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RTE: *what's the point?*

That's the first question that arises in the wake of the controversy over hidden payments to RTE presenters.

Reports describe a barter account in which revenue from advertisers went in, and payments to Ryan Tubridy went out. The payments were not recorded as salary to Tubridy but as general "consultancy fees".

As the chairperson of the RTE board Siún Ní Raghallaigh admitted, the structure was designed to deceive.

The controversy has revealed a culture at variance with most people's idea of Public Service Broadcasting. RTE pays its top talent. It then promotes those people so that they can earn even more from the institution. It facilitates them in obtaining sponsorship from commercial entities. It also appears that one Show Business Agent represents numerous people, along with commercial entities that sponsor the various programmes. The system is set up to maximize the earnings of "the talent".

The questioning of the RTE Board and Executives by the Oireachtas Committees was sometimes unfair. For example, is the Financial Controller of RTE obliged to second-guess what his Chief Executive tells him is the reason for expenditure? He is not a policeman.

But the fact that our democratic representatives feel they can take pot-shots at the institution in order to play to the gallery suggests that RTE is not very popular. The high-

continued on page 2

Pro-Neutrality: Dublin Meeting

A pro-neutrality public meeting, held in Dublin on 24th June 2023, is worthy of note for a number of reasons. It was called in response to the Government's *Consultative Forum on International Security Policy*, a controversial initiative that, arguably, did not go to plan. It was sponsored by the Left Group in the European Parliament and organised by the two MEPs with the highest profiles from that Group, *Clare Daly* and *Mick Wallace*. It had an impressive line-up of international speakers. And, for a political meeting, it had an unusually large attendance.

Similar to any public meeting, the speeches had their share of high-blown rhetoric, but they also contained plenty of hard information not covered by the mainstream media. The meeting was significant in the context of the ongoing Irish debate about Neutrality, but may also have significance for the wider

continued on page 8

NATO's Counter-offensive In Ukraine

After around four weeks of the much trumpeted NATO (Ukrainian) counter-offensive the Washington Post ran an interview with General Valery Zaluzhny, the top officer in Ukraine's armed forces. Zaluzhny, who had been mysteriously absent from public view for quite a while, made it abundantly clear to the Washington Post that he was not at all enthusiastic about the counter-offensive his forces were

expected to carry out, nor of the expectations in the West around it:

"...Zaluzhny expressed frustration that while his biggest Western backers would never launch an offensive without air superiority, Ukraine still has not received modern fighter jets but is expected to rapidly take back territory from the occupying Russians. American-made F-16s, prom-

ised only recently, are not likely to arrive until the fall—in a best-case scenario.

His troops also should be firing at least as many artillery shells as their enemy, Zaluzhny said, but have been outshot tenfold at times because of limited resources.

So it "pisses me off", Zaluzhny said, when he hears that Ukraine's long-awaited counteroffensive in the country's east and south has started slower than expected—an opinion publicly expressed by Western

continued on page 12

	<i>Page</i>
RTE: <i>What's The Point?</i> Editorial	1
Pro-Neutrality: Dublin Meeting. Dave Alvey	1
NATO's Counter-offensive In Ukraine. Pat Walsh	1
Readers' Letters: The Fatal Danger Of Propaganda Is That Its Creators Start Believing It! Eamon Dyas	3
Chairman RTE. Donal Kennedy	
The O'Connor Column (Reflections On The Prigozhin Affair)	4
Es Ahora. Julianne Herlihy (Culure And History: Lucey Park)	15
Ukraine: Words, Words, Words. Jack Lane	16
The Brian Murphy osb Archive, No.5: <i>The Planned State Commemoration Of The RIC</i>	17
What Is History? Brendan Clifford	18
What Is Democracy? John Martin	21
The Morrison Report. David Morrison (Ashkenazi vs Mizrahi ?)	23
Housing: Response To Criticism. John Martin	24
Looking Back At The Korean War. Ben Cosin	24
German Perspectives: Re-Armament. Herbert Rimmel	25
De Valera, The Irish Times, Hitler, Fine Gael, David Gray, Eduard Hempel, The Varadkarish Irish Times,,And Leo Varadkar. Donal Kennedy	26
More On The Turf Board! Donal Kennedy	27
Correction To Last Issue, IPR	28
Biteback: Schools Abuse Inquiry Unpublished Letter to 'Irish Times', Niall Meehan	28
Does It Stack Up? Michael Stack (Minister Ryan, Green Party, And Climate Change; Wild Fires; Concrete Jungle!; Concrete Jungle! Policing)	29
Ukraine Jumble (Poem). Wilson John Haire	30
Labour Comment , edited by Pat Maloney: <u>Irish Trade Union Congress</u> James Connolly 15 April 1916 (back page)	
Organised Labour: 'Big Tech' Workers Organise? (page 31)	

est-paid entertainer is not exactly loved. There was a sense of glee that an arrogant institution had its come-uppance.

This arrogance might be acceptable if RTE was self-financing. But more than 50% of its revenue comes from the State in the form of the License Fee and other subsidies. Therefore, it does not qualify as a semi-state company and accordingly should be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The justification for the subsidy is that RTE is a public service broadcaster. But what does that mean?

One idea is that the broadcaster should be independent of the State; that it should hold the Government to account.

There is an idea that this is what the BBC does. But nothing could be further from the truth. The BBC is controlled by the British political party system. Conflicts

or disputes that are aired by that institution reflect those of the political parties. If there is a consensus among the two main political parties about an issue, the BBC never expresses a dissenting view.

That is not the case with RTE. It appears that it is genuinely independent. There were a number of controversies in the late 1960s and early '70s, when the State attempted to assert its authority: but since then it appears that RTE's independence has been established.

Indeed, it boasts about its independence. Following Gay Byrne's death, his virtues were extolled. Apparently, he modernised Ireland and liberated it from the obscurantism of Church and State! It would be interesting to know if there are any other broadcasting organisations anywhere else in the world that make equivalent claims!

It is difficult to know when this *hubris*

started. In the early 1980s, when there were 'heaves' against Charlie Haughey's Government, some of the pro-Haughey supporters were shocked at the innovative practice of journalists interviewing journalists. Now, no one would bat an eyelid.

A contributor to this magazine often remarks that, when he went to Trinity College in the early 1980s, all the student radicals there subsequently turned up in prominent positions in RTE. In the case of one of those, Joe Duffy, he was promoted as a student radical on the *Late Late Show* long before he joined the organisation.

Even though Joe was prominent in student politics, it was always difficult to pin down exactly what his politics were. He wasn't affiliated to any of the various left-wing sects that were influential at the time.

It is interesting that we now know more about his politics in his capacity as an RTE personality than was revealed in his free-wheeling student days. He wrote a book about the child victims of the 1916 Rising. Was the 1916 Rising, the seminal event in the foundation of the State, an atrocity?

In a debate about a documentary on "*Coolacrease*" on his radio show, he said the execution of loyalists who fired on the IRA was murder because the lawful authority was not the first Dail but the British Government.

Is it conceivable that an American media personality would be allowed claim that the American War of Independence was somehow not legitimate? Indeed, is it conceivable that any American broadcasting network would commission a documentary to make precisely the same point?

An egregious example of the power that RTE exercises occurred on a *Late Late Show* (8.5.2009), hosted by Pat Kenny. Three guests were invited on the panel: Fintan O'Toole, Nell McCafferty and John Crown (a well-known oncologist with political ambitions). Our democratically-elected politicians were consigned to seats in the audience: where they were harangued by the unelected personalities with the active encouragement and participation of Kenny.

The following remark from British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, con-

cerning the newspapers owned by Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook, seems apposite: "...power without responsibility: the prerogative of the Harlot throughout the ages" (Speech, 17th March 1931).

It would be interesting to compare the BBC's coverage of the British economy following its 1976 IMF bailout with RTE's coverage of our bailout.

Following the financial crisis, the general approach of RTE was to abuse the politicians. A contributor to this magazine complained to RTE about its coverage and was told that it was merely reflecting public anger. But the question arises whether they were reflecting public anger or stoking it!

It is well known that RTE celebrities were angry, since they had lost a fortune from investments with the property developer Derek Quinlan. If the crisis in this country was at least in part caused by over-spending and mindless speculation, RTE was part of the problem rather than the solution.

It is not surprising that the power that RTE arrogates to itself breeds arrogance. The *Mission to Prey* documentary-makers felt that they could persist with a provable lie. They refused to wait for a DNA test which would prove that the priest at the centre of the documentary was not the father of a child.

A remarkable aspect of this controversy is that, when the solicitors representing the priest threatened legal action against the programme-makers, the latter didn't even bother referring the matter to their own solicitors.

Of course, the legal costs and compensation to the plaintiff were ultimately borne by the taxpayer.

It must be clear that RTE cannot be trusted. It should never have been accorded the power that it accrued. Structures should be put in place to ensure that there is close democratic political oversight over its content. There is no suggestion that RTE should be an organ of government, but it should act in the interests of the State.

Structures of oversight should be exercised by both Government and Opposition parties. The days of unelected 'celebrities' deciding on the political agenda must surely be at an end!

The fatal danger of propaganda is the ever-present possibility that its creators end up believing it!

The hawks in the White House premised their policy of taking on Russia and China at the same time on the belief that Russia was weak militarily and economically. They therefore encouraged the most anti-Russian elements in Ukraine to provoke Russia in the sure knowledge that the EU would mount no effective opposition to that provocation.

So, when Russian forces, consisting of nothing more than a large punitive expedition, crossed the border into Ukraine at the end of February 2022 it was interpreted by the hawks as an invasion. After all, the weak Russia that they imagined would be incapable of mustering no more than the 190,000 troops that Russia had invested in that "invasion". And, even as evidence of the slow cumbersome movement of Russian armoured columns towards Kiev and the absence of its airforce seemed odd to their military commentators, the hawks refused to see anything other than an invasion by a weak and incompetent Russia.

