn, 2015) is very well worth reading. The story of Highland land reform isn't over yet, but this is how Hutchinson finishes, after the death of John MacPherson in 1922 at the age of 87:

"None of the newspapers noted what was common knowledge in Glendale—that John MacPherson had lived to see, over the hill from Lower Milovaig, crofters' sheep and cattle grazing without hindrance on the green turf of Waterstein".

That is a fitting finale. There are still some loose ends to tie up in relation to the island of Lewis in the 1870s and the reign of terror of Donald Munro, so hopefully all can be wound up in the next issue.

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AND The Special Relations
Freemason
Late Queen's Wealth
AND Most Important Of All!
Roosevelt
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AND the Special Relations —

I watched the new monarch's [Charles III] first Address to the nation and, in the context of all his talk of it being a more diverse nation than the one his mother inherited on becoming Queen, he said that it remained the duty of the monarch to protect the institutions and values of the state and in particular those of the Church of England.

Although this is not altogether unexpected—after all it's the core requirement of an English monarch anointed and given legitimacy, not by parliament but directly by a Church of England God—I was struck by the way in which the new monarch couched this commitment in such uncompromising terms.

Given the fluidity of parliamentary-endorsed liberal values and its susceptibility to forces that would challenge the values that currently underpin what's left of a Church of England: is it only a matter of time before we see the tensions within the state becoming more critical?

(A Reader, 10.9.2022)

Freemason?

Was the late Queen Elizabeth II a Freemason? "*No, she was not.* The most senior member of the Royal Family who is a Freemason is the Duke of Kent who is Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England."

(<https://www.quora.com>)

"A branch of the Freemasons secret society is being formed by members of the Royal Household and police who protect the Royal Family.

And their decision to call it *The Royal Household Lodge* has put them on a collision course with Buckingham Palace—as has their plan to co-opt the royal cipher—EiIR—for their regalia, to underline their connection to the Queen.

Although the Queen's cousin, the Duke of Kent, is head of the secretive organisation—he is Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England—the new branch has not gone down well with the Royal Family"

(*Evening Standard*, London. 12.4.2012)

The late Queen's husband, Prince Philip was a Freemason, as was her father, George VI, who was an enthusiastic brother, he joined several Lodges and different masonic orders. He was the *Senior Grand Warden* of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1923 and *Provincial Grand Master* of Middlesex from 1924 until 1937. Also, *Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland* (1936-1937).

In the late 1980s, it was reported that the new king, Charles II, refused to become a Mason, "largely because he is a committed Christian".

Late Queen's wealth!

"It is perfectly clear that the Queen is one of the richest individuals in the country, a status not unconnected with her land holdings. For the first five years of its life the *Sunday Times* [1989] Rich List placed the Queen at the head of Britain's rich largely on the basis of the value of the Crown Estate and the Royal Art collection" (Kevin Cahill, *Who Owns Britain*, Canongate, 2001)

AND most important of all:

The late Queen was *Head of the British Armed Forces*, also known as the Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces, was the supreme command authority of the British Armed Forces, a role vested in the sovereign of the United Kingdom, according to British constitutional law. The authority to issue orders and give commands to military personnel is delegated by the sovereign to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defence, who in turn delegate their authority to career military officers.

Roosevelt

In the days after the Pearl Harbour attack, on 7th December 1941, suspicion fell, not only on Japanese-American communities in the US, but also on Germans and Italians.

Pearl Harbour is located in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, a US state located in the Pacific Ocean about 2,000 miles (3,200 km) from the US mainland

The infamous Executive Order 9066 was issued by US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt on 19th February 1942. It granted the Secretary of War and his commanders the power to

"prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate military commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded".

No specific group or location was mentioned in the Executive Order, but it was quickly applied to Japanese-Americans. More than 120,000 were incarcerated.

Many families of German and Italian origin were also interned, deported or forced to relocate.

Roosevelt told Attorney General, Francis Biddle, to make arrests, but added:

"I don't care so much about the Italians. They are a lot of opera singers, but the Germans are different: they may be dangerous."

Around 11,500 German-Americans were interned and 1,521 Italians were arrested by the FBI up to June, 1942.

The U.S. also demanded that Latin-American countries evict Germans, Japanese and Italians whom the FBI suspected of subversive activities.

Fifteen countries complied and 6,609 suspects were brought to the US and interned: 4,058 Germans, 2,264 Japanese, and 287 Italians.

Elizabeth I

was the daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn who was sent to the block on 19th May 1536.

Elizabeth whose

"genius lay in her deep understanding of the culture she shared with her people. As far as women were concerned, this culture favoured two convergent ideals. The glamorous role of chivalry and the courtly tradition painted the feminine ideal as a virgin, pale, fair of hair, and of willowy, ethereal figure. Concurrently, the religion of Roman Catholicism worshipped the Blessed Virgin not only as the mother of God, but as a kind of goddess herself, a being who could intercede for those who prayed to her, and a proper object of worship. Elizabeth recognised that a weakness of Protestantism, as far as

the emotional life of the people was concerned, was its diminishment of the role of the Blessed Virgin. To be sure, she was still to be venerated as Christ's mother, but she was not to be set between the people and God as a kind of intermediate object of worship.

Grasping that this 'removal' of the Virgin had left a void in the Protestant heart, Elizabeth began to develop about herself—in her appearance, her conduct, her every pronouncement—the image of a virgin queen, at once a blend of the courtly ideal and the religious one. If the absence of the Blessed Virgin had created an empty place in Protestant England's emotions, Elizabeth herself would fill it.

"This self-created virgin image was doubtless one of the factors that dissuaded Elizabeth from marriage." (Alan Axelrod, *Profiles in Leadership*, Prentice Hall Press, New York, US, 2003, p.158.)

Apology To Republicans!

The Irish Catholic Church should follow the example of Pope Francis and apologise for its treatment of Irish republicans during

the Civil War as the Pope had done in relation to events in his own native Argentina, a historian has told the annual *General Liam Lynch Commemoration* in north Cork.

Author Dr. Tim Horgan told the annual gathering at General Liam Lynch's grave at Kilcumber Cemetery outside Fermoy, Co. Cork, that the Bishops of Ireland put politics above Christianity in 1922 by excommunicating those who were fighting for a republic in the Irish Civil War.

"Sacraments were denied, men were refused Christian burials, no confessions, no communion, no condemnation of torture or concentration camps, no priestly comfort on the way to the firing squad wall; it is a fact of history that these excommunications were never revoked even after the fighting ceased," he said.

"In contrast, the present Pope Francis, over 20 years ago, apologised for the role of the Argentine Church in his country's Civil War in the 1970s, declaring, 'We want to confess before God everything that we have done badly', and for the way the Church 'had closed its eyes' to murder and torture perpetrated by the state" (*The Irish Times*, 11.9.2022). *****

Martin Tyrrell

Máirín Mitchell—a rather conventional republican
Part 4

We Can Keep the Peace

Máirín Mitchell was born Marion Houghton Mitchell in England in 1895. Her father, Thomas Houghton Mitchell, a successful GP, was Anglo-Irish but had settled in England after graduating in medicine from Trinity College, Dublin. Her mother, Gertrude Pease, was heiress to a considerable fortune. The fortune had been made by Thomas Pease, Máirín Mitchell's great-grandfather, who had set up a business importing cognac from France.

The Peases were a Quaker family, strictly teetotal and therefore unhappy that one of their own should take up such a line of work, so Thomas Pease decamped to the Church of England. As a result, Máirín Mitchell's immediate background was entirely Anglican. Although in her lengthy correspondence with the veteran Irish Republican Desmond Ryan she would sometimes claim to be of '*Catholic and Quaker stock*', her Quaker ancestry was arguably too far back to have had any

great influence on her, while her Catholicism was something she had acquired on her own initiative sometime in the 1920s.

That was also when she began to identify as Irish, Gaelicised her name, went to Irish language classes and generally immersed herself in bohemian London. By the 1930s, she had become a fine travel writer. Her *Storm Over Spain* impressed Orwell who reviewed it positively in *Time and Tide*—and it is on account of this that she is remembered, to the extent that she is remembered at all.

Just as, for Orwell, war with Germany would revive the patriotism in which he had been drilled in childhood, so would Mitchell increasingly align with Britain once the war was underway. Irish neutrality she considered justified, but only on account of partition. However, were partition to go—were Britain to intervene and end it—then Ireland, she thought, should immediately join the war.

It was Britain, she argued, that guaranteed the wellbeing of the world through its long-standing maritime supremacy. In her view, the Royal Navy kept the seas open for trade, a kind of global service. If only the partition of Ireland could be dealt with, Ireland might join with the old Empire in the present war—and in its wider peace mission. This is the view she elaborates in *Back to England* (1941) and *Atlantic Battle and the Future of Ireland* (1942).

Mitchell wrote two further books during the Second World War—*The Red Fleet and the Royal Navy* (1942), and *We Can Keep the Peace* (1944), both of which elaborate on the position she adopted in the two earlier books.

Both *The Red Fleet and the Royal Navy* and *We Can Keep the Peace* take as their starting point the view that Germany is the greatest threat to world peace there has been in the modern period. Germany, Mitchell alleges, has caused a series of wars of increasing destructiveness and will continue to be a threat to global stability, even when the present war is over.

If there is a third World War—which Mitchell suggests is either likely or not entirely out of the question—it will be the fault of Germany, just as the previous two World Wars were down to Germany, to Germany "trying to make a *Deutschtum of the Earth*", as she puts it in *We Can Keep the Peace*.

She offers no explanation for what she sees as Germany's consistent belligerence in the recent and not so recent past or why she thinks it is unlikely to go away. It is not due to economics. Germany, she claims, has been as belligerent when it was rich as when it was struggling. And it is certainly not down to the way Germany was treated at Versailles. Versailles, she says, was a lenient treaty, whatever the Germans and the various sentimentalists who agree with them say to the contrary.

