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Ukraine: Neutrality Or Atlanticism?

In the wake of Russia's recognition of Luhansk and Donetsk and its subsequent invasion of Ukraine, the EU has finally capitulated to Atlanticism— subservience to the US in ideological and geopolitical matters. After many years of foot dragging, Germany and other EU Member States are now complying with instructions from across the Atlantic. Economic ties with Russia are being phased out and military spending is being increased to the level America expects of its NATO allies. The idea that Brexit would cause the remaining 27 states of the EU to follow a course independently of the US and Britain, that Europe would become a new pole in a brave new multipolar world, is no longer credible.

In mild defiance of the US, Angela Merkel persisted for years with the construction of Nord Stream 2, a set of gas pipelines bringing Russian gas to Germany, owned by a subsidiary of a Russian state company, Gazprom. At a cost of €6.6 billion the project was completed in 2021 but the new Social Democratic Chancellor, Olaf Schulz, decreed that its certification should be cancelled when Vladimir Putin officially recognised the two separatist entities in Eastern Ukraine on the 21st of February. Following that initiative, Schulz's Government has set about closing down the Nord Stream 1 gas pipelines. They will be replaced by importing Liquid Natural Gas from Qatar and the US and perhaps by reverting to coal-fired and nuclear forms of energy.

The other watershed change being implemented by the new German Government is that a once-off fund of €100 billion is being created to rebuild the German army, and annual public expenditure on the military is to be increased beyond the 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product required by NATO. This will make it the third largest military budget on earth. The anti-militarist orientation of German politics dating from 1945 has been abandoned.

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Pressing For A Constitutional Right To Housing Is Ill Advised!

The Sinn Fein policy on housing, as articulated by Eoin O'Broin in his book, *Home* (Merrion Press, 2019) is mainly sound and worthy of support. On a subject of such fundamental importance, however, it should not be taken as the last word. Its proposals should remain open to critical evaluation.

One idea that is debateable is one he gives pride of place to in a list of proposals in *Home*: the idea of a Constitutional right to housing. In the sense that the present Government has committed to the objectives of increasing housing supply by 30,000 units per year for the next ten years, expanding the availability of cost-rental schemes

The Second Casualty Of War!

"The European Commission is preparing to release billions in recovery funds for Poland "within a matter of weeks", sparking accusations that it is putting EU wartime unity above concerns over the rule of law in the country. The commission has for months refused to unlock €36bn (£30bn) in recovery funds for Poland over concerns about its government's ability to guarantee the proper spending of EU money, because of its politicised courts. But with a brutal war at the EU's borders that has sent 3 million refugees fleeing into neighbouring countries, including 1.86 million in Poland, officials are seeking an end to the dispute. According to two sources, the commission is ready to release Poland's billions if the government moves forward with plans to scrap the disciplinary tribunal of the Supreme Court, a central aspect of the long-running dispute between Warsaw and Brussels over the rule of law. "There is a strong willingness from the commission to unblock it," said an official, who *added that money could be released within a "matter of weeks"...*" (The Guardian, 17 March 2021)

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(rent based on the total cost to the State of building and maintaining a house over thirty years), and increasing the volume of social and affordable housing, Sinn Fein policy is already being implemented. That is to the good, even from the perspective of Sinn Fein.

If that party were to win a place in Government in the next General Election, we could expect those policies to be intensified and deepened. While such a reform of housing is in process, even with a strong degree of public support, the

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European Commission in Disarray

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has exceeded her authority on several occasions. In this instance, she issued a number of statements regarding Ukraine. On the first day of the invasion, she said that European Sanctions will have the aim of gradually destroying the industrial base of the Russian economy. A few days later, supporting a request from Ukraine that it should be fast-tracked into membership of the EU, she said: “*Ukraine is one of us and we want them in the EU*” (Guardian, 2 March).

By supporting the Ukrainian request for a quick entry into membership, she made a commitment she cannot deliver. French President Macron wants all proposals for further enlargement stalled until a change in the EU Treaties is adopted that would remove the unanimity rule regarding EU foreign policy. Ukraine’s request is also problematic as the country now has disputed borders and, according to Transparency International’s *Corruption Perceptions Index*, it is the second most corrupt state in Europe. In 2008 Germany, Italy, Belgium,

the Netherlands and Luxembourg were among a group of Member States that blocked any reference to Ukraine from a joint communique.

There are also indications that the Commission is prepared to back-peddle on its sanctimonious interference in the sovereignty of Poland and Hungary over how judges are appointed.

“According to two sources, the commission is ready to release Poland’s billions [€36 billion] if the government moves forward with plans to scrap the disciplinary tribunal of the supreme court, a central aspect of the long-running dispute between Warsaw and Brussels over the rule of law. “There is a strong willingness from the commission to unblock it”, said an official, who added that money could be released within a “matter of weeks”. To release the funds, the commission would not require Poland to reinstate judges ousted from their posts as a result of policies pursued by Warsaw to increase political control over the court system” (Guardian, 17 March).

This represents a significant climb

down by the Commission and begs the question why some such political approach was not taken in the first place. Given Poland’s strategic importance in US plans for NATO in Europe, the Poles would be well advised to hold out for more concessions from Von der Leyen.

With Germany’s change of course, and the European Commission in disarray, it is not surprising that British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is threatening to invoke Article 16 of the *Northern Ireland Protocol* before the May Elections in Northern Ireland, unless the EU makes further concessions regarding the Protocol. During the Brexit negotiations liberal media outlets in both Ireland and Britain vied with each other in decrying the incoherence of the UK position. A complete lack of realism on the British side was contrasted with a measured and realistic approach on the part of the EU negotiators. At that time, and in opposition to that narrative, *Irish Political Review* construed the Brussels institutions, despite the obvious competence of Michel Barnier, as ‘toy town’.

We argued that the technocrats populating the corridors of power in Brussels had no solid knowledge of Europe’s political history, not even the history of their own countries and, consequently, they had very little understanding of contemporary geopolitics. That reading of the limitations of the EU elite has, unfortunately, proved accurate. The response of Brussels to the Russian invasion has been to toe the US line and defer to America’s most loyal ally in Europe, the UK. The tables have thus been turned in the UK versus EU confrontation. Liz Truss is simply taking advantage of that turn-about.

Atlanticism now rules in Brussels so any suggestion that Russian anxieties over its security may be well-founded, or that the US has been stirring up trouble in Ukraine since at least the ‘Orange Revolution’ of 2004, now lie outside the bounds of permissible EU discourse.

Ukraine Since 2004

An article published in *Multipolarista*, a US magazine devoted to “*documenting the transition to a multipolar world*” contains an informative account of recent history in Ukraine. Written by Yuliy Dubovyk, a citizen of Ukraine now living in the US, it has the title, “*Russia: US is using Ukraine as ‘cannon fodder’*” (14 March 2022). Much of what Dubovyk has to say is already well known but, by signing his name to the piece and adding his photograph, and through the detail he provides, his account adds credibility to a narrative that is critical of the general Western position.

A source of evidence he cites is an article from the *Guardian* in 2004 headed, “*US campaign behind the turmoil in Kiev*” (26 November 2004). This describes US efforts to fund ‘*Colour Revolutions*’ in Serbia, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine and can be easily retrieved from the Internet. The remaining paragraphs of this section are a summary of Dubovyk’s article with some quoted extracts.

The US Government has been meddling in Ukraine for decades and has backed two *coups* in that time. The first began in November 2004, following a Presidential Election in which the US-backed candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, lost out to Viktor Yanukovich. Western Governments refused to recognise the result and declared electoral fraud. The ‘Orange Revolution’ then moved into gear and a second run-off vote was held in December. The result was that Yushchenko was declared President. Like previous holders of that office, Yushchenko pandered to the interests of oligarchs. He also pursued a Western agenda. He

“implemented a programme of austerity, reduced social spending, bailed out large banks, deregulated agriculture, advocated for NATO membership, and repressed the rights of language minorities like Russian speakers.”

In the Presidential Election of 2010 Yushchenko received just 5 per cent of the vote. The winner on that occasion was Yanukovich, who was labelled pro-Russian by Western media but who was simply neutral. In 2013 Yanukovich refused to sign a European Union *Association Agreement* that would have been a step towards integrating with the EU. In that instance, Brussels demanded that Kiev impose neo-liberal structural adjustment [usually meaning unemployment], sell off Government assets, and give the International Monetary Fund greater control over public spending. Yanukovich rejected this for a more favourable offer from Russia.

Enraged by the rejection of the Association Agreement, Western-backed organisations brought out their supporters to overthrow the Government. Control of the protests was taken over by far-Right forces like *Svoboda* (a neo-Nazi party) and *Right Sector* (a coalition of fascist organisations). US politicians like Senator John McCain attended the protests and spoke from platforms alongside far-Right leaders.

A leaked recording of a conversation between Victoria Nuland of the US State Department and the US Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, provided solid evidence of US involvement in the *coup*. In the

conversation the two officials agreed that Arseniy Yatsenyuk, a neo-liberal, should head the new Government. Anti-*coup* protests across Ukraine were violently broken up by the far-Right, but two areas in the East, Donetsk and Luhansk rose up and declared independence.

“Seeing the hesitation of the Ukrainian military, far-right groups (and the oligarchs that were backing then) formed so called ‘territorial defence battalions’, with names like Azov, Aidar, Tornado, etc.”

...
“In May 2014 neo-Nazis and other far-right forces assaulted an anti-*coup* demonstration in the major city of Odessa. 48 people were burned alive in a labour union building.”

It should be noted that the far-Right, despite having much influence in the security forces and in the governmental apparatus, has failed to win electoral support. In an Election after the 2014 *coup*, Petro Poroshenko, projecting a moderate image, won the Presidency but was unable to sustain a moderate stance.

“The new President had the impossible task of trying to appear sufficiently patriotic for the far-right while at the same time sufficiently “respectable” for the West to continue backing him publicly.”

How difficult it was to keep up the ‘respectable’ appearance can be seen in the way a holiday celebration was moved to October 14th, the day the Nazi-backed Ukrainian Insurgent Army was formed. Some Ukrainian soldiers wear red and black badges to show support for the Fascist tradition. Stephen Bandera and Roman Shukheych, both of whom organised massacres of Poles, Jews, Russians, and other minorities during World War Two, are heroes of the Ukrainian far-Right. However, it should be remembered that, in the 1940s, the majority of the Ukrainian population supported the Red Army and actively resisted Nazi occupation.

The brunt of the civil war with Luhansk and Donetsk was waged during Poroshenko’s tenure. The Ukrainian army and its far-Right paramilitary allies were responsible for the vast majority of civilian casualties. Between 2014 and 2019 over 13,000 people were killed with 28,000 injured. In the last Presidential Election in 2019, Poroshenko received 24 per cent of the vote as against Volodymyr Zelensky who achieved 73 per cent. Zelensky ran on a platform of peace, even going so far as to address the Russian-speaking Eastern parts in Russian. Much like the initially-moderate Poroshenko, however, Zelensky did a 180-degree about-turn from

his peaceful rhetoric on attaining Office. He was told that he risked losing Western backing otherwise.

All of this goes to show that Ukraine is essentially a US puppet regime.

“When Washington tells Zelensky he must continue the civil war in Ukraine against his own electoral promises, support NATO membership, ignore the Minsk II agreement of 2015, or even ask for nuclear weapons, he does everything he is told.”

THE IRISH RESPONSE

Former President Mary McAleese, backed up by former President Mary Robinson on an edition of the *Late Late Show* in early March, aspired to speak for the nation when she said that Ireland, while remaining militarily neutral, is not neutral politically or morally. Leaving aside the motivation of RTE in ignoring the sitting holder of the Office of President, while giving prominence to long-retired former Presidents on an issue of national importance, the concept of a neutrality policy that is one thing in the military realm and something else in politics is a patent nonsense.

The Government’s approach as represented by Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney is that the issue of neutrality needs to be debated but that the debate should not be held now. They want the matter to receive due deliberation only when a future Citizens’ Assembly devoted to the issue has concluded its work. From that you might expect the Government to hold to the existing policy pending a full debate at an indeterminate time in the future.

Actually, they have chosen to view the Russian invasion in isolation from the chain of events that led up to it, as was obvious in the way that Coveney denounced Russia’s recognition of Luhansk and Donetsk in the days before the invasion as a violation of international law, a charge that even Israel avoided making. They have acted as cheer-leaders for the US position at the UN, used their influence at the EU to support the application of extreme Sanctions against Russia (and indirectly against Germany and all European States which depend on Russian gas supplies), and expressed wholehearted solidarity with a Ukrainian regime that is far from blameless in the matter of military targeting of civilians.

PERSPECTIVES ON NEUTRALITY

To appreciate the viability of neutrality as a response to the Ukraine conflict, it is only necessary to examine the positions

adopted since the invasion by states like China, India, Pakistan, Iran and South Africa. A statement by Russia's Chief of Mission in New Delhi, Roman Babushkin, describing Western Sanctions against Russia as a means of strengthening US hegemony, may partly explain the attraction of neutrality for such States. He said:

“Russia and India don't recognise such unilateral sanctions that are illegal and confront the UN Charter and international law. These are a major tool of the West to pressure other countries and to establish a unipolar world order” (Hindustan Times, 26 February 2022).

A concern of the Chinese is that NATO expansion in Europe sets a worrying precedent for the expansion of the US's Indo-Pacific strategy in Asia. Such expansion may lead to a US proxy war against China in the way that the war in Ukraine is essentially a war between Russia and the US. China has been careful not to endorse Russia's recognition of the two separatist republics in Eastern Ukraine and has repeatedly called for a political resolution of the conflict while maintaining relations with Russia.

Outlining the position of the South African Government, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated:

“The war could have been avoided if NATO had heeded the warnings from amongst its own leaders and officials over the years that its eastward expansion would lead to greater, not less, instability in the region” (Aljazeera, 18 March 2022).

Referring to the invasion he went on to say that South Africa cannot condone the use of force or the violation of international law. Ramaphosa has thus shown, like the other above-mentioned states, that a neutral stance is compatible with a refusal to condone the invasion.

THE IRISH DEBATE

Ireland is a neutral country whose neutrality rests on the ideal of preserving international peace through international organisations that curtail Great Power machinations likely to result in war. In a nutshell that was the policy pursued by de Valera in the 1930s and 1940s. In line with that precedent, Ireland should remain militarily and politically neutral regarding the Ukraine war. Being neutral should also mean refraining from involvement in the imposition of economic sanctions against Russia

John Bolton, a US politician described on Wikipedia as an American nationalist, conservative and neo-conservative as well as a foreign policy hawk who advocates US

military action against, and regime change in, Iran, Syria, Libya, Venezuela, Cuba, Yemen and North Korea, was interviewed on RTE radio on March 3rd. Asked for his view of Irish neutrality, he said in a sympathetic tone that he understood that we had an issue with Great Britain historically but that now, “*Ireland should turn the page and join NATO*”.

In truth Ireland has little need of advice from a US neo-con about joining the Western alliance, a voluble group of Irish opinion-formers have been straining at the bit on that issue for decades. The Russian invasion is their big moment. Sifting back through articles in the Opinion section of the *Irish Times* since February 24th, we see Michael McDowell and Alan Shatter pressing aggressively for a no-fly zone over Ukraine as though we were already in NATO, while Stephen Collins, Patrick Smyth, Pat Leahy and Noelle O'Connell each argue that neutrality is out-dated. The most explicit case for NATO was made by Séamus Murphy, an Irish Jesuit who lectures in philosophy in Chicago. He says:

“After 1991 and the USSR's collapse, small eastern European countries fled to Nato desperate for shelter before the bear reawoke. Yet Ireland, deaf or indifferent to their experience, has the gall to think itself morally above Nato” (IT, 7 March 2022).

Not one of the above commentators makes any reference to US interference in Ukraine's affairs, the problem of the neo-Nazi battalions, or the threat to Russian security. The last time that Séamus Murphy had an opinion piece in the *Irish Times* he maintained that the 1916 Rising should not be celebrated. He said:

To celebrate the Rising is to celebrate their [the rebel leaders] anti-democratic elitism and bloodlust. One cannot have the Rising without having its meaning, and that meaning empowers Provo-land” (IT, 12 January 2016).

Here we have the nub of the problem with the Irish neutrality debate: those on the anti-neutrality side are the same people who have been anti-Republican in the Decade of Centenaries debates. Séamus Murphy is as deaf to the Russian case regarding Ukraine as he was to the reality that the War in the North arose from factors internal to Northern Ireland and was unrelated to commemorations of Independence. Those who advocate against neutrality tend to be hostile to any recognition of the Republican origins of the State. Their arguments rest on ahistorical feet of clay, not a good starting

point when engaging with a *demos* born out of the Rising, the 1918 Election and de Valera's statecraft.

Alan Barrett, Director of the Economic and Social Research Institute, made an interesting comment about neutrality on the Brendan O'Connor radio show on RTE (13 March). Speaking not as an expert but as a citizen, he said he thought many Irish people were uncomfortable about American foreign policy as it was applied in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, and as it is operated in South America. At the same time, he believed, they mostly felt guilty about not participating in the war against Nazism. That point is relevant in assessing the views of the only two contributors to the *Irish Times* Opinion pages who showed the slightest understanding of the origin and meaning of Ireland's policy on neutrality: Noel Dorr, the eminent former diplomat and Diarmaid Ferriter, a columnist and history professor.

Dorr and Ferriter, in separate articles, were respectful of the traditional policy and of de Valera but neither attempted to describe what is happening in Ukraine from a neutrality perspective. They both laboured from the disadvantage that scholarly work has not been done on Irish foreign policy during World War Two. The problem is not that there have been no studies of the subject, but that a history of the War from a de Valeraite perspective was never attempted.

That is why the British and American view prevails and why the Irish position is not appreciated by the wider public as referred to by Alan Barrett. Fortunately, a solid foundation for an Irish history of the War has been provided by writers associated with *Irish Political Review*—see the contributions of Brendan Clifford, Jack Lane and Dr. Pat Walsh to *Elizabeth Bowen—'Notes on Eire'*, Aubane Historical Society, 1999.

US DEBATE

In contrast to the Irish debate, Ukraine's tragedy is being forthrightly discussed in the US. There are at least three prominent US contributors whose arguments take account of the full story and whose views are readily available on the Internet. The first is *Michael Hudson*, a radical economist who considers that the Sanctions against Russia will force Russia and China to trade in an alternative currency to the US dollar, thus undermining the “*dollarized imperial economy*”. His most relevant recent article is titled, “*The American Empire self-destructs*”.

Another, *John Mearsheimer*, is a Professor of Political Science and an International Relations scholar at the University of Chicago. A YouTube video recording of a lecture he gave in 2015 headed, "*Why Ukraine is the West's Fault*" is insightful on the *deep causes* of the Ukraine crisis. He identifies the West's policy of peeling Ukraine away from Russia's orbit and making it a Western bulwark on Russia's border as a primary cause.

The third contributor is *George Friedman*, a Hungarian-born US geopolitical forecaster and strategist on international affairs. Author of nine books, Friedman's academic credentials—he has a doctorate from Cornell—are in political science. He is strongly pro-the US Empire. A lecture he gave to the *Chicago Council on Global Affairs* on 15th March 2015 has attracted a lot of attention on the Internet because in it he expounds the view that the complex relationship between Germany and Russia has long been a concern for the US.

In that talk he is refreshingly honest in describing how the US Empire is like a teenager that sometimes behaves stupidly as when it tries to establish Democracy in places like Afghanistan. It needs to admit that it is an Empire, he argues, and learn from older Powers like the British Empire in the way it ran India. He also states that a Ukraine that is aligned with the West rather than being neutral poses an '*existential threat*' for the Russians. Joining up the dots from his statements, it can be argued that a war between Russia and Ukraine would be to the advantage of the US because it would end the relationship between Germany and Russia.

The US wants Irish neutrality to be ditched. But, from the above contributors and a wealth of other evidence—like the article by Yuliy Dubovyk—it is clear that the US has had ulterior motives for its various involvements in the internal affairs of Ukraine. The war there has already had the effect of consolidating Atlanticism by binding Europe more closely to NATO and sundering relations between Germany and Russia: good outcomes for the US. The Ukrainian Government has not been following the best interests of its people by allowing itself to be used as a pawn by Washington.