These oddities, which were consistent with a punitive expedition providing time and the opportunity for Kiev to alter course, were viewed by the hawks as just more confirmatory evidence of Russian weakness, as that is how their propaganda had framed Russia. And the myth of the invasion continued to frame not only Russian actions but the actions of the Ukrainian army. So, when Moscow eventually came to the conclusion that parking its army on the outskirts of Kiev wasn't going to alter Ukraine's stance and decided to withdraw, that withdrawal was interpreted as a glorious victory for the Ukrainian Army. It had, after all not only held the Russian army at the gates of Kiev but driven it back in defeat! No other explanation was possible because there was no room in Western minds for accommodating anything other than a Russian invasion.

It now seems that the actions of the Ukrainian General responsible for replacing the withdrawn Russian troops with Ukrainian troops on the outskirts of Kiev has warranted him being described by the BBC as "*the most successful general of the 21st century so far*".

While not in any way doubting the military prowess of General Syrskyi—his military manoeuvring around Kherson admittedly required more than what was required outside Kiev—it seems to me that the way the BBC propaganda machine has been positioning him has more to do with sustaining Western hope in the aftermath of the failure of the much vaunted Ukrainian counter-offensive than anything else. The stalling of the counter-offensive is about to be rectified by the arrival of "*the most successful general of the 21st century so far*" (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66225691>). Or so it is hoped!

Eamon Dyas

Chairman RTE

I have just watched, for the first time, a recording of Ryan Tubridy's ignorant and vain attempt to get the better of Martin McGuinness. It was as shameful as Gay Byrne's attempt to have Gerry Adams lynched by guests chosen for that purpose, which backfired on *The Late Late Show*, inherited by Tubridy.

The Late, Late Dr. Christopher "Todd" Andrews, when Chairman of RTE, is said to have telephoned its Chairman, asking him to "*Fire that fucker*" (Gay Byrne).

Todd was the Grandfather of Ryan Tubridy. His attitude to "Gaybo" was sound. And, in fairness to Todd I shall return to other things in his favour.

But he was a dictatorial Bully, as the dispute with the Engineers employed with the Turf Development Board in 1936 should reveal. My father was one of the Eleven Engineers (there had been a total of 12 Employed) when Todd cut their fuel allowance by 50%.

Donal Kennedy

The O'Connor Column

Russia's January 6th ?

Reflections on the Prigozhin Affair

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the purported 'commander' of Russia's largest "Private Military Company", the Wagner Group, attempted a *coup d'état* in Russia on 23rd-24th June.

Given the predictable uniformity of Irish media coverage, dutifully regurgitating hand-outs from the *Institute for the Study of War*, King's College London, and US/UK Intelligence, here is another perspective on the events, for the record.

Official Western opinion was ecstatic. Russia, declared Washington neo-con *supremo*, Anne Applebaum, in an article in *The Atlantic* published—curiously enough—within hours of Prigozhin's initial move, was that it was on a "*descent into civil war*". The opportunities presented were boundless and mouth-watering!

In 2003, Applebaum described Bush/Blair's 'evidence' that Saddam Hussein's Iraqi had Weapons of Mass Destruction as being "*irrefutable*", justifying immediate full-scale military intervention. She was thereafter one of the most vociferous cheerleaders of all America's criminal Middle Eastern wars.

She appears occasionally in Irish media, syndicated, like others such as Samantha Power or Gideon Rachman, whenever a wobble in public opinion needs ironing out.

Applebaum is closely entwined with the US Intelligence/Propaganda *apparatus*. Her husband, former Polish Foreign Minister and leading figure at the *Atlantic Council*, Radosław Sikorski, famously tweeted after the Nordstream pipeline explosions: "*Thank you, USA!*"

The 'civil war' line was dutifully regurgitated across Western media, and was soon embellished by Gideon Rachman declaring in the *Irish Times* and *Financial Times* (henceforth the *Irish/Financial Times nexus*), and no doubt across numerous other outlets, that the "*chaos*" was to be welcomed as greatly assisting Ukraine's "*counteroffensive*" achieve its ambitious goals.

Before the latest happy turn of events, other writer of this ilk had begun to seriously worry about the prospects of the NATO-supported War as the Ukrainian Counter-offensive, with its new deployment of Western armaments, was producing lamentable results.

After almost a month, Ukrainian losses had been great, including among the supposedly "*game-changing*" Western weapons—such as Leopards, Bradley's, AMX's etc. The Russian Army, it began to be admitted, was performing skilfully in defence, halting Ukrainian attempted breakthroughs. Ukrainian gains after four bloody weeks for the attacking forces amounted to three tiny slivers of territory and around nine villages, all in the "*grey zone*" or *glacis* area of the Front still far from even the first of the heavily fortified Russian lines.

The attacking Ukrainian forces so far include three of the nine NATO-formed Brigades, some equipped exclusively with NATO weaponry. These three have not performed noticeably better than standard Ukrainian ones, many of which have shown far greater élan in battle impressive. Excessive faith in western weapons and NATO training has proven costly. The fact that Ukrainian air power and air defences have been so depleted by concerted Russian effort has left their attacking forces highly vulnerable to aerial attack.

The six remaining NATO-formed brigades, not yet committed at the time of writing, still constitute a formidable reserve of about 30,000 heavily-armed and equipped men. Their potential remains to be seen. The Ukrainian Defence Minister has stated that the main "*blow*" has yet to be launched. This may or may not achieve a significant breakthrough, though experience with the offensive to date would not inspire confidence.

Pretence in the West that the NATO efforts have the sole purpose of helping Ukraine defend itself and recover lost territory has been slipping. It is now openly stated that a Ukrainian victory is possible only through the fatal weakening of Russia and the fall of the Putin-led Government. Some even admit that this has always been

the purpose of the War.

A recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, organ of the US Congress's '*Committee on Foreign Relations*', which appeared just days ahead of the Prigozhin Coup, said that hoping for an overthrow of the Russian government through a liberal-democratic protest was probably unrealistic, though should be encouraged. Greater potential for internal chaos lay in fomenting "*separatism*" in Russia's ethnic autonomous regions, though these were weak tendencies. What options remained? The major fragmentary force was, in fact, Russian nationalism! (*The Treacherous Path to a Better Russia*, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2023)

The new line is that Russia, unlike the Western powers, is an "*imperialist entity*", and the West should lead a movement to "*decolonise*" it. As the Prigozhin crisis was beginning, a Conference, run by the US-run '*Commission on Security Cooperation in Europe* (CSCE)', had just opened, entitled "*Decolonising Russia*" and attended by "*representatives*" of all types of groups and peoples (all expenses paid!).

The challenge was how to get territories around the Russian periphery to "*peel away*" from the Federation until the central entity became unsustainable and collapsed. The geopolitical theories of Admirals MacKinder and Mahan on subduing the "*Eurasian heartland*" still hold great sway in Washington think-tank circles.

John McCain famously quipped around the time of the 2014 US Kiev *coup*—from which everything since has flowed—that Russia was no more than a "*gas station masquerading as a nation*". Just push at the door and it will reveal it has no substance.

Reflecting a similar world view, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the EU Commission whose Atlanticist predispositions frighten even Macron

and Scholz, prophesised in April 2022 (sic) that, as a result of the onslaught of unprecented US/EU sanctions, the Russian economy would collapse within two months. “*It is intatters*”, she exclaimed to a jubilant European Parliament, “*intatters I say!*” Military pundits across the @est have similarly repeatedly declared Russia on the verge of running out of ammunition and missiles, and that its demoralised army, given just a slight push, would collapse and flee.

This hubris is reminiscent of standard fascist views of Russia. “*You only have to kick in the front door*”, Hitler told his euphoric generals just before launching *Operation Barbarossa* in 1941, “*and the whole rotten Russian edifice will come tumbling down!*” It is also the logic of the NATO-sponsored, NATO-trained and NATO-directed “*Great Ukrainian counter-offensive*” which western officials have insisted on despite Ukrainian squeamishness.

It was essential that some results of the offensive be apparent by the time of the mid-July NATO summit in Lithuania, lest some European peaceniks dent Alliance commitment.

But eleven rounds of USEU trade sanctions, meant to so weaken the Russian economy as to foment unrest among an immiserated population, leading to a shattering of the Russia State, have come to naught. The sanctions, so far, have failed miserably, with Russia, according to the IMF, returned to economic growth and displaying prodigious industrial capability. The output of the Russian armaments industry has astounded RUSHI and other authoritative western militarist experts. On the other hand, the German economy, indeed its very economic model, lies in danger of deep and long-term structural decline.

With the failure to date of the economic and diplomatic war (Russia is far from “*isolated*”), a reality slowly dawning on Western influencers is that the only source of serious political discontent with Putin is to be found among the harder nationalist Russian right.

Duma members, journalists and bloggers from this camp have criticised Putin, his Defence Minister Shoigu and others, for not prosecuting the “*special military operation*” as an all-out war, the way US/UK do theirs, obliterating the very means of existence of the enemy population—such as water supply systems—from the start. Kyiv, they scream, should be treated like the Baghdad, Tripoli and Falujadh!

Prigozhin is a populist “*oligarch*”, a

very rich entrepreneur with a large popular following, due to the *bravours* of his Wagner warriors and his loud-mouthed nationalistic rhetoric. He has demanded a clean-out of military “*bureaucrats*” and prosecution of operations in Ukraine along Iraq-style “*shock and awe*” lines.

Prigozhin’s hero-worshippers can be found across the internet. One blogger of this ilk—Rolo Slavskiy (though possibly a NATO psych-ops bot)—rants incessantly in this vein, accusing Putin and his circle of “*betrayal*”, as creatures of the West craving acceptance by it and agreement with the US on the “*security architecture*” of Europe. Slavskiy’s tirades leave little to the imagination, attacking Shoigu as—

“a Tuvan gangster who hates Russians and participated in ethnic cleansing of Russians (or at least did not intervene) in the 90s in Tuva” (Tuva is an autonomous ethnic republic in Asian Russia).

During the Prigozhin episode, Western commentators became a little worried that what they had wished for might come true. Maybe Putin is the “*moderate*” after all!

So, what was the Prigozhin revolt?

The 1990s Russian Constitution forbids the deployment of conscripts abroad, which is why most of its forces in Ukraine are either contracted soldiers of the regular army—all recalled reservists—or “*private formations*” such as Wagner (there are also a few others).