Might it be genetic then, this German problem? It is an argument that Mitchell says she has consciously rejected, despite what she regards as the substantial evidence in its favour. (She claims several times, for instance, and without any evidence, that Vidkun Quisling's movement in Norway was a movement in which German expatriates were prominent).

In the end, she decides that there is something in the culture of Germany—whether the political culture or the cultural culture, or the interplay between these two—that has made of Germany a perpetual threat to an otherwise orderly world.

In these two books, written when the World War had turned the Allies' way,

Máirín Mitchell tells us that, for as long as there is a Germany, a lasting peace can never be guaranteed. But maybe, just maybe, Germany, once it is defeated, can at last be contained, until such time as the threat it poses has been neutralised. It is not impossible, she concludes. But it will take years of tough-minded policy to reshape the Germans into a demilitarised and unthreatening people. The country will probably need to be occupied until it is at last fit to govern itself, after which a close check will need to be kept on it.

It might need to be dismantled—transformed back into a confederation of autonomous states, say—disarmed, and made reliant on international trade, so that it is forever susceptible to the threat of blockade. Its people will need to be re-educated, by carefully vetted teachers, and all of its media scrupulously monitored.

Above all, the consequences for Germany of ever again transgressing must be made as dire as possible. It must be unambiguously put to the German people that, should they rise, the whole world will rise against them and that the world that will rise against them—the United Nations—will be led by a formidable peace troika comprising Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union.

If nothing else, these are books that capture a certain strain in English Conservative thinking in the middle years of the Second World War. Aside from the *leitmotif* of Germany bad, Russia, all of a sudden, good, Mitchell assumes that Britain will end this war as great, if not greater, a Power than when it declared it. It will be a global Britain based on the Commonwealth which she here depicts as already more or less a kind of federation and which she calls, variously, the *United Commonwealth* or the *Oceanic Commonwealth*.

The Commonwealth was a fairly vague concept in the 1940s. It generally referred to the Dominions, the self-governing parts of the British Empire, and excluded everything else, including India and much of Africa—many millions of people who had few political rights, or none whatsoever. (Clarence Streit, an American, wrote a book called *Union Now!* in the late 1930s. It advocated that the Democracies should form a Union against Totalitarianism. George Orwell reviewed it and said that Streit was wrong if he thought that countries like Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands were democracies, since they all had extensive colonial empires where the colonised populations were governed undemocratically.)

There were five active Dominions at the time Mitchell wrote her wartime books—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Ireland. The first three had begun

as colonies where the colonisers had been mainly British-descended and now massively outnumbered the colonised.

South Africa was different on two counts. First, the settlers were in the minority but were politically empowered nonetheless, and, second, the British-descended settlers represented a slight minority of the total.

Finally, Ireland. Ireland was the only Dominion where the colonised had both remained a majority and gained political control. Also, its leadership had neither sought nor welcomed Dominion Status and had, in effect, rejected it in 1937. (There had been a sixth Dominion, Newfoundland, which had become insolvent during the Great Depression and had its dominion status suspended.) Such was the Commonwealth in the early 1940s.

In discussions at that time, Britain was generally held to be one thing and the Commonwealth another, rather than the Commonwealth being a thing of which Britain was a part.

The Commonwealth had no authoritative institution representative of its members that could make binding policy for them in any area of particular consequence. Any binding policy for the Commonwealth was set by London on the understanding that the Dominions, the member states of the Commonwealth, would voluntarily adopt it.

This was the expectation when London declared war on Germany in September 1939—that the Dominions would shortly follow suit. In the previous World War, the Dominions had had war declared for them and had gone along with it without complaint. Although the *Statute of Westminster* 1931 had conferred on them a formal independence, it was assumed that they would continue, independently, to come to the conclusion that any war declared by London was their war also.

Mitchell writes that the Dominions unanimously followed Britain in declaring war on Germany although she notes that South Africa was a little less enthusiastic than the others and needed a change of government before it came in with the rest. She chooses not to mention Ireland, the Dominion that did not declare war on Germany, or the argument that Ireland, as a Dominion of the British Empire, the Statute of Westminster notwithstanding, had no business, and no legal basis, for opting out. I have looked at this in previous instalments. The argument at the time was that the King cannot be belligerent in one place and neutral in another. Regardless of what a Dominion government might decide, the indivisibility of the Crown must ultimately prevail. And, since the Crown does not make policy but

takes it from Westminster, then there will always be matters where the Dominions must do as Westminster decides, even if that is not what they decided themselves. In short, although the *Statute of Westminster* had made the Dominions independent states, the oneness of the Crown put a limit on their independence. In some circumstances, anyway, such as a war, they could not take a different policy from that of the Crown, and since the Crown took its line from Westminster, they could not take a different line to Westminster.

Moreover, although as independent states they could in theory reconstitute themselves—even to the extent of renouncing their Dominion status—in renouncing this status, they would be renouncing the status from which all their subsequent powers flowed, including the power to renounce their Dominion status and reconstitute themselves as something else.

That was another argument deployed against Ireland when it began to reconstitute itself in the 1930s. These were not simply debating points. They were the basis for subsequent threats to invade Ireland and compel it to participate in the War: and a post-War announcement suggested that it was only considerable forbearance in Westminster that had prevented invasion.

(In all her previous books, Mitchell mentions Ireland a great deal and misses no opportunity to find interesting Irish connections in the most unexpected of European places. In contrast, in these two later wartime books, if she mentions Ireland, it is only in passing.)

The South African case was much more straightforward than the Irish, since South African support for neutrality was in the minority (i.e. was supported by a minority of the minority that governed South Africa) and thus never amounted to anything. In 1939, the governing Afrikaner Party was opposed to joining what it saw as a British war, but could not carry a policy of neutrality in the South African Parliament.

The Anglo-Afrikaner Opposition then stepped in and governed for the duration of the war in which South Africa participated. And the Afrikaners came back into government in 1948 and introduced apartheid, which was intended to institutionalise and thereby conserve existing racial segregation.

The politics and government of the Dominion of South Africa had been, from its inception in 1910, an affair of the minority white population only. The limited enfranchisement of Africans that had been permitted in the Cape was phased out, as was African peasant proprietorship which had been thriving since the 1870s. None of this raised any great issue in the Oceanic United

Commonwealth—neither before the War, nor during it, nor for a good many years after it. During the War what mattered was that South Africa, and its naval base at Simon's Town, had not become neutral.

The Red Fleet and the Royal Navy is, in part, a eulogy of the Soviet Navy and, by extension, of the Soviet Union. Five years before, in *Storm Over Spain*, Mitchell had feared the rise of Soviet Communism and the type of world it might bring about. Her sympathies then were with the Irish, with whom she had identified, the Spanish anarchists whom she admired, and, most of all, the Basques whose social Catholicism she thought offered a viable way out of an increasingly conformist world.

In 1942, however, she is full of praise for the Soviet achievement. It is a carefully worded eulogy that does not dwell critically where it might have been expected to. By chance, for instance, Mitchell's former enthusiasm—anarchy—and her 1942 enthusiasm, the Russian Navy—were both present in the most significant of the uprisings against Bolshevism, the revolt at the Kronstadt naval base. In *The Red Fleet*, however, Kronstadt is passed over quickly, with much of the unpleasant detail—the several hundred executions, say, and the several thousand imprisonments—omitted. "*In sympathy with the peasants*", writes Mitchell, "*the sailors, always individualistic, forceful, sometimes revealing more of the anarchist than the Bolshevik, revolted against the grain confiscations*" (*The Red Fleet*, p20). Lenin suppressed it, she goes on to say, but it was a factor in the introduction of the New Economic Policy—which, according to Mitchell, met the peasants halfway.

Russia's is a hard-headed and patriotic socialism, she claims, one she contrasts favourably with the supposedly sentimental version developed by the English, a sentimentality that she says is ultimately almost as great a danger to peace as "*the collectively aggressive nature of the Germans*" (p14).

(Sentimentality is, for Mitchell, the great British failing, particularly in the inter-War period when, she claims, it manifested as benevolence towards Germany. It is a concept that recurs throughout both *The Red Fleet* and *We Can Keep the Peace*. She is critical of the TUC, for instance, for rejecting, in September 1943, a resolution charging the German people with war guilt, as in 1918, and recommending the military occupation of the country once the war is won. This decision, she says, might someday be looked back upon as the day that Britain lost World War Three.)

Mitchell commends the Russians for making their preparations for war during peacetime, which is when she says they should be made, and when Britain should have made them. This present War, she says, is "*the bitter fruits*" of appeasement. Her post-war ideal is that the current Anglo-Soviet alliance continues. Had there been such a thing in place at the start of the War, Mitchell writes, it is conceivable that the fall of France might have been avoided. Instead, "*unfortunately for the rest of the world, Britain and Russia were almost strangers to each other*" in the pre-War period and "*not without some reason did the Kremlin regard the contemporary government in England as being unlikely to prove particularly helpful against Germany*" (p71).

We Can Keep the Peace is the more optimistic of the two books. The War had turned a corner by 1944 and it was evident which side was going to win. In *We Can Keep the Peace* there is a growing sense of the amount of military power available to the Allies now and when the war is over.

Mitchell was, of course, writing before the Allied air raids on Germany and Japan, and the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which might have made her reconsider the value of such disproportionate military power. As it stands, however, Germany, the world's problem, is the only cloud she sees. It is a problem, she claims, that predates Hitler and Nazism to the extent that she considers it unhelpful to talk about Hitler and Nazism as though they were the problem.