From an Irish perspective, on conservative grounds in a time of rapid political and geopolitical change, considering the way that US hegemony is being secured, neutrality should continue to be defended. ■

NATO Military Exercises

Western media has been fuelling the tension over the Ukrainian conflict and Russian build-up of troops within western Russia yet ignoring Nato plans for at least 22 Nato military exercises during 2022, including Defender-Europe 22 in May and June involving 33,000 troops from 26 countries. These Nato military exercises will take place along the borders with Russia from the Arctic Ocean through the Baltic States down to Bulgaria and including the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

These 22 exercises are clearly designed to intimidate and encircle Russia. Three of these exercises Joint Arctic Training 22, Neptune Strike 22 and Saber Strike 22 have already begun during January. Several aircraft have been transporting armed US troops involved in these exercises through Shannon airport, with the approval of the Department of Transport. This is in contravention of Department of Foreign Affairs regulations. The solution to the Ukrainian conflict is for Ukraine to become a neutral state but Nato is strongly opposed to the concept of neutrality and is working to include the existing neutrals into Nato. The Irish government should be using its role as a neutral state to promote peace in eastern Europe. **Edward Horgan, PANA**

(Irish News)

Ilan Pappé on Zelensky and Gaza:

"... The Ukrainian establishment does not only have a connection with these neo-Nazi groups and armies, it is also disturbingly and embarrassingly pro-Israeli. One of President Volodymyr Zelensky's first acts was to withdraw the Ukraine from the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People—the only international tribunal that makes sure the Nakba is not denied or forgotten.

"The decision was initiated by the Ukrainian President; he had no sympathy for the plight of the Palestinian refugees, nor did he consider them to be victims of any crime. In his interviews after the last barbaric Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in May 2021, he stated that the only tragedy in Gaza was the one suffered by the Israelis. If this is so, then it is only the Russians who suffer in the Ukraine ..."

<https://www.palestinechronicle.com/navigating-our-humanity-ilan-pappe-on-the-four-lessons-from-ukraine> Submitted by **Philip O'Connor**

DLR Roger Casement Summer School 2022

Lexicon Library, Dun Laoghaire 5 - 7May 2022

Debate: What the War in Ukraine Means for Ireland and the EU

Speakers: **Clare Daly MEP** and **Barry Andrews MEP**

Chair: Deaglán de Breadún

Friday 6 May, 11.15 am - 1.00 pm

Night of Music and Song with Paul Linehan

Songs by Thomas Moore, Thomas Davis and Percy French

Tenor: Paul Linehan, Musician: Anne Cullen, Readings: Dave Alvey

Introductions: Mary Delaney

Thursday 5 May, 6.30 pm – 9pm

Movie – Secrets of Putamayo by Aurélio Michiles starring Stephen Rea

Introduced by Philip McDonagh

Friday 6 May, 3.45 pm

Human Rights: Sayed Anosh from Afghanistan, Roos Demol from Belgium

Chair: Mary Lawlor (Frontline Defenders)

Topics: Women in Afghanistan in

2022, Refugee Treatment in Ireland

Saturday 7 May, 2.15 pm

Historical Lectures: on Casement, Maire Comerford, and more

Speakers: **Ruairi de Burca** (Dept of Foreign Affairs), **Hilary Dully**, **Padraig Yeates**, **Tom Daly** (Ulster GAA) **Chairs: Martin Mansergh, Philip McDonagh,**

Different times (see Programme)

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Ukraine

The biggest fear of the US was of German/Russian close economic ties. This friendship was supported by the majority of ordinary Germans and, I guess, Europeans. Two questions remain: Why does US NATO not end the war by guaranteeing Ukrainian neutrality? And why are our politicians and mainstream media not asking the same?

Simon O'Donnell

Russian Economy

We often come across denigrating comments about the Russian economy being smaller than that of S Korea or Italy. But that is only if you take the dollar exchange value of GDP into account.

I feel that GDP measured according to purchasing power parity is a better way to compare, at least living standards and countries' actual production of goods and services.

Ukraine's economy or GDP has 'shrunk' dramatically and salaries are low by western standards. But, when I was there a few years ago, I could buy a bottle of Jameson's cheaper there than I could buy it here. The same applied to almost everything except maybe some consumer products or luxury products, which I don't buy anyway.

Outside of the West, Japan, South Korea etc., prices of ordinary commodities are far cheaper, so a smaller amount of money goes much further. This applies to fuel, food, rents, electricity, all the basic necessities: and don't talk to me about other items that some consider essential, such as cigarettes and beer!

When the value of goods and services is factored in, rather than GDP being measured by the artificial notion of mere money, then the relative size of a country's economy changes dramatically. Russia jumps to being the 6th largest economy in the world, while France and the UK fall to 9th and 10th respectively. Italy and S. Korea, to which Russia is often compared, come in at 13 and 14, behind Turkey and Mexico. S. Korea's economy is thus a little over half the size of Russia's. I daresay this approach has its flaws, but the traditional approach seems to me to reflect an imperialist propagandist view of the world rather than the lived reality.

Paschal Ranaghan

German Economy

In the German magazine, *Spiegel*, there was an assessment of how Germany will come economically out of the Ukraine crisis, and especially out of breaking off all trade links with Russia. The verdict of that rabid rag was: *we can do it!* Germany's leading intelligent newspaper, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, had an article on the business pages analysing German trade with China. It equally concluded that ending that trade too was 'doable'. This is all heading in one direction. A new Cold War (a serious one involving iron curtains and minimal East-West interaction) is, in my view, not only on the cards, but has long been planned.

It would undoubtedly be good for America. All Western countries will be obliged to transfer their eastern trade in oil, gas, IT, engineering components, Artificial Intelligence, arms etc. etc., to it and its proxies instead. Silicon Valley is as much part of the famous military-industrial complex as Boeing and Lockheed. The list is endless.

A new arms race would drive American prosperity, as it is the core component of US industry. A captured western hemisphere market will greatly expand it, as it did from the Marshall Plan to

the fall of the Berlin Wall, fuelling western prosperity with the US at the top. So, happy days are coming for the US.

The *Spiegel* "essay" had an interesting table showing German trade with a range of countries over the years. It showed that 2021 was a decisive year, as in that year Germany's combined trade with Russia and China for the first time overtook German trade (imports/exports) with the US. And the future trajectory was going only one way. In other words, inexorable relative US decline and European economic integration with the East. It seems to me quite clear what is now happening.

Philip O'Connor

Imperial Britain!

Britain is a country that evolved as an imperialist entity—it was the womb from which it emerged. But the life that throbbed through its imperialist existence began to wane after the First World War and continued to weaken into the Second World War and into the 50s.

Thatcher saw this waning of its world influence and sought to retain it through shifting its economy to one that, through the reform of its financial institutions, could hold onto a semblance of its old influence. But Britain has never made the cultural change that reflected its changed circumstances—something that was acknowledged by her Falklands adventure—and it continues to live in the cultural fantasy that it is in fact the same Britain that previously ruled the waves.

This is what makes it such a dangerous operator in the world. Its fantasy is no longer constrained by a reality that previously could impose some sort of responsible constraint on its actions. The result of this toxic mixture is that the first impulse of its political leaders is to rush to prove itself on the world stage whenever it thinks the circumstances are favourable.

Britain can never be a normal country which can overcome the cultural inheritance of its imperial past because it was originally formed through a culture that was intrinsic to its imperial development and that culture continues to be the medium by which the majority of British people define themselves. It cannot be taken away from them through a normal political evolution. It can only cease to exist when Britain ceases to exist.

Eamon Dyas

Tommy Dwyer

We regret to inform readers of the death of a long-standing supporter of this magazine, Tommy Dwyer.

Readers are invited to send in recollections and tributes

The O'Connor Column

Statesmanship!

De Valera, from the time of the Treaty negotiations onwards, sought a formula that would enable Irish sovereignty evolve while maintaining an “*external association*” with the British Commonwealth, the new term for the Empire as it was rebranded after WW1.

The Treaty firmly locked Ireland into Britain’s military arrangements. Ireland would have no independent maritime force and its coasts would be patrolled by the Royal Navy. Three fortified ports were retained under British occupation. In a European war scenario—and everyone assumed a further European war, differing only on who Enemy No. 1 might be this time—Ireland would perforce form part of and be involved in the British war.

Britain justified its obduracy in refusing to accept the Irish Republic—established in 1918 by as democratic an act as it is possible to do such things—on the grounds that Britain’s security required Ireland to remain under its guidance in military, foreign policy, monetary, and other essential matters.

Britain’s leaders stressed that the security imperatives of defending its western approaches dictated this.

In the 1930s de Valera championed “*collective security against aggression*” at the League of Nations. He specifically advocated it against Italian fascist aggression against Ethiopia and committed to provide Irish troops to any common effort. He pointed to the League’s failure, at the insistence of its dominant powers, France and Britain, to face down Japanese aggression in China.

However, “*collective security*” was not to be and Mussolini’s troops stormed into Ethiopia.

By 1938 de Valera was convinced that the Great Powers were manoeuvring towards war. Having experienced the realities of Great Power politics at the League, he determined on a course of neutrality for Ireland. That necessitated first and foremost getting the ports back and ejecting these final British military garrisons.

Britain was again playing the ‘Great Game’, and it decided to clean up affairs in

its back yard. An agreement was reached with the occupied ports being returned to Ireland.

De Valera stressed that Irish foreign policy and, when he came to articulate it, Irish neutrality, would perforce involve a “*certain consideration*” for Britain. He undertook that Ireland would not join any alliance with a hostile intent towards Britain, nor allow its territory to be used by any other Power for an attack on Britain.

Britain was not interested in such commitments and no Treaty enshrining them was concluded. To keep freedom of action, it returned the ports “*unconditionally*”, but stressed repeatedly that, should the ports become essential to its defence requirements, it would not hesitate to simply re-occupy them and do anything else it might deem necessary on Irish territory.

Britain went to war in alliance with France and Poland against Germany. It did not describe what it was doing as in any way a war “*on fascism*”. It was agnostic on the issue. Its problem, it said, was Germany. Among its allies was fascist Portugal. It courted recently-fascist Spain and would do a deal with it securing its friendly neutrality in a way that was entirely problematic for Germany. Until June 1940 it sought to retain fascist Italy as an ally.

De Valera was not an anti-fascist in the sense that he had no intention of joining any alliance whose purported purpose was to defeat fascism in other countries. The issue never arose, as no such alliance existed anyway, despite the Soviet Union calling for one.

The *Irish Times* had jubilantly welcomed Hitler’s electoral triumph in 1933 as having created a bulwark in Germany against the spread of Communism. De Valera made no such statements. But he did denounce Nazi religious and racial persecution and refused to recognise the fascist Spanish *coup* government, as demanded by the *Irish Independent* and much of the Church and Fine Gael leaderships until the fascist Generals established *de facto* control of the country in 1939. He decried the German attacks on neutral Belgium and Holland in May 1940.

From the late 1920s, de Valera specifically rejected a military solution to the Partition problem, despite the large Catholic minority in the North awaiting precisely such a deliverance from their predicament. This was not because de Valera thought a military solution might not be justified, but because launching a war effectively against England in such circumstances would be suicidal for Ireland. Ireland’s future sovereignty would depend to a large degree on advantages that could be secured through evolving diplomatic relations with Britain.

De Valera managed Ireland’s precarious neutral status through the first years of the war. There were various threats to it, including the remote possibility of a German invasion or, more plausibly, a German incursion or landing in summer 1940. Otherwise, the main and recurring threat was a British invasion from the North, or an attempt by it to re-seize the Treaty ports or the Shannon Estuary. All of these options, it is now known, were actively and repeatedly considered by the British.

Ireland was very poorly armed. Apart from a stock of rifles and machine guns of 1920s vintage or older, it had only the rudiments of an armed defence. In 1940 Dublin’s air defences consisted of just six AA batteries, only three of them heavy guns. The Treaty had allowed for a native defence force, primarily for suppressing “*insurgency*”, but acquiring arms from anywhere other than Britain was to be considered a hostile act. Ireland was thus reliant for arms on British generosity. Throughout 1939-42 Britain declined to deliver arms to Ireland on the grounds that its neutrality was hostile to Britain.

What Ireland had was people. Besides the army, the LDF and other voluntary forces, a secret network of underground groups from the old IRA was established in Munster to lead an insurgency in case of attack. In September 1940 the shrewd British Ambassador in Dublin, Maffey, scolded the British Admiralty for ideas it had that Ireland could not defend itself and the island should be taken in hand militarily. They should be under no illusion, he

told them, about the “*determination*” of the Irish Defence Forces “*to fight bitterly against whomsoever first invades EIRE.*”

Throughout the war, Ireland exercised its neutrality with the “*special consideration*” for Britain de Valera had outlined until he was blue in the face before the war. After 1942, threats from either side receded and America came into the war. Ireland had no squabble with the US and many people were positively inclined towards it. From this point onwards Irish neutrality was exercised with great consideration for American requirements though never to the point of breaking against Germany.

Zelensky and de Valera

De Valera was a statesman who rejected any forceful attempt to reverse the iniquities of the partition settlement and who manoeuvred to maximise Irish sovereignty in a geopolitical context dominated by British Naval and military power. He asserted a neutral status for Ireland in the forthcoming, and then actual, war that was declared in 1939. This was made possible, firstly, by having secured the return of the Treaty ports and, secondly, by giving assurances that Irish foreign policy would be exercised with a “*certain consideration*” for Britain’s interests, that Ireland would not join any alliance with a hostile intent towards Britain, and that it would never allow its territory be used by any other power for preparing an attack on Britain.

The contrast between de Valera’s stance towards Britain and that of Zelensky towards Russia in the last two-to-three years could not be more striking. We must take it that Zelensky is no idiot. In May 1945, Churchill, tongue-in-cheek, and no doubt pickled with gin, taunted de Valera for having “*frolicked*” with the Nazis and Japanese while Britain had “*stood alone against tyranny*”. That was nonsense of course. But that Zelensky had been more than “*frolicking*” with NATO for the last number of years is now entirely clear. That he has betted all on a massive escalation drawing NATO in is also the only logical explanation for what can otherwise only be seen as a suicidal course.

In the Second World War Hitler gambled on the West leaving him alone to do what he intended in Russia. His plan was to push Russian Slavdom back beyond the Urals where it could vegetate in an Asiatic space while he “*Europeanised*” the western bit by ruthless means. It was not a new idea in the West. For Russia today, what has been happening since at least 2014 seems like a very similar agenda. Zelensky gambled

on NATO not leaving him in the lurch, refusing to negotiate on any grounds other than a complete Russian withdrawal and restoration of the “*territorial integrity*” of the concocted 1991 Ukrainian state.

At the time of writing, Zelensky seems to have been vindicated, with NATO fulfilling what must be his wildest dreams in terms of extravagant military support and the exclusion of the Russian state from global capitalism. His position was never one of accommodating to the powers around him, but playing the card of a NATO proxy in a wider war.

Few today would say he miscalculated, whatever the cost.

Ukrainian flags at the IIEA

Thought is a scarce commodity in Irish policy circles these days. When the Russian military intervention began, the main concern of Irish diplomats was the rather unsavoury one of providing “*support*” for Irish couples involved in the business of having children through Ukrainian proxies, in the form of mule or “*surrogate*” mothers. Once that embarrassing episode was got over, it all became a matter of the much higher purpose of “*European solidarity*” with the nation of these mothers.

On 14th March, the Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA) held a webinar entitled *War In Ukraine: Is This The End Of The Long Peace In Europe?* It was addressed by three hardline NATO protagonists, Prof. Donncha Ó Beacháin of DCU, Prof. Ben Tonra of UCD and Judy Dempsey, a journalist described as “*a senior fellow at Carnegie Europe and editor in chief of the Strategic Europe blog.*”

The chairperson of the webinar, Marie Cross, sported a large Ukrainian flag on her lapel, which coloured proceedings somewhat. Tonra at one stage said all had now changed, changed utterly and Ireland would have to look entirely afresh at its security options. Yet he has said little different in the last forty years, during which he has relentlessly championed Irish NATO membership, the NATO “*Partnership for Peace*” and a common European defence alignment against the East. Someone might have pointed that out.

AMERICAN GLEE

There is an undisguised glee among US spokespersons since Putin embarked on his “*Special Military Operation*” in Ukraine. It is the glee of one who holds trump cards as an endgame approaches. American world leadership, or world dominance—the two

terms are used interchangeably in *Foreign Affairs*—has been restored, even if over a shrunken area of the world. Even the IIEA concluded at its recent webinar that the idea of an independent “*European security architecture*” is forever buried. There is, again, only one leader. The threat of European economic integration with Russia and what US strategists fears was its “*Eurasian*” absorption has been repulsed.

On 24th March, a US/EU Commission agreement, which Biden secured with von der Leyen, provided for Europe henceforth to buy an additional 15bn m3 of US LNG per year, rising to 50bn m3 by 2030. Biden has also offered to replace Europe’s lost imported grain and fertilisers from Russia with similar quantities from the US and Russia. He spoke solemnly of the “*long term benefits*” that would “*outweigh the short-term pain*”. The pain, of course, will be all Europe’s—there will be no “*pain*” for the US, only “*gain*”. He didn’t say that, of course, though everyone knows it. This is how he put it:

“I know that eliminating Russian gas will have costs for Europe, but it’s not only the right thing to do from a moral standpoint, it is going to put us on a much stronger strategic footing.”

A survey of German business managers reported in *Spiegel* the following day makes for very gloomy reading. The impoverishment of “*Europe*” is now well underway as it is reduced to a sideshow on the US’s eastern front.

How much humiliation can the old busted powers of the “*EU*” continue to take? It seems that the sky’s the limit!

The glee at the recent geopolitical turn of events is not confined to the US. It is also palpable in the London of Boris Johnson. Liberal opinion has been that he took a disastrous turn with Brexit. But Boris too has been looking like a winning player holding the good cards. He has created a military “*alliance*” with East European states, coordinated of course by Britain, which is the largest arms supplier to Ukraine. He also thinks the EU should allow Ukraine become a member, out of “*solidarity*” of course. Britain can of course wash its hands of the costs this will involve. The important meetings in Brussels were not those of Biden with the EU, where Biden simply issued orders to a humiliated bunch of former defeated powers, but the meeting of NATO:⁴ and Johnson, like Churchill in 1946, has emerged as a new “*leader of Europe*” in that forum while von der Leyen, Scholz

and Macron look on helplessly.

Global US leadership was gradually slipping away, compromised by China's economic resurgence and Europe's entanglements and trade relations with both it and Russia. But in a world where this has evaporated overnight—and the “East” will struggle to consolidate as a separate and hostile entity—in the world that remains there is room for only one hegemon.

If the 30-year post-1989 era has now come to an end, the new one looks very like the one it had replaced. The West is NATO, which is US power behind which everything else is herded. The “Five Eyes” of the Anglosphere will have a privileged place in it, with Europe as a bottom-feeding appendage. France, Germany and Italy might flail and wiggle, but their future has been determined, and it is a decidedly shrunken one: a return to the bit-part role they played in the previous Cold War. Europe's wings have certainly been clipped.

SILVER LINING?

An interesting aspect of the new Cold War is that by definition it ends *globalisation*. How can you have globalisation without a global economy? Russia, China and many others have been gradually squeezed from the world economy through sanctions, manipulation of trade rules etc. This did not start in February 2022. In the case of Russia, a major state has been expelled from world capitalism by precisely the Powers that coaxed it onto a capitalist path in the first place, thirty years ago. China is watching.

But the last Cold War had its bright side. Lesser states could play off the big boys to their advantage. Many were crushed in the process but some prospered, relatively speaking. The need for tight economic and political control of the “Alliance” also brought benefits for the working classes of the West. Keynesian economics, consumption-driven growth, fear of left-wing rebellions etc. all contributed to a thirty-year period of unprecedented growth and wealth distribution. The welfare state, full employment, free education and social mobility. *Les trentes glorieuses* is what the French called it.

With a new Cold War, it seems very likely that a return to highly managed economies might well be the result, with similar distribution systems and consumption-oriented state policies. Modern Monetary Theory will let the printing presses role. The US of course will sit at the top of it, with the arming of the West driving its military industries, the basis of the US “*development model*”. Europe will be perhaps much poorer, but also maybe essentially happier.