The idea of private military contractors is hardly a Russian invention, having been pioneered on a large scale by the US with *Blackrock* and other outfits in Iraq and Afghanistan (of course you could go back to the French Foreign Legion, British Gurkhas, etc.). Ukraine too employs privateers and mercenaries, from its “*foreign volunteers*” from around the world and Georgian, Belorussian and even Russian Fascist Legions, to Western “*contractors*” handing “*sophisticated*” Western arms it capacity to operate.

Prigozhin has long touted his hard-nation nationalism. Putin by contrast is a conservative and cautious leader, in both political and military matters, marked by a pedantic adherence to constitutional legalities. He keeps his distance from both wild Russian nationalists and delusional western-oriented liberals. He represents the Russian State and brooks no assault on it. He has tamed the once all-powerful western-oriented Oligarchs of the US/Yeltsin era and bent them to his will. Those who wouldn’t bend have found safe haven in the West (though many had much of

their property stolen through “*sanctions*”). Putin allows only those who stay out of politics to remain and enjoy their wealth if they invest it in the national economy. His gaining the upper hand over the oligarch class was a long and slow struggle, hardly even noticed (or deliberately ignored) by the western commentariat.

Putin has now also decided to curb commercial military adventurers and privateers.

The breaking point for Prigozhin came when Putin decreed last month that private military companies’ contracts would not be renewed, and that instead from 1st July each soldier among them would have to sign a contract directly with the Ministry of Defence.

The days of the free-booters were numbered.

The Wagner Group was established originally, not by Prigozhin but by the State’s Secret Security services to facilitate long-arm operations. It was decided at some point to regularise it along US “*Blackrock*” lines by reconstituting it as a commercial “*company*”. Prigozhin was a trusted business figure brought in and tasked with running it. But his role was commercial—he has no military experience and never commanded a military unit. He is not, and never has been, “*commander*” of the Wagner Group, however much he masquerades as such.

Western press reports made much of the element of Wagner composed of “*criminals*”. Wagner had been permitted to recruit among civil prisoners, who were offered an amnesty in return for six months’ frontline service. But this is only an aspect of the organisation, the substance of which is composed of hardened army veterans continuing a military career by other means. A ban has been issued prohibiting free-enterprise recruitment of convicts.

Prigozhin protested loudly against the Putin Decree, but agreed to accept an appointee of General Surovikin, the commander of Russian land forces in Ukraine, to command his force in Ukraine. All Wagner senior officers at the Front are Government-approved appointees. But, since his verbal attacks on leading military figures, Government contracts for businesses of his have dried up, such as those operated by his umbrella company, Concord, for rationing the army and even providing school meals.

The writing was on the wall for him, personally, financially and politically.

US Intelligence, as reported through the *NYT* and *Washington Post* (promptly

regurgitated by the *Financial/Irish Times* nexus), claims that Putin had advance knowledge of Prigozhin's intentions, but let it proceed. They also claim that they themselves knew of Prigozhin's plans some weeks in advance, but kept silent about them. The *Daily Telegraph* boasted how British Intelligence also knew "every detail". The latest US Sanctions against Prigozhin were even suspended ahead of the *coup* so as not to derail it.

This is not to suggest that the US/UK had any real part in the affair, however jubilant they were initially at the turn of events. The whole point of Prigozhin's "protest", after all, was that the Kremlin was being manipulated as puppets of Western interests and not prosecuting the War vigorously or ruthlessly enough.

Prigozhin's actual *coup* 'army' was just a fraction of the 25,000-strong Wagner PMC. Most of the Group, commanded by real officers, remained in position on the Ukrainian Front and did not take part. The force that "occupied" Rostov was small, about two thousand strong. The convoy of Soldatska he sent on the road to Moscow was also small, maybe 150 assorted cars, armoured vehicles and trucks, with one or two tanks on low-loaders.

The Western media reported excitedly on Prigozhin's "March on Moscow". But he himself called it just a "March for Justice". He aired his grievances with the Ministry of Defence, made no claim against the leadership of the State and did not even mention Putin. He declared he had no wish to damage the "Special Military Operation", though, echoing Western critiques, ranted that the whole thing had been misconceived from the and that the Ukrainian counter-offensive would obliterate Russia's forces. His only demands were for the termination of the Wagner contract to be reversed, and for particular army leaders to be dismissed for incompetence. It was, or so it seemed at first, merely a protest.

But this was Prigozhin's fatal miscalculation. Putin came out quickly with a brief statement denouncing the action as an "armed mutiny" and "treasonous" "stab in the back" to a country at war, though not naming Prigozhin personally. He dismissed talk of a "protest" and appealed to the public, army and political bodies to rally to the legal order.

Putin made an interesting comparison between the "mutiny" and what had happened to Russia in 1917. By this he did not mean the Bolshevik Revolution *per se*, but the fatal decision of the Kerensky

would-be "liberal-democratic" regime in February 1917 to force the Tsar to abdicate—an act, in Putin's mind, fatal to the constitutional order and opening the way to the subsequent cascade of anarchy. Bolshevism, the Western Wars of Intervention, and the White/Red Civil War that followed, all flowed from that initial undermining of legality.

Following Putin's statement, a visibly deflated Prigozhin had little option but to up the ante, declaring that the war in Ukraine had been mishandled and calling on political figures to defect to him. "Russia", he said, "will soon have a new President."

The protest had become a *coup*.

But the West's dream of a "civil war" rapidly dissipated as, following Prigozhin's response to Putin, no one—apart from oligarchs in Western exile, such as the onetime 'owner' of Yukos Oil, Mikhail Khodorkovsky—rallied to him. Virtually every military and political body and institution in the country declared for the "legitimate" Presidency. The crowds celebrating the Wagnerites in Rostov melted away.

Coups often have a comic-opera aspect, though mostly only apparent in retrospect after a *coup* has failed. It is an aspect less often revealed in coups that succeed. If any significant group had rallied to Prigozhin, a full-fledged *coup* and civil war would have been underway, with the only possible outcome if successful the installation of Prigozhin's as some kind of Commander Ruler and Putin's reduction to at best a cipher in a military dictatorship.

A case study in the comic-opera aspect of *coups* was the ill-fated CIA-instigated *coup* against Venezuela a few years ago. A march over a frontier bridge from Columbia (*coups* always seem to involve such a "Great March"!) was meant to ignite a pre-prepared revolt among Venezuelan Generals. The ground was prepared for international support by hyped articles appearing across the Western media the week before extolling the liberal-democratic qualities of the figurehead *coup* leader, Juan Guaido.

These articles played the same role as the Applebaum/Rachman incitements in the Prigozhin affair. Such articles even washed up on Irish shores that week. But, when the Generals failed to rise to the occasion, in both Venezuela as now in Russia, the effort dissolved into a shambles.

In his response to Prigozhin's provocation, Putin ordered no military intervention

beyond surveillance (hence the unfortunate pilots who lost their lives when their unarmed IL-22 surveillance plane and several helicopters near Prigozhin's Column were shot down by the Soldatska's formidable Pantsir S-1 anti-aircraft system in a still obscure incident.

Meanwhile, at Russian army HQ in Rostov, which the Western media described as having been "stormed" by Wagner troops, no one suffered as much as a scratch, with photos appearing of Prigozhin talking to patient but obviously irritated local army commanders, who, probably on instructions, apparently encouraged him to set off on his "march". Otherwise street cleaners continued to work and people rode by nonchalantly on bicycles or took selfies in front of or with Wager troops.

Most of Prigozhin's officers—who are Department of Defence appointees—refused to take part in their boss's adventure. His men in Rostov looked confused in footage that emerged, wandering about wondering what they were doing there. Others lounged in local coffee shops, bars and restaurants. Apparently they had been told there had been a Ukrainian incursion which they were sent to counter.

As the "civil war" narrative failed to gain traction, the west turned to talking merely of "chaos" in Russia, which would give the faltering Ukrainian counter-offensive the break it desperately needed, and predicting that it would be successfully exploited.

But Ukrainian President Zelensky did not share this euphoria, admitting even during the "*coup*" that there had been no let-up in Russian military pressure on the front and that Russian defence lines remained strong. Russian artillery and missiles continued to rain down unabated. The front line hardly changed.

One interesting initiative in the counter-offensive was a crossing of the Dneipr by a small band of Ukrainian infantrymen beside the broken Antonovskiy bridge near Kherson. It is a small incursion without armour back-up as yet. Whether it becomes a bridgehead for a daring strike southwards remains to be seen, though the marshy terrain will not help.

The well-informed Ukrainian Youtube blogger, *Denys Davydov*, stated matter-of-factly how this crossing had been made possible by the blowing of the Kakhovka Dam some weeks ago, which had washed away Russian defences and especially their electronic surveillance systems across a wide area along the flooded southern bank of the river.

The bombing of the dam is routinely declared by Western media, on Pentagon instructions, to have been a Russian action (as before it the blowing of the Nordstream pipelines). But now we also hear how the draining of the river and reservoirs north of dam too will also facilitate Ukrainian attacks over the river, including in the area of the Zaporizhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). It will be recalled that in the early days of this conflict the Ukrainians blew a dam north of Kiev to flood territory to impede a Russian approach to the capital. This was declared by Western media at the time a stroke of genius.

How the events in Russia will impact on developments in the War remains to be seen. Certainly, Russian army units ignored Prigozhin's antics and got on with their job. Ukraine has made some minute territorial gains in the south and in an area south of Bakhmut. But equally Russia has made gains to the north towards Liman and Kupyansk. At the time of writing, the 'frozen frontline' situation seems to have been little affected.

Prigozhin's "*coup*" gained zero traction within Russia, despite Prigozhin's star status in nationalist media and undoubted personal popularity. But he seems to have greatly overestimated the political substance of his celebrity—a common failing.

Western media soon sobered up, and by the end of the affair on Sunday 25th June were beginning to fret whether their dream of a "*civil war*" would in reality be a nightmare if the "*cautious*" (though still "*evil dictator*") Putin were to be replaced by the only substantive alternative: a reckless Russian Nationalist, controlling Russia's vast nuclear arsenal.