The problem, in Mitchell's view, is that "*The inhabitants of Germany are Germans above all*" (*We Can Keep the Peace*, p208). In support of this claim, she draws heavily on Peter Wiener's *German with Tears* (1942). Wiener wrote that Germany had been comprehensively militarised for more than a century, to the extent that every subject taught in school was taught to military ends and every schoolboy between the ages of 10 and 18 was taught in ways that would prepare him for military life. In this respect, he said that the Weimar Republic was no different from any other incarnation of the German State.

People were deluded, Wiener argued, when they praised Weimar as some kind of ideal, noting by way of evidence a manual for teachers written by a Professor Vogeler in which war is described as an antidote to the "*weeds of peace*", and that it brings out the best in the nation.

But if this was how it was in Germany, it was how it was in plenty of other places, too. When Eric Blair, the future George Orwell, was an infant—three years old or

thereabouts—he was enrolled in the Navy League, which lobbied to maintain naval supremacy; at his preparatory school, St. Cyprian's, there was a Cadet Corps with which he drilled from the age of seven or eight; and, at Eton, he was in the Officer Training Corps. These activities were as compulsory as maths and English.

When Orwell abandoned his revolutionary socialist opposition to the War and became a revolutionary socialist supporter of it, he was frank about what had brought about the change— "...the long drilling in patriotism which the middle classes go through had done its work".

Mitchell was not the only person impressed by Peter Wiener. Eleanor Roosevelt noted his claim that the defective German character could be dated back to Frederick the Great. It was a sobering thought, the First Lady wrote,

"but it is better to have these things out in the open. All the people of any nation, no matter how they have been conditioned, are never identical. But if you know what the conditioning has been, you can judge the general results and prepare yourself for the time that it will take and the methods which will have to be used to develop a new mentality and new characteristics in Hitler's Germans."

I have not been able to find much reference to Wiener. From what I can gather, he was a teacher, both in Germany and in England, and it is possible that he took to the latter because that was where he was living, perhaps around the time of the Declaration of War. *German With Tears* lifts its title from Terence Rattigan's 1936 play *French Without Tears* (to which it is otherwise unrelated), and consists of a series of letters from an English student to his former German teacher (a German teacher in both senses—a teacher of German who was also a German national, like Wiener himself). The student complains that everything he has been taught about the Germans has been romantic and sentimental (sentimentality again!)—it has encouraged him to pity the defeated nation. This has left him ill-prepared for the real world and the real Germans that are disrupting it. The teacher proceeds to put him right, telling him frankly that the Germans have been rogue for centuries. It is how they are brought up. And Teacher should know, he is one of them. And one of the people who had the job of schooling them.

An earlier work, in which Wiener suggested that Martin Luther was a kind of forerunner of Hitler and therefore evidence that the Hitlerian mode in the German character was centuries old received

short shrift from Lutherans. *German With Tears* itself was unfavourably reviewed in *The Dublin Review* where the reviewer, Franz Borckenau, an émigré from fascism and, at that time, still a revolutionary socialist, homed in on its multiple historical inaccuracies and, especially, its conflation of the shrill, chauvinistic textbooks introduced in Nazi Germany with the uncontroversial schoolbooks that had been used under the Weimar Republic. But what puzzled Borckenau most was that Wiener had waited until the War began before voicing his criticisms of Germany. Surely the time to criticise was when the Nazis were on the rise and might have been stopped. And, indeed, Wiener was no refugee from Nazism but rather seems to have become, following the Declaration of War in 1939, a kind of professional anti-German in the Vansittart style, whose unique selling point was that he was himself German ("*like the reformed burglar at a Salvation Army meeting*", as Orwell said of Brigadier-General Frank Crozier addressing a pacifist gathering).

We must not succumb to that perennial British tendency to pity the vanquished, writes Mitchell. Not in the post-war world. "*Twice in our own memory and five times within a century Germany has allowed herself to be possessed with the same lust for conquest*" (p42). The five times are presumably: the Schleswig Holstein War, the Six Weeks War, and the Franco-Prussian War, plus the two World Wars.

The first of the five, the 1864 War, was prompted by Denmark's annexation of the Schleswig and Holstein duchies. Germany and Austria jointly intervened to reverse the annexation. There was then a falling out over what should be done with the two duchies, which prompted the Six Weeks War.

The Franco-Prussian War was a defensive war on the German side that went badly for the aggressors, the French. But Schleswig-Holstein and the other two were small fry compared with the conquest of Britain, which Mitchell claims is an ambition regularly explored by German writers and thinkers and was the primary goal in 1914 and again in 1939. She mentions Rudolf Martin, for instance, a disillusioned and rejected civil servant who fantasised that, if Germany had 50,000 zeppelins (Mitchell writes 'aircraft'), and if the German Army marched into France and took over the port of Calais, it could airlift hundreds of thousands of troops into England.

The fatal flaw in this particular plan, if there had been a plan and not a fantasy, and if the French had obligingly allowed the Germans to take over a Channel port, and the British had stood aside and let it happen too, was that the required number

of airships was many times the number of airships that existed in 1908. There were not 50,000 airships in the entire world, let alone in Germany, in 1908, or 1914 or any year after. I would hazard a guess that, if the total number of airships constructed in all times and places were calculated, the number would be well below 50,000. Germany, the land of the airship, had, at the start of the First World War, around a dozen zeppelins in military use. Most of these were destroyed or decommissioned in the first year of fighting. And fewer than a hundred were constructed up to 1918.

Then there is Paul Rohrbach, who wrote *German Thought in the World*, a bestseller in Germany in 1912. This is plain evidence that Germany aimed at world conquest, says Mitchell. It advocates German expansion into Africa and Eastern Europe. But these were Rohrbach's aims for Germany rather than those of the German Government. Germany had no war aims in 1912 or 1914 because it had not planned to go to war. It had no plans either for global conquest. (If it had had such plans, it would not have had the wherewithal to do anything about them.)

The great expansionist States—measured by the successful acquisition of territory—were Britain, France and the United States, and then Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal and Italy. German expansionism was half-hearted by contrast—Germany was the last and least of the colonial powers. In 1914, there were more Germans living in Paris than in all of Germany's colonies put together.

The great expansionist fantasy in the early 1900s was that the English-speaking peoples of Anglo-Saxon descent might combine and determine the outcome of the world. The United States would join with Britain and the Dominions, and dominate. The dream had not quite died in the 1940s; there is something of it in Mitchell's own speculative, post-War global order.

In parallel to the Anglo-American ideal in its high days in the 1900s, there was a series of alarmist speculative fictions that worked up the idea that the next war would be with Germany, that Germany would start it and that it would be a war of conquest. There was Saki's *When William Came*, and Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands*. But Well's *War of the Worlds*, and even *Dracula*, plays to the same anxiety. William Le Queux's *The Invasion* of 1910 was the most hyped of all these fictions. When the book was serialised in the *Daily Mail*, the newsboys wore German army uniforms!

TO BE CONTINUED

The Constitution Of Eire/Ireland

Part Four of Extracts from *The Constitution Of Eire/Ireland*
by Angela Clifford (Athol Books, 1987)

Dail Debate Continued

[NOTE: This instalment resumes reporting of the Dail Debate on the Draft 1937 Constitution. Square brackets denote material added for this reprinting.]

In the Debate, the term 'President' refers to the head of the Government under the old Treaty Constitution, i.e. Eamon De Valera. The 1937 Constitution was to change the title of this position to Taoiseach.

It has recently come to my attention that Frank MacDermot, a TD who is quoted in the extracts below, worked for British Intelligence and played a sinister role in blackening Roger Casement's name.]

Partition

The ending of Partition was declared by all nationalists to be their first priority. But only a handful of nationalists allowed any weight to anti-Partitionist considerations when it came to devising actual political measures. And that handful could exert no influence on the conduct of politics because the development of the State in accordance with the impulse of the social movement which produced it could not be reconciled with the measures which might have tended to erode Partition. The more Catholic-nationalist ideals were realised in political structures, the more Partition was strengthened. And it was not a practical possibility that the political life of the new State should be put into suspended animation until Partition was ended.

The nationalists in the Dail who saw the new Constitution primarily in its bearing on Partition were very few indeed. On the Opposition side there was Frank McDermott (formerly of Fine Gael, now an Independent). And on the Government side there was Eamon Donnelly (FF, Leix-Offaly) who was born in Northern Ireland, seconded by Thomas Hales (FF, West Cork).

MacDermot (who was seconded by Professor Alton of Trinity) proposed that

"the Dail declines to give a Second Reading to Bunreacht na hEireann since, while purporting to establish a Constitution for the whole of Ireland, it offers no basis for union with the North and contains various provisions tending to prolong partition" (11.5.37, Col 76).

MacDermot's remarks on Partition and the United Ireland mentality are so acute that it is worth reproducing them at length:

"Now I come to the question which interests me most, and that is the question of the unity of Ireland, which all of us here in this House have agreed should be the paramount issue in our politics, and in that regard I feel compelled to take the view... that the Government, in this draft Constitution, have misused a great opportunity. It is not of course that any legislation here could immediately solve the problem of partition; that problem can only be solved by inducing the Northern Unionists to give their first allegiance to Ireland—to put the peace, dignity and happiness of Ireland before any other loyalty. For this to be possible, we have got to offer them an Ireland in which a place can be found for their traditions and aspirations as well as for ours. Until we are willing to do this we are partitionists at heart, no matter how loudly we shout about unity.

"The six Northern counties will have no part in the coming plebiscite on these constitutional proposals. They are not represented here to-day, except perhaps the constituency of South Down [de Valera was MP for S. Down at the time]. We, who are claiming jurisdiction over all Ireland, have therefore imposed upon us the duty of exercising imagination and sympathy, of acting as the trustees of those who are absent, of taking into account the objections that would probably be raised by the spokesmen of the Northern Unionists if they were among us participating in our deliberations" (Cols 79,80).

MacDermot brought up four main counts on which he believed the Constitution would offend the North: King, Commonwealth, Church and Language.