Second Casualty Of War!

continued from page 1

This leaves the great EU campaign for their ‘*rule of law*’ in tatters. The very edifice of the EU—having been proclaimed as being based on law as interpreted by Brussels and legitimised by the ECJ just weeks ago—There was jubilation that the miscreants had been condemned and would have to pay the penalty and be punished. But Law is nonsense without enforcement and punishment. Law and punishment go together like a horse and carriage—you can't have one without the other. That is not just ‘a rule of law’ necessity: it is the essence of law itself as there is simply no law without enforcement. In its absence law is just verbiage in books. That is now what the EU ‘rule of law’ amounts to. And if the EU is nothing without its law, as it consistently proclaimed, then the EU is on the way to being nothing, a sham.

It has been pointed out repeatedly in this magazine that this fetishising of law by the EU would end in disaster. Law had replaced politics as the agency of the EU, as the means of developing the EU and creating the glue, the faith, the *demos* around which political coherence could be built. Law was proclaimed to be that bond: but it has now been self-discredited. Law is in any case hidebound and static. War, which is politics at its most intense, has rapidly taken law and legalism off the agenda, as it inevitably would when needs must. And once off, it is discredited and cannot be restored.

The EU has found just as unreliable a *demos*, a purpose, to replace law as its *raison d'être*—Russophobia together with servility to the US. In the latter role it is reverting to its roots. The US in the later 40s had to force Europe to get its act together to provide ballast against the Soviet Union. Europe belatedly tried to make this project its own by grandiose plans for everlasting peace and harmony in Europe: and the world would follow its example. It was the US Secretary of State, Alan Dulles, who specifically wrote about and called for “*The United States of Europe*” for the specific US need of the time and not for any grand ideological reason.

De Gaulle was the only European leader who saw an alternative, a union of the different peoples of Europe—and not their amalgamation—and no beholding

to either power block.

The conflict in the Ukraine is leading to another likely development which is even more ominous for the EU:

“Boris Johnson is understood to be open to accepting an invitation to attend the European Council next week when EU leaders meet to discuss the war in Ukraine, though one has yet to be extended.

A Downing Street source said Johnson would be in Brussels next week for a Nato summit, along with the US president, Joe Biden, who will attend the council meeting later that afternoon. They said it remained a possibility for Johnson to attend the council meeting—which would be a major symbolic step post-Brexit.

However, the decision on whether to invite Johnson to the EU summit is for the European Council president, Charles Michel, a former prime minister of Belgium.

EU sources said that no such invitation had been sent to Downing Street and that this was not expected to change. A spokesperson for Michel said: “No comment” (Guardian 17.3.22).

In the event Johnson did not attend but there is no doubt that the possibility was not rejected out of hand by the EU for a UK Prime Minister to attend the EU Council—a person who has shown a lifelong contempt for the EU, beginning with the straight banana fable and culminating in achieving Brexit.

It is easy to envisage a scenario of 'crisis' where he will be welcomed to the highest decision making body of the EU!

And even more significant was the fact the US President was welcomed into its bosom: attending the meeting from which the UK was excluded!

—And in any case there is usually no need for a sub captain to play when the team captain is playing well.

These events show that the EU's very governance, as well as its ‘rule of law’ *mantra*, is in tatters. It begs the question—in its own right, what is the EU now for? It is not master of its own destiny. That is provided by the US. There is instead a vacuum which Britain will be only too willing to fill: and be back to its historic mission - mischief making in Europe as a totally free agent. Watch this space! As the cliché has it, truth is the first casualty of war; ° but in the Ukraine conflict the second casualty has been the EU.

Jack Lane

Sean O’Faolain and Canon Formation

Part 2.

The one thing that Sean O’Faolain had in plenty was what we in Ireland call ‘neck’. And the other thing that distinguished him from others was the way he ‘used people’ without any thought as to how they might feel about it. If one was truly looking for these *motifs* in his life, his autobiography’s title says it all — ‘*Vive Moi*’. And that is truly how he saw his life, self-centered to the core with nary a care as to many casualties he left in his wake as long as *his* appetites were satisfied.

O’Faolain played up his fight for Irish freedom, though—when the Irish were successful in finally establishing a democratic State—he *canáned* about it to all and sundry. The people who got on and made something of themselves invited his sneers, but most especially those who really got on. As Maurice Harmon, O’Faolain’s biographer, neatly put it:

"He [O’Faolain] detected the first signs of that acquisitive middle-class, which, in combination with an uncultivated Church, threatened the Republic he had tried to create."

The cheek of O’Faolain! when there he was, tooth and claw, trying every trick in the book, and many not, to make sure he and his family were seen as being very middle class—if not above!!

Harmon also recounts that, when Sean’s mother was in the North Infirmery, dying, he told Nancy McCarthy she was only to ring him when she was nearing the end.

She died on the 13th May 1944 and was buried out of St. Peter’s and Paul’s Church on the 15th May. Sean had telephoned Gus in the UK and sent a telegram to Father Pat in Australia. But there were only two mourners and that was Nancy and Sean.

For the life of me, I can’t fathom why Mrs. Whelan should have had such an incredibly poor turnout: because the Irish were/are DNA’d to go to funerals because, by doing so, they were/are honouring both the dead and the community.

There is another incident that Harmon later recalled in his book that gave me huge pause and shock. Apparently, Sean, in one of his rages with his poor “*uneducated boor and uncivilized*” mother, “*threw her down the stairs and broke her leg*”. And after his mother’s funeral:

Sean—

“brought his mother’s old handbag to Dublin and examined it with revulsion: it revived his sense of her miserable, self-denying piety. Going through it was a ‘painful business... with its pathetic snuff-tin, bits of holy bread’ (?) “... her specs and a brass ring ... I burned the lot in haste and horror ...”

He paid her doctor’s bill but there were other bits to tie up, including “*other creditors, bookmakers and pawnbrokers*”. What Sean would never acknowledge was that his poor parents were very hard-working in order to give the children an education. But Sean was not for hearing that but as anything but utter “*parental blackmail*”.

O’Faolain had great mentors in Daniel Corkery and Professor Stockley, who invited him and other young people to their homes to listen to classical music, engage in great conversations, and make them familiar with their libraries. It never seems to even occur to O’Faolain that he should be grateful for these incredible acts of cultural and personal benevolence.

In today’s Ireland, which is very much a product of the bile of O’Faolain *et cetera*, Daniel Corkery’s name has all but been erased. This son of Cork was a poet, playwright, producer, novelist, critic, teacher and a painter of a very high quality. In many ways he has the real hallmark of a *Renaissance* man. His watercolours, in my opinion, stand among the best that Ireland has produced. It is such a pity that the National Collection contains only a handful of Corkery’s paintings and that many appear to be lost.

Some were found by accident: by the good fortune that, in 1965, the late John and Joan Cronin of Douglas, Cork, purchased a

house and its contents in Fountainstown, Co. Cork as a holiday home without knowing that it was Daniel Corkery’s last residence. There, in an airing cupboard, was a collection of his watercolours—much to their delight. They were unsigned—Corkery’s signature style was no signature: but they were subsequently authenticated. ‘*The Hidden Ireland*’, indeed, in all its glory and shyness.

The other person who gets no praise from Sean in his autobiography, ‘*Vive Moi*’, is his poor suffering wife, Eileen.

What I never knew about Eileen, *née* Gould, was that she did very good service for Cumann na mBan and was quite active in Republican circles. So active that, unlike her future husband, she was imprisoned for a number of months in 1923. But that seemed to have cured her of Irish politics because in prison she became disillusioned. She made the incredible analysis of seeing the other women prisoners as being “*driven by love for their own ruthless selves*”. This is pure piffle, as anyone with the remotest knowledge of sacrifice for one’s fellow man would be hard put to come up with such nonsense—unless of course you had the ultimate bad luck to be the girlfriend of one, Sean O’Faolain, with his gibberish notions of Irish politics.

All the time after gaining a degree in economics in UCC in 1923, Eileen worked at teaching, and she supported Sean continually. She jumped from one school to the next just to be near Sean—thereby making building a career that much harder. And, finally, when he got his Commonwealth Scholarship from 1927-1929 to the USA, she moved to a ‘settlement house’, where she worked while Sean did his studies in Harvard.

They moved again to another place and Eileen took up secretarial work. They were finally married on 3rd June 1928 in Boston’s Cathedral of the Holy Cross. In 1929-1933 both of them lived in London—where they both taught this time, with Sean finally contributing to the couple’s earning capacity: a real first for work-shy Sean. They then came back to Ireland where Sean decided to become a writer.

They lived in a rental until 1971 while they built a house at Knockaderry, Killiney, Co. Dublin. It was here that Eileen created a well-regarded garden. From 1971 to 1988 they lived at Rosmeen Park, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. The couple had two children Julia (born 1932) and Stephen (born 1938.) But Eileen started writing children’s books and her first one was published to critical acclaim in 1940, ‘*The little black hen*’. All her subsequent books were well received

and they were illustrated by the likes of Nora McGuinness, Brian Wildsmith and others.

Finally she seemed to be coming into her own but, throughout the 40's and onwards, Eileen suffered with near-chronic illnesses with some of her ailments being psychosomatic or "*stress-maladies*", as her daughter Julia characterised them, brought on by her husband's serial infidelities.

Despite trying various diets, she suffered greatly from arthritis and stomach ulcers. But whenever Sean wanted her to accompany him in his travels, to gather material for his travelogues, she did. Contrast Sean O'Faolain's attitude to his wife to his grovelling before Elizabeth Bowen and one has the measure of him immediately.

By the time I was finished reading about Eileen O'Faolain's life, I so wanted her to have forgotten her diets and fads and just got a revolver and turned it on that *scuit*—her husband, with his many infidelities which he made sure to have her know about.

O'Faolain was a nasty man, not only in his dealings with his wife, but also with his poor son, Stephen—who, in the end, was cancelled too and kept away from Ireland by monies rationed by Sean because he could never live up to the latter's idea of a gentleman.

Though Stephen "*threatened to come home*", he did not; "*it had been arranged years before that he would stay away in return for a regular allowance*". In fact, Sean only acknowledged towards the end having one child and that was his favourite Julia.

I also find it interesting that there is still no biography of Eileen O'Faolain, who died in 1988. Indeed, an article in '*The Irish Independent*' by a Frieda Klotz bemoaned: "*Elusive O'Faolain fails to let herself shine through*", but what is our academia doing if not researching a woman failed by her own gendered writers and commentators?

I fear that my intention to write about canon formation fell by the wayside because sometimes that is how it is when one writes. I had been down in our main book room and was looking up works by Sean O'Faolain. And there were at least three books by Eileen O'Faolain: I noted first their beautiful production and illustrations—the latter really were quite wonderful. I was gobsmacked and asked himself if he was aware of her and he said '*of course*'. That's Cork people for you all round!

Julianne Herlihy. ©.

To be continued.

Pressing For A *Constitutional* Right To Housing Is Ill Advised!

continued from page 1

electorate would be justified in taking a '*jury still out*' attitude. In other words, it remains to be seen whether Government action in line with Sinn Fein policy would prove equal to the challenge of resolving the housing crisis.

Key issues in delivering a successful reform of housing are: effective implementation of policy; competent management of the necessary public finance; productive, mutually beneficial cooperation with the private sector; and the maintenance of public support in the face of opposition from powerful vested interests. These objectives would require enhanced organisational capacity in the public service. They would also require prioritised and prolonged political management.

In proposing a change of the Constitution recognising a right to housing, O'Broin cites a presentation made to the Oireachtas Housing Committee in 2019 by Leilani Farah, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing. Farah argued that Ireland needed to adopt a human rights-based strategy on housing to meet its international obligations (p. 156).

With all due respect to the internationalist cause, human rights-based strategies are attractive in some quarters precisely because they are apolitical. Rigid, legalistic universalism of that type would be an affront to any electorate. The transformation of housing policy requires a high level of statecraft informed by relevant local and historical knowledge, not a move away from politics.

In recent years two mini referenda on

the question of direct elections of Local Authority Mayors in Cork and Waterford were defeated and the consensus of opinion on that is that the proposals lacked detail. The voters were unclear about what powers the directly elected Mayors would have in practice, so they voted *No*.

A similar problem would arise if a Sinn Fein Government pressed for a Constitutional Amendment on housing in advance of a successful implementation of its policy. First, demonstrate that a radical policy based on a right to housing works, then, and only if there are credible legal challenges based on the property rights enumerated in the Constitution, set about campaigning for a Constitutional Amendment.

The idea that people should have a right to housing, and that such a right should take precedence over market considerations, is sound, and should be repeatedly asserted in public debate, but putting that idea to the test in a Referendum before it has become the established norm would be ill advised. Where would the transformation of housing policy as a project stand if a Constitutional Amendment on a right to housing was defeated?

Dave Alvey

Editor: The Courts have already trespassed into the political domain. Giving a constitutional right to housing would further enlarge their usurping of the democracy. As is pointed out above, only if there are successful constitutional challenges to an active State housing policy should a referendum be held to vindicate public provision of housing.

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Spycatcher Revisited !

I first read *Spycatcher*, published by Heinemann, Australia, back in 1987. It was described as *The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer*. This was Peter Wright, former Assistant Director of MI5. He had worked in the Admiralty as a scientist and left to become MI5's first scientist.

In leaving the Admiralty he had to forfeit 15 years of a pension fund. He was promised it would be retrievable in the end, as he put in his years in MI5. That never happened and he was left with a diminished pension when he retired from MI5.

That left him embittered and his revenge was to write this book. That's how the story goes, but there has to be more to it than one mere disgruntled operator. More of that later.

Re-reading it was like reading a totally different book. After 25 years it can be difficult to remember many things but there are the highlights that impinge on your memory in a personal way, that's easy to remember.

For example there was the illegal copying of the membership files of the CPGB. The description of this raid I remember reading as something totally different. The latest book I have read calls this raid *Operation Party Piece*. In the book I have read recently, the files are stored in the flat of a wealthy party member, who lives in the exclusive area of Mayfair in London. A source within the CPGB had given information as to where the files were kept. The flat was then put under intensive visual, telephone, and letter surveillance.

Listening one day they heard the wife of the man, while he was at work, say on the phone, she was going out for an hour and would leave the key under the mat. Within 20 minutes of the call being monitored a MI5 operative was round there taking a plasticine imprint of the key.

The burglary – Wright calls it that – was arranged for when the couple were away in the Lake District. What were called *Watchers* were sent after them in case they decided to return early. Banks of pedal-operated microfilming machines were set up in Leconfield House (MI5 headquarters in Curzon Street in London's West End)

to copy the files. A team entered the flat and picked the locks on the filing cabinets, where the membership lists were, which also contained written applications. These were photographed with Polaroid cameras, then driven to Leconfield House. In all 55,000 files were copied.

In the first version of this story I read, the location was a top barrister's office. He was well-known in the media. That burglary was on a Sunday, with a furniture van hired, and one of the old Xerox machines, *that weighed a ton*, placed in the back. Maybe that court case in Australia forced a change, that wouldn't identify the barrister. The easier course would be a business premises, rather than a private flat, that would have attracted attention with so many engaged in the operation.

The original office idea would have been in the City of London, which is deserted on a Sunday, with very few residential buildings. It was also the day maintenance was carried out on offices and business premises by building companies and office furniture removers.

Wright says:

"For five years we bugged and burgled our way across London at the State's behest, while pompous bowler-hatted civil servants pretended to look the other way."

A bit longer than that I would think. At the time I had married into a communist family, which meant my wife, her parents and brothers were in those files. I never particularly cared what they knew about my political beliefs, neither did my wife or her family. We were out there in the streets selling the *Daily Worker* and going to meetings, indoors and outdoors, taking part in demos and working within the Trade Union movement. My father-in-law had articles in the *Daily Worker*, and my mother-in-law was meeting up in Paris with the staff of *L'Humanite*, and visiting communist East European countries.

We knew all about surveillance by the State's security services. Coming from Northern Ireland I had a lot of experience of it, as a teenage communist, from RUC Special Branch, along with being continually photographed.

The CPGB was a powerful organisation then, though numerically small. It was a government in waiting with its membership of top lawyers, academics, Trade Union officials, Church of England members like Hewlet Johnston, the Red Dean of Canterbury, and a number of his flock, like Ministers of Religion.

It had a publishing house, Lawrence & Wishart, a daily paper, and a youth paper, *Challenge*.

If MI5 was infiltrating the CPGB, then equally, the CPGB was trying to infiltrate MI5. They did succeed on a couple of occasions, but they were uncovered and sacked without any publicity.

We were aware of what was happening and sought out their infiltrators, photographed them secretly and published their pictures in the *Daily Worker*. This work was also going on in the CPNI. Numerically even smaller, it had a powerful grip on the Trade Union movement. To get a job in heavy engineering, or the building industry, you had to apply at the Union offices of the full-time organisers. Even the fire brigade, with its communist General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, was the real recruiter of new staff.

The odd tokenism of a Catholic Trade Unionist did get a job, in the almost wholly Protestant work force within heavy industry, but the Catholic community didn't benefit in the least from the influence of this Protestant-led CP. They continued to live under the heel of the Unionist monopoly.

Most of the surveillance was on the Catholic members of the CPNI, and a few Protestants sympathetic to the plight of the Catholic community.

So, the London scene in the left-wing world seemed mainly a peaceful one, to me, compared to life in Belfast. I did have a strange experience in my first few months in London. I saw an advert in the *Daily Worker* for an office worker on a Soviet English-edition magazine. Though I was a manual worker, I thought they would understand and give me a chance as an office worker. In Belfast this change-over was impossible.

I went along to the interview with the obviously Russian editor. He asked me a few questions about my background, after examining my CPGB card, going into another room to phone someone, as to its authenticity. Satisfied, he began questioning me about the Belfast shipyard.

I was surprised about how much he knew about it. He mentioned the Engine Works. This was a huge section of the Yard that ran the whole length of a road. It was a series of huge workshops with only two locked gates, one for vehicles, and one for pedestrians. It was a highly secretive place with security staff on the gates. It was out of bounds to any one who didn't work there. On occasions, when passing it, the ground would begin to shake as if there was going to be an earthquake. They were testing a ship's engine. Maybe a warship engine? My interviewer was now talking warships, did I work on any of them? I told him I was a carpenter and that warships had very little woodwork, because of the risk of fire, and that the little woodwork done on them was done by a small unit, of which we were never a part. He then asked me if I knew anyone who worked in the Engine Works. I did know a brass moulder who lived not far from me in Hollywood, County Down.

The interviewer asked me why I came to London, when I had been working in a much more interesting place. It might be interesting to him but I had lost interest in the shipyard and had given up my job in it, where I was known and had my father, my uncles, and their sons working there, for a couple of generations, and they being Protestant guaranteed them work, and having their surname, it also gave me work, when H&W had it to give.

Surely the interviewer wasn't suggesting I should go back Belfast and take up my old job again! I was in London in order to expand and, being aged 22, I wanted a girlfriend without the complications of sectarian identity. I had already lost one, I had been in love with, when I revealed my true background. Even the young ladies of the Young Workers' League were hooked up with Protestant boyfriends. The YWL had no Catholic teenage girls. I made it plain to the interviewer I was here to stay in London.

I could type a bit, having used the CPNI typewriter, but now I was being asked how many words a minute I could type. I knew then I was wasting my time and walked straight out. I wasn't into spying, and that little we did was in order to preserve the integrity of the two CPs. I helped save the socialist Unity Theatre from take-over by commercial interests through infiltration into the groups advocating it. Or helping to close down a Young Communist League branch in a Jewish area, that had gone totally Zionist. Or unmasking a Jewish psychotherapist, a member of the CPGB executive, through research of Jewish

publications, to reveal who was behind the Zionist propaganda in the CPGB, he who managed to turn a YCL branch into one advocating Zionism. I was one chosen to confront him with this revelation at his comfortable home in West Hampstead, to which I went from my Kilburn basement dump. He asked me who I thought I was in reading Jewish literature. He implied that I was semi-literate. I agreed with him and said I preferred to be like that and being able to think for myself. He would obviously have preferred one of the party chiefs to visit him. I being lower in the ranks, almost a nonentity, outraged him. A higher rank, I reasoned out, would have meant his expulsion. He wasn't expelled from the CPGB but was kept out of meetings. A couple of years later he died while still in his late forties. It was the end of an illustrious career. He started out in the South African Communist Party, and was an early supporter of the ANC. His activities saw him have to leave South Africa in a hurry.