The Western narrative line has quickly changed. No more Applebaumian "*civil war*" fantasies or dreams of Ukraine successfully exploiting the "*chaos*" for its "*counter-offensive*".

The new line is that "*whatever about the outcome of the coup, Putin has been fatally weakened*". It has, declared Rachman in the FT, "*fatally undermined Putin*". In three TV interviews that day, on CBS, CNN and NBC, US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, declared that the cup had revealed "*more cracks in the Russian façade*" and Russia's "*diminished standing in the world*".

"Russia", he said, "*is crumbling*". Like a parrot, French President Macron then emerged to exclaim how the coup had revealed "*the fragility of the Russian Army*", showing "*real cracks*" in

the Russian edifice. The message is that Russia is now vulnerable. The dictator is not all powerful and can be unseated (Remember Hitler's words: "*You only have to kick in the front door, and the whole rotten ...*").

Russian political and civil society, as well as the military, remained stable. Putin refused to deal directly with the mutineers and had Lukashenko talk with them. He moved to ensure a political, legalistic solution, avoiding military clashes. An "*agreement*" with Prigozhin was reached through Lukashenko. Wagner troops who had not mutinied (the great majority) could sign up for the regular army, as already intended. Those who took part in the mutiny would be amnestied but disbanded, and those who wished could join Prigozhin in Belarus, whence he has been banished. What will become of him is unclear, though the legal charges against him still stand. It was to all intents and purposes a surrender.

It is said that Prigozhin is in a "*windowless hotel*" in Minsk. He was soon ranting again, however, repeating his grievances and complaining that his move was merely a protest, not a *coup*. Putin responded with another statement stressing the legal and constitutional issues, praising Russian society for standing by the constitutional order and indicating that Prigozhin would be dealt with. His company's accounts for various state contracts had been suspended and would be audited for "*discrepancies*". His companies had been raided and various materials seized. The Wager Contract was a fully-funded State one anyway. The opaque nature of how Russia manages its affairs was rarely more opaque.

Putin's position has in fact been strengthened. He is the political leader of a diffuse society of many volatile parts. If the Wagner people who stayed at their positions on the Front are successfully absorbed into the regular military, he will have been vindicated.

There was initially unease in ruling circles in countries that had bet on the stability of the Russian political system, notably China, Türkiye, Iran, Pakistan, India, Saudi Arabia, former Soviet Asian states, South Africa, Pakistan and the Gulf States. Not to mention Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico and others that had a neutral position and never sanctioned Russia.

But they quickly calmed down, some praising Putin's handling of the crisis and diffusion of it without serious bloodshed. Erdogan, who had faced a far more serious US *coup* in 2016, was the first to rally. The

Global Times, the authoritative English-language voice of the Chinese Communist Party, declared: "*That the Wager revolt weakens Putin is western wishful thinking*", while its Foreign Minister warned the West against trying to exploit it.

Military revolts by frustrated Generals against 'tardy' politicians are commonplace in times of war, including in western democracies. In 1914 a revolt by English generals at the Curragh threatened to plunge Britain into a civil war, a crisis arguably only averted by the State declaring war on Germany instead.

A dangerous crisis developed for the US in the early 1950s when General MacArthur confronted Truman, demanding that the US nuke North Korea when he saw that Truman was about to settle for a frozen conflict. In 1962 French Generals and the *colon* organisation, OAS, seriously attempted to overthrow de Gaulle when he moved to settle the Algerian War by accepting Algerian independence. This was a much bigger and more dangerous military revolt than the Prigozhin affair.

On the scale of *coups*, Prigozhin's turned out not to have been much more than the riot in the US Congress by chaotic elements from the undergrowth of Trump's support base on 6th January 2021, following the BLM [Black Lives Matter] turmoil across US cities the previous Summer. The Russian events even involved far fewer fatal casualties than these Trump-base riots.

Western leaders and media have argued themselves into a corner. The only permissible end to the war is a full Ukrainian victory, which Zelensky has insisted includes the overthrow of Putin and the pushing of Russia back beyond the Sea of Azov and "*out of Europe*". Western leaders have repeatedly declared that only Zelensky's impossible terms apply.

The *coup* attempt will the likely outcome that the gloves will come off even more in the "*special military operation*". Some weeks ago Putin answered a journalist's question on how the War would be ended, given that negotiation was ruled out by the West, and NATO had escalated to the point of British rockets killing Russians. His answer was that it will end with "*the destruction of the Ukrainian army on the battlefield*".

The Russian system might well become more authoritarian too, as Western leaders have vowed to exploit any fissures in it (Blinken and Macron's "*cracks*"). Biden

on becoming President declared an international conflict between “*authoritarianism*” and “*democracy*”. But what is to happen in a world in which a majority of states, regardless of whether they hold elections, are being decreed “*authoritarian*” by the West?

International law has been replaced by the “*rules-based order*”, with the “*rules*” being whatever the West at any moment decides they are.

While elections once defined “*democracies*”, anything short of full loyalty to the Rainbow flag is now deemed undemocratic!

Grades of “*authoritarianism*” have been defined, from “*illiberal democracies*” to “*electoral dictatorships*”. But the great majority of the States of the world are firmly within these definitions, while the world of the “*Golden Billion*” is substantially confined to the Anglo-Saxon

Powers and their accomplices in Western Europe and other defeated regions such as Japan, South Korea etc.

Most of the world is incredulous at the Western position on Ukraine that rules out any negotiated solution or agreement with Russia on a European security architecture. While abhorring what has happened in Ukraine, they widely accept the analysis by Professor John Mearsheimer (USA) of the causes and even inevitability of the War, and see a negotiated end to it as the sole and obvious solution.

They also largely admire Putin’s dealing with a rebellion of a small rogue outfit for its political astuteness and bloodless outcome.

Such views of the Ukrainian war, so widely shared across three-quarters of the world, are in a different stratosphere to what is presented for daily consumption in the Western media.

its rule of conduct in its relations with other States.”

The EU’s *Rapid Reaction Force* will be operational by 2025. High Commissioner Josep Borrell had said these forces will be more effective than the Battlegroups—they will be pre-designed units that can be grouped together, disbanded and re-grouped. Borrell had said that combat operations in what he calls “*non-permissive environments*” will need to be envisaged. This, Wallace said, is an EU Army.

Through his criticism of the Triple Lock, he said, Taoiseach Micheál Martin is precipitating the destruction of the UN, a forum that is not perfect by any means, yet is valuable by being based on its Charter. At this time, Wallace argued, we need to strengthen global institutions like the UN. President Michael D. Higgins was emphatic about this in his interview criticising the drift towards NATO the previous week. He [the President] said that the decline of the UN was an incredible failure of diplomacy and that the future of the UN lay in countries of Africa, Asia and South American rather than in Europe.

Pro-Neutrality: Dublin Meeting

continued from page one

international debate about the Ukraine War, NATO and the future of the United Nations.

The speeches are available on YouTube but, given the importance of the issues being discussed, there may be value in having an account of them in print. In any case the proceedings are summarised below.

MICK WALLACE

The meeting opened with a contribution from Mick Wallace MEP, who remarked on the size of the crowd and pointed out that, judging by the response at meetings in Cork and Galway that he and Clare Daly had addressed, the Irish people were in a different place to the political class on the subject of neutrality.

Ireland would do well to hold on to the badge of honour that the tradition of neutrality bestowed, he said, and use it to facilitate diplomacy and de-escalation of international conflict. He said the Russian invasion of Ukraine was being milked by militarists as a justification for an acceleration in this area. He listed the myriad EU initiatives in the military sphere: the European Defence Agency, PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), the European Defence Fund, the European

Peace Facility, Battlegroups, the Rapid Response Force, Strategic Compass and so on. All of these, he said, were either in place or planned prior to the War.

In the Irish debates over the *Nice* and *Lisbon Treaties*, different Fianna Fáil Governments had mocked the idea that the changes would lead to an EU Army and membership of NATO. But very different statements had been made by figures like Jean Claude Juncker and Federica Mogherini (former EU High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs) that were closer to the true intention. Mogherini stated that PESCO was “*the foundation stone of a future EU army*”.

He said the phrase, ‘*military neutrality*’ did not fit the parameters laid down in Article 29 of the *Irish Constitution*, nor did the setting up of a forward US military base [Shannon] to facilitate illegal wars. He quoted from the Article as follows:

“Ireland affirms its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly co-operation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality.

Ireland affirms its adherence to the principle of the pacific settlement of international disputes by international arbitration or judicial determination.

Ireland accepts the generally recognised principles of international law as

Wallace stated:

“EU involvement in Mali and the Sahel [the region right across Africa below the Sahara] has not been benign. It has been designed to advance EU and member states’ interests such as access to resources and policing migration flows. You probably know that France gets 50 per cent of its uranium from Niger and 75 per cent of French electricity comes from nuclear. We [the EU] are down there to protect French access to cheap uranium. It has been under-reported but the mission has been an unmitigated disaster with shocking consequences for local populations and knock-on effects on regional conflicts. In Brussels, African countries are discussed as places for the EU to engage in geopolitical contests with Russian and Chinese interests, and EU missions are considered strategic assets in these contests.

The training mission in Mali approved by the Council of the EU barely has any basis in international law. It was requested by a Government that had emerged from a *coup*, that clearly did not exercise comprehensive control over the territory. In effect, the EU’s military training mission is a massive foreign participation in what is referred to in international law as a “*non-international armed conflict*”, in other words a “*civil war*”.

Towards the end of his speech, Mick

Wallace described the agenda the European Council is pursuing in its Southern and Eastern neighbourhoods as “*frankly neo-colonialist*”. As a result of the EU’s almost complete subservience to the US and NATO since Russia’s entry into Ukraine, he believes that the Triple Lock is no longer enough to protect Irish neutrality.

SEVIM DAGDALEN

Clare Daly next introduced Sevim Dagdelen, a leading member of the *Die Linke* party in the German Bundestag, its spokesperson on international affairs and disarmament. Of Kurdish background, she is a member of the German-Chinese, German-Indian and German-US Friendship Groups in the Bundestag. She is also a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Calling for an immediate ceasefire and diplomatic negotiations in Ukraine she said:

“It appears that an Agreement was on the table in March 2022. It is a disgrace that the then UK Conservative Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, in cahoots with the US Administration prevented a deal from being reached.”