Article 29.4.2 says that the Government may, in any executive function or in connection with external relations,

"avail of or adopt any organ, instrument, or method of procedure used or adopted for the like purpose by members of any group or league of nations with which the State is or becomes associated for the purpose of international co-operation in matters of common concern".

This provision, taken in conjunction with the circumlocution of the External Relations Act, meant that, though neither King nor Commonwealth are named, the King as head of the Commonwealth was to be used in the appointment of ambassadors.

MacDermot said:

"From this point of view [that of Northern Unionists], Sir, the first great fault of these proposals is the omission of the King except in so far as he survives, precariously, as an organ or instrument for external use only. Every other self-governing unit in the Commonwealth disdains the conception of employing some agency outside itself for the conducting of international relationships. The other members of the Commonwealth find it more dignified to adopt the King as an integral part of their internal constitution, so that they are in a position of complete equality with Great Britain instead of becoming a sort of hanger-on or satellite, which is what is implicit in external association. I suggest that it would be far more valuable to employ the King as an organ or instrument for securing Irish unity than as an organ or instrument for appointing Ministers to foreign countries. There is an intense sentiment about the Throne in Northern Ireland. I shall not deny that it is often unworthily exploited, often mixed up with less respectable feelings and passions, but the sentiment is there, and is, I believe, as fundamental with them as our love of independence is with us. Events like the Coronation could be so used as to contribute powerfully to Irish unity; we prefer to let it raise fresh barriers and harden feeling against us. In this new Constitution we are creating a ceremonial head of the State with considerable dignities and powers. He could also be the King's representative without the smallest infringement of our nationhood or our liberties. As, however, he is not to be the King's representative, his existence will make us less attractive than ever to the Northern Unionists" (Col 80,81).

MacDermot proposed an alteration to the Preamble of the Constitution which would add the aspirations of the Northern Irish majority to those of the Catholics. He proposed to add the following words after "*Gratefully remembering their*

heroic and unremitting struggle to regain the rightful independence of our Nation”:

“Remembering, too, that nearly one-quarter of our people are united by ties of blood, tradition and sentiment with Great Britain, remembering the part played by our fore-fathers both of Gaelic and of British stock in founding and developing the British Commonwealth, and by our kith and kin to-day in guiding its destinies; remembering the security given by membership of that Commonwealth against attacks upon our independence from any quarter; remembering the long agony of Irish history due not solely to foreign oppression, but also to conflict of ideals and loyalties among Irishmen; and earnestly desiring our country to grow to its full stature by conciliating our various traditions and aspirations so as to fuse them into one national consciousness and to attain that measure of unity in heart and mind which makes a nation.”

MacDermot spoke as follows in support of his proposal:

“In relation to this amendment, I was anxious to ascertain whether ‘we, the people of Eire’, speak merely for the Irish Free State or for the whole country. The President has told us that we speak on behalf of the nation. That fact makes still more appropriate the insertion of the words that I desire to see added to the Preamble...

“If those words were in the Preamble the Constitution would really be a step on the road to doing away with Partition. In that case I venture to say that nobody who meant what he said in the Preamble would reject the other amendment I proposed, declaring ourselves free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations and acknowledging King George VI as King of Ireland, so long as we remain members of the Commonwealth of Nations.

“I maintain that it is a mockery to produce a statement of the motives that are in our minds at the head of this document which claims to be a milestone of the utmost importance on the road to national unity and to leave out the considerations that are included in my amendment. I hope the President will accept it” (4.6.37, Col 1923-4).

This attempt to put something in the Constitution that the descendants of the United Irishmen might relate to gained little support. MacDermot could not even get the five people needed to call for a division so that he could have a vote—even though they would not have been required to vote in support. De

Valera’s response was “Deputy MacDermot should be satisfied now that he has got that off his chest” (Col 1924), and the amendment was negatived without a vote.

Urging “*an open declaration of our membership of the Commonwealth*”, MacDermot blurted out what all know but were careful not to say: “*we cannot afford to be treated as aliens by Great Britain*”. And he commented:

“Their [the Unionists’] stomachs turn—and I do not blame them—at all the hugger-mugger with which our membership of the Commonwealth is associated, and at our fear of going into conference with the representatives of the other States that compose it” (11.5.37, Cols 81,82).

(Because he knew that they could not afford to be treated as aliens by Britain, MacDermot said in this speech: “*Separatism has run its course*”. He assumed that unacknowledged membership of the Commonwealth would continue. He could not foresee that Costello and MacBride could make the further separatist gesture of formally leaving the Commonwealth without having Eire citizens treated as aliens by Britain.)

In the course of the Debate MacDermot proposed an additional Article declaring the State a member of the Commonwealth. It was defeated by 56 votes to 3. His supporters were Trinity TD, Professor Ernest Alton, and John Good, Independent for County Dublin.

(Cornelius O’Leary, Professor of Political Science at Queens University, Belfast, has attributed Fine Gael opposition to the 1937 Constitution to its lack of a Commonwealth dimension: “Fine Gael opposed it on the ground that the country would be better served by full, unequivocal membership of the Commonwealth” (*Irish Elections*, 1979, p29). That groundless statement is, I fear, all too typical of Professor O’Leary’s political-historical comment.)

Fine Gael failed to support any of MacDermot’s initiatives on the Commonwealth. And when MacDermot, in his Final Reading speech (June 6), challenged Fine Gael to tell him their position on King and Commonwealth so that he could decide which way to vote, he got an evasive answer. He asked whether, if the Constitution were rejected by the people, and Fine Gael won the next election, it would restore Article 12 of the 1922 Constitution, (deleted by de Valera’s Amendment No. 27), “the Legislature shall consist of the King and two

Houses” (Col 354), Dillon replied:

“We have converted the Fianna Fail Party to our view... that we ought to remain in the Commonwealth... I want to make it the easiest thing in the world to declare a republic in this country. I believe that the easier you make it to declare a republic, the more certain it is that our people will not do it” (Col 367; Dillon was a member of the government which declared a republic eleven years later).

Given the equivocal answer to a straight question, MacDermot voted for the Constitution. He thought it was a good Constitution, apart from alienating the North. Since Fine Gael would not support a King and Commonwealth position for the purpose of reconciling Ulster, he took that position as lost, and voted on other grounds. He wrote in a letter to the Irish Independent:

“nobody voting in the plebiscite on the new Constitution should imagine that our relations with the Commonwealth and our attitude to the King are part of the question that has to be decided. At no time in the course of the debate in the Dail did a single member of Mr. Cosgrave’s party raise these issues...” (26.6.37).

(Cosgrave subsequently ‘explained’ Fine Gael’s failure to support MacDermot’s amendment on the grounds that it asserted

“a principle contrary to the adopted practice governing the relationship of the Crown to the members of the British Commonwealth... the MacDermot amendment did not propose to recognise the Crown as the symbol of free association [within the Commonwealth]. It recognised George VI as the king of Ireland. Fine Gael took its stand on the treaty and the agreements reached by the Imperial Conference with respect to the definition of the Crown in relation to members of the British Commonwealth” (*Irish Press*, 7.6.37, as summarised by Arthur W. Bromage, “Constitutional Developments in Saorstát Éireann And The Constitution Of Eire, *American Political Science Review*, October 1937).

Bromage comments:

“This technical and ingenious explanation aside, it is obvious that Fine Gael was in an unfortunate dilemma. Had Fine Gael voted for the amendment, it would have been open to pro-British charges in the ensuing Irish election. By failing to vote for the amendment, Fine Gael was open to charges of insincerity in its stand for the Commonwealth connection” (p858).

*

On the Fianna Fail side, Eamon Donnelly moved that the Second Reading be deferred until 1st January 1938, and

“that a special Government Department be set up for the purpose of uniting and co-ordinating all the anti-Partition forces in Ireland, North and South, irrespective of political or religious outlook, organising the Irish race abroad for their assistance and support, focussing through the home and foreign Press world opinion on this grave national issue, and pressing the English Government to reopen negotiations on the reunification of Ireland, and so that, if and when a solution of this problem is found, Bunreacht na hEireann can be submitted to the whole people of Ireland for ratification or otherwise” (11.5.37, Col 104,5).

Donnelly argued that forces beyond the nationalist fold could be mobilised for an anti-partitionist offensive. The “Unionists” (by which Donnelly presumably means the Southern Protestants)—

“have been holding meetings all over the country, too, and the burden of their speeches also is that, until Ireland is united, commercial and financial success will not and cannot be achieved” (Col 106).

He had already proposed that an “all-Ireland convention could be called together”, which would have attracted, apart from Fianna Fail and Fine Gael,

“Labour, North and South; public boards, corporations, farmers, unions, the Ports and Docks Boards of Dublin and Belfast, the corporations of Cork, Dublin, Waterford, Drogheda and Clonmel, professional and commercial interests, southern Unionists, the universities of Belfast, Dublin, Cork and Galway” (11,1222).

They would all get together and take the matter up again with England “on the basis of a plebiscite to be taken in the areas I suggest” (Col 114).

England should be the target of approach, because the six counties had been “ceded to England”. Lord Craigavon himself had told the Northern Ireland Parliament recently: “Mr. Baldwin is Prime Minister of Northern Ireland and not I”. Donnelly added:

“When the Constitution... was brought up for debate in the Ulster Parliament, the same answer was given: ‘You have to deal with Mr. Baldwin and his Cabinet’” (Cols 113, 112).

“My objection to this Constitution is that it seems to me, if I may say so with all respect, that we are putting the cart before the horse. The major issue in Ireland at the moment is to get our

nation first and let the people of Ireland draft a Constitution afterwards” (Col 111); “everybody has to live under this Constitution and, if the day comes in the near future when we have an united Ireland, and when another 1,250,000 people are added to the population of this State, surely it is not an unreasonable request... to secure some way by which they would have a voice in the Constitution under which they might be expected to live later on...” (Col 107).