Peter Wright describes a life, and his colleague's lives, as one of locked safes, locked doors, and extraordinary measures to save the Director-General of MI5 from internal assassination. The book I read all that time ago spoke of the DG's desk with a button which, if pressed, brought up an armoured steel plate against bullets.

The book I just read had a long corridor to the DG's office, somehow constructed to make it difficult for an assassin to get to his office. They had electronic bugging devices and two-way mirrors that could be activated in the washroom if someone was suspected.

We were just amateurs with a strong political belief, and most of our sleuthing was a one-off. It was just too distasteful a job for most of us. We didn't have the stomach for it. I could only do it with the aid of alcohol. In reading the Wright memoir the whisky and gin bottle seemed to feature widely, with flowing ashtrays. We could have had that in common if you replaced the whisky and gin, and the drinking clubs with pints of bitter in the pub.

Speaking of long baffling corridors, I might have helped to construct that. I started on a building job at the top of Gower Street in London, beside Euston Square, back in the early 1950s. I presumed it would be an office building when fully built. It was only up to the second floor when I started. The foreman was an easy-going Pole. He advised, us newcomers, that the job was *time and materials*. That information meant that we were to take it

slowly. That way the company building it would make a lot more profit than they would if it had been a fixed price or a competitive estimate.

This was government money, gleaned from the taxpayer. A lot of municipal buildings for borough councils used the T&M method of payment, sometimes whole estates of council houses were built. It was at a great cost to the councils. So, I reckoned it had to be council offices.

Years later I was working in the NHS and happened to read the magazine *Time Out*, a directory for entertainment and the arts. This was during its more radical period. One issue was covering secret London—it's H-Bomb shelters and the premises of the security services.

I realised that, just opposite the hospital I was working in, it was the building I had helped to construct. It was a new headquarters for MI5 which Wright was calling a dismal place to work in. Having worked on it I resented that description of it! In the A&E department there was a two-way window, obviously, you could see out but not in. It faced the MI5 building. For curiosity I looked through it and watched those going in and out.

Lunchtime seemed to be the best time with nervous-looking middle-aged women coming out with their shopping bags, looking left and right, before stepping into the street. Or occasionally you might see a very tall, well-dressed, youngish black man appear, surprising that during that period in the 1980s, when the black community was said to be against the police, and recruitment of minorities, to watch their communities, hadn't started.

I wouldn't have seen Peter Wright as he had retired in 1976. There is only so much peeping you can do when you have no real purpose in doing it. I was just surprised by the coincidences, and then that wore off. *Time Out* now had me on the hospital roof looking towards London University after they claimed MI6 had premises among its buildings. There were strange aerials sticking up here and there. But it was of no real purpose.

Time Out was a bit late in its revelations. I had left the CPGB at the end of the 1960s when party officials had begun to interfere in my marriage, that was, I was breaking up with my wife, and therefore breaking up with a communist family. The energy in the CP was at a low ebb. It had lost its militancy, the *Daily Worker* had become the *Morning Star*. I had carried on after

Hungary and Prague, as I wasn't particularly interested in Social Democracy eroding Communism.

It was plain to see the West, which still held its colonies, with the situation in Northern Ireland still the same burden for the Catholic population, with the brutality of a Saudi Arabia, and with Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal, that their talk of freedom was just pure hypocrisy.

The downhill decline continues with NATO at its most brazen today. NATO, the bringer of war. A NATO that binges on Cold War fantasy.

This latest reading of the Wright memoir is so packed with the intricacies of electronic bugging, the way in which code-books are used, and the periodic moaning about his diminished pension you long to read on and find the gung-ho bits. But he wasn't like that. He believed in the steady continuous wearing down of the enemy who were ensconced in London.

He reveals that every foreign embassy was bugged in London. The French Embassy came in for particular attention because of De Gaulle and his refusal to allow Britain into the EEC.

Khrushchev's bedroom in Claridges Hotel was bugged. But the man is too canny to discuss anything in his bedroom. Blunt's office at the Courtauld Institute of Art History is bugged after he has been discovered as a Soviet agent, and they are discussing his immunity in return for information on his companions and their activity.

Detailed instructions are given as to how new bugging methods are done, like resonance and micro-waves. MI5 has a factory, and workshops are inventing various devices. MI5 also have safe houses all over London, buying more when needed, or using premises with the permission of local borough councils.

The Post Office plays a big part in MI5 operations, in rigging telephones under the excuse of regular maintenance. Wright himself even dresses like a post office engineer in order to penetrate the Egyptian Embassy. He does the same with the French Embassy, and though Embassy officials keep a close watch on him and the genuine PO engineers, he manages to rig the phones. It's the phone or phones near the cipher room he is after.

There also the laboratories of commercial companies like Shell Oil, with executives who were once in MI5, and so allowed MI5 to use them. No one who has been in MI5 retires. They go through

the motions but are always available, and go to the same clubs, or invite one another out for dinner. Victor Rothschild is such a one, always there, as chairman of Shell Oil.

Some are wealthy and active in MI5, one was an MP: they can be in any profession as they practise their dual role. They will snap up choice jobs for the money and continue their liaison with MI5. They seem to be everywhere. I found one in the theatre, an artistic director, who wasn't very artistic, but always very anxious to know the political opinions of actors and writers. When he died, thankfully, his record of Army Intelligence came out in his obituary.

When I belonged to this particular theatre, he was running, I noticed very un-artistic people visiting him, and taking him out to lunch, on a regular basis. This was a eunuch who was turning down plays he thought too radical or too critical of England. I preferred the days of the Lord Chamberlain licensing of plays. I got some early radical stuff through which I wouldn't get published today. The Lord Chamberlain's Office seemed much more sophisticated in their choice.

Wright, on his visits to Washington, meets with J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI. Hoover he sees as an ignoramus with his criticism of socialism in the UK.

Wright knows that with Attlee, the old world will go on with its colonialism and its privileges, its Eton, its wealthy class and their mansions, and the continuation of the monarchy and its expansion. Wright demonstrates the amount of contact MI5 and all British Governments of the day had. They can be in immediate contact with the PM or the Foreign Secretary most times, they need to be in contact. Major issues can be raised about people in government, or in public life, who come under suspicion. Government and MI5 keep a closed book on these encounters.

There was one weird instance concerning the Harold Wilson Government when he was suspected of being a Soviet agent. In a business he once ran, he had been to Moscow a number of times and was now friends with Joseph Kagan (Baron Kagan), the manufacturer of the Gannex raincoat, which Wilson wore in public. Kagan was Lithuanian, and suspected of being a Soviet agent as well. Cecil King, controller of the Labour-supporting paper, the *Daily Mirror*, was a member of MI5, and volunteered to help overthrow the Harold Wilson Government, and have it replaced with an all party coalition. This

madness was stopped by better brains. Harold Wilson resigned as PM. The rumour then was he had been told to do so by the security services. But the truth was he was suffering with beginnings of Alzheimer's. Made a lord, he struggled in every day to the House of Lords to sign in, just for the money. He was financially badly off.

Wright is shocked by this whole episode against Wilson. He never saw Labour as a threat to the integrity of the nation. He redoubles his investigation of the well-born and the privileged. He sees them as pretending friendliness with their over familiarity, that distances those of a lesser breed from them. He particularly loathes the Cambridge 5, AKA: *The Ring-of-Five*, for their arrogant manner and class.

Wright, in his anti-insurgency mode, travelled the world, as if he were in MI6. He was in Egypt. The Netherlands, France, Cyprus, during EOKA, and seemed to think the assassination of George Grivas, the head of EOKA, would stop Cypriot resistance to British rule. Grivas never used the telephone or wireless for communication but used couriers to contact the various units of EOKA. Wright thought he was bound to slip-up on this, and so went to Cyprus equipped with his electronic gear. He went around, always dreading a sniper's bullet, looking for any sign of wireless apparatus on high buildings, especially Greek orthodox churches. At one point he thought he had discovered one such device disguised as a lightning conductor. He set up his equipment in order to listen in. Getting the right wavelength, he felt he could lure Grivas out of his mountain stronghold and into the arms of a British Army assassination squad. But he was recalled to London, and remained disappointed he couldn't be responsible for the death of Grivas. The killing of Nasser in Egypt was also called off, an operation he was very much interested in.

One of his colleagues was sent to Malaya during that terrible period ruled over by General Templar, and his *fortified villages*. Wright certainly believed in giving the anti-colonial movement a death blow. Lancaster House, where negotiations were run by nations emerging from colonialism, was bugged. It was the time of Philby, Burgess, Maclean, Blunt and the mystery 5th man, that made up the *Cambridge 5*.

Wright believes the 5th man, out of the Cambridge 5, is his own Director-General, Roger Hollis. He becomes obsessed with this idea for the last few years of his time

in MI5. Thatcher was later to deny that Hollis (now Sir Roger Hollis) had any part in the subversion of the Intelligence service by being in cahoots with the KGB. With Hollis as the 5th man, in his reckoning and observation of his daily life, he manages to have, this now retired DG up for interrogation. At one time he proposed to have Hollis's house in the country bugged. He had to drop the idea or be sacked. That would mean no pension at all.

I wondered what Wright was covering up. Was he diverting attention from himself? He was so good at this that he himself was never suspected, though so many of his colleagues, within MI5 were suspected of having links with the KGB. I also wondered how he was able to remember in detail so many electronic and coding methods and dozens and dozens of names of both British and Soviet operators and defectors. He either had a prodigious memory or he had hundreds of files to refresh his memory. Was this the book that eventually saw a reformed MI5 with less of the privileged and more of the shop assistant?

No security service is friendly, though you might have friendly intentions towards them. On a visit to Cuba in 1997, my wife, a practising Catholic, had to visit almost every Catholic church in Havana. We had learnt the scarcest items in Cuba was soap and biro pens, so, we brought quite a few of both. She decided to distribute them to the various Catholic Churches we visited and give some either to the priest or the church helpers. It turned out to be helpers who took them for the church. The priests didn't want to come near us.

In one Church she tried to join the congregation as they discussed something after Mass. She spoke some Spanish but their faces remained blank, including the priest. We weren't to know that at that time the Church was under suspicion to do with pro-American views, as they were described. After that we began to see well-dressed men with suits and ties, and dark glasses, appearing suddenly out of side streets, and on one occasion standing on mounds directly staring in our direction as we passed.

Sometimes they appeared in the revolutionary museum, once the presidential place of Batista. We were looking at the missile that had brought down the US U2 spy plane, and parts of the plane itself. I felt I shouldn't use the camera there as they started standing in front of what I wanted to photograph. My wife, unbelievably, didn't think anything about it. I didn't tell

her whom I thought they were in case she became frightened. Understanding the closeness of Cuba to the US, understanding the economic embargo, understanding a government that won't tolerate opposition voices, all for their own security as a nation, still didn't stop me feeling angry.

Returning to the book: Wright had a high regard for Felix Dzerzhinsky, the father of Soviet intelligence.

In order to defeat the White Russians, he formed an artificial opposition to the Bolsheviks, which drew them in to be under surveillance, and finely to be defeated.

Wright quotes Lenin who said to Felix Dzerzhinsky:

The West are wishful thinkers, we will give them what they want to think.

Some of Wright's colleagues taunt him as wanting to move towards Communism but it's never going to happen, when you learn of Wright's English chauvinism. The English are just too grand for communism.

The post Stalin period see so many Soviet defectors that MI5 can scarcely cope with the acres of documents involved. There is also the problem of fake-defecting, with defectors coming in with false information.

Experiencing the decline of the communist parties in Belfast and London I noticed also, the decline in morality. The Belfast Party bookshop was being robbed blind of its cigarettes and books by CP members. They were even doing it in front of me.

There was no one in the bookshop to supervise it in the evenings, but the meeting rooms were above it and the members had to pass through it. Similar sharp practices were going on in the London CP, mainly the theft of donations from sympathisers. So it wasn't difficult to watch the Soviet Union in decline.

To round up with a few facts from the book:

MI5 had a registry of 2 million British names of suspects with hand-written information against each name. This will eventually all have to be typed, with the advent of the computer age.

Wright's father was also a scientist and worked for the Marconi Company back in 1912, straight from university. Just before WW1, he was working on radio signal detection of the German Fleet, and was eventually drawn into MI6, going on a mission to Norway, to set up detection equipment in the loft of his accommodation.

Somehow German Intelligence get on to him. One morning he looks out of the window and sees opposite a poster with his photo on it offering a large award for his detection and arrest. His MI6 escape plan works, and he's back in England, working with the Marconi company and MI6. Eventually Marconi sells his company to a cable company and Wright, Snr. is out of a job in the 1920s, and therefore of no use to MI6. Radio is failing to develop for a time. He falls into alcoholism, his son Peter has to give up his education through lack of money and develops a stammer, and wears leg-irons when he develops rickets. It is during this time that he develops a hatred for the wealthy and the privileged. He says:

"Years later, I began to search, out for MI5, the well-born Englishmen who had become addicted to communism in the 1930s. This period of my life came to fascinate me. They had enjoyed to the full a privileged background and education denied to me, while my father had suffered at the capricious hand of capitalism. I experienced at first hand the effects of slump and depression, yet it was they who turned to espionage. I became the hunter, and they the hunted."

Now, you can only guess about what is going on within MI5. There isn't a lot to divide them, with Communism gone from the most of Europe. There may not be so many *gentlemen* members of independent wealth and titles. It has to be Ireland and the Muslim subject now.

With the Russo-Ukrainian War there is the misinformation business to keep them occupied. Wright spent some of his time in a RAF plane over London listening for illegal signals, now there are so many other ways to do that.

The mobile phone and the computer is a gateway to most people's lives now.

One thing Peter Wright had in common with what is happening today was indicated by his constant use of the word Russia to describe the USSR. It is the century's old enemy once more appearing. Its communism was just another weapon against the West. Now its capitalism is seen in the West as yet another weapon. Wright called his work *The Great Game*. That has some continuity today.

His book sold 2 million copies, making him a millionaire. He went to Tasmania to live and took up farming, which he said was what he always wanted to do in his life.

Wilson John Haire
16.3.2022.

The Ukraine: *the why's and wherefore's*

When Britain agreed that there could be an Irish state in Ireland, in place of the British state, it insisted on having security against the far-fetched possibility of an Irish invasion of Britain.

It also insisted that the existing Irish Government, which had set itself up on a mere democratic mandate, without Imperial permission, should be knocked down and another set up in its place.

Michael Collins was set up with an Army and a Government under British law. The first thing he did was invade the British state. That is, he invaded Northern Ireland, apparently not realising that it remained part of the British state. He thought he could just make war on the Orangemen, but what he met was the British Army. He was sent back to the part of Ireland he had been given, with instructions to make war on the Irish Army that did not recognise his new British-authorised Provisional Government as legitimate.

Putin has decided to try to stop the encroachment on the Russian sphere of the most powerful military, economic and ideological force in the world by means of making war on the Ukrainian Government when it refused to desist from its anti-Russian policies internally, or its external policy of making itself a base for American operations against the Russian state by expressing the intention of joining NATO. Whether that decision was well-judged, or was reckless, will be decided by the outcome.

Innocent civilians get killed in wars. But it has been argued that there are no innocent civilians in modern wars, which are wars of populations. That was Britain's view in the Great War, and it has always been the American view in its wars.

It is perhaps a difficult fact of life for a small, neutralist democracy with pacifist ideals to live with. But De Valera's Ireland had the courage to live with it, and to refrain from morality judgment, when it armed itself in support of its neutrality in 1939, while shifting Great Powers fought out their conflicts.

BRITISH EMPIRE

But Britain had good reason, a hundred years ago, to be concerned about the possibility of a serious attack from Ireland if it was let become independent, though not by Ireland. The war that was widely thought

to be in the offing in the early 1920s was a British/American War. The USA was challenging British dominance in the world. It had saved it from probable defeat by Germany in 1918, and provided it with the arms and the money to fight the War, and it was not going to allow it to re-assume its world-dominating Imperial pretensions after the War. It was uncertain for a while whether Britain would concede primacy peacefully, or would make a fight of it.

It conceded. And the fact that it was fighting a war in Ireland and that there was a substantial Irish-American strand in American public opinion, must have been a factor which inclined it to concede.

The crucial concession was made at the Washington Naval Conference (1921-22). Britain gave up the principle of Naval dominance of the world, which it had maintained through the 19th century, and acknowledged freedom of the seas; and it ended its alliance with Japan, which had protected its Empire in the Far East.

The USA then bided its time for a generation, letting the British Empire bungle its way towards a second war on Germany, which it again fought as a World War. It turned a deaf ear, for more than two years, to Britain's pleas to come and save it for a second time.

During that period Germany invaded Communist Russia, expecting a quick victory—which would lead Britain to call off the War which it was not even trying to fight in earnest. If that had happened, the greater part of the world would then be shared by the German and British Empires.

But the German invasion of Russia failed. Japan responded to American threats by striking at the American Fleet in Pearl Harbour. And Germany declared war on the USA in alliance with Japan. And the result of these developments was that, when the War ended, the world was shared between Communist Russia and ultra-Capitalist America—an outcome which nobody envisaged when Britain declared war in 1939 over the trivial issue of the transfer of the German city of Danzig from the League of Nations to East Prussia.

The USA hustled Britain back into the War in Europe in 1944 so that it could meet

the Russian Army in Berlin. And then it stayed behind in Europe and reconstructed it as a forward base against the Russian enemy that had defeated Hitler.

The division of the world between Russia and America, with each doing as its pleased with its own half—that was the *rules-based post-War order* that has been so much in the news in recent weeks.

The 1945 system lasted for forty-five years. The structure of the socialist half then gave way under pressure from the capitalist half.

The British Empire broke up in a series of wars. Some of the post-1945 wars were fought in Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, Aden, Egypt, and Palestine.

THE SOVIET 'EMPIRE'

The Soviet Empire—if the system can rightly be called an Empire—dismantled itself into nation-states. And many of those nations had no coherent existence in the world prior to the Soviet system.

Vladimir Putin, in his work of re-shaping Russia into a Christian, capitalist state, has been critical of the Soviet system in this matter.

The Tsarist Empire was not organised by nationality and did not foster nationalism. It was a kind of general civilisation enveloping many peoples, whom it left to carry on their affairs as they saw fit. The Bolsheviks asserted control over almost the entire sphere of the Tsarist Empire. They did this as a necessity of defence, rather than by expansion. They defended themselves against invasions, drove the invaders back, and, when the fighting stopped, they were in possession of the ground.

The same thing happened in 1941-5. European Fascism invaded and was beaten back and Soviet power found itself in Central Europe.

Both after the wars of intervention around 1920, and after 1945, Soviet authority laid out the region in which it was in power in the form of nations with political powers of varying degrees. This was distinctively Stalin's way of handling the situation.

The vast territory was set out in national form. National culture was fostered. No region was left nondescript. Political power in each was conducted by a national segment of the Bolshevik Party. When the 'Empire' crumbled, an array of nation-states was found standing in its place.

The nation-state in question at the moment is the Ukraine. It did not exist as an entity in world affairs in 1914. It first appeared under German fostering during

the Great War, and played some part in the Wars of Intervention (against the Soviet Union). It seems to have appeared first as a nationalism rather than a nation.

It would seem to have been one of those developments described by Ernest Gellins in which nations are produced by nationalism, rather than nationalism by nations.

It re-appeared as an active nationalism in 1941, joining forces with Hitler in his War on the Soviet Union—as far as Hitler would let it. It was suppressed with the suppression of Nazism, but maintained an active cultural existence abroad in which its Nazi orientation was not denied. A nationalism which arises in antagonism with Communism is scarcely distinguishable from Fascism. The warding off of Communism (or international socialism) by the assertion of nationalist authority was the purpose of Fascism. That is why Mussolini was honoured by Churchill.

The dismantling of the Soviet Empire was a very untidy business, compared with its construction. In the Ukraine certainly it did not take adequate account of national facts—possibly because the facts were uncertain, but also because Ukrainian nationalism had close connections with Nazism and had fought with Hitler against Stalin in 1941 and would have formed a state under German protection, as in 1918, if Hitler had allowed it.