Turning to the present situation, she said it has become a dangerous proxy war between NATO and Russia that has the potential to escalate. Apparently, she said, many NATO members are crossing a line between non-belligerent and belligerent involvement. They are doing this through—

“cooperation between intelligence services; advising and coordinating liaison officers on the ground; by exchanging technical and tactical expertise; by comparing situational pictures to the point of joint situational planning; and by training Ukrainian soldiers on the use of Western weapons on a massive scale.”

Brazil, China and six African countries have all launched peace initiatives. Why weren’t these being supported in Washington, London, Berlin, or Dublin? she asked. Answering the claim that NATO is a purely defensive alliance, she pointed to the Alliance’s 20-year War in Afghanistan; its bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999; its intervention against Libya in 2011; and its constant expansion eastwards up to the Russian border. NATO, she said, was a warfare alliance and should be dissolved. She then stated:

“Against the backdrop of the proxy war in Ukraine, I have called for the withdrawal of Germany from NATO, and the withdrawal, after seventy years,

of US soldiers from Germany. And they should take their nuclear weapons with them.”

She said that she had been unable to get a clear answer from the German Government to the following question:

“can we be sure that weapons supplied by Germany to Ukraine will not end up in the hands of neo-Nazi groups operating in Russia against their own Government?”

On this ground, she said, we should be worried.

Sevim Dagdelen made some further points. Sanctions against Russia were not damaging the Russian economy while the economic war was pushing Germany, followed by the EU, into recession. In a new form of neo-colonialism, NATO countries were attempting to force the Global South to abandon its neutrality—the new Right-wing Government in Finland has proposed that African countries considered too pro-Russian at the UN General Assembly should have their development assistance cut off. She concluded:

“Ireland has a long history of fighting for independence against colonial oppression. Neutrality is at the heart of its hard-fought independence. You have, my friends, our solidarity in this so important struggle. Let us stand together against this war and against this escalation, for an immediate ceasefire and peace negotiations and let’s win the peace and not the war!”

ANN WRIGHT

Ann Wright was introduced as a woman who had served in the US military for 29 years and in the diplomatic service for 16 years, working in US Embassies in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan and elsewhere. She resigned from the US Government in March 2003 in opposition to George W. Bush’s War on Iraq. She has been an anti-War voice since then and is the co-author of, *‘Dissent: Voices of Conscience’*.

She said she would like to see a part of the US secede and become a neutral country. Two of her friends had “*sat in your jail in 2019*”, one an army veteran, the other a former marine [Ken Mayers and Tarak Kauff], they had cut through the wires at Shannon Airport—the US has turned Shannon into a US airbase, she said. She also wanted to mention Roger Cole of PANA who had kindly invited herself and Madea Benjamin [the next speaker] to do a speaking tour in Ireland fifteen years ago.

Referring to NATO she said:

“Once you’re not a neutral country the slippery slope goes pretty damn fast. All of a sudden you are a NATO partner and a NATO this and that, and will you do this and that. Not a member, but a partner, and you have obligations to fulfil. So, the slippery slope is already there, and trying to stop that is such a critical thing and so hard. I mean so hard. We’ve been hearing from Clare and Mick of going around the country right now and with this Government sponsored forum it should be quite . . . We’ll still call it “neutrality” but it’s not really neutrality. So, as Mick accurately describes, “those bastards”, you know, go after ‘em, go after ‘em. Because it is so important that the people of Ireland stand up to say, we have a long history of being neutral. We want to keep that history. It is important to us, and you warmongers, go someplace else, go someplace, but don’t stay here in Ireland.”

She said that Americans, US citizens, seldom recognise all the places where the US military go, but the people who have been the recipient of US military actions know very very well what it is. She said the US spends \$800 billion every year on its military and now was adding \$120 billion on Ukraine.

She referred to an Irish Nobel Peace laureate, Mairead Maguire, with whom she had been in an Israeli jail for challenging Israeli treatment of Palestinians on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. With Mairead, herself and Madea had also gone to North Korea because they believed in talking to people they were told not to talk to.

She quoted from a statement by Maguire saying that, after violence and war, many people never recover but are like the walking dead. Maguire believed that humanity faces a choice of going down the road of the US and NATO or choosing peace, non-violence and neutrality. Wright concluded by hoping the Irish people would not make the wrong decision on neutrality.

MADEA BENJAMIN

Clare Daly introduced Madea Benjamin as Ann Wright’s *‘partner in crime’*. Co-founder of the women-led peace group, *Code Pink* and a member of such groups as: *Global Exchange*, *Peace in Ukraine Coalition* and *Unfreeze Afghanistan*, she has been active in US peace politics for over fifty years.

Benjamin, with Ann Wright, had just come from a visit to Western Ukraine. She had seen hundreds of freshly minted graves of war dead. It pained her tremendously,

she said, that her country was pouring more and more weapons into the conflict, and, as Sevin had said, stymieing negotiations repeatedly. She saw the US intent as dragging out the War in order to weaken Russia.

Referring to the attempted mutiny of the Wagner Group, which was in process on June 24th, she questioned what would happen if Putin was got rid of, answering that we have no idea.

She saw dangers that the War would spread to other European countries, would become a third World War and become nuclear. She believed the way to help the people of Ukraine was to provide humanitarian assistance, to take in refugees, “to offer our Governments forward as mediators”, and to open the public space for dialogue.

A factor that scares her very much was how that space is closing. In the US peace activists are blocked from writing op-eds [opinion editorials] or articles in the mainstream or appearances on mainstream television. They now have to pay for ads in places like the *New York Times* to get their opinions across. Having written a book entitled, *War in Ukraine – Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict*, she has been travelling around the country to seventy different cities. She has been encountering more and more protests against her message.

The opposition, she says, is coming from Ukrainian Americans, from people who call themselves Leftists, from some very strange quarters, and from aggressive elements who say they are fighting for democracy in Ukraine. None of these believe in free speech. Her talks have been cancelled at universities, bookstores and churches. At the last talk she gave before coming to Europe there was such an aggressive protest that one of her hosts, a Veteran for Peace, ended up in the emergency room in hospital, having been beaten up.

Walking to the present meeting, she had been surprised that there were no protesters outside. This, she said, was because there is space in Ireland for dissent, not unrelated to its being a neutral country.

That is not what she and Ann had experienced as they travelled around Eastern Europe recently. In Poland people were scared to talk about negotiations. In Slovakia people had lost their jobs for writing about the need for negotiations. In Austria, one of the few neutral states

left on the continent, they had faced great difficulties in organising an *International Summit for Peace in Ukraine* (they had been delighted that Clare Daly had joined them in that venture).

The original plan was that the Summit would be hosted by the *Austrian Federation of Trade Unions* but the Federation got cold feet two days before the event, because of protests—including from the Ukrainian Ambassador to Austria. They pulled the plug on the Summit. She said that the Summit was a major event including people from Ukraine, Russia and thirty other countries. The Austrian Press Club cancelled the venue they had booked for a Press Conference, and the media in Austria had trashed the Summit as being organised by “*Putin apologists*”. Actually, she said, they were quite happy to call Putin a murderous dictator, but it made no difference. The remainder of Madea Benjamin’s contribution is worth quoting in full:

“And that’s why again it is so important to be here. And I want to single out how important it is for the world community to hear the voices of Clare Daly and Mick Wallace, which we hang on to, in your one-minute speeches. Those speeches before the European Parliament, I hope you understand, are listened to by hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions of people around the world who are so inspired to hear those words and who are reassured to know that we are not crazy, that there are people like Clare, and like Mick, who are the voices that we need to hear.

“And when we talk about the voices that Ireland needs to have represented, we do not need more voices representing militarism, we need the voices representing peace. And the voices of Ireland right now are so important because of the representation that Ireland has around the world. When I travel around the world, I am so jealous of the Irish because you are so loved, not because you have a strong military or a big weapons industry; you are loved because of your neutrality and your anti-colonial roots. You are loved because of the support you have given to struggles from Palestine, to Yemen, to Cuba. And you are loved for echoing the voices of people throughout the Global South who are saying we need to end this war.

“The people like the six African heads of state who said this war is affecting everyone throughout the world; and it’s bringing more hunger and famine to these countries; the voice of the Pope who says let us not legitimize and get used to war, we must do something to end it; and the voice of China.

“And I know, when the Chinese came out with their peace proposal, some of us went to our Congress, where our Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, was talking about US diplomacy, and got up and interrupted him and said, ‘What US diplomacy? Where is the US diplomacy? And if you don’t like the Chinese peace proposal, where is your peace proposal?’ At which point we got arrested and thrown out.

“So, I just want to say in ending that the voices of rationality out there are coming not only from Ireland, but from the Global South and the voice I want to end with is the voice of President Lula from Brazil, who was invited to meet with President Biden and was cajoled, saying you must send weapons to Ukraine. And he got out of that meeting and said publicly:

“Ukraine does not need more weapons. What they need is interlocutors who will talk to the Russians and say what a horrible mistake they made invading Ukraine. What we need is interlocutors who will talk to the Ukrainians and say it is time to start the dialogue.”

He said, “*we do not want to join this war. We want to end this war.*”

I think that is the sentiment of the majority of people here in Ireland.”

LOWKEY

The next speaker, Lowkey, was introduced as a British-Iraqi hip hop artist who is active in a host of British Left campaigns, especially the *Palestine Solidarity Campaign*, and is a contributor to a website that reports on the activities of British intelligence, *Declassified UK*. He addressed two questions: what Irish neutrality now looks like in a material way; and the forces pushing Ireland towards NATO.

The picture he painted of Irish neutrality was not complimentary. So far, the Irish Government has funnelled €134 million to the Ukrainian War Effort for the purchase of fuel and protective gear. Thirty members of the Irish Defence Forces have been providing specialised training to the Ukrainian military, and Irish officials are members of the *Ukraine Defence Contact Group*, set up by US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austen to coordinate military aid to Ukraine. Lowkey later referred to US use of Shannon Airport as a re-fuelling stop-off as further evidence of how Irish neutrality is constantly undermined.