Donnelly was not opposed to the substance of the Constitution. As he said “I do not wish to cavil at this Constitution at all... as a follower of President de Valera” (107). It was just that he took seriously the aim of ending Partition. Neither was he unduly concerned about the Unionists, whom he was prepared to see coerced: “there is a minority in Northern Ireland of 500,000 people whose eyes are always yearningly looking to the day when their deliverance can take place” (107); “if there must be no coercion of Ulster, there should be no coercion by 700,000 people there of the substantial minority of 500,000 people” (108). Whilst he was prepared to back de Valera’s 1923 proposal of local autonomy in Unionist areas (9110), he insisted “We cannot call this a nation until we get back that territory” (Col 113). And things could be left too long. He feared the effect of the Northern Ireland education system on nationalists (113)!

Although Frank MacDermot and Donnelly were united in making partition their priority, and in liking the rest of the 1937 Constitution, they were worlds apart. Donnelly had no understanding or sympathy for the Unionist position, and he described MacDermot’s Dail speech as “one of the most barren that I have ever listened to” (117).

Donnelly’s amendment was seconded by Thomas Hales (Cork West, FF — Sean Hales’ brother). Whereas

Donnelly’s main concern had been the Catholic minority in the North, Hales was worried by Southern Republicans who would take the Constitution seriously and end up in jail. He said:

“The big question... is to visualise what really will be the position when the Constitution is passed... Will you have a position, for instance, under Article 1 of the Constitution [declaring the independence of the Irish nation] that you will have a certain number of men working or standing for the nation who will come under Article 38 of that Constitution [allowing the establishment of Special Courts], and possibly be imprisoned by Eire?” (Col 118). “The President and the Government can argue that there is nothing in this to stop any man from going ahead and using constitutional methods to bring in the North. That certainly will be done in a haphazard, aimless, indefinite way. A certain number of men will advocate conciliation, conference and consent. Finally, we will get others who will possibly go further and introduce a certain amount of violence. It is clear that those men who will stand for Article 1 will be put into jail under Article 38...” (Col 119).

Instead of having the position “that by apparent or by silent consent the Irish race will stand divided and smashed at home and abroad” under the proposed Constitution, Hales wanted de Valera to “make the issue clear and proclaim the Republic of Ireland”. The effect of this would be “you make England keep Partition there by force of arms and you will let the world see that she is doing it” (Col 120).

But this openness was not to be. Southern Governments have failed to either reject or accept partition. And succeeding generations of Republicans have found the 26 Counties far more vicious in suppressing the threats they posed to its stability than the dreaded Unionists or imperialists.

In the final vote on the Constitution, Donnelly voted for it whilst Hales did not vote.

Launch And Public Meeting

Friday, November 11th at 7pm

The Teachers’ Club, Parnell Square, DUBLIN

“The Kilmichael Ambush, the historians and
Eve Morrison’s defence of Peter Hart”

A presentation by *Niall Meehan*

Attend in person

or, to receive a Zoom Link for the event, contact:

jacklaneaubane@hotmail.com

Peter Brooke

Solzhenitsyn's Two Centuries Together. Part 21: *Who Are The Ukrainians* (Continued)

Beginnings of a movement for national independence

Shevchenko And Russia

The last piece in this series broke off in the middle of a discussion of the poetry of Taras Shevchenko. Shevchenko was the first major writer to use the Ukrainian language, regarded as a peasant language — albeit with a rich store of popular songs and stories. He was greatly criticised in the 1840s by the Russian literary critic, Vissarion Belinskii, who saw his major poem, *Haidamaky*, as a backward step, a betrayal of the artist's calling to advance the nation towards a world culture: "*For Russia 'civilisation' meant turning to Europe*", the source of "*all that is great, noble, human and spiritual*" in art, science and politics.

Instead, Shevchenko was using a language—destined, in Belinskii's eyes to oblivion—to celebrate the backward and violent culture of the Ukrainian Cossacks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in their wars and mass civilian massacres against the Catholic Poles, Greek Catholic Ruthenians ('Uniates'), and Jews.

Belinskii, it should be said, liked Gogol and was at the same time one of the first to celebrate Dostoyevsky, though this was the early social realist Gogol and Dostoyevsky. He was to turn against their later, religiously-oriented, work.

But Shevchenko's ire was not confined to Poles, Jews and Uniates. In his poem, *The Excavated Mound*, he blames Bogdan Khmel'nitsky for signing the *Treaty of Pereyaslav* (1654), which started the process of bringing east bank Cossacks under the control of the Russian Government. It is Ukraine who is speaking here:

"There was a day I knew delight
In this vast world of ours.
My joy was great...
But oh, Bohdan,
You unwise son of mine!
Look at your ancient mother now,
Ukraine, of stock divine,
Who as she cradled you, would sing
And grieve she was not free;
Who, as she sang, in sorrow wept
And looked for liberty!...
O dear Bohdan, if I had known
That you would bring us doom,

I would have choked you in your crib,
Benumbed you in my womb!
For now my steppes are meted out
To Germans and to Jews;
My sons now toil in alien lands
Where foreign lords abuse;
The Dnieper they are drying up;
The loss will break my heart;
And my dear mounds the Muscovite
Is shattering apart."

The context of Shevchenko's complaining against the excavation of burial mounds is rather poignant, given that he was a member of the *Archaeological Commission*.

However, he wasn't a member for very long. In 1847 he came under suspicion for his association with the clandestine *Brotherhood of SS Cyril and Methodius*. Unpublished poems of his were found, notably *A Dream and Caucasus*, which were taken as directly offensive to the Tsar, Nicholas I, and to the Empress (who had arranged the raffle that freed Shevchenko from serfdom).

As a result, he was condemned to military service for life, without promotion, and with the express prohibition of all writing or drawing.

The other members of the Brotherhood received relatively light punishments and some of them, notably Nicolai Kostomarov, went on to very successful careers.

The Caucasus is dedicated to a friend of Shevchenko's, an artist and poet, who died as part of Russia's 'civilising mission' in that part of the world. The circumstances are described in Pat Walsh's book, *Great Britain against Russia in the Caucasus*. In Shevchenko's eyes, Moscow was doing to the free Muslims what it had already done to the free Cossacks in the Ukraine:

"Come, learn from us! We'll teach you what
The price of bread is, and of salt!
We're Christian folk: with shrines we're blest,
We've schools, and wealth, and we have God!
Just one thing does not give us rest:
How is it that your hut you've got
Without our leave; how is it we
To you, as to a dog a bone,
Your crust don't toss! How can it be
That you don't pay us for the sun!

And that is all! We're Christian folk,
We are not heathens — here below
We want but little!... You would gain!
If only you'd make friends with us,
There's much that you would learn from us!
Just look at all our vast domains —
Boundless Siberia alone!
And prisons—myriads! Peoples—throng!
From the Moldavian to the Finn
All silent are in all their tongues
Because such great contentment reigns!
[...]

And you, my good Yakov, you also were driven
To die in those mountains! Your life you
have given
For your country's hangmen, and not for
Ukraine,
Your life clean and blameless. 'Twas your
fate to drain
The Muscovite goblet, the full, fatal draught!
Oh friend good and noble, who'll be never
forgot!
Now wander, free spirit, all over Ukraine
And with the brave Cossacks soar over
her coast,
Keep watch o'er the grave mounds on her
spreading plains,
And weep with the Cossacks o'er all of
her woes..."

A Dream, subtitled 'A comedy', is even more savagely directed against the Russian domination of Ukraine. In the dream he imagines himself to be flying high over the whole of the Russian lands:

"Goodbye, O world, O earth, farewell,
Unfriendly land, goodbye!
My searing pain, my tortures cruel
Above the clouds I'll hide.
And as for you, my dear Ukraine,
I'll leave the clouds behind
And fall with dew to talk with you,
Poor widow-country mine.
I'll come at midnight when the dew
Falls heavy on the fields;
And softly-sadly we will talk
Of what the future yields.
Until the rising of the sun
We'll talk about your woes,
Until your infant sons are grown
And rise against the foes."

From the sky he sees a host of woes throughout the Empire, for example the suffering of people working in the Russian gold-mines in the Far East. But the poem comes to a climax when he flies to St. Petersburg and contrasts the vulgar display of splendour with the misery on which it was built.

He sees the equestrian statue of Peter I (subject of Pushkin's nightmarish short story, *The Bronze Horseman*) with its inscription, "*From the Second [Catherine II who commissioned it] to the First*", and then evokes the hetman, Pavlo Polubotok, who died in the Peter and Paul fortress in 1724:

"I see a steed
A-gallop and his flying hooves

The granite seem to cleave!
 The rider, bareback on the horse,
 In something like a cloak,
 Is hatless. His bare head's adorned
 With leaves, perhaps of oak.
 The steed rears up as though it means
 To leap across the sea,
 And he extends his arm as though
 He coveted to seize
 The whole, whole world. Who is that man?
 I read the message terse
 Inscribed upon the mound of stone:
 "The Second to the First."
 I understand right well what's meant
 By those laconic words:
 The First was he who crucified
 Unfortunate Ukraine,
 The Second—she who finished off
 Whatever yet remained.
 Oh, butchers! butchers! cannibals!
 And did you gorge and loot
 Enough when 'live? And when you died
 What did you take with you?
 A heavy weight pressed on my heart.
 It was as though engraved
 Upon that granite I could read
 The story of Ukraine.
 I stand... And then I faintly hear
 A melancholy strain,
 From ghostly lips a mournful song:
 From Hlukhov-town at break of dawn
 The regiments withdrew
 To build abutments on the line.
 I, with a Cossack crew,
 As acting hetman of Ukraine
 Due northward took my course—
 Up to the capital. Oh God!
 Oh wicked tsar, accurst!
 Oh crafty, evil, grasping tsar,
 Oh viper poison-fanged!
 What did you with the Cossacks do?
 Their noble bones you sank
 In the morass and on them built
 Your capital-to-be,
 On tortured Cossack corpses built!
 And me, a hetman free,
 You threw into a dungeon dark
 And left in chains to die
 Of hunger... Tsar! We'll never part.
 We are forever tied
 Together by those heavy chains.
 E'en God cannot untie
 Those bonds between us. Oh, it's hard
 Eternally to bide
 Beside the Neva! Far Ukraine
 Exists, perhaps, no more.
 I'd fly to see if she's still there,
 But God won't let me go.
 It may be Moscow's razed the land,
 And emptied to the sea
 Our Dnieper, and our lofty mounds
 Dug up—so none may see
 The relics of our former fame.
 Oh God, please pity me."