From the Moscow viewpoint, the Great Patriotic War which destroyed Nazi Germany is sacred and any force that aligned itself with Hitler is damned. Although Ireland kept out of that War, in both its initial British phase and its predominant Russian phase, a certain stratum of Irish opinion adopted something like the Russian view for the purpose of condemning Sinn Fein for being willing to accept German assistance. Britain lives in a kind of ideological haze about it, still pretending that it was not Stalin's war but Churchill's.

The United States, which came late to the War, saw Russia as the enemy from the moment it defeated Germany and took the Nazi anti-Communist elite in the military, technology, Intelligence and propaganda spheres into its service and protection, even while participating in the fraudulent Nuremberg Trials.

(They were fraudulent because they were not based on any established body of law and did not establish an actual body of law; because the precedent set by the states conducting them—the way the winners had exerted their power—was not allowed to the defence; and because the indiscriminate killing of undefended civilians from the

air was excluded from the indictment. A senior American Judge, Chief Justice Stone of the Supreme Court, refused to take part in them on the ground that they were lynch law.)

Hitler had expected the Grand Alliance of Communism and Capitalism against him to fall apart in the Spring of 1945. He had saved Europe from Communism and his defeat would bring Communism into Central Europe. The Alliance held firm until Stalin joined Truman in finishing off Japan. And then the United States took up the anti-Communist Crusade and Nazi personnel transferred easily to its service. The best known of these are Reinhard Gehlen in Military Intelligence and Carl Schmidt in ideology.

One useful effect of the Russia/Ukraine conflict is that the mystique of the Second World War as propagated in British ideology has been dispelled. If it is now OK for Ukrainian nationalists to have fought with Hitler against Stalin, how can the criticism of Sean Russell for going to Germany just to buy arms be sustained?

The *Ukrainian Encyclopedia*, produced in Canada in the 1960s, notes that a large part of the Jewish population was deported by the Soviet Union in 1941. It does not explain that they were shifted eastwards out of harm's way—out of the way of the Germans and their Ukrainian allies.

The Ukraine—the 'frontier' of the Tsarist Empire—had the biggest population of Jews in the world. The large population of Jews there, in the region of Kiev, lived more or less peacefully over many generations, subject only to occasional small-scale pogroms instigated without serious intent by the Tsarist Government. And it was there that a kind of secular Jewish national culture developed.

The serious trouble for Jews began when Britain drew Russia into its 1914 War on Germany as an ally. The Jews, not being Russians, were suspected of being German agents, and treated accordingly. They were disproportionately represented in the revolutionary movement in Russia, with the result that a rule-of-thumb equation was made between Jews and Bolshevism.

BREAK-UP OF SOVIET UNION

When the State system of socialist economy was being broken up about thirty years go, large chunks of public property passed into the hands of individuals who were politically well-placed to receive

them. These were the Oligarchs. And it was in accordance with the nature of the thing that many of the Oligarchs were Jews.

For about ten years there was Oligarchic democracy in Russia. A better name for it would be Oligarchic anarchy, but the West recognised it as democracy because it was free from socialist State control.

In those years the standard of living of the populace plummeted and the death rate soared. But there was *Freedom*. There was no public authority in control of what was going on.

David McWilliams describes the restoration of Capitalism as being done by means of a—

“voucher privatisation scheme. Every citizen was given a token to say they owned a tiny fraction of the business... Some clever men understood if they could amass these tokens they could own the industry, so they bought the tokens for pittance from confused citizens and, at a stroke, acquired the sector. As they had been involved in the sector, they were selling commodities in dollars, converting these into roubles and thereby acquiring the assets. The oligarchs, such as Roman Abramovich, were off. They now owned the second-largest oil industry in the world. It is estimated that 22 individuals, friendly to Yeltsin, stole 40 per cent of the country in exchange for using their resources to get Yeltsin elected in 1996...” (*Irish Times*, ‘Follow The Money’, *Irish Times*, 12.3.22).

So far, so good. If the enervating Communist welfare state was to be broken up and made capitalist, that was a way of doing it. That was Gaidar's way and nobody else seemed to have a better way.

The mass of the people were impoverished and a coterie of immensely wealthy owners of private property was established. The State framework of life was broken up. Democracy prevailed in the form of a free-for-all of parties funded by private capital and privately-conducted media, which elected Parliaments that were unable to govern and were not intended to govern. Public authority was replaced by the authority of private capital.

But the democracy of free Capital didn't work. In a very superficial way it resembled the Capitalism set free by the 1832 *Reform Act* in England, which produced Manchester Capitalism as its Utopia. The working part of society was rendered helpless, but the owners of Capital were not capitalists of the kind that arose out of English Puritanism. And least of all were they *bourgeois* in the German sense. They were not *burghers*.

Their concern was to get their wealth out of the country—

“where the Russian people could not get

their hands on it. They bought everything that the West had to sell: yachts, property, companies, vineyards, art and, of course, football teams. And they made sure to keep the new president (and Yeltsin's chosen successor) sweet as Putin had the power to confiscate the source of their wealth at home..." (ibid).

It was estimated in 2020 (*Report on 'Russia's dark money'*) that a trillion dollars' worth of Russian wealth was "stashed away in the West", and that "Putin and his closest associates" control a quarter of it. Another estimate is that "60 per cent of Russia's wealth exists off shore".

So the characteristic thing about 21st century Russian Capitalism is that it puts Russian wealth at the disposal of the better-organised Western capitalist economies.

Who loses by this transaction? For the West it's all grist to the mill. The loss is entirely Russian. And the maxim, *pecunia non olet* [money does not stink], asserted when money was gold, applies even more forcibly now that money has become Credit, losing all tangible form and becoming a kind of spiritual essence.

But the West has suddenly become morally concerned that the Russian money which has been so useful to it is stolen money, and that it must be—what???—returned to its owners? But who now are the legitimate owners of Communist public property privatised thirty years ago? Restitution is impractical.

The solution seems to be that confiscating it from the thieves is the only moral solution available!

Coincidentally, of course, that means it falls into the hands of Western financial institutions.

However, David McWilliams ends with a suggestion, that:

"...assets seized from oligarchs close to Putin could be put into a fund used to pay reparations to the Ukraine and to stabilise a post-Putin Russia..." (Ibid).

GOVERNMENT

A view of the situation frequently heard on the British media when Russia intervened in the Ukraine was that Russia was governed by a coterie of Kleptocrats, of which Putin was the master. They plundered Russia and salted away their assets in the foreign capitalist markets. Putin stayed at home to look after the shop while his colleagues looked after his wealth abroad. He could therefore be brought down if the oligarchic investments abroad were confiscated and the oligarchic social elite in Russia were ostracised in all the fashionable Western locations which they liked to frequent.

This view of the matter was dismissed as fantasy only by some voices from America—which was the foundation of post-1945 Capitalism and is still its driving force.

Putin is presumably a very wealthy man. Not to be wealthy in Yeltsin's Russia would have been to be out of the game—comparable to not being an aristocrat in England of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. But, in the period of Oligarchic anarchy, he concentrated on reconstituting a State and subordinating the Oligarchs to a measure of state control, beginning with the payment of taxes. He turned around the declining birth-rate and got the population reproducing itself again. And social welfare began to have a meaning again.

Edmund Burke, the philosopher of English statehood, said during the French Revolution that *the basic human right is the right to be governed*—an axiom which can be appreciated only when government is lacking and nothing exists but freedom: the survival of the fittest (the most brutal?).

By reconstructing a State on the foundation of its military/police apparatuses, Putin halted the decline into social misery.

If democracy in the medium of individual freedom is held to be the only legitimate political form, even though its outcome is social chaos, then Putin's achievement of restoring an effective State was authoritarian. But, if a general sense of security is accepted as being a social-political necessity, then some other words must be found to describe the establishment of an effective framework of State which makes life tolerable.

Democracy, on the whole, is a means by which states are governed, not a means by which States are formed. An Irish State might have sprung into being democratically in 1919 if Britain had not sought to overrule it by force, and conferred its authority on a replacement established by force in 1922. (Professor Garvin, in the National University, gloried in the authoritarian 1922 event and dismissed the merely democratic 1919 event.)

The construction of the German State by means of two minor wars and a major war of defence against France in 1870-71—instead of being constructed by the German Parliament in 1848—has been depicted as an abnormality by British propagandists (including Professor Mansergh), which tainted subsequent German development. It was a *Sonderweg* [exceptional way]. But the idea that the British State was established democratically could be held only by the mind of pious British patriot. It was founded in war and was governed by an aristocracy for a century and a half before going over to democratically-based government in the course of a further 80 years.

A former NATO Commander, a Rear-Admiral, commenting on British television on the Ukraine problem, said that the world seemed to be dividing into two regions: Asiatic despotism and European liberal democracy. The way he said it suggested that he thought that was in accordance with the grain of things. And one can see why.

Liberal democracy has its strongholds in states which were capitalist imperialisms—plunderers of the world.

When democratisation came to be seen as a practical proposition at the end of the 19th century, it was openly said that it was Imperialism that made it so.

The tribute of Empire eased the relations between the classes. Exploitation was no longer an exclusively domestic relationship. All benefitted from exploitative foreign trade. And the working class came to understand that this was the case. As Lenin put it, it had become a labour aristocracy.

THE EXTERMINATORS

The case with the United States was different in kind. Capitalism there did not have the problem of developing out of a pre-Capitalist society and reconciling the exploited to their condition. The pre-capitalist societies were exterminated across the whole continent and a new society made up piecemeal by the spread of modernising Europeans across the empty spaces. The closest thing to a native mass that had to be accommodated was the slave population brought in from Africa.

The fact that the native populations were exterminated was not noticed. It was not concealed. The extermination was the subject of the popular culture of *Cowboys and Indians*, but at the same time it was not noticed. A few years after the *Gettysburg Address*, when Lincoln's Democracy ruled half a Continent, the Civil War General Philip Sheridan announced that "*the only good Indian is a dead Indian*".

Unionist victory in the Civil War cleared the way for a rapid final solution of the Indian question. The abolition of slavery was felt to be part of the same ideal as the abolition of the native population. There was never the slightest hint of a movement in opposition to the extermination. All agreed that it was right and necessary that it should be done. But it was done in a state of mind of high moral rectitude, and therefore it was not noticed as a fact of ordinary life in this world. (After all, freed slaves were a useful workforce, which the Indians were never going to be!)

A book was published some years ago about *American Opinion On Ireland*. The first chapter was about Native American

Opinion. These *Native Americans* were people whose parents had come to America before having them—replacement ‘natives’!

The extermination process was deliberate, systematic and cold-blooded. So much was evident in the genre of exterminationist literature called *The Western*. And John Minahane has demonstrated it in historical detail in a series of articles in *Church & States* about the attempts by Indian natives to secure their continuing existence by means of Treaties with the colonists.

And yet a statement of the indisputable fact that the United States was founded on genocide is met with puzzlement.

An English Gladstonian Liberal—who was in Parliament with Parnell and shared the same fate in the divorce court—Sir Charles Dilke, divided the world into “*dear people*” and “*cheap people*”, and praised the Anglo-Saxon race for its unparalleled success in exterminating the “*cheap people*”, particularly mentioning the native American peoples. The book in which this was said, *Greater Britain* was a best seller. Dilke was denounced by nobody. But his political career was ruined, like Parnell’s, by the Divorce Courts and the Nonconformist Conscience.

FAIR HAIR AND BLUE EYES

During the first week of the Russian action in Ukraine the *vox pops* in various media Channels spoke of the shock they felt at the picture of blue-eyed and fair-haired people being killed in war. They look like us. It was wrong!

It was not surprising that these were the feelings that influenced people. What was surprising was the fact that the controllers of the media let these expressions pass for a day or two before realising that they made bad propaganda and curbing them. Most of the world is not made up of faire-haired and blue-eyed people, and the others are listening.

The fair-haired and blue-eyed may well be the superior people of the world—Hitler was not the only one who thought so—but they are far from being the majority, and the majority has been provoked over the last century and a half into devising means of looking after itself against the superior people.

Where do the Irish fit in? The Young Irelanders described them accurately as the “*aliens of the West*”. A popular United States race analyst described them in the 1920s as *Aryans of the third class*, the first class being Anglo-Saxon Protestant. During the past thirty years the Irish sense of national purpose has been dispelled by

the institutions set up to guard it, and it has leaped out of the rural world of modest peasant contentment into the urban world, living on edge in global Finance Capitalism. It set about globalising itself in a world that it took to be *global*, but was only *American*.

The globalist illusion peaked in an issue of *Studies* less than two years ago, dedicated to Peter Sutherland (a Fine Gael lawyer who went on to become the Founding Director of the World Trade Organisation).

Globalism was an unachievable aim because it is an incoherent ideal. All that was possible was Global dominance by the United States. It had the opportunity to attempt it when the Soviet Union broke up and China, post-Mao, was in two minds about its future course, and the Congress movement in India was still warding off the Hindu nationalist party. But it did not know how to go about it. Therefore it has got itself into the position of being unable to gain its ideal of global dominance or to give it up.

Trump tried to reduce it to the status of a nation among the nations but Biden has reasserted it as the *only indispensable nation*. Ireland was torn by *angst* under Trump. Under Biden it is content.

It is no longer itself. It is European and American: European in the context of being American.

It is a member of the EU but not of NATO. If it could be conjured into NATO it would not leave. And it is a degree less than European because it is not in NATO.

STATE POWER

The European Union is an American construction within the prior construction of NATO.

NATO was established because Soviet power came to Central Europe by destroying the Fascist order in which Europe had enveloped itself. (In 1945 Germany fought to the bitter end and in support of Hitler, but in 1918 it rebelled against the Kaiser.)

In 1945 Russia did no more than stand on the ground to which it had been led in the course of defeating invasion by Germany and its allies. It later organised its own military alliance in opposition to NATO: the Warsaw Pact.

The Soviet system broke up in 1990. The Warsaw Pact dissolved. NATO expanded into Warsaw Pact territories and the EU followed.

Russia, in disarray, suggested joining NATO, which was a defensive organisation—wasn’t it? It sought security within NATO. NATO rejected it. Russia would have to look after itself. And, against all the odds, it did so.

The restoration of an effective State in Russia makes it a problem for the United States, and therefore a problem for Europe, which has no foreign affairs of its own. And just now it cannot tend to its domestic affairs competently because it is an American dependency in foreign affairs.

The foreign affairs spokesman of the British Labour Party criticises Russia for being “*barely a democracy*”. What Russia has now is a Government. It did not have a Government in the 1990s when it had the complete freedom of *laissez-faire*, and a welter of fly-by-night political parties contesting elections to an ineffectual Parliament.

If the essential thing about Democracy is voting for a wide choice of parties, Russia was a flourishing democracy in the 1990s. If the essential thing is conducting effective government with the consent of the populace, then it was not a democracy thirty years ago, and it is a democracy now, if only “*barely*” so!

The British Parliamentary system was dominated for two centuries by two parties, the Whigs and the Tories. Both were aristocratic groupings. The Whigs stood for Progress and War (Siamese Twins), the Tories for Consolidation and Peace. In the course of time they organised themselves as mass parties of the population—the Tories first—and renamed themselves as Liberals and Conservatives. The Liberal Party overreached itself by launching the Great War against Germany and Turkey. It fragmented in the course of the War and a Labour Party suddenly sprang into existence to take its place.

Labour stood for the establishment of Socialism by means of class conflict—or at least its rhetoric did.

There was discussion of whether the Parliamentary system could be the arena in which the conflict of classes over comprehensively different social systems could be played out. The conclusion was that it couldn’t. Churchill was particularly insistent on this.

For the Parliamentary system to be viable, the parties had to be in substantial agreement, disagreeing only on the margins. The parties had to be something substantially less than the agents of antagonistic classes, and they had to accept the existing social system with minor amendments.

Socialism could not be constructed after this election, Capitalism restored after the next, to be destroyed in the election after that.

The Parliamentary ideal was fierce rhetorical conflict between two major parties which were in substantial agreement, with

a third party in the offing to keep them honest, so to speak.

Churchill stood for government, to be conducted within tradition as far as possible. He was sceptical of the ideology of Democracy. He thought the 1885 Reform was entirely adequate. He felt degraded by the 1918 Reform bringing in male adult suffrage, made necessary by the War, which obliged him to mouth phrases like *Hang The Kaiser!* to please the voting mob.

And when the idealised democracies in the Versailles system produced more disorder, he supported the establishment of effective government by means of Fascism. His anti-German campaign in the 1930s had nothing to do with Fascism as such, only with balance-of-power.

Putin established effective government out of a democratic shambles. In the course of doing so, he constructed an authoritative party. That party was elected because of the popular experience of life under it as compared with the degradation of life under Yeltsin's democracy.

Opposing parties now get nowhere in elections, not because they are harassed by the ruling party, but because they are nonsense parties, or anti-system parties. They are in that sense revolutionary parties aspiring for something like the "*colour revolutions*" which have unleashed havoc around the Middle East with Western democratic encouragement.

DEFENDING UNIPOLARISM?

The initial British propaganda on the intervention in the Ukraine cited Syria as Putin's major atrocity until then. Western Democracy had decided that the Assad regime must be overthrown. The Assad regime was conducting a liberal state in which a multi-religion bourgeois life was developing, but the West decided that it must be destroyed. Britain withdrew legitimacy from the existing Government and transferred it to some liberal-democratic grouplet that has never been heard of since.

The force that was being stifled in Syria was not democratic liberalism but Islamic fundamentalism. Britain did not discriminate. Islamism was grist to its mill—and there was in fact no other grist available for it. Many British Muslims went off to take part in the overthrow of Assad by taking part in the actual anti-Assad forces. Assad sought Russian help and it enabled his Government (the legitimate Government according to the United Nations) to survive. As the tide began to turn, the West discovered that Islamic terrorism

was rampant and had to be put down, and it demonised the British Muslims who had gone to Syria at its urging. And it never explained what had happened to the forces of democratic liberalism which it had recognised as the legitimate rulers of Syria. And it has still not recognised the Assad Government which held the ring with Russian assistance. And the Russian assistance remains on the record as an *atrocious*.

There is no such thing as democratic foreign policy. There is only the foreign policy of a democracy. And democracies are not altruistic.

*

UKRAINE

The US decided that Russia must be squeezed, therefore the EU is squeezing it. Last year a Colour Revolution in Byelorussia failed, so this year the issue is NATO extension into Ukraine.

The Ukraine was in conflict with Russia because of the anti-Russian *coup* in Maidan Square in 2014, instigated by the US and backed by the EU.

An elected Ukrainian Government under President Yanukovic, which made trade deals—with the EU (for agriculture) and with Russia (for industrial goods), when the EU was expecting an exclusive trade deal even though Ukrainian industry would not have been competitive in it, was overthrown by a Ukrainian national upsurge the streets of Kiev which displayed the traditional fascist symbols of Ukrainian nationalism.

The *coup* led to defensive action by the Russian population in the Crimea and in the industrial east. The Crimea then voted by referendum to join the Russian Federation and the Russians in the Eastern provinces declared themselves autonomous.

The replacement Ukrainian regime asserted irredentist sovereignty over the Crimean region of Russia and declared the Eastern provinces as being in rebellion and treated them accordingly.

Putin described the continued bombardment by the Ukrainian Government of its Russian provinces in the East as genocide. The new German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz (a Social Democrat), scoffed. He was a German, wasn't he? And so he knew something about genocide. But Putin's usage of the term was in accordance with the degraded democratic usage of recent times. The term lost its literal meaning long ago.

The Ukrainian events of 2013-14 have been taken off the record by Western media, both State and commercial. All that is said is that there was a Russian invasion.

BBC's Radio 5 is the British Vox Pop and statements of fact sometimes escape into it. This happened one night in the Stephen Nolan Show. A caller said he was disturbed by the idea of the expansion of NATO into Ukraine. Nolan said there was no need for concern. NATO was purely defensive, and who had the Ukraine ever attacked?

The caller said that the east of the Ukraine had been attacked by the rest of the Ukraine.

There was a long pause by Nolan, during which the caller said: *Will you call me a liar?*

Another pause. Then: *Next caller please!*

But this was only a passing moment of awkwardness in a smooth narrative.

The Ukrainian Government was in military conflict with the population of one region of its state, and was asserting a right of sovereignty over a region which had seceded to Russia, and it was asking for membership of NATO and the EU for the purpose of enforcing its claims.

The Russian Government said it would treat the extension of NATO into the Ukraine as an act of aggression. It demanded a guarantee against NATO and an acceptance by Kiev of the autonomy of the Eastern Provinces and the referendum result in the Crimea, which was overwhelmingly for union with Russia.