Regarding pro-NATO elements in Ireland, he confined his remarks to the *Consultative Forum on International Security Policy*. Deriding the claim that the Forum was facilitating impartial debate,

he detailed the backgrounds of some of its panellists:

Renata Dwan, who participated in a number of the Forum sessions, is a senior consulting fellow at the British *Chatham House* organisation. Lowkey listed the financial backers of *Chatham House* as follows: the British Foreign Office; the US State Department; BP; Exxon Mobil; the German Foreign Ministry; Shell; the British Army; BAE (armaments manufacturer); the US Embassy; Trevor Chinn (lobbyist for Israel); Lockheed Martin (armaments manufacturer); NATO; and the Guardian newspaper.

Another panellist he mentioned was *Neil Melvin*, who holds a key position in the British military think-tank, *the Royal United Services Institute* (RUSI), which is funded by Raytheon, BAE and Martin Lockheed, all global armament manufacturers.

Lowkey was at pains to provide specific detail on the gains being made by arms makers and oil companies arising from the Ukraine War. He estimated that, as a result of the surge in the price of oil consequent on the War, Exxon Mobile had made \$56 billion and Shell \$40 billion. Over the first year of the War, the share price of Raytheon had increased by 17 per cent, while during the first six months that of Lockheed Martin had increased by 37 per cent.

Referring to *Professor Brigid Laffan* of the EU University in Florence, Lowkey said she was also a Trustee of the Herti School in Berlin. That School recently hosted a NATO model event involving its *Allied Command Transformation Unit*.

Through the event young people were trained to be part-functionaries of NATO. And referring to the Forum's Chair, *Professor Louise Richardson*, he informed the audience that last November she had been awarded the Chair of Global Security for the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University. The professorship was endowed by Sir Leonard Blavatnik, an Anglo-American billionaire originally from Ukraine.

CLARE DALY

Clare Daly MEP was the final platform speaker. She addressed the politics arising from Micheál Martin's forums, covering their credibility, the Triple Lock and the role of the UN, exaggerations around Russian shipping and undersea cables, the relevance of the Irish tradition, and a brief

pointer on the future of Irish neutrality.

Regarding the Forums she was dismissive. They were one-sided, had not a single representative from the Global South, were best described as a racket and a con job serving the interests of the bag men of the international arms industry.

As a result of the present War, we were witnessing a campaign of accelerated militarism at EU level, but it was not working in Ireland.

She characterised Micheál Martin's Forum initiative as a '*debacle*'. A majority of Irish people instinctively love neutrality, she said, because it is tied up with our independence and sovereignty. However, to a certain section of Irish opinion, she said, being Irish was an embarrassment. "*Well not to us and not to our President!*"

Acknowledging that the UN could sometimes come across as a basket case, she was adamant that multi-lateral collective security is still the only way. She asked: *why are we abandoning the UN?*

Concerns being expressed by the Government regarding Russia's Veto on the Security Council were scaremongering.

The UN's mission in Bosnia had been authorised by the Security Council after the outbreak of the War; use of the Veto had not arisen.

In sixty-five years of Irish Peace-Keeping, the Veto had been used only once and that was by the Chinese over a proposed mission to Macedonia.

If the Triple Lock was ended, what would prevent future Irish Governments from despatching Irish troops to conflict zones, like those in recent years in Iraq or Afghanistan, or to the Sahel at the present time?

What she called '*threat inflation*' was also at work in the scaremongering over Russian ships being spotted near the Irish coast. When the hysteria died down, it had transpired that bad weather was responsible for a Russian ship staying close to the Irish coast. Because of Sanctions, Russian ships also needed to re-fuel at sea, thereby breaking their usual patterns. The ships of many nations passed through Irish waters; Russian shipping was no different.

Concerns had been voiced at one of the Forums about a need to safeguard the flow of data through undersea cables because Ireland was now a "*Data Centre Hub*". But the cables were privately owned by multi-national companies that create negligible employment and "*leech off our electricity*". "*We're now expected to give up our neutrality because of them?*"

At any given time, 25 per cent of the existing 400 undersea cables across the world were out of action: caused by accidental damage from fishing vessels or bad weather. This has little effect on the international flow of data. A recent EU report had found no verified instances of sabotage of undersea cables.

The only instance of undersea sabotage was to the *Nord Stream pipelines* and, she said, we don't hear that being discussed as a security threat.

[Clare Daly and Mick Wallace are the only MEPs to have questioned why the EU is not properly investigating the Nord Stream attacks]

Turning to the Irish tradition, Daly stated:

"We are a small country, as Eamon De Valera said, and in many ways I feel bad about quoting him but in fairness to him on this issue, he said all a small country can do is resist being the tool of any Great Power, and he was right! We are against the backdrop of Great Power conflict. We should have no part of it. All a small country can do is argue for the upholding of international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes, and that has served us well so far."

"We are unique in the European Union as a former colonized country, but yet a mature democracy. As I said we understand conflict. We should use that for good with the other 120 countries who are also non-aligned and neutral. It's not backward. It's not isolationist. It's not embarrassing. Actually, neutrality is the most progressive form of internationalism that you can have, and it was tied up in our peace-keeping for which we are loved universally. 72,000 men and women going on peace-keeping missions. It's part of struggles for self-determination, for de-colonialization around the world."

Daly concluded by saying that the next few months would be critical. The Government would deny any intention of abandoning neutrality and disavow the idea of joining NATO; this would be couched in lofty nonsense. But all the while they would continue barrelling down the road of increased involvement in the defence structures of the EU. *Make no mistake about it*, she said, *this means alignment with NATO*.

She considered that the protests had damaged Micheál Martin's initiative, that the pro-Neutrality movement was on the right side of history. The challenge now was to "*make a real neutrality*".

A QUESTION NOT ASKED AT THE FORUM

During the final day (June 27) of the

Consultative Forum in Dublin Castle I asked a question which I thought pertinent and reasonable. It was during the “*Defence Forces Capability Development*” session and I put my question through an online facility used throughout the four days of proceedings, Slido.com.

My question read:

"What measures need to be taken to end Irish dependence on the RAF regarding aerial threats to our national security?"

The background to the question is that it was recently revealed in an *Irish Times* report (8 May 2023) that a secret deal, dating back to 1952 apparently, allows the RAF to monitor Irish skies and, in certain circumstances, to deploy its aircraft over Irish territory. My question was the obvious question to ask during that session.

Questions asked through Slido appeared on a large screen behind the stage. Other questions came up and remained on the screen. Mine appeared for all of a half

micro-second. Regardless of whether my question received support on Slido, it should have been asked by the Session Moderator, Sinead O'Carroll, Editor of the *TheJournal.ie*. As it turned out, that session was mainly concerned with bureaucratic matters and was rather dull.

On the subject of Slido, the former MEP, Patricia McKenna, complained that it gave an unfair advantage to the opponents of Neutrality as they were present in large numbers.

I'm not so sure about the validity of that complaint. It was up to the defenders of Neutrality to organise themselves, so that questions relevant to the different sessions were agreed beforehand and then supported. There were easily enough attendees on the pro-Neutrality side to manage that.

Perhaps the Government side did have an advantage with Slido and were well prepared for using it. For future reference, however, the Left should be more clued in to using the technological facilities.

Dave Alvey

defence operating in the screening zone is made up of small units with anti-tank weapons and which call on artillery and air force upon contact with the enemy. There is a high degree of attrition from the screening defence, including the dense mine-fields that form the basis of it.

In the fortnight before the launch of the counter-offensive, the Russians degraded the Ukrainian air defences that had been moved up to cover the advance. Vehicle convoys were devastated by the Russian Air Force as the web of minefields were being rushed. Mines did most damage, and they were being constantly laid even during the advance. Much Ukrainian mine defence removal equipment was lost in these headlong assaults.

The Ukrainian counter-offensive proceeded without air superiority and with artillery dominance in favour of the defence. In fact, the degrading of the Ukrainian air defence gave the Russians air superiority over much of the battlefield, particularly to the South. After a few weeks of costly open advances, Ukrainian troops resorted to their standard tactic of advancing through the cover of wooded areas in small groups. The NATO-advised tactics and the Western-supplied armoured vehicles were abandoned, or saved for another day. Whether that day will come is another matter.

NATO's Counter-offensive In Ukraine

continued from page 1

officials and military analysts... “This is not a show”, Zaluzhny said Wednesday in his office at Ukraine's General Staff headquarters, adding:

"It's not a show the whole world is watching and betting on or anything. Every day, every meter is given by blood.

“Without being fully supplied, these plans are not feasible at all... But they are being carried out. Yes, maybe not as fast as the participants in the show, the observers, would like, but that is their problem”..."

The counter-offensive in Ukraine should be correctly described as a NATO counter-offensive. The forces launching it have been armed and trained for six months by NATO countries, in the territories of the NATO bloc. The counter-offensive is set to NATO's agenda and timetable. It is inspired, directed and fashioned both in scope and limitations by what Washington wants of the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians set out with NATO tactics and a NATO strategic plan of campaign, widely advertised by various ex-NATO cheerleader Generals.

It is clear that Ukraine has been hustled into the counter-offensive by Washington. Great things were expected by former US Generals and Western analysts, to be achieved very quickly. There does not seem to be much concern about Ukrainian losses, beyond the effect such losses would have on their ability and willingness to continue to fight. In fact, losses are never spoken about or quantified, lest they sow panic and disgust amongst the Western public. The main target of the offensive seems to be Western public opinion.

The NATO counter offensive was probably the most advertised military operation in history. It even had its own movie trailer, in which Ukrainian troops said "Shhhh...": A bizarre concoction of Hollywood and the media men running the Kiev administration.

The Russian defence, which it is having to overcome, sometimes known as the Surovikin Line, has been constructed over nine months. There are four lines of fortifications behind an initial screening zone of a lowland glacis. Russian mobile

MILITARY TACTICS

Before the counter-offensive, it was confidently predicted that superior NATO strategy and tactics would defeat the Russians. That has shown to be a mistaken view.