The poem also features grotesque caricatures of Nicholas and his Empress, together with scorn for a Ukrainian flunkey who has abandoned his language for Russian and German, and for the tribe of civil servants who—

"hasten next
 Their office desks to man,
 To scribble — and to rob the folks
 Of everything they can.
 Among them here and there I see
 My fellow-countrymen.
 They chatter in the Russian tongue
 And bitterly condemn
 Their parents that when they were small
 They didn't teach them how
 To jabber German — that's the cause
 They've no promotions now!
 Oh leeches, leeches! It may be
 Your father sadly sold
 His last remaining cow that you
 The Moscow tongue should know.
 My poor Ukraine! My poor Ukraine!
 These are your hapless sons,
 Your youthful blossoms, splashed with ink,
 In German reared salons,
 On Moscow's silly-potions fed
 Until they are inane!...
 Oh weep, my childless widow-land!
 Unfortunate Ukraine!"

Having read all that, it's difficult to agree with Sergei Glazyev when he says "*a self-evident thing for Shevchenko is integration of the entire Slavic world under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor*" Shevchenko was indeed a supporter of the Pan-Slavic idea, but hardly under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor.

Poles, Uniates And Galicia

I find it quite surprising that the censor, apparently, had no problems with Haidamaky in 1842, or indeed with Gogol's *Taras Bulba* in 1835, given the relish with which they describe Ukrainians slaughtering Poles. Since 1815, when they took control of the '*Kingdom of Poland*' (Napoleon's 'Grand Duchy of Warsaw'), the Russians had responsibility for a large Polish Catholic population—in addition to the Poles already taken through the partitions.

There had already been a major unsuccessful Polish revolt in 1830 and, to quote the historian James T. Flynn (Russia's Polish problem, p.213):

"If Poland could not be permitted independence, what policies could be devised to offer Poles an acceptable way of life within the empire? This was the horn of the dilemma which faced government officials. Historians and publicists could analyse, with varying degrees of heat and light, the roots and dimensions of the problem. It fell to government officials to try, with varying degrees of courage and responsibility, to find ways to promote the integration of a Polish population into the life of the Russian empire."

Flynn is also a specialist in the history of the Uniates and has written a comparison between the policies of the Uniate Bishop Lisovskii, trying to establish an independent Uniate seminary in Polock, Belarus, in 1806, and Archbishop Troy of Dublin, establishing Maynooth in Ireland in 1795.

Despite Catherine II's promise of freedom to practise their religion at the time of the partitions, the Uniate Church was suppressed in 1839 everywhere in the Russian domains except the Kingdom of Poland, where it was suppressed in 1875. This concerns more the history of Belarus than Ukraine but it is interesting to see that, while a distinct Ukrainian national consciousness was developing in the Dnieper area, celebrating Cossack hostility to Catholics, with Uniates regarded as traitors to the Orthodox cause, it was on the basis of the Uniate 'Greek Catholic' Church that a distinct Ruthenian national consciousness was developing in Galicia, in the Austrian Empire.

This became obvious in the revolutionary year 1848.

As a result of the failure of the 1830 revolt in the Kingdom of Poland, large numbers of Polish refugees arrived in Austrian Galicia. There was an attempt at revolution in 1846, fostered by the Polish Democratic Society, inspired by the French revolutionary ideals that had been established in the Duchy of Warsaw. According to the account by Antony Polonsky, specialist in Polish-Jewish history:

"Wild rumors circulated that the nobility intended to slaughter the peasants. Uncertain of the ability of the Austrian government to protect them, peasants began to form themselves into bands for the purpose of self-defence ... Thus when the noble revolutionaries in Galicia proclaimed their insurrection, the peasants in the areas of Tarnów, Rzeszów, Wadowice, Nowy Sącz, and Sanok turned on them savagely, killing some and handing others over to the Austrian authorities. Everywhere they proclaimed their intention of acting on behalf of the emperor and that their action was directed solely against the landlords and their agents. There seems to have been very little anti-Jewish activity... The rising was almost entirely confined to the Polish-speaking western areas of Galicia. Some peasants in mountainous areas, where labor services were not a source of conflict, did in fact support the insurrection. In all, perhaps 1,100 people were killed, 3,000 were arrested, and 430 manor houses were burnt" (p.451).

As a result, when 1848 came along:

"the revolutionaries in Galicia lacked any real faith that they could achieve their objectives on their own, and the progress of the revolution there was almost entirely dependent on events elsewhere in the monarchy, above all in Vienna. In March, following Metternich's flight from Vienna, Polish liberals and revolutionaries, including some members of the Democratic Society, met in Lviv and on 14th April set up a Central National Council (Rada Narodowa Centralna), which was to be both a representative and an executive body. Its

members agreed on a common program, which was notable in that it only called for the autonomy of Galicia and did not mention Polish independence. In addition, they demanded the abolition of Labor services [the 'corvée' associated with serfdom - PB].

"The relative weakness of the revolutionary upsurge, partly the result of the widespread fear among landowners of a new 1846, left the initiative in the hands of the new Austrian governor Franz von Stadion. He displayed unusual political skill, appealing for support to the now increasingly nationally conscious Ukrainian majority in the eastern part of the province. This policy had been initiated already in February 1847, when the Austrian government proposed to divide Galicia into its eastern and western parts. In February of the following year, Stadion gave permission for the publication of a Ukrainian newspaper. He also attempted to secure Jewish support by calling on the Austrian authorities in April 1848 to abolish all special taxes paid by Jews. In addition, and most importantly, he did what had not been done in the aftermath of the 1846 jacquerie: he managed to persuade the imperial government on 23 April to abolish labor dues, which effectively pacified the countryside in the Austrian interest. As a result, he was able to reestablish Austrian control in Cracow in April and in Lviv in November" (p.454).

Among the Ruthenians:

"The strongest force at this time was Austro-Slavism, which was supported by the Greek Catholic hierarchy, including the Greek Catholic bishop-coadjutor of Lviv, Hryhorii [presumably Ukrainian for Gregory - PB] Iakhymovych, and the Metropolitan Mykhailo Levyts'kyi. It was organized in the Supreme Ruthenian Council [Holovna Rus'ka Rada], which was established in 2 May to act as a counterweight to the Polish National Council. Its organization was encouraged by Stadion and it undertook widespread political agitation, collecting thousands of signatures in support of its objectives, the most important of which was the division of Galicia along the San River into two administrative entities. The degree of political mobilization was considerable. Nearly 200,000 people signed a petition advocating such a division. In addition, 25 Ukrainian deputies sat in the lower house of the parliament established on 25 April. In a resolution of 10 May published in Zoria halyts'ka, one of the Ukrainian newspapers established in 1848, the Supreme Ruthenian Council asserted:

"We Galician Ruthenians belong to the great Ruthenian nation, which speaks the same language and numbers fifteen million, of whom two and a half million live on the land of Galicia. This nation was once independent, it had its own literary language, its own laws, its own princes, in a word, it lived in prosperity, was wealthy and powerful..." (p.456).

John Paul Himka takes up the story, saying that—

"After the defeat of the revolution, during the decade of neo-absolutism, political life came to a standstill. Such Ruthenian political representation as existed in the 1850s was limited to the higher clergy of the Greek Catholic Church in Lviv".

But they were not inactive:

"During the 1850s, the Greek Catholic clergy also established hundreds of Ruthenian parish schools, where cantors provided peasants with a primary education".

Politics revived in 1860, when *"the Habsburg monarchy sought to reform itself in the wake of defeat in the Italian war of 1859"*. In the reform programme of 1861 a bicameral central Parliament was established with provincial Diets, including a Polish dominated Galicia. The *Ukraine Encyclopedia* (entry for 'Galicia') complains that—

"Even though the Ukrainians constituted half the population of Austrian Galicia, their share in the diet was never more than a third and often much less, owing to Polish control of the provincial administration and to electoral manipulation."

But to continue with Himka's account:

"One symptom of the new order was a revival of the Ruthenian press in Galicia. The newspaper Slovo began to appear in January 1861. At first it enjoyed the moral and financial support of Metropolitan Iakhymovych, but his attitude cooled to the paper when it began to criticize the Greek Catholic higher clergy. Electoral politics was also revived, and a number of Greek Catholic priests acquired seats in the Galician diet ... The great issue of the 1860s was the restructuring of the monarchy. The Ruthenian leadership, which was concentrated in the Lviv consistory, submitted a series of (ultimately fruitless) memoranda to the emperor and his ministers reiterating the Ruthenians' desire to see Galicia partitioned, stressing their loyalty to the central government, and importuning the government not to favor the Poles.

"The early 1860s also saw the beginnings of a sharp political cleavage within the Ruthenian movement between Russophiles and Ukrainian national populists (narodovtsi). The higher Greek Catholic clergy considered both movements extremist, the Russophiles because they gravitated toward Russian Orthodoxy, and the national populists because they flirted with liberalism and admired the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko in spite of anti-Catholic passages in his writings."