Those demands were rejected out of hand as being in conflict with Ukrainian sovereignty. And the US Secretary of State said that consideration of ethnicity was out of order in relations between sovereign states.

Russia moved into the Eastern Provinces and recognised them as independent. It might have stood there on the defensive and confronted Kiev with a decisive loss of another region of its state as a consequence of its 2014 actions, but it chose to go further—to press Kiev actively, but without altering its formal demands. But, in doing this, it gave up the strength of a viable defensive position which would have been a problem for the Ukrainian Government. It would have faced President Zelensky with the problem of enforcing Ukrainian nationalist sovereignty over regions which had seceded from his state on nationalist grounds after they had been attacked by the nationalism of the State which was alien to them.

The Secretary of State may rule ethnicity off the agenda, in accordance with the experience of the United States where immigrants from various nationalities are meshed together to become the master people of the world, but in all other regions nationality and ethnicity are still seen as real social

entities, and they are not in decline.

Defence of national secessions from an aggressively hostile nationalist state of another colour—a nationalism with fascist antecedents—would have been widely intelligible, even in the face of dissembling propaganda. Carrying the military action beyond those regions, even though it is said to be with the same object, is less intelligible and it concedes the strength of the defensive to the Ukrainian Government and its Washington backer.

Zelensky is both encouraged and shackled by Biden. He is the means of bringing about the comprehensive sanctions against Russia by Europe which it is hoped will destroy the Russian State, but he is denied the world war which he thinks should be fought on his behalf. Biden tells him that his demand for a no-fly-zone over the Ukraine is a demand that the Third World War should be launched, and that he will not do it. Zelensky cannot see the reason for that. He is in the grip of an absolute nationalism which justifies whatever is done in its interest, even if the result should be extinction.

But for Biden the Ukraine is a means to an end. It remains to be seen if he can destroy the Russian economy by sealing it off from Europe and the systems of credit-money operated by the dollar, but the capacity of Russia to inflict catastrophic damage in all-out war doesn't seem to be doubted.

Sooner or later there will of course be an all-out nuclear war. It is part of the Christian story of the world. It was toned down when the Roman Empire blended a modified form of Christianity into its State religion, but was reinvigorated by the Reformation. The United States is the dominant liberal power in the world, but liberalism is an empty doctrine to live by and vast regions of America live by the evangelical Christianity which brought it into being, and which flourishes in it free of State interference. But it seems that Ukraine is not judged to merit Armageddon.

FINLAND

There is talk of Finland joining NATO. The BBC's *Newsnight* introduced the subject by explaining that Russia attacked Finland in 1940. It did not mention that Finland invaded Russia in alliance with Hitler in 1941.

The Russian attack on Finland during the Winter of 1939/40 happened in the context of the British (and French) Declaration of War on Germany in September 1939—after Britain had spent six years collaborating with Hitler, enabling him to break the restrictive conditions imposed on Germany

by the Versailles Treaty, and browbeating Czechoslovakia into submission to Hitler.

The Versailles Conference and its League of Nations were set aside by Britain as it directed Hitler eastwards, before suddenly deciding to make war on him over an issue of no real consequence, the city of Danzig, in 1939. Danzig, a German city, was within the territory allocated to Poland by Versailles but was not under Polish Government. It was a kind of City State under League of Nations authority. Hitler had made a Treaty with Poland recognising the Polish state (a thing which the Weimar democracy refused to do) leaving the anomalous question of Danzig to be dealt with later. In 1939 he proposed that Danzig be made part of the adjacent East Prussia, and that there should be an extra-territorial motorway across the Corridor separating the two parts of Germany.

Britain (and France) countered by immediately offering a military guarantee to Poland—which the new Polish Government accepted—thus ending the Polish 1934 Treaty with Germany. Relying on this British/French backing, the Poles refused Hitler's offer of a settlement and made Danzig a war issue.

Hitler took up the challenge. But Britain (and France), while *declaring* war on Germany, left the Poles to fight alone against the Germans. The Polish State collapsed within about three weeks. Russia then moved into a region which Poland had captured from it in the War of 1920.

The Russian move was in accordance with a *Non-Aggression Pact* made by Germany and Russia in late August 1939 when German/Polish War became a virtual certainty.

EUROPE

The European Parliament recently adopted a resolution which declared that Russia caused the Second World War by making this Agreement with Germany on the eve of the German/Polish War. (See: *The EU Resolution On What Caused The Second World War*. Wilson John Haire, *Irish Political Review*, October 2021.)

Britain (and France), when giving the military guarantee to Poland made a half-hearted attempt to form an alliance with Russia against Germany. But Poland would not have it. It had defeated Russia in 1920 and seemed to be confident of defeating Germany's recently cobbled together and untried Army, and it was not going to have Agreement which brought Russia into play against Germany in a way that involved a Russian Army on Polish territory.

If Britain (and France) had actually at-

tacked Germany on September 3rd, instead of merely declaring war, it is a virtual certainty that Russia would not have entered Polish territory in late September. The purpose of the Pact was to ward off the collision between Germany and Russia which seemed to be the British object.

So Poland fought alone, and disappeared from the map.

And the new, untried, German Army was given an easy war to start with.

Under the Pact, Russia had advanced the frontier westwards through Poland. It pursued further defensive measures in Finland, pushing the frontier of the country back from Leningrad, and compensating it with territory further north. And it occupied the Baltic states.

All of this was done in a war situation. The British Empire (and the French) had declared war, and World War seemed to be the only kind of war that Britain seemed to consider worth fighting.

The British (and the French), though in a formal state of war with Germany, tried to get involved in war with Russia by coming to the support of the Finns. They revived the League of Nations for the purpose of expelling Russia from it as an aggressor, and they organised expeditionary forces to go to Finland. But the Finns made an settlement with Russia.

The Finnish regime was the Fascist outcome of a Civil War. It was reasonable for Russia to strengthen the defences of Leningrad against it in 1939. And in 1941 the Finns joined Hitler in the invasion of Russia.

Meanwhile the German Army was given a second practice war in 1940. Hitler responded to the Anglo-French Declarations of War eight months after they were issued. The British had no serious will to fight. When the Army was brought home from Dunkirk, American correspondents reported that the country gave an immense sigh of relief. And the French, abandoned by the British, refused to continue a war in which they had been defeated and settled. But Britain would not let the War end. It still had the most powerful Navy in the world and could keep the War atmosphere alive with interventions here and there, hoping for something to turn up.

What turned up was the German invasion of Russia, which changed things utterly.

Stalin, in his first message to Churchill, drew attention to the fact that, in the first phase of the War—the British phase—the Russian expansions had provided for greater

defence in depth. When the moment of truth came, Churchill agreed and said he had always understood the geopolitics of the matter (see *The Kremlin Letters*).

The invasion of Russia was a joint German-Finnish-Rumanian-Hungarian action.

The British future depended on Germany being defeated by Russia. Churchill understood this very well, but he continued to regard Russia as the main enemy of British interests in the world. He also understood that, if Russia defeated Germany, it would make itself the major military Power in the world and that Britain would treat it as an enemy again the moment it saved it from humiliation by Germany. He was also sceptical of the ability of Russia to oppose Germany any more successfully than the British and French had done.

With these considerations in mind, Churchill tried to avoid declaring war on Finland, Rumania and Hungary—until Stalin asked him straight out what he was up to, and his Foreign Secretary, Eden, insisted that those states were German allies and a British Declaration of War must be issued against them.

The morale of the Russian population held firm against a German assault such as the British (and French), who began the War with their fraudulent military guarantee to the Poles, had not experienced before wilting. And so the Russian Army arrived in Central Europe in the Spring of 1945 through purely defensive action against a German force that was depicted in British propaganda as being destructive of all civilisations. Communist Russia saved all civilisation! But the moment European civilisation was saved by Russia, Russia was treated in practice by Churchill (and Churchill was Britain) as having *conquered*, not *liberated*, half of Europe, and of being intent on destroying the civilisation of which, until that moment, it was depicted as the saviour. And Churchill tried to find a way of acting against Russia, in the Summer of 1945, as the destroyer of European civilisation, even while Russia was still being represented in the British State propaganda as its saviour.

That hodge-podge of paradoxes passed muster for a generation and more. The European Union was founded on it. Its substance is what the French philosopher, Louis Althusser, called a “*constituted blank*”.

Its substance cannot survive what has been said and done by the *West* (the USA plus its dependencies) in the Ukrainian affair.

The form of the European Union may remain the same, but its essence has transubstantiated into an Anglo colony.

WORLD WAR 3 ON HORIZON

The Manichean picture of the Second World War, with Good on the one side and Evil on the other, has been shredded, and now it's *back to basics*. The rehabilitation of Ukrainian nationalism is the shredding machine.

Sean Russell had his own reasons for going to Germany in search of arms. They cannot have been less valid than Ukrainian nationalist reasons for forming Armies to fight alongside Germany against Russia. And there's Frank Ryan, who fought against Fascism in Spain, and who, when Fascism won and installed itself as a stable system, agreed to a deal under which he was conveyed to Germany.

And then there are the wars of destruction waged by Britain under cover of the “*Anti-Fascist War*”—a complete misnomer as far as Britain is concerned—the overthrow of the national Governments of Iraq and Iran in 1941 in order to take their oil and bring them into the War.

And then there is “*totalitarianism*”. I first came across its use in, I think, the *Capuchin Annual*, during the War, defending neutrality as the only position from which the reality of things could be seen and thought about. The idea of Totalitarianism made the War meaningless from the moment it became a war between Germany and Russia, between Fascism and Communism—which it conceived to be two varieties of the same thing, both of which being deplorable.

And now there is Germany in itself. The sight of blue-eyed and fair-haired people, who were segregating themselves from the Asiatic, being made war upon by the Russian Asiatics (who also seem to be blue-eyed and fair-haired) has outraged them: and there is talk of them rousing themselves from their long hibernation and going back into business. They have been the comatose centre of Europe for about three quarters of a century. They have been intellectual caricatures of themselves, producing turgid gobbledegook. If they are to resume connection with what they were from Kant and Schopenhauer onwards through the 19th century, down to General Bernhardt in the early 20th, they must explain why National Socialism succeeded where anti-national Social Democracy failed, but without the use of words like *charisma* and *hypnosis*. And they must relativise National Socialist actions in the context of the precedents of the world affairs in which it acted, instead of wallowing in the medium of absolute uniqueness to which they were confined by the Nuremberg Show Trials.

The Irish intelligentsia might help them if we had one, and it had not parted company with the world outlooks of James Con-

nolly and Canon Sheehan. (The Jesuits did a hatchet-job on Sheehan and Desmond Greaves did it on Connolly—for whom Nietzsche was the greatest philosopher of the 19th century and the War Socialists of 1914 were the only genuine variety.)

Anyhow: the point is that Ireland gave guarantees to England when being granted a degree of independence, that its territory would not be used by a third party against England, and it gave England possession of its major Ports for a generation.

The Ireland which became a state after 1918 was the product of draconian English oppression, combined with a modicum of British reform of what had survived its oppression. Arthur Balfour, when asked in the 1920s how he felt about the loss of Ireland to the British Empire, replied that the Ireland it had lost was the Ireland he had created. There was a fair degree of truth in that statement.

The Ukrainian Government refused to give Russia a guarantee that it would not be used by a third party against it. In the case of Ireland in 1921 the third party was entirely hypothetical, but in the case of the Ukraine the third party is the United States in its NATO manifestation. And the US had made it clear that its intentions towards Russia were hostile.

Ukrainian nationalists certainly felt oppressed by Russia. That is why they have joined Germany twice in action against Russia. But the Ukrainian State is not the creation of these anti-Russian nationalist movements. It is the creation of the Soviet Federation. There was no Ukraine on the map until the Soviet Federation put it there. And, when the Federation was being dissolved, ground was given to the Ukrainian state which need not have been given. It was given on the understanding that there was no substantive differences between Russians and Ukrainians.

The Ireland which made concessions to Britain had a few generations of strong nationalist action of the modern type behind it, and centuries of distinctive existence prior to that. The Ukraine which refused to give guarantees to Russia was in the throes of nationalist development in a state which had been gifted to it, and that nationalism was directed against the State which had created a Ukrainian state for the first time.

Kiev will probably have to concede at the end of the War more than if war had been prevented. But it has been acting as if the War was the one which it had sought—which is understandable.

Brendan Clifford

A Correspondence in *History Ireland* on de Valera and the Plenipotentiaries.

To: The Editor, *History Ireland*
04/12/2021

Dear Editor,

Joseph E.A. Connell Jr. writes in the November/December issue of *History Ireland*:

“Later de Valera told the Dáil, ‘now I would like everybody clearly to understand that the plenipotentiaries went over to negotiate a Treaty, that they could differ from the Cabinet if they wanted to, and that in anything of consequence they could take their decision against the decision of the Cabinet.’”

This is taken from T. Ryle Dwyer’s “*De Valera, the Man and the Myths*”, but it is a truncated sentence from de Valera, who had concluded “but of course they would know the consequence” (Dáil Éireann, 14 Dec. 1921, Private session.)

This omission changes the implied meaning completely as it clearly indicates that de Valera meant the plenipotentiaries could take decisions against decisions of the Cabinet but they should not do so because of the consequences.

The consequences obviously being that it was a clear breach of their Cabinet instructions of 7 October. Those instructions were that as plenipotentiaries they could negotiate any document they deemed adequate, but not sign anything until so agreed and instructed by cabinet. Which of course is exactly what they didn’t do, a breach they later justified on the basis of a British threat of unleashing “immediate and terrible war”.

Those instructions sought to maintain Cabinet unity at all costs and the decision by the plenipotentiaries to act independently of the Cabinet broke that instruction and inevitably maximised Cabinet divisions, which was the crucial fact that led to the débâcle that followed.

(Ryle Dwyer distorted the historical record on a crucial point and ensured that his book was very appropriately named as a result of his own myth-creating about de Valera.

This particular myth should not be left stand by Joseph Connell or *History Ireland*.)

Yours sincerely

Jack Lane

Aubane Historical Society

Published in *History Ireland* March-April 2022 with sentences in brackets omitted and with a note by the Editor of *History Ireland*:

“For Joseph E.A. Connell Jr’s response, go to ‘Letters Extra’ on our website, <https://www.historyireland.com/category/letters-extra/>. We didn’t have room for it here.”

To: The Editor, *History Ireland*

10/3/2022

Reply to Mr. Connell

Mr. Connell, in his long, unprinted, reply to my letter says in effect that the delegates, appointed to negotiate a Treaty with Britain, had authority independent of that of the Government, and superior to it, because of their “*plenipotentiary status conferred by the Dáil*”.

The delegates never asserted this superior status in their meetings with the Dáil Government, of which most of them were members. They asserted that independent authority only after they had acted against Government instructions and had split the Government and the Dáil by doing so.

If the Dáil had conferred on them the dictionary status, quoted by Mr. Connell, of “*full power of independent action on behalf of the government*” it would in effect have established a second Government. The conditions under which Plenipotentiaries were appointed by Governments in the past had to do with long distances and consequent delay in communications.

But the Irish “Plenipotentiaries” frequently attended meetings of the Government which appointed them with the consent of the Dáil.

The obstacle which caused the Irish representatives to be called Plenipotentiaries was the refusal of Britain to recognise the Irish Government or to acknowledge its representatives as its representatives. The credentials given to the delegates as “*Envoys Plenipotentiary from the Elected Government of the Republic of Ireland*” were not presented to the British Government. They would not have been accepted if they had been.

Games can be played with the word *plenipotentiary*. Lloyd George played them very well, his intention being to break the Irish Government, but he never recognised them as actual Plenipotentiaries in the sense of being Envoys from the Irish Government. De Valera accepted nomination as President in the Second Dáil on the condition that he should have wide-ranging authority. If, as Mr. Connell suggests, it was clear that the delegates

could not be relied on to act according to their instructions, he would presumably have done something about it.

“Their unreliability, however, only became clear when, under Lloyd George’s handling of them during the night of December 5th/6th (which puts one in mind of Hitler’s handling of Austrian Chancellor Schusenegg in 1938), they broke and did his bidding.

Yours,

Jack Lane

Aubane Historical Society

COMMENTS

Ryle Dwyer takes us back to the notorious methodology of the late Professor Peter Hart which entailed, inter alia, the deletion of evidence from records that flatly contradicted his thesis, which in his case was that the War of Independence was a war against Protestants and particularly so in the Bandon area of West Cork.

Readers may recall what he did. The British Army’s official history of its Irish campaign “*Record of the Rebellion in Ireland* (vol. II)” said that “*in the south the Protestants and those who supported the Government rarely gave much information because, except by chance, they had not got it to give*” and he then omitted the next sentence: “*An exception to this rule was in the Bandon area where there were many Protestant farmers who gave information ... it proved almost impossible to protect those brave men, many of whom were murdered while almost all the remainder suffered grave material loss.*”

This deletion occurred both in his thesis of 1992 (p. 413) and his book of 1998 (ps. 305-6). All sanctioned by his internal and external Professorial supervisors and publisher.

Ryle Dwyer’s ongoing thesis for decades is that de Valera bears responsibility for the ‘civil war’ by his handling of the negotiations. He and Tim Pat Coogan competed in belabouring this charge. This truncating of de Valera’s statement is an attempt to back up the charge by changing the record which happens to be about the single most important issue in the negotiations with the British – who should make the final decision? The truncating/deleting served a clear purpose as did Professor Hart’s – to back up a flawed thesis.

In his reply Mr. Connell uses a lot of his letter to knock down a straw man - that de Valera objected to the plenipotentiaries agreeing and signing an agreement. He has no need to quote anybody else to ‘prove’ this as de Valera himself made and reiterated the point clearly in the debate on the ‘Treaty’ on 14 December 1921. His objec-

tion was not that they should not sign an agreement but that they should not have signed the agreement that they did sign. He explained this fully and at length and it is available online on the Oireachtas website: [“DEBATE ON TREATY RESUMED – Dáil Éireann \(2nd Dáil\) – Wednesday, 14 Dec 1921 – Houses of the Oireachtas.”](#) Its Oireachtas reference is Vol. T No.2 (14/12/21)

The substantial issue was the acceptance or not of the Crown and Dominion status - not the technicality of signing. He reminded the Dáil that what turned out to be the last Cabinet meeting on 3rd December discussed this issue at length and eventually agreed that the latest draft was unacceptable because of that issue and the plenipotentiaries agreed to go back and try to get a better deal and follow the instructions originally agreed. He trusted them to do what they agreed to do - they did not do so.

Mr. Connell seeks to explain away and justify this basic fact by finding a contradiction between the Cabinet instructions and the negotiators as plenipotentiaries. There was no such contradiction. The instructions were how the plenipotentiaries would relate to the Government that they were representing during the negotiations. It complimented their efforts and is a normal procedure in such negotiations. Are there any negotiations carried out by representatives of any Government on such a serious issue where there are not detailed instructions given by their Government as to how they should negotiate and conclude the negotiations? It is inconceivable that any other approach would be taken by any serious Government deciding on the future of the state.

He claims the instructions were not Cabinet decisions even though they are recorded clearly as such in the Cabinet records see: **“No. 160 UCDA P150/1925 Instructions to plenipotentiaries from the Cabinet (Copy) Dublin, 7 October 1921.”**

Then he argues that in any case they were not valid as the Dáil voted for the plenipotentiaries but not for the instructions and that the Dáil was superior to the Cabinet—*“an inferior body.”*

He introduces a constitutional novelty to justify this claim. The Irish did not adopt the American

concept of separation, or competition, of powers. They choose a Parliamentary democracy where Cabinets govern and Parliaments agree or disagree and if the latter they vote against the Cabinet and if necessary vote it out of office. No evidence exists that the Dáil objected to the instructions or even contemplated doing so. Cabinets govern – period. The Cabinet agreed on 3rd to December to reject the latest draft from Whitehall and asked the *“Delegates to carry out their original instructions with same powers”* (Minutes)

Mr. Connell claims that *“Clearly*

it was not a delegation in which the cabinet could have confidence that it would conclude a Treaty on grounds solely discussed in cabinet.”

So Mr. Connell creates another constitutional novelty. The plenipotentiaries become their own authority on what was to be concluded as a Treaty. Another separation or rather another power is created.