NATO uses small-unit tactics, and it taught the Ukrainians the basics of this form of warfare in Britain and Europe. This can be efficient at the tactical level, but it was developed against insurgents in NATO's 'small wars'. It is not so good when these small units are being out-gunned by artillery, battle tanks, and thermobaric bombs, and also having to proceed through extensive minefields that slow them down to a crawl. When officers are killed, the units become incapable of executing complex manoeuvres taught to them in NATO training schools and they fall back on the (Soviet) basics.

NATO, which advertises its combined arms proficiency as the gold standard, has not got the knowledge or experience of manoeuvring large forces, because they have never faced a substantial enemy, such as the Russian Armed Forces, in battle.

Franz Stefan Gady, a Fellow from a US think-tank, spent last month [June] assessing the counter-offensive at the various Fronts. Gady noted that

"no Western type of military can really do this sort of combined arms operations at scale, with the exception of the United States. But even the United States Armed Forces would have a very difficult time breaking through these defensive layers because no Western military in the world currently has any experience in breaching the types of defenses in depth that the Russians put up, in the south and east of Ukraine."

The largest operations in Iraq and Afghanistan involved only a few hundred troops and not tens of thousands of soldiers deployed across a 900-mile Front against an enemy with a large body of trained infantry, superior artillery, and air power. A compact professional army is effective when fighting is done on a small scale and losses are low but, with the intense attritional fighting in Ukraine, armies have to be constantly replenished with new troops.

In the Karabakh War, Azerbaijan suffered 14,000 casualties in 44 days, including 3,000 fatalities. That is nearly 25 per cent of Azerbaijan's 65,000 standing army used up in just over a month of fighting. The War could only have been waged for a maximum of two months at such a rate of losses. Ukraine is having to replace around 25,000 men every month: and finding well-trained immediate replacements for this amount of casualties is becoming increasingly difficult.

Kiev possessed a huge reserve at the start of the War, but this has been whittled away after 500 days of fighting, and the counter-offensive is using up the reserve at an unprecedented level. No amount of new weapons can compensate for such depletion of human resources.

The *Washington Post* on 18th July sums up Ukraine's efforts and Washington's requirements of them in a couple of sentences:

"Ukraine aims to sap Russia's defenses, as U.S. urges a decisive breakthrough: Ukrainian commanders have yet to use the large-scale offensive tactics they have been trained on, as Kyiv says it needs more weapons to fight the war Washington wants" (The West Feels Gloomy About Ukraine. Here's Why It Shouldn't).

HOPES RAISED!

The Wagner drama was a brief ray of sunshine to the West. Yevgeny Prigozhin had been tasked by the Russian command with holding the line at Bakhmut around 6 months ago, owing to a shortage of regular

Russian forces. But the figurehead of the Wagner PMC [Private Military Company] decided to make a name for himself as a General by capturing the city. With this in mind he recruited a large number of convicts, many of whom he promptly sacrificed in going for glory. The Battle of Bakhmut was won, but not before Russian aerospace, artillery and regular forces had to be diverted to win the battle, so that Wagner could be extricated.

Upon extrication the Russian command decided to sideline the loose cannon, Prigozhin, and absorb the Wagner forces into the regular army or re-constitute it. The knowledge of his impending obscurity prompted Prigozhin's escapade, aimed at settling scores with Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov—whom he blamed for not pandering to his Bakhmut adventure, and for not waging the War thoroughly enough.

Putin defused the Prigozhin/Wagner bomb with considerable tact and skill, avoiding a damaging conflict that would have had the West in raptures and the Russian people disorientated at Russian fighting Russian. The high hopes of the West were dashed with the settling of the matter. The British media, with no memory of how the British Government dealt with the Curragh Mutiny in the British Army, continued to tell the tale of a Russian implosion.

THE REAL WAR AIM!

The Wagner Mutiny exposed the Anti-Russian nature of the conflict that the West is waging in Ukraine. The Ukrainians are mere instruments of Western policy and for London and Washington their deaths are meaningless in the grand scheme of things, only regretted in weakening NATO's weapon. Prigozhin was cheered on without regard for the tens of thousands of Ukrainians his forces had killed. In fact, Ukraine was altogether forgotten as the greater prize came into view—the destruction of Putin!

The Western objective was always the disintegration of the Russian Home Front, as opposed to disintegration of the enemy Front Line. What was revealed in the Prigozhin Mutiny was that the objective of the West is political collapse of Russia not the democratisation of Russia.

Why else would someone like Prigozhin be supported and why else does the West promote the idea of regime change in a Russian nationalist direction in preference to the moderate Putin? Hopes are now placed on Igor Strelkov (Girkin), a hardline

force in the 2014 Novorossiia movement, who is regularly quoted in the West for his criticisms of Putin's moderation in waging war against the Ukrainians.

WAR CRIME?

After the Prigozhin narrative of Putin weakness and chaos in Russia had run its course a bombshell hit in the announcement that Washington was about to supply Kiev with cluster munition. Both Biden and Jake Sullivan, mindful of previous odium expressed in the West to the use of such a weapon, stated that this was an unfortunate necessity given that the Ukrainians were running out of ammunition for their artillery and stocks in the West of shells had been depleted. And this revelation that the cupboard was bare was saved by the West until the middle of a counter-offensive!

The use of cluster munitions has been presented as being legitimate because, though the Ukrainians know what they will do to their beloved territories, they are still willing to use them all the same! And it has been a concealed fact that the Kiev forces have already used them against civilian areas in Luhansk and Donetsk, presumably to punish the reluctant Ukrainians, already.

Cluster munition was developed during the Cold War to defend against large-scale armoured attack, supported by masses of infantry. They make large offensives difficult.

But what cluster munitions will also do is to make large parts of the country uninhabitable for civilians and unusable for agriculture, for decades.

US cluster bombs have not been produced since 1996 and will have a dud rate of at least 1 in 5, according to the *Washington Post*.

Jake Sullivan, Security Advisor to President Biden, states that the alternative is Russian tanks rolling forward through Ukrainian lines if this is not done. Whatever happened to the belief that the counter-offensive was going to smash the Russian lines and liberate Crimea by the Summer? This is an indication of how Washington sees the War going: and it is not towards Crimea, as General Hodges et al predicted.

JOINING NATO?

At the NATO Summit in Vilnius—which the counter-offensive was launched to impress—Sullivan stated that the US "was not ready for war with Russia". Zelensky, who threatened not to attend if his demands for more weaponry and admission to NATO were not granted,

attended but was sent home angry with empty pockets. A broadside against deficiencies in British military aid was met with an undiplomatic rebuff, the post-dated resignation of Defence Secretary Ben Wallace (who is to retire from politics), and the sacking of the Ukrainian Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

Both Britain and Ukraine have been put in their place by Washington, which knows what it wants from the War and has asserted ownership of it.

Hence at Vilnius, Ukraine was badly let down, being told that it would not be admitted to NATO, as this might bring about a war in which the West was obliged to fight—instead of just Ukrainians! Instead, Kiev was informed by Washington that it would have to win the War before it could gain the great prize of NATO protection!

Since the major objective of the Special Military Operation was to prevent Ukraine being admitted to NATO this seems to justify Putin's decision to launch it in February 2022.

What the Vilnius Summit confirms is that the only thing required of the Ukrainian is a blood sacrifice for the NATO objective of disabling Russia as a Power in the World.

SOME REALITY!

After all the media cheerleading for the great Ukrainian counter-offensive, and the hyping-up of its prospects of success, the grim reality seems to have set in. Most Western media outlets have altered the "victory by the Summer" narrative to the "patience please, this will be difficult" story.

Most striking has been an article published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 18th July by ex-British Officer, Robert Clark, entitled, *'Ukraine and the West are facing a Devastating Defeat'*:

"The long-planned counter-offensive, now in its second month, has run into several problems—not least that Kyiv is still waiting for approximately half of the western military equipment promised earlier in the year. Meanwhile, its forces are under increasing pressure to commit its reserves as Russian troops—despite reports of low morale across the front—remain dug-in, seemingly committed to defending every inch of Ukrainian ground captured since last year.

"As Russian minefields take their toll on western-supplied tanks and Ukrainian sappers, their forces have so far retaken approximately five miles of the sixty miles they need to split the land-bridge

connecting Russia to Crimea. The land between Mariupol in the east and Melitopol to the west is seen as the vital ground to achieving this.

"It is incredibly tough going for the Ukrainians. They lack the air cover and advanced jets to protect their ground forces from Russian attack helicopters and fighters. Their soldiers, meanwhile must negotiate miles of minefields, tank-traps and then ultimately the heavily dug Russian trench networks...

"The variable that isn't on their side is time. In war, time is perhaps the cruellest factor one cannot change. We saw this in NATO's operation in Afghanistan, where the Taliban took great delight in the retelling of a famous Afghan proverb: "you may have the watches, but we have the time"...".

Summer will soon begin to roll into Autumn. Indeed, we are already halfway through the season. The fighting will begin to grind to a cold halt as the freezing Winter saps troops' ability to conduct high-intensity warfare. This will only give Russia more time to further build up its defences, as it did last Winter.

By this point in the West, meanwhile, all eyes will be on the upcoming US election, with more political attention diverted by the UK's general election. Kyiv knows it has a shortened window of opportunity to capitalise on its battlefield initiative and take back as much ground as it can.

If Kyiv fails in its battlefield endeavours to split that land bridge, and retake much of its own territory by Winter, then vocal calls of territorial concessions for marginal political outcomes will likely become far more prevalent—not just in Ukraine but likely from Western capitals, as so-called "*war-fatigue*" begins to bite, international stockpiles of equipment and ammunition wither, and politicians begin to worry about domestic budgets ahead of national elections.

While much fighting remains to be done across Ukraine's southern farmlands over the coming months, Governments across the West must be prepared for the grim prospect of territorial concessions as one potential political outcome of a failed counter-offensive. Whether a Putinist Kremlin would respect such a deal if Kyiv were to receive security pledges short of full Nato membership is extremely doubtful.