With the end of the rule of Nicholas I in Russia and the arrival of the reforming Tsar, Alexander II, on the eve of the emancipation of the serfs in 1860, Shevchenko

himself had returned from exile in 1857. Somewhat oddly he came to St Petersburg, where he died, broken in health, in 1861. He was still writing poetry and, despite the prohibition, had written several stories (in Russian) while in exile but it is still in the poems written in the 1840s that his importance for Ukrainian nationalism is mostly based.

Neither in Galicia nor in Little Russia was there as yet much evidence of a substantial tendency towards national separatism. But in Galicia—a distinct people with its own church, its own education system and its own language—was in the process of formation.

The distinct quasi-national culture that had existed in Little Russia under the Cossacks was by now little more than a romantic memory. In particular, the intellectual life of the Polish-oriented Kiev-Moghila Academy was, it seems, despite the continued existence of the institution, entirely forgotten. Even those who could be called Ukrainophiles, with the large exception of Shevchenko, could be said to be engaged in the great project of creating an essentially new all-Russian culture.

Class Politics

So. The 'Ruthenians' in Austria and the 'Ukrainians' in Russia had it in common that they were both mainly peasant societies. They had lost their native aristocracy (it had effectively become Polish) and they hadn't been in a position to develop a bourgeoisie. There was a Polish artisan class in Galicia but otherwise the role of artisan, shopkeeper etc. was mostly taken by Jews.

Thus, although in Galicia a political consciousness (nationalist or socialist) could develop among the Poles on the basis of the aristocracy and artisan classes, for the Ruthenian/Ukrainians it was concentrated on small numbers of University students.

There was, however, a difference between the two peasantries. The Russian side included large numbers of peasants who had escaped from serfdom in Galicia, who had maintained their Orthodoxy in defiance of those of their priests who had converted to the Uniate/Greek Catholic Church, and who had joined the Cossacks—either the official Cossacks mostly west of the Dnieper, or the unofficial 'Zaporozhian' Cossacks mostly to the East—in conditions of almost perpetual warfare with the Tatars.

Despite their Orthodoxy, and despite the development of an impressive intellectual Orthodox centre in the Kiev-Moghila Academy, it is doubtful if these Eastern Ukrainians, soon to be incorporated into the Russian Empire, were well supplied with, or well organised by, an Orthodox priesthood. (For what it's worth, Gogol in *Taras Bulba* portrays their Orthodoxy as little more than a badge of identity.) The distinct Ukrainian—intellectually European—Orthodoxy

that developed in Kiev had, as we have seen, been tasked by Peter with the job of educating the wider Russian Church.

At the same time, under Peter (who took the territory East of the Dnieper), and Catherine (who had the territory West of the Dnieper as well as the territory to the South previously held by the Tatars), the Cossack tradition seems to have been successfully tamed, with the Cossack chiefs becoming landlords and the foot-soldiers reduced to serfdom—hence the complaints of Shevchenko's poetry. And yet something of the independent Cossack tradition remained, ready to spring up again with the collapse of Tsarism in the twentieth century.

In Galicia, by contrast, the Greek Catholic Church became the organising centre for the Galician Ruthenian peasantry, and was encouraged in this by the Austrian Government as a counterweight to the Poles. After the constitutional reform of 1861, when an elected Diet was established in Galicia, the Ruthenians were mainly represented by Greek Catholic priests.

When National Populist ideas began to spread among the Ruthenian student population, they had no way of reaching the peasantry except through the Church, which had its own programme for national education and improvement. As a result, populist literature aimed at the peasantry had a clerical character that was profoundly shocking to the Russian Ukrainian Socialist, Mikhailo Drahomanov, when he arrived in Galicia in 1875.

The Ruthenian student movement in Galicia, such as it was, was divided between 'Russophiles' and 'National Populists', who could be called 'Ukrainophiles', though the Ruthenians weren't yet defining themselves as 'Ukrainians'.

The National Populists had been inspired by Shevchenko's poetry and by the Polish uprising that took place in 1863. Under the 1861 Constitution, Galicia was treated as a unit, which meant that it was overwhelmingly Polish in character, despite the promise of a separate Ruthenian-dominated Eastern Galicia which had been made in response to Ruthenian loyalty during the earlier Polish rising in 1848.

It was the largest crownland in Austria, covering a quarter of the whole area, but very undeveloped in terms of industrial production. There was a population of about 6½ million—40% Poles, 40% Ruthenian, 10% Jews. The Ruthenians counted in Hegel's terminology (also used by Engels) as "*non-historical peoples*"—peoples who had never formed a State and who lacked a nobility, unlike the 'historical' Russians, Germans, Poles, and Magyars.

By the early 1890s less than 20% of the students in the Universities of Lviv

and Cracow were Ruthenian. In the Lviv Polytechnic, there were 83% Poles, 11% Jews and 6% Ruthenians.

Nonetheless, the mere fact that, in marked contrast to Russia, there was an elected regional Parliament led Drahomanov to think Galicia had promise. Given the clerical orientation of the National Populists, it was actually among the Russophile student group that he made most impact.

The Russophile paper *Druh* (Friend) wasn't written in Russian but in the curious Ruthenian language of culture, *Yazychie*. Drahomanov contributed articles in Russian which the 'Russophiles' had to translate, thus illustrating how far removed they were from Russia.

Out of the *Druh* circle Drahomanov recruited two remarkable disciples—Mykhailo Pavlyk and Ivan Franko, both from poor peasant backgrounds, both studying at Lviv University but having great difficulty making ends meet. Drahomanov introduced them to European and Russian radical literature, including Chemyshesky, Lassalle, Mill, and Dobroliubov. Pavlyk and Franko converted *Druh* from *Yazychie* to the peasant language, Ruthenian/Ukrainian, and in the Summer of 1876 the two Ruthenian student clubs united as *Ukrainophile*. *Druh* lost the financial support it had received from the Russophile Establishment and was financed by Drahomanov. It took on a radical Socialist character.

Through Pavlyk and Franko, and under Drahomanov's influence, Galicia became an important conduit for the smuggling of revolutionary literature, mainly from Switzerland, to Russia.

Drahomanov was a leading member of the '*Kyiv Hromada*', described by the *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* as "*the most important catalyst of the Ukrainian national revival of the second half of the nineteenth century*". Its earliest activities had been devoted to producing educational material for Sunday Schools, using the peasants' own language—a similar project to the one undertaken by the Greek Catholic Church in Galicia. But that came to an abrupt end in 1863 with the issuing of the '*Valuev Circular*'.

Petr Valuev was Russian Minister of the Interior under Alexander II, the '*Tsar-Liberator*', responsible in 1860 for the emancipation of the serfs. This, however, had been followed in 1863 by the Polish insurrection. There was no particular suggestion of a Russian Ukrainian sympathy for the Poles or of any great sympathy for Ukrainian separatism, despite the popularity of Shevchenko. But the Polish rising illustrated the dangers of separate national identities. Already in July 1862, Valuev had written to Alexander Golovnin, the Minister for Public Education, calling on him to ban Yiddish publications and the use of Yiddish in education:

"[the ban] will prevent the further liter-

ary development of the slang [zhargon] and thus remove the possibility of it ever becoming the means for expressing those concepts that the Jews will, with the expansion of education among them, adopt from Russian and German books. [The ban] will thus promote a gradual replacement of the slang by Russian ..."

Golovnin opposed this ban but, by 1863, Valuev's ministry had taken over the administration of censorship from the Education Ministry and he was in a position to move against Ukrainian. As with Yiddish, Ukrainian was regarded as not a real language—"nothing but Russian corrupted by the Polish influence". The aim was—

"to license for publication only such books in this language that belong to the realm of fine literature; at the same time, the authorisation of books in Little Russian with either spiritual content or intended generally for primary mass reading should be ceased" (Remy, p.92).

So it was not a total ban. The upper classes could read 'fine literature' in the peasant language but it couldn't be used as a medium for the education or spiritual edification of the peasants themselves. Thus an obstacle was placed between the Ukrainian cultured class and the peasantry which contrasts with the role of the Greek Catholic priesthood in Galicia. The *Valuev Circular*, which was simply an administrative measure, was strengthened in 1876 by the '*Ems Decree*' which widened the range of material that was banned (anything of an informative, non-literary nature) and gave it legislative force. The ban on the popular or educational use of the Ukrainian language continued until 1905.

Although the *Kyiv Hromada* was formally banned early in 1863, it continued in existence, concentrating on cultural activities and historical research. Drahomanov joined in 1869, and in 1873 was instrumental in establishing the '*Southwestern Branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society*'. He also edited a daily newspaper, the *Kievan Telegraph*, a Ukrainophile rival to the Russian Conservative paper, *Kievlanin*.

With his colleague, Volodymyr Antonovych, he published a two volume '*Historical Songs of the Little Russian People*', following it in 1876 with '*Little Russian Folk Legends and Tales*'. But 1876 and the *Ems Decree* saw the suppression of the *Kievan Telegraph* and of the Southwestern Branch of the Geographical Society, and Drahomanov dismissed from his post in Kiev University.

When he went West (in his dealings with Galicia he was mainly based in Geneva), it was as a representative of the *Kyiv*

Hromada. He established a Ukrainian language press and published a journal, *Hromada* (5 vols, 1878-82), "the first modern Ukrainian political journal", according to the *Encyclopedia*. He was also involved with the Russian Liberal emigration, editing their journal, *Vol'noe Slovo*. But the Kyiv *Hromada* itself, concentrating on cultural studies, broke with him in 1886, not wanting to be associated with his politics.

These were still more Socialist than Ukrainian separatist: an anarchist Socialism envisaging a federation of free peoples rather than a centralised planned economy. (He published collections of letters by Turgenev and Bakunin addressed to Herzen.) His disciples, Pavlyk and Franko, were imprisoned, albeit briefly (Austria being at the time vastly more indulgent in this respect than Russia), for their activities and in particular Franko's promising career—he had published a well-received collection of stories centred on the oil extracting town of Boryslav—was wrecked.