Of course that is exactly what happened and by doing so the Cabinet was irrevocably split and a débâcle inevitably ensued when Cabinet authority is so compromised in a Parliamentary democracy.

Jack Lane

Ukraine: The Afghan Connection

The US Geopolitical War on Russia and Quagmire Ukraine

President Zelensky’s mentor, the Ukrainian billionaire, Ihor Kolomoisky, who spent millions of dollars forming a military force which saved Ukraine in 2014 by halting the advance of the separatists, stated some facts to the *New York Times*:

“It has become clear that the European Union and NATO will never take in Ukraine, so it would be better to accept reality and not even try... The United States is simply using Ukraine to try to weaken its geopolitical rival: “War against Russia” he said, “to the last Ukrainian”...” (New York Times, 4.6.20).

Kolomoisky, the man who made Zelensky President of Ukraine, is, of course, correct. The war in Ukraine is fundamentally a US geopolitical war on Russia, waged since it became apparent that Vladimir Putin was managing to resurrect Russia into a functional state again during the first decade of the 21st Century—a century that was supposed to have belonged to America. That is why the war’s chief object is the demonisation of the Russian President and aims at his overthrowing and replacement with a regime more palatable to Western interests.

Its secondary objective, in the event of its primary aim being unachievable, is the disabling of Russia, particularly economically, so that it is *“turned into a Third World country.”* The punishment of being reduced to the level of the Third World, after Russians tasted the benefits of capitalism, is what is then to be applied to the Russian

people until they acquiesce in the *“American Century,”* the globalised liberal world order and the *“end of history”*.

The US has undoubtedly already succeeded in three of its primary objectives with regard to Ukraine: Firstly, it managed to cultivate a Ukrainian leadership that was prepared to lend its country to the US and its allies as a battlefield/glacis, and its people as cannon-fodder, for America’s geopolitical war on Russia. Secondly, it managed to provoke Putin and corner him into deciding to launch a military intervention in Ukraine that would inevitably cost Russia dear, in blood and treasure, at least in the short-term. Thirdly, it has effectively warded off the understanding that NATO expansionism was a direct cause of the conflict in Ukraine.

There is a very self-satisfied look across in Washington among the US political class at what has been so far achieved, after the recent disasters it produced in the Muslim world, that had left a bad taste among its allies. The well-armed heroic Ukrainians fight on, drawing Russia into greater and greater military involvement and producing more and more horrendous scenes of civilian suffering for the Western media to feast upon. Western Europe has been shaken out of its lethargy and been subsumed by a vast exodus of refugees who look just like Europeans and for whom things must be sacrificed and, at the same time, supported in war.

NATO, which was increasingly seen as a dangerous and redundant residue of the Cold War, by growing sections of both

Americans and Europeans, is suddenly back in business with a *raison d'être*. The vast US arms industry, an indispensable part of the economy of the indispensable nation, is looking forward to growth projections again. Europe has been blocked off from cheap Russian energy supplies and will be dependent now on oil and gas from sources which the US controls, in one way or another. Biden made a point when he scolded Bundestag members about Germany's recent good economic relations with Russia, particularly its construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. That sort of thing is intolerable now.

Ukraine is a bad business, but a very good business at the same time for Washington. The US suffers least of all in the war in Ukraine. Without troops on the ground, it faces no casualties, and no body bags returning home. The Ukrainians take the casualties and the Europeans take the economic hit from energy sanctions and supporting the refugees. Washington stands to gain so much by it – as long as the war is not played out to the full, in one way or another.

Many people would now perish at the thought of the US ever having anything but good intentions for Ukraine. How quickly wars affect the senses and promote forgetfulness in the population. How speedily is even recent history forgotten.

INDUCING RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN THE QUAGMIRE

Retired US Army Colonel and Professor of History at Boston University, Andrew J. Bacevich wrote the following account of how that most liberal of US Presidents, Jimmy Carter, lured Russia into Afghanistan in order to make it a battlefield and quagmire in the Cold War. The intention, as in Ukraine a generation later, was to get its people to fight America's geopolitical battle, with US supplied arms and training, to cause maximum casualties to the Russians, while Washington stood back watching the ensuing devastation of the country:

"On July 3, 1979... President Carter... signed off on a memo committing the United States to assist Afghan insurgents who were warring against the Soviet-supported regime in Kabul. The amount involved was small... but the scope of the initial investment belied the magnitude of the mayhem the United States was seeking to promote.

Three months earlier (May 1979), a mid-level Pentagon official attending a White House meeting called to consider Afghanistan's growing political instability suggested that the situation there offered the possibility of "sucking the Soviets into a Vietnamese quagmire". The idea caught on. Considered in a Cold War context, the prospect of inducing conflict on the scale

of Vietnam exerted great appeal. That such a conflict might, however inadvertently, yield adverse consequences for the United States (never mind the Afghan people) simply did not occur.

From our distant vantage point we may wonder how a war comparable to Vietnam could prove beneficial for anyone. At that time, such considerations had no purchase. In the dichotomous logic of the Cold War, whatever discomforted the Soviets automatically qualified as desirable and was presumed to be strategically advantageous...

So the explicit purpose of aiding Afghan insurgents, Brzezinski subsequently acknowledged, was to "induce a Soviet military intervention," which the United States intended to exploit for its own purposes." (America's War for the Greater Middle East, pp. 22-3)

It should be noted that the jihadi insurgents had taken up arms in reaction to the Afghan Government in Kabul attempting to educate Afghan women and girls. The US support for the Islamic fundamentalists' objection to the educating of females came 6 months before the Soviet military intervention in December 1979, which was designed to stabilise the situation and push through a modernisation reform programme.

It is interesting that one of the first words used by the current British Foreign Secretary, even prior to the Russian military intervention, was "*quagmire*". Did she discover this for herself one wonders, or was she briefed by a well-read American?

The interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Polish-American hawk, and Carter's National Security advisor, published in *Le Nouvelle Observateur* on 15 January 1988, is very interesting indeed and worth recalling:

"*Question:* The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, stated in his memoirs that the American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahiddin in Afghanistan six months before the Soviet intervention. In this period, you were the national security advisor to President Carter. You therefore played a key role in this affair. Is this correct?

Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahiddin began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan on December 24, 1979. But the reality, closely guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention [emphasis added throughout].

Q: Despite this risk, you were an advocate of this covert action. But perhaps you yourself desired this Soviet entry into the war and looked for a way to provoke it?

B: It wasn't quite like that. We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we know-

ingly increased the probability that they would.

Q: When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they intended to fight against secret US involvement in Afghanistan, nobody believed them. However, there was an element of truth in this. You don't regret any of this today?

B: Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter, essentially: "We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war." Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war that was unsustainable for the regime, a conflict that bought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire.

Q: And neither do you regret having supported Islamic fundamentalism, which has given arms and advice to future terrorists?

B: What is more important in world history? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some agitated Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?"

I wonder will the role of the US in provoking the war in Ukraine in 2022 be written about with as much candour, in the future, as Brzezinski did in this interview a decade after events in Afghanistan. The answer to that probably lies in how successful this war turns out to be for the US.

According to his New York publisher, Random House, Prof. Bacevich's book is about how, having won the Cold War in 1991,

"a great transition occurred. As the Cold War wound down, the United States initiated a new conflict – a War for the Greater Middle East... From the Balkans and East Africa to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, US forces embarked upon a seemingly endless series of campaigns across the Islamic world." (*America's War for the Greater Middle East*, Dust jacket)

Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke in a Cambridge University book, published in 2004, summed up what the US was prepared to produce in the world in pursuit of its geopolitical objectives:

"The year 1979 was an important one in the development of today's terror phenomenon... The crucible for the pan-Islamic movement... was the jihad against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 – where, it is well known, US and British intelligence services were working hand-in-glove with the jihadists, all the while being well aware of the latter's extremist tendencies. By the time that the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan

in 1989, a whole generation of religiously inspired terrorists had been produced and subsequently dispersed across the globe.” (America Alone, p.275)

But we know from Zbigniew Brzezinski that this did not come about from “*the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan*” but from the geopolitical strategy of the US Government, aimed at luring the Russians into the quagmire and helping to develop and amplify the jihad, and harnessing it in its own interests. And it was hugely worth it even after producing “*some agitated Moslems*” and the Taliban! (But this was said before “*some agitated Moslems*” paid the US a visit on 9/11!)

Prof. Bacevich’s book was published in 2016 as President Trump began to bring this phase of US warfare, against the Islamic world, to a close, having failed to get it to submit to the liberal world order and the “*end of history*”.

Two years prior to this, in 2014, President Obama and his Vice President, Joe Biden, through Victoria Nuland, had begun to open a new phase in US warfare by overthrowing the Ukrainian government in Kiev in a *coup* after some EU bungling in the matter. President Trump chose to keep the pot simmering in Ukraine by shipping material to the post-Maidan regime in Kiev, whilst bringing US involvement in Afghanistan to a close.

President Biden completed the US military withdrawal from Kabul in 2021 in a rather embarrassing way. With that he sanctioned and froze the Afghan Government’s assets abroad, bringing on starvation in Afghanistan, and turned his attention to his unfinished business in Ukraine.

The US, therefore, can be seen to have repeated the trick it played on the Afghans and Russians back in 1979 in creating a quagmire of Ukraine. Putin, having taken his military gamble, far from wanting to conquer Ukraine, occupy it, or invade Europe, as Western propaganda suggests, is most probably now trying to work out how to escape the quagmire with the semblance of a military victory and security for the future. That might require reducing the territory of the Ukraine established by the Soviets, of course. But we must presume that the US will attempt to close off Putin’s exits to keep the war going in Ukraine for as long as it can.

The Ukrainians, for their part, seem to have been oblivious to what has happened, and is still happening to the Afghans as reward for their services to US geopolitical interests. Perhaps they believe that their

Christianity, blonde hair and blue eyes will ultimately save them from the fate of the darker skinned Muslims. But we should I feel remind them of what happened to the Armenians, Greeks and Poles for services rendered to the Anglosphere in the last century. Fairy tales do not always end in “*happy ever after*”!

KISSINGER’S WARNING

It seems that the greatest sense about Ukraine was talked after the events of 2014 when the EU, US and Kiev had plainly overreached and Russia deprived Ukraine of the Crimea and Donbas as a result of the Maidan coup. Then the Trump Presidency put things into suspended animation after the shock to Washington and Kiev brought about by the Obama/Biden scheming.

However, the return of Biden and the expectations he raised in liberal America about leading America back to universalising itself has had the effect of propelling things toward a final reckoning in Ukraine.

The US and its allies today are certainly closer to the hawk, Brzezinski, than they are to the tricky diplomat, Henry Kissinger, who in 2014 wrote:

“In my life, I have seen four wars begun with great enthusiasm and public support, all of which we did not know how to end and from three of which we withdrew unilaterally. The test of policy is how it ends, not how it begins.

Far too often the Ukrainian issue is posed as a showdown: whether Ukraine joins the East or the West. But if Ukraine is to survive and thrive, it must not be either side’s outpost against the other — it should function as a bridge between them.

Russia must accept that to try to force Ukraine into a satellite status, and thereby move Russia’s borders again, would doom Moscow to repeat its history of self-fulfilling cycles of reciprocal pressures with Europe and the United States.

The West must understand that, to Russia, Ukraine can never be just a foreign country. Russian history began in what was called Kievan-Rus. The Russian religion spread from there. Ukraine has been part of Russia for centuries, and their histories were intertwined before then. Some of the most important battles for Russian freedom, starting with the Battle of Poltava in 1709, were fought on Ukrainian soil. The Black Sea Fleet — Russia’s means of projecting power in the Mediterranean — is based by long-term lease in Sevastopol, in Crimea. Even such famed dissidents as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Joseph Brodsky insisted that Ukraine was an integral part of Russian history and, indeed, of Russia.

The European Union must recognise that its bureaucratic dilatoriness and subordination of the strategic element to domestic politics in negotiating Ukraine’s relationship to Europe contributed to turning a negotiation into a crisis. Foreign policy is the art of establishing priorities.

The Ukrainians are the decisive element. They live in a country with a complex history and a polyglot composition. The Western part was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1939, when Stalin and Hitler divided up the spoils. Crimea, 60 per cent of whose population is Russian became part of Ukraine only in 1954, when Nikita Khrushchev, a Ukrainian by birth, awarded it as part of the 300th-year celebration of a Russian agreement with the Cossacks. The west is largely Catholic; the east largely Russian Orthodox. The west speaks Ukrainian; the east speaks mostly Russian. Any attempt by one wing of Ukraine to dominate the other — as has been the pattern — would lead eventually to civil war or break up. To treat Ukraine as part of an East-West confrontation would scuttle for decades any prospect to bring Russia and the West — especially Russia and Europe — into a cooperative international system.

Ukraine has been independent for only 23 years; it had previously been under some kind of foreign rule since the 14th Century. Not surprisingly, its leaders have not learned the art of compromise, even less of historical perspective. The politics of post-independence Ukraine clearly demonstrates that the root of the problem lies in efforts by Ukrainian politicians to impose their will on recalcitrant parts of the country, first by one faction, then by the other. That is the essence of the conflict between Viktor Yanukovich and his principal political rival, Yulia Tymoshenko. They represent the two wings of Ukraine and have not been willing to share power. A wise U.S. policy toward Ukraine would seek a way for the two parts of the country to cooperate with each other. We should seek reconciliation, not the domination of a faction.

Russia and the West, and least of all the various factions in Ukraine, have not acted on this principle. Each has made the situation worse. Russia would not be able to impose a military solution without isolating itself at a time when many of its borders are already precarious. For the West, the demonisation of Vladimir Putin is not a policy; it is an alibi for the absence of one.

Putin should come to realise that, whatever his grievances, a policy of military impositions would produce another Cold War. For its part, the United States needs to avoid treating Russia as an aberrant to be patiently taught rules of conduct established by Washington. Putin is a serious strategist — on the premises of Russian history. Understanding U.S. values and psychology are not his strong suits. Nor has understanding Russian history and psychology been a strong point of U.S. *policy-makers*.”

The old Cold Warrior Kissinger now sounds like the voice of reason amongst the war hysteria today in the West. His words show how extreme both Washington and Europe have become as the Cold War understandings have disappeared and “*the logic of the feelings supplants the logic of fact and reason*”.

Pat Walsh

Oh Happy Day!

When Britain embarked on its long-planned war on Germany in 1914 everything German was put in fear of its life. Low-life Dachshunds could be kicked to death. German Shepherds had to pass as salvations. Pork Butchers and jewellers, violinists and waiters, Catholic Priests, Lutheran Pastors, Jewish Rabbis, German Street Musicians, long living happily side by side with Britons, were immediately subject to verbal and physical attack. The Royal Family was scared into disowning the family name, much to the amusement of the King's First Cousin, the Kaiser and became the *House of Windsor*.

A contemptible business. But at the time most of the people, including, indeed most notably the British Royal Family, were woefully under-educated. When Archduke Ferdinand was murdered at Sarajevo it perturbed George V because he had been looking forward to receiving him at Sandringham so that they could compete in slaughtering birds with shotgun fire.

Within weeks George V was presiding over a War in alliance with the Archduke's Murderers. News of the Sarajevo murders was conveyed to the Kaiser by a British Naval Officer, when the Kaiser, dressed in his Role as an Admiral in Britain's Royal Navy, was inspecting a British Warship in a German Port. The Kaiser gave the unfortunate conveyor of the message a Great Bollicking for some minor irregularity in his dress or bearing.

When the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia, King George V did nothing to give Czar Nicholas II—his First Cousin—and family asylum in Britain or its possessions. He feared if he did, the British people, who had no time for Czarism, would overthrow himself.

And when Lloyd George was advocating hanging the Kaiser, there was not a peep of protest from the Palace. The Kaiser found asylum in Holland, which had sensibly stayed neutral in a world gone mad.

Joseph Heller's *CATCH 22* depicted some crazy scenes but none to match the ones described above.

Those of you who read Heller's masterpiece may remember *Milo Mindbender* who recognised that their war was crazy but saw no reason not to profit from the craziness.

Which brings me to the genius, **Horatio Bottomley**. It is believed that he was the

love-child of Charles Bradlaugh, who was elected to Parliament for Northampton but was barred from taking his seat. He was an honest man and would not take the required oath because he did not believe in God. He was jailed and fined and kept winning Bye Elections for 8 years, being finally admitted when a Bill, drafted by himself, was passed allowing MPs, and witnesses in the Law Courts, to make *affirmations* consistent with their principles.

If Bottomley was indeed Bradlaugh's son it might explain, if not excuse, his lack of principles.

Bottomley was a brilliant communicator, a cheap journalist who tailored trash to a generation that owed its limited literacy to the 1870 *Education Act*, introduced to Parliament by "Buckshot" Forster.

One publication was *Tit-Bits* a collection of facts, serious or trivial to inform or amuse the readers. I sometimes follow the same formula, as you may have noticed.

Another Publication, *John Bull*, was Imperialist and Jingoist, like its Contemporary and Ours, *The Daily Mail*. Lord Salisbury dismissed the *Daily Mail* on its arrival as "*A Paper for Office Boys, by Office Boys*". He

badly under-rated it. It was aimed AT Office Boys. But it was, and is still written by Devilishly clever writers for their owners' Satanic Ends. For many generations the *Daily Mail* has supported the Conservative Party and has had its favourites win more elections than their rivals.

John Bull was largely responsible for making life in Britain for Germans and people of German origin dangerous and miserable, and having German music, art and literature devalued. Bottomley became an MP and was talked of as a future Prime Minister.

He came a Cropper when he persuaded vulnerable people to part with their money for a supposedly charitable scheme. He was sentenced to imprisonment.

A Prison Visitor, finding him making Mail Bags asked "*Sewing, Bottomley?*" "*No, Reaping*" was the Reply.

A century later most people in Britain are much better educated. No cynic, such as Bottomley, could make a good living by taking most Britons for Fools, whip up hysteria at everything German. Nor expect to have such a Scoundrel as Bottomley regarded as a likely keyholder to Number 10 Downing Street. Each morning this Spring Britons can sing "*Oh Happy Day!*".

Donal Kennedy

Iran: Some Duplicity From The *Irish Times*

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, an Iranian lady who was held in Iran for some years and released in March, did not act as might have been anticipated after rejoining her family in Britain. She criticised Boris Johnson, who had suggested upon her arrest that she had been detained while giving instruction to journalists. To many that suggested some sort of Intelligence function, so it is not surprising that she felt she had been set up. The usual practice for British Governments in such cases is to deny, deny, deny.

Another criticism made at the press conference celebrating her return was of the Johnson Government over frozen funds held in London which belong to the Iranian Government. Part of the settlement enabling Nazanin's release was the release of these assets. The confiscation of the foreign reserves of Governments in Anglo disfavour is a form of blackmail that is practised both by the US and the UK.

The Iranian money confiscated by Britain was a payment for tanks, which had been ordered and paid for by Iran. The tanks were produced, but Britain refused

to deliver them when there was a change of Government in Iran—and also kept the money!

This had a precedent in 1914, when Turkey ordered warships from Britain, and paid for them in advance. The ships were ready for delivery when Britain chose to make war on Germany, but Britain refused to deliver them when Turkey declared neutrality in that War, and did not refund the money. The background to this was that Britain had made a secret deal with Russia to make war on Turkey and divide the spoils between them. Keeping both the ships and the money was a provocation designed to force Turkey to respond in a way that would serve as an excuse for making war on it.

(It might be remarked that the huge Afghanistan Government reserves held by the Americans, British and other countries, could solve Afghani food shortages at a stroke. These funds are badly needed: UNICEF has put out urgent appeals on behalf of the children of Afghanistan: "estimates put the number of children at risk of death from starvation in Afghani-

stan this year as high as one million" (Peter Power, IT. 23.3.22).

As for Iran, Denis Staunton reported:

" Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe has criticised the British government and successive foreign secretaries for waiting six years to pay a decades-old £400 million (€477 million) debt to Iran that secured her release this week. The aid worker, who is a dual British-Iranian citizen, said London and Tehran had treated her as a political pawn. "I was told early on that there is something they want off the Brits, and they're not going to let me go until such time as they get that. I didn't know the details at the time" (IT 22.3.22).

The Iranian money confiscated by Britain was a payment for tanks. The tanks were produced but Britain refused to deliver them when there was a change of Government in Iran, but kept the money.