Regardless, this would surely be a favoured outcome for China's ruling "*wolf warrior*" foreign policy elite. Beijing would be utterly delighted if the War were to end with Ukraine divided, Rus-

sian troops permanently in the Donbas, harassing Kyiv and Europe, and Nato fractured on political lines. Such an outcome would be a gift to China as Xi Jinping begins to ramp up his own imperialistic and extra-territorial ambitions across the Indo-Pacific—and a devastating defeat for the West."

US Secretary of State Blinken is still confident of a Ukrainian victory. He stated at the Aspen Security Forum on 21st July:

"I believe they have what they need to be very successful. And as they deploy and as they actually put into this effort all of the forces that have been trained in recent months, the equipment that we and some 50 countries have provided them, I think that will make a profound difference."

At the time of writing it is widely believed that the Ukrainians have used up around one-third of the forces earmarked for the counter-offensive. While fighting continues, this cannot be said to constitute a defeat of the counter-offensive, but only time will tell if these losses will have resulted in a significant degrading of Ukraine's capacity to pursue the War to any advantage in the future.

Perhaps this was all part of the Washington/NATO plan. But it all seems too clever by half and there is likely to be Hell to pay.

The War is likely to escalate, with the West having welched on the grain provision deal. The Russians are taking out the Ukrainian port facilities at Odessa and Nikolaev, and Kiev is threatening all shipping on the Black Sea heading to Russian ports.

What does America make of it all? David Ignatius in the *Washington Post*:

"Meanwhile, for the United States and its NATO allies, these 18 months of war have been a strategic windfall, at relatively low cost (other than for the Ukrainians). The West's most reckless antagonist has been rocked. NATO has grown much stronger with the additions of Sweden and Finland. Germany has weaned itself from dependence on Russian energy and, in many ways, rediscovered its sense of values. NATO squabbles make headlines, but overall, this has been a triumphal summer for the alliance."

It seems that the Ukrainians are what used to be known as a "catspaw".

Pat Walsh

Books, Culture And History

This article deals with the culture and history of Cork city, leaving books to one side for this issue of *Irish Political Review*.

An issue has arisen in our city that needs to be addressed because it is one of those important things that come along very seldom and, if it is not dealt with, leaves a huge opportunity for open debate slide out of sight, which is then to the detriment to all of us citizens. Engagement is always a fruitful exercise, especially when the stakes of our city itself are up for grabs—quite literally in this case.

The only green space within Cork city is *Bishop Lucey Park*, and it is quite a small site of land really. Before the Covid lockdown, it was kept up to a lovely standard by the workers of the City Council and, like all things with Covid—the park fell into some disrepair, both during the lockdown and afterwards. One can look at photos and see the deterioration, for example the photo used by the *Irish Examiner* (20.7.23), credited to noted local photographer Denis Minihane, is outside the park with its beautiful columns and ironwork gates open but still within shot. This is quite an old photo, going back to pre-Covid I'd guess.

I walk past the park almost every day and sometimes I stop and look in but would not go into the park itself because there is definitely a quality of unsafeness and unsavouriness about it and about the majority of those using it. There is a lot of public urination and the use of unlawful substances is quite common to see. That this is true about the rest of Cork city needs no clarification, but at least one can escape into other streets or even pubs etc. if needs be.

I suspect that, as long as everything is kept within boundaries, the ordinary public keep going on about their business. Once I used to walk through that park quite often and loved the trees especially, and birdsong. But pigeons and seagulls are pretty dirty and raucous and there are more of them now than ever. There is a beautiful photo of the marvellous fully mature birch trees, taken by UCC plant scientist Eoin Lettice, and shared from his Twitter feed in the *Cork Independent* (13.7.23).

But that was then and this is now: and the Freemasons have won in their battle to acquire 54 square metres of the Park to extend their building for purposes of what they allege is—

"the construction of an extension to provide universal access and fire escape facilities to their historic 4 story building on Tuckey Street."

On Monday, 10th July, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Munster Freemasons were 'sold' the land by Cork City Council, with the Councillors approving the deal with 18 in favour – and 7 against, with 6 absentees for various reasons.

The Freemasons paid the sum of €1 only, and there was an interesting explanation for this codology by the Council: normally that kind of land right in the middle of the city would bring in, at the very least, in today's valuation something like €400,000.

After all, we are talking about a site that is big enough for a good-sized house! The *Irish Examiner* had two very well argued articles by Eoin English and Michael Moynihan on the matter. And there was even an Editorial containing some trenchant comment about the whole deal.

It was contended by the City Council Executive that the Council did not have "*good and marketable title over the land parcel required*" but does have "*possessory rights*"—

"which meant that land did not possess a monetary value, so instead, the onus was being put on the Freemasons to make access to the building available to public groups for up to 20 hours a month."

This was a complete red herring! Even if they—the Council only has "*possessory title*", that would mean they had squatters' title: but that would still be enough for them to sell the Park land for any sum of money that they could get on the open market. As far as I know, the Council Executive never put it on the open market.

As Eoin English commented about this whole deal: "*it was one of the most city's contentious land disposals*", with the details being:

"a beloved park: the city centre's only bit

of green space, the felling of trees, a material contravention of the city's development plan, a symbolic €1 price tag, the relocation of a Chernobyl memorial, and the male only Freemasons adding a whiff of mystery and intrigue and for some a dose of misogyny. Critics described the disposal as a shady deal for a glorified boy's club that the city was selling out and didn't care about the park or those who use it, that it was a tone-deaf act of environmental vandalism that would set a dangerous precedent against the back-drop of a climate crisis. Many felt that a way should have been found to provide a new fire stairs and lifts within the footprint of the historic building."

It is important to go back in history and look at what was there before Bishop Lucey Park: there was an extensive site of a drapery business owned by T. Lyons & Co. on the South Main Street; and on the Grand Parade there was a mattress warehouse owned by Jennings & Co. And there was a lane separating these properties from Christ Church (which now houses the Triskel Gallery).

There are some reports that a fire laid waste to the Jennings warehouse and so the land, after some time elapsed, was eventually acquired with tax-payers' money by Cork City Council as "*a green space*" for the people of Cork.

It is my absolute belief that the Council left the Park deteriorate into a dodgy area, as now we know that from 2013 onwards the Freemasons were in dialogue with the City Council Executive to acquire the plot of land that was eventually acquired by them for the outrageous sum of €1.

That is the reason that there hasn't been a public outcry, because the Council has now committed to doing up Bishop Lucey Park after the Freemasons have finished their refurbishment.

What I found very peculiar too was that it is said that it was not the Freemasons who were sold the land, but *Craft Property Ltd*—the legal entity for the Provincial Grand Lodge of Munster Freemasons. However, that last bit of the sentence is untrue. There are now two legal entities in play here and, when I looked up the Companies Office, *Craft Property Ltd*. gives its company address as 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. Its status is also given as a "*Private Limited Company*". The address given is that of the '*Freemason's Grand Lodge of Ireland*', located in an incredibly beautiful Georgian building opposite Leinster House, the seat of our Government and Dáil, and Buswells Hotel (where I have spent many a good evening with Fianna Fáil members of the Dáil, who always stayed there during their

working week before they all got so wealthy and bought their own places).

Often the Freemasons, after their “*special meetings*”, with their “*special gear*”, would come across the road for a drink and sometimes looked uncomfortable under our very non-furtive gaze! There definitely was more than “*funny aprons*” inside their “*bags*” but alas I’ll never know now!

In Eoin English’s article in the *Irish Examiner*, 17th July 2023, there are an accompanying six photos of the inside of the Masonic Hall. What really stood out for me was the one where three men are having their “*coffee morning*”, and there is a big plate of choc/plain biscuits, giving the whole surroundings a real whiff of apparent PR domesticity. This is—one finds it hard to believe nowadays—where women are not allowed become members, or even visit, except on special days which is the same requirement for the rest of us citizens.

Michael Moynihan wrote thus:

“The fig leaf of women being allowed to access the building— well, leaf is generous: a tiny shred of bark, maybe—brings us close to the realm of alternative facts. Women not allowed to become members of an organisation but—but!—granted permission to set foot on the hallowed grounds of that organisation? This is once-in-a-century false equivalence. Olympic-level nonsense. Allowing women to access the building is the kind of rationale which belongs to the seventies. The 1870s”.

When the vote was called, 18 Councillors approved the disposal, with councillors Dan Boyle (Green Party), Oliver Moran (Green Party), Deputy Lord Mayor Colette Finn (who took to Twitter to say that she had opposed the deal “for the simple reason that this moved public open space into private hands and reduces the biodiversity of the area”), Lorna Brogue, Brian McCarthy, John Maher, and Ted Tynan voting against.

Amongst those who approved the vote were Terry Shanahan (Fianna Fáil, a former driver for Micheál Martín), Mary Rose Desmond (Fianna Fáil), Des Cahill (Fine Gael), Mick Nugent (Sinn Féin), Damien Boyle (Fine Gael, who commended the charitable work of the Freemasons by claiming that in 2022, they raised €4.5 million alone for various groups including *Médecins sans Frontières*, RNLI and Simon).

Dan Boyle was the only one who really didn’t pull his punches saying:

“.. Replacement planting in place of mature trees is not like-for-like. You can only replace a mature tree with a mature tree. You need 10-15 semi-mature trees to replace the carbon effect of one mature

tree. What we are achieving is one or two trees where there used to be 15”.

I would urge any reader of the *Irish Political Review* to go online for Michael Moynihan’s superb article, ‘*Why are we ripping up climate plans to accommodate the Freemasons?*’ (*Irish Examiner*, 20 July 2023), and also Eoin English’s ‘*Freemasons break their silence over €1 Bishop Lucey Park deal with city council*’

(17 July 2023).

A people’s green park in the midst of this Summer of raging climate change (mostly in other countries—for now) was as nothing it seems against the wishes of the secretive Freemasons of Cork. The latter are again at the heart of our ‘shiny new imperial culture’.

Julianne Herlihy ©

Words, words, words

Listening to and reading the Western narrative on the War in Ukraine, we have a tsunami of words, essentially saying that Mr. Putin invaded a sovereign state and, as that is an illegal