Franko was a social realist of the sort Belinskii would have appreciated, were it not that he wrote in Ukrainian.

Their trials made a huge impact without however yet generating a substantial political movement. The problem in Galicia was the lack of a substantial social base for a political movement. Pavlyk and Franko were both heavily involved in the militant movement that was developing among the artisans of Lviv, but these were almost entirely Polish. Access to the Ruthenian peasantry still had to pass through the Greek Catholic Church.

But that was changing, largely through the Church's own efforts. As an alternative to the tavern, the Church was establishing *Reading Clubs*, which soon spread like wildfire. In Himka's account (p.122):

"There were only a handful of these clubs in the 1870s, but hundreds in the 1870s and thousands by the turn of the century. In the reading club, the minority of literate peasants would read aloud to their unlettered neighbours. They read popular newspapers and booklets filled with information on saints, agricultural technique and, especially, politics. The peasant began to be aware of his or her national identity so that in a very real sense the growth of the network of reading clubs was synonymous with the growth of the nation."

Nothing of the sort, of course, was happening in Russia. There was an impressive intellectual élite, researching history and folklore but prevented by government policy from making much contact with the folk; there was a conspiratorial elite which, after the failed attempt to 'go to the people',

was now engaged in terrorist activity on the people's behalf (but so far as I can see this didn't yet engage any specifically Ukrainian cause); and there was the folk themselves, whose frustrations towards the end of the century were taking the form of spontaneous anti-Jewish pogroms. It could be argued that this was at least partly a consequence of the Government's policy of preventing popular education in the people's own language, cutting off the connections that could have been formed between the University-educated class and the peasantry.

The period covered by Himka's book on '*Socialism in Galicia*' ends in 1890, the year which saw the formation of the first Ukrainian political party. This was the '*Ruthenian-Ukrainian Radical Party*', established in Lviv in October, inspired by the ideas of Drahomanov, Pavlyk and Franko, though Drahomanov himself thought it was premature and never formally joined.

It was at that congress that the question of an independent Ukrainian national state was first raised. Viacheslav Budzynov'skyi (1868-1935) proposed as a maximum demand the unification of all the Ukrainian territories in an independent state and as a minimum demand, the division of Galicia into two parts, one Polish and one Ukrainian.

Prior to this, the most radical Ukrainian demand had been for autonomy within a Pan-Slavic state. It was because documents arguing for this were found in their possession that the members of the Society of SS Cyril and Methodius had been sent into exile in the 1840s.

Drahomanov also advocated Ukrainian autonomy within a wider federation and this was generally the position favoured by the Radical Party. Budzunov'skyi got no support for his motion, but he did get some support from a group of his fellow students in Vienna who produced an open letter calling for the creation of an independent Ukrainian state. Franko and Pavlyk replied, arguing that the proposal would only serve—

"the interests of those strata who would be the first to benefit from the eventual establishment of an independent Ruthenian state, whereas the fate of the working people in this independent state could even deteriorate."

1895, however, saw the publication of what is widely regarded as the first serious argument for an independent Ukraine—*Ukrainia irredenta*—by another young radical, Iuliian Bachyn'skyi (1870-??): the question marks meaning of course that he ended up in the Soviet Union. He had supported Budzunov'skyi in 1890 but, as a gymnasium student, didn't have the right to vote).

Ukrainia irredenta argued for "a free, great, politically independent Ukraine, politically independent from the San to the Caucasus". The San is a tributary of the Vistula on the Polish side of the current Polish-Ukrainian border.

Things were moving quickly. In December 1895 the Radical Party adopted a resolution similar to the one put forward by Budzunov'skyi in 1890, and 1899 saw the emergence of two new Ukrainian parties with a Nationalist programme—the National Democratic Party, and the Ruthenian-Ukrainian Social Democratic Party (Bachyn'skyi was a founder member). In 1900 a series of articles calling for independence was published in the main Ukrainian language newspaper, *Dilo*, Franko published a pamphlet—*Beyond the bounds of the possible*—in support of it and a mass student rally was held in Lviv on July 14th.

Himka interprets this as a development in Socialist thinking towards Marxism. Drahomanov, as a follower of Bakunin, was suspicious of any centralised State. By 1900 the argument had developed that Socialism could only develop on the basis of industrial capitalism, and the Ukrainians could never develop industrial capitalism so long as they were part of a larger state having to compete with Bohemia or Vienna. Pavlyk and Franko had criticised Budzunov'skyi and Bachyn'skyi not as nationalists but as Marxists.

Nonetheless, Himka says: "*Drahomanov, in a sense, broke the ground for the advocacy of independence*" (*Young Radicals*, p.230). In the mid 1870s, he says (p.233), there was no talk of independence: "*A handful of intellectuals in the cities was involved in a cultural nationalism that had little connection with the overwhelming majority of the nation, the peasantry*".

It was the Church that was providing the connection between its own intelligentsia and the peasantry through the establishment of the reading room as an alternative to the tavern. But Drahomanov formed a radical intelligentsia able to take advantage of the reading rooms for the development of secular politics. In summary Himka says (p.235):

"Ukrainian statehood was first championed in Galicia, where the constitution and the existence of a nationally conscious clergy permitted the sort of development described above [the formation of the Reading Room movement, 'Prosvita' - PB]. Where this development was lacking, as in Russian-ruled Ukraine, the great majority of the Ukrainian intelligentsia could not see beyond federalism, until war and revolution opened their eyes."



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**Italy Leads!
Hype
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Pride Flag
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Italy Leads!

The victory of *Giorgia Meloni* and her “*Fratelli d’Italia*” (*Brothers of Italy*) party in Italy’s recent election made global headlines.

Meloni won with a platform that supports traditional families, national identity, and the country’s Christian roots. In a speech earlier this year, she said “*no to the LGBT lobby, yes to sexual identity, no to gender ideology*”.

As the leader of a party that originates from a post-War movement, born from the ashes of fascism, Meloni can neither be called a post-fascist nor simply a far-right leader.

Her international position is *Atlanticist*, and she has supported Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, congratulating him on his election.

On European issues, Meloni is critical of how Europe runs the risk of imposing policies on nation-states, but she is not against the principle of a European Union.

In short, the reality of Meloni’s politics is much more nuanced than it may seem at first glance. This explains why Catholic hierarchies in Italy have shown a degree of openness toward the politician following her electoral victory. (*Catholic News Agency*, Rome, Italy: 29.9.2022.)

Hype

The newspaper correspondent cabled to his Editor: “*Almost impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the situation here, but I shall do my best.*”

The Story Of Belgium

There is often a very great gap between the stated lofty aspirations of Great Powers at war and their pragmatism when the spoils of victory are

being shared out. The rights of small nations—if Ireland is taken a case in point—at the end of the first World War, or the Freedom of Poland at the end of the Second, counted for little when the peace was being organised.

It was the fate of Belgium to receive short shrift when the victors gathered at Vienna to reorganise Europe after the collapse of Napoleon’s empire. Without consulting its people as to their feelings on the matter, they handed the country over to Holland in direct violation of all the principles of freedom which they had mounted during the years when they were trying to overcome Napoleon.

For a dozen years, Belgians complained that their national life was being stifled by the Dutch. Dutchmen, they claimed, were being put into all sorts of official positions, over the heads of Belgians. Dutch-owned industries were being favoured over their Belgian counterparts, and there was a bias against the native language. Matters reached a head when, on 23rd August 1830, a mob attacked the offices of a pro-Dutch newspaper and within weeks the whole country was in revolt.

It took the Dutch only a short time to discover that large bodies of troops are of little use in controlling a large scale urban revolt. Brussels had to be evacuated and, one by one, other towns fell to the insurgents.

By November, the Kingdom of Belgium had been declared by a National Congress and, among those being mentioned as a suitable king for Catholic Belgium was Daniel O’Connell whose campaign for Catholic rights in Ireland had been closely watched from the European continent. *S.J.L.*

Pride Flag

A catholic parish in Dublin has apologised after breaking the Arch-

diocese of Dublin’s policy and flying a ‘Pride’ flag.

St. Teresa’s Church on Donore Avenue in Dublin 8, flew the flag on 26th June 2022, during an ecumenical LGBT+ prayer service they held.

The parish was contacted by the Archdiocese and reminded of the policy, which states:

“Flags may be flown on special occasions such as the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Only the Papal flag and/or the National flag are permitted to be flown on church grounds in the Archdiocese of Dublin.”

(*The Irish Catholic*, 7.7.2022)

Hearts And Minds!

“...America is a declining empire, haunted by the psychological blow sustained on Sept. 11, 2001[9/11]. Those who purport to lead us act with increasing desperation to salvage the image of America the invincible, America the providentially blessed, American the always-right.

People are left desperate for something to believe in. And there is nothing left to sustain these fictions other than sheer belief in them.

This confers a special responsibility upon us—not to say Americans are short of things in need of doing. It is our responsibility to recognize how destructive the habit of blind believing has proven. It is our responsibility to stop believing, to begin using our “*merely logical intellects*”—what a phrase, that—to think through the Republic’s long list of predicaments and dilemmas so that a way can be found out of the swamps into which feeling and believing have led us.

Where does the future of the troubled Republic lie? Our hearts have a lot to do with it, but we had better begin to use our heads first. Then our hearts will follow”

Patrick Lawrence

Consortium News (U.S.), 7.9.2022.

Chairman Mao!

A British diplomat was asking Mao Tse-Tung some questions after having been granted a rare interview.

“What do you think would have happened if Mr. Khrushchev had been assassinated instead of President Kennedy?”

Chairman Mao thought and then said:

“I don’t think Mr. Onassis would have married Mrs. Khrushchev.”