But Staunton and the *Irish Times* failed to mention an even more interesting revelation made at that press conference by Tulip Siddiq, Labour MP for Hampstead, who had campaigned for Nazanin's release for many years. Siddiq, a Shadow Finance spokesman for the party, revealed she was seeking:

" an inquiry by the Foreign Affairs Committee into the government's handling of Nazanin's case and the key moments which may have led to her arrest and imprisonment—including the detention of Iranian government officials who had come to Britain to negotiate the repayment of a £400 million debt in 2013..."

(The Spectator,
<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/what-lessons-can-britain-learn-from-nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe-s-ordeal->).

So there was a third reason for Iran's 'unreasonable' behaviour! First the suspected Intelligence angle; then the piracy of Iranian reserves held in London; and finally the arrest and imprisonment of Iranian officials sent to London to negotiate the return of the stolen Iranian funds!

Arresting negotiators is a practice unheard of since barbaric days. And it is noteworthy that the *Irish Times* in its report of Nazanin's press conference failed to mention the matter at all.

Angela Clifford

· Biteback · Biteback

Kennan Did Not Mince His Words On Nato Expansion

As Ukrainians express dismay at Germany's refusal to sell them weapons ("Ukraine blames Germany for 'blocking' Nato weapons supply", Report, December 13), I'm reminded of a 1997 New York Times article by George Kennan, entitled "A Fateful Error". The architect of the cold war policy of containment did not mince words in arguing that "expanding Nato would be the most fateful error in American policy in the entire post-cold war era".

He predicted that "it would inflame nationalistic, anti-western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion", "have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy", "restore the atmosphere of cold war to east-west relations", and "impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking".

The situation around Ukraine is a return to hostilities that is unprecedented since this 1997 foreshadowing by Kennan and follows his script to a tee. Harkening back to similar circumstances that occurred in Kennan's prime in the 1950s, one can ask: "What would have happened if the western allies had not rejected Stalin's proposal in 1952 to withdraw from eastern Germany".

Stalin's preconditions were that the Allies withdraw troops from western Germany and that Germany remain militarily neutral following unification. Distrusting Stalin's motivations, the Allies countered with a condition that Germany be free to join the "European defence community" (which ultimately failed to take off) and rearm accordingly.

Stalin rejected the counter-offer, and the rest was history. To examine whether the Allies had made the right decision to reject Stalin would require a lengthy examination.

We know however that the conscience of the West German political elite did not rest easy for years following this exchange, troubled with speculations of what might have been.

Armen Martirosyan, Ambassador of Armenia,

Financial Times, 15 December 2021. We are indebted to Dr. Pat Walsh for this item

President Higgins: Too Neutral!

The (London) Times reports that Irish Leaders distance themselves from President Higgins remarks on Ukraine neutrality. He suggested that:

"Ukraine should become a neutral country in the interest of peace, and that it could discuss "what might be agreed in terms of defence rather than aggression" with other neutral EU member states.

Neither Leo Varadkar, the tanaiste, nor a spokesman for the Micheál Martin, the taoiseach, would support Higgins's comments when asked this week. Varadkar said: "I think fundamentally that's a decision for Ukraine. In many ways that's at the heart of this conflict, is that Russia is still approaching its neighbours from an imperial point of view." He added: "It should be for Ukraine to decide whether it's neutral or whether it joins Nato, and whether it wants to join the European Union or not." ...

Higgins had said the most "urgent task" was to stop the killing in Ukraine, achieve a ceasefire and allow the full flow of the humanitarian relief that was necessary. "To do this, I must repeat that we need to utilise every chink of diplomacy that is left", he said....

The Government has not taken a position on Ukrainian neutrality and Ministers have not suggested that a neutral Ukraine would potentially help the country. The remarks of a president are generally understood to have been approved by the government of the day, though this does not always happen.

This month Varadkar warned that the assumption that Ireland had made for 70 years that nobody would attack the country because it was neutral militarily was not necessarily true in a modern context: "Ukraine was neutral militarily. It was not part of any military alliance. It was attacked because it was politically part of the West, or at least wanted to be. We make the assumption that, even if we are attacked, the British and the Americans will come and save us anyway. I am not sure that is the kind of assumption a sovereign country like ours should make." "

[Higgins was also criticised by Fine Gael TD, Neale Richmond.] <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/029bbe96-a48e-11ec-9909-6547dd4945b7?shareToken=a957caad719fa36183594315580709c7>]

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

Environment – Windmills

Twenty or more years ago, the local inhabitants at Derrybrien, Co. Galway protested at the environmental destruction which would be caused by the construction of 70 — yes, seventy! — wind-turbines on the Sliabh Aughty Mountains.

A subsidiary company of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) was involved in the project. The ESB was set up to operate the Shannon Scheme when the enormous generating station at Ardnacrusha was built in 1926 and the ESB did a very good job at electrifying Ireland.

The company was started by engineers and is a major employer of both Civil Engineers and Electrical Engineers and they do Herculean work in setting up and operating Ireland's electrical network in the wildest, most rugged landscapes throughout the country. So they should have known what it means to deal with mountain bogs!

Briefly, a mountain bog starts by means of a clump of mosses and lichens starting to grow in a hollow or puddle among the rocks on a mountain or an upland area.

The vegetation cannot root in the rock so the roots hang in the water, taking in nutrition. Oxygen is absorbed from the air, as is nitrogen and other nutrients.

Over hundreds of years, the mosses grow and decay and keep growing and growing and getting bigger and bigger. The moss at the surface can be pulled by hand but, down underneath, the immense weight of both decaying and growing vegetation becomes denser and — after one or two thousand years — the bog will be thousands of tons in weight and will have far outgrown its original hollow.

In upland Ireland it rains nice and gently almost every day and the moss is good at absorbing the rain. Sometimes quite a lot of rain falls within a short time frame. The bog can take a great deal of it but when the bog becomes saturated it wants to move

downhill in accordance with the Law of Gravity and, as it has long outgrown its original little hollow, it starts to move — thousands of tons of it: a dark, rolling mixture of water and decayed vegetation which flows over everything in its path and carries everything with it.

It happens to all mountain bogs eventually. It may take two or three or more thousand years of growth and it will eventually happen.

The process at Derrybrien was hastened, no doubt, by the inevitable vibration of the construction phase of the project and, if that had not happened, then it would have happened from the uneven vibrations of seventy turbines, because the wind is never still. Be it a breeze or a gale, the wind is always vibrating. Just look at the behaviour of a flag in the wind, it is never still when the wind is blowing.

It is interesting to see that the local people, from their folk memories, know about the behaviour of upland bogs but that the Engineers — who went to university — were not aware of such behaviour, even though understanding it is basically common-sense.

Maybe those same Engineers had common-sense **before** they went to university and perhaps it was educated out of them!

Then, what was really brutal and savage for the local residents, was that in 2003, after the collapse of the bog, the ESB and Ireland had to be taken to the *European Court of Justice*, which in 2019 found Ireland was in breach of environmental safeguards.

The EU imposed a fine of 5 million Euros and daily fines of 15,000 Euros and, in spite of all this — the ESB went to *An Bórd Pleanála* in a vain effort to get retrospective approval for the project.

Good money was thrown wildly after bad and this was the decision of our own Government!

And now all the turbines have to be deconstructed and it is truly heartbreaking to see the damage done to the local ground in an area of such scenic beauty.

Environment – Electric Cars

A motoring correspondent recently commented in *The Irish Examiner* to the effect that the rise and rise of electric cars is inevitable, as is the demise of the internal combustion engine (petrol and diesel engines).

The main impetus for the production of electric cars seems to be the big financial

support provided by the State, which last year issued 13,412 grants amounting to over 63 million Euros.

The grant is 5,000 euros towards the purchase of new battery electric vehicles (BEV's) and also 600 euro towards the cost of a domestic charging point.

And then the cost of electric refuelling is subsidised also.

This should all end in tears because BEV's are bad for the environment, the second-hand values are low because no one yet knows how long the batteries last, and new batteries are very expensive as well as being environmentally hazardous.

The BEV scheme is a great waste of state funding at a time when funding is badly needed for housing, education, and for structural projects such as roads, bridges and dams and of course, for the Ukrainian refugees who are, as I write, pouring into Ireland in their thousands — the last figure on RTE News being over 40,000 people are now here and more are coming.

Emeritus Professor John A. Murphy

The former Professor of modern Irish history has died recently. He started in UCC as assistant lecturer in 1960 and became Professor in 1971.

He was an adept lecturer in the *English History of Ireland*. He once in class referred to the Easter Rising of 1916 as

“little more than a street brawl” !

He liked to be controversial and so he was a good entertainer. He was fond of singing and had good volume in his voice which he liked to exercise — even singing in class those songs which he thought appropriate to the lesson although it was noticed he did not sing ‘*The Croppy Boy*’ or ‘*The Boys of Wexford*’!

He sang Percy French's songs and a favourite of his was ‘*Deep in Canadian Woods We've Met*’.

He had a very good memory and it seems he never forgot anything.

Above all, he was an atheist and he did not have much time for the Catholic Church.

I am constrained from saying any more by that good Irish custom: “*Do not speak ill of the Dead!*”

So I won't.

Michael Stack ©

Yes, friends, governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class. The British capitalist class have planned this colossal crime in order to ensure its uninterrupted domination of the commerce of the world. To achieve that end it is prepared to bathe a continent in blood, to kill

off the flower of the manhood of the three most civilised great nations of Europe, to place the iron heel of the Russian tyrant upon the throat of all liberty-loving races and peoples from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and to invite the blessing of God upon the spectacle of the savage Cossack ravishing the daughters of a race at the head of Christian civilisation.

Yes, this war is the war of a pirate upon the German nation.

And up from the blood-soaked graves of the Belgian frontiers the spirits of murdered Irish soldiers of England call to Heaven for vengeance upon the Parliamentary tricksters who seduced them into the armies of the oppressor of their country. (Irish Worker, 29 August 1914.)

Readers are invited
to send in their Trade Union news]

ORGANISED LABOUR

Kevin Callinan, General Secretary of Fórsa, said: 'This report digs into how we should, and how we can, achieve an expanded state and work towards a best-of-class social wage supported by a competitive environmentally-robust economy founded on secure and well-paid work.' (24.2.2022)

Hike PRSI to boost State spending, Trade Union report suggests

PRSI should be hiked to meet underspending on pensions, childcare, education, and renewable energy, according to a new report commissioned by Ireland's largest trade union, Fórsa (Ireland's Public Service union).

The report produced by *Think Tank for Action on Social Change* (Tasc) examines the role of the Irish State post-pandemic, and recommends key areas where State spending should be increased, and how the gap in spending could be bridged.

It reports that, at 40% of national income, Ireland's State spending is the eighth lowest of the 27 EU countries, and below the EU average of 46.5%.

The State spends almost €3,500 less per person each year on public services and infrastructure compared to similar European countries — €17bn less in 2019 alone.

Ireland spends 28% less on pensions and 12% less on family and child welfare when

compared to high-income EU countries, and just two-thirds of what its peer group spends on basic research.

Other areas of underspend include early years' provision including childcare, higher education, waste management, and environmental protection.

The report calls for the retirement age to be kept at 66, and for eldercare supports spending to increase by €900m in the coming years.

It also recommends a €1.5bn increase in funding for the early years sector to bring it up to 1% of national income as recommended by Unicef, and a trebling of public funding for renewable energy research and development.

The report adds that State spending on higher education should be returned to 2000s levels of about 1% of national income, with 0.1% of this spending allocated to research.

'*The Irish State Post-Pandemic*' report says the single biggest cause of the

shortfall in State revenue compared to high-income European countries is low social insurance contributions, particularly on the employer side. It calls for employers' and self-employed PRSI to be increased to at least 1% of national income.

It also calls for the phasing out of capital gains tax (CGT) relief, the updating of property values used to calculate local property tax, and the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies.

Fórsa General Secretary Kevin Callinan said the report "*takes up the challenge*" of fundamental reform of State finances to bring Ireland in line with "*the rest and the best*" of Western Europe in terms of spending on public services and infrastructure.

"This report digs into how we should, and how we can, achieve an expanded state and work towards a best-of-class social wage supported by a competitive environmentally-robust economy founded on secure and well-paid work," he said.

READERS' comments welcome:

A future Social Partnership Programme?; End ridiculous self-assessment for Property Tax; The Massive Black Economy

CONNOLLY continued

commercial life of the world. Her large coal supply helped her to this at a time when the coal supply of other countries had not yet been discovered or exploited. Added to this was the fact that the ruling class of England by a judicious mixing in European struggles, by a dexterous system of alliances and a thoroughly unscrupulous use of her sea power was able to keep the Continent continually embroiled in war whilst her own shores were safe.

Whilst the cities and towns of other countries were constantly the prey of rival armies, their social life crushed under the cannon wheels of contending forces, and their brightest young men compelled to give to warfare the intellect that might have enriched their countries by industrial achievements, England was able peacefully to build up her industries, to spread her wings of commerce, and to become the purveyor-general of manufactured goods to the civilised and uncivilised nations of the world. In her own pet phrase she was 'the workshop of the world,' and other nations were but as so many agricultural consumers of the products of England's factories and workshops.

Obviously such a state of matters was grossly artificial and unnatural. It could not be supposed by reasonable men that the civilised nations would be content to remain for ever in such a condition of tutelage or dependence. Rather was it certain that self-respecting nations would begin to realise that the industrial overlordship by England of Europe meant the continued dependence of Europe upon England – a most humiliating condition of affairs.

So other nations began quietly to challenge the unquestioned supremacy of England in the markets. They began first to produce for themselves what they had hitherto relied upon England to produce for them, and passed on from that to enter into competition with English goods in the markets of the world. Foremost and most successful European nation in this endeavour to escape from thralldom of dependence upon England's manufactures stands the German nation. To this contest in the industrial world it brought all the resources of science and systematised effort. Early learning that an uneducated people is necessarily an inferior people, the German nation attacked the work of

educating its children with such success that it is now universally admitted that the Germans are the best educated people in Europe. Basing its industrial effort upon an educated working class, it accomplished in the workshop results that this half-educated working-class of England could only wonder at.

That English working class trained to a slavish subservience to rule-of-thumb methods, and under managers wedded to traditional processes saw themselves gradually outclassed by a new rival in whose service were enrolled the most learned scientists co-operating with the most educated workers in mastering each new problem as it arose, and unhampered by old traditions, old processes or old equipment. In this fruitful marriage of science and industry the Germans were pioneers, and if it seemed that in starting both they became unduly handicapped it was soon realised that if they had much to learn they had at least nothing to unlearn, whereas the British remained hampered at every step by the accumulated and obsolete survivals of past industrial traditions.

Despite the long hold that England has upon industry, despite her pre-emption of the market, despite the influence of her far-flung empire, German competition became more and more a menace to England's industrial supremacy; more and more German goods took the place of English. Some few years ago the cry of 'Protection' was raised in England in the hopes that English trade would be thus saved by a heavy customs duty against imported commodities. But it was soon realised that as England was chiefly an exporting country a tax upon imported goods would not save her industrial supremacy. From the moment that realisation entered into the minds of the British capitalist we may date the inception of this war.

It was determined that since Germany could not be beaten in fair competition industrially, it must be beaten unfairly by organising a military and naval conspiracy against her. British methods and British capitalism might be inferior to German methods and German capitalism; German scientists aided by German workers might be superior to British workers and tardy British science, but the British fleet was still superior to the German in point of numbers and weight of artillery.

Hence it was felt that if the German

nation could be ringed round with armed foes upon its every frontier [Edit.] until the British fleet could strike at its ocean-going commerce, then German competition would be crushed and the supremacy of England in commerce ensured for another generation. The conception meant calling up the forces of barbaric powers to crush and hinder the development of the peaceful powers of industry. It was a conception worthy of fiends, but what do you expect? You surely do not expect the roses of honour and civilisation to grow on the thorn tree of capitalist competition – and that tree planted in the soil of a British ruling class.

But what about the independence of Belgium? Aye, what about it?

Remember that the war found England thoroughly prepared, Germany totally unprepared. That the British fleet was already mobilised on a scale never attempted in times of peace, and the German fleet was scattered in isolated units all over the seven seas. That all the leading British commanders were at home ready for the emergency, and many German and Austrian officers, such as Slatin Pasha, have not been able to get home yet. Remember all this and realise how it reveals that the whole plan was ready prepared; and hence that the 'Belgium' was a mere subterfuge to hide the determination, to crush in blood the peaceful industrial development of the German nation.

Already the British press is chuckling with joy over the capture of German trade. All capitalist journals in England boast that the Hamburg-American Line will lose all its steamers, valued at twenty-millions sterling. You know what that means! It means that a peaceful trade built up by peaceful methods is to be struck out of the hands of its owners by the sword of an armed pirate. You remember the words of John Mitchel descriptive of the British Empire, as "a pirate empire, robbing and plundering upon the high seas."

Understand the game that is afoot, the game that Christian England is playing, and when next you hear apologists for capitalism tell of the wickedness of Socialists in proposing to 'confiscate' property remember the plans of British and Irish capitalists to steal German trade – the fruits of German industry and German science.

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LABOUR

Comment

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James Connolly: The War upon the German Nation (wwi)

From *Irish Worker*, 29 August 1914

Now that the first drunkenness of the war fever is over, and the contending forces are locked in deadly combat upon the battlefield, we may expect that the sobering effect of the reports from the front will help to restore greater sanity to the minds of the people.

There are thousands of Irish homes today from which, deluded by the foolish declaration of Mr. Redmond that Ireland was as one with the Empire in this struggle, and the still more foolish and criminal war whoops of the official Home Rule press, there went forth sons and fathers to recruit the armies of England. If to those thousands of Irish homes from which the call of Mr. Redmond drew forth young Irishmen we add the tens of thousands of homes from which reservists were drawn, we have a vast number of Irish homes in which from this day forward gibbering fear and heartbreaking anxiety will be constantly present – forever present at the fireside, unbidden guests at the table, loathsome spectres in the darkness grinning from the pillows and the coverlet.

Each day some one of these homes, some days thousands of these homes will be stricken from the field of battle, and news will come home that this young son or that loving father has met his doom, and out there under a foreign sky the mangled remains, twisted, blown and gashed by inconceivable wounds will lie, each of them in all their ghastly horror crying out to Heaven for vengeance upon the political tricksters who lured them to their fate.

Poor and hunger-harassed as are the members of the Irish Transport & General

Workers' Union, is there one of them who today has not a happier position and a clearer conscience than the so-called leaders of the Irish race, who are responsible for deluding into enlisting to fight England's battles the thousands of Irish youths whose corpses will ere many months be manuring the soil of a foreign country, or whose mangled bodies will be contemptuously tossed home to starve - a burden and a horror to all their kith and kin?

Read this report from the Daily News and Leader of the 25th August, 1914, of the statement of an Alsatian peasant who saw some of the fighting in Alsace. He says:

“The effects of artillery fire are terrific. The shells burst, and where you formerly saw a heap of soldiers you then see a heap of corpses or a number of figures writhing on the ground, torn and mutilated by the exploded fragments.”

And when you have read that then think of the many thousands of our boys – for

God help us and them, they are still our brave Irish boys though deluded into fighting for the oppressor – around whom such shells will be falling by day and by night for many a long month to come. Think of them, and think also of the multitude of brave German boys who never did any harm to them or to us, but who rather loved us and our land, and our tongue and our ancient literature, and consider that those boys of ours will be busy sending shot and shell and rifle ball into their midst, murdering and mangling German lives and limbs, widowing humble German women orphaning helpless German children.

Such reflections will perhaps open the way for the more sane frame of mind I spoke of at the beginning of this article. To help in clarifying the thought of our people that such sanity may be fruitful in greater national as well as individual wisdom, permit me, then, to present a few facts to those whose attitude upon the war has been so far determined by the criminal jingoism of the daily press. I wish to try and trace the real origin of this war upon the German nation, for despite all the truculent shouts of a venal press and conscienceless politicians, this war is not a war upon German militarism, but upon the industrial activity of the German nation.

If the reader was even slightly acquainted with the history of industry in Europe he would know that as a result of the discovery of steam as a motive power, and the consequent development of machine industry depending upon coal, Great Britain towards the close of the eighteenth century began to dominate the

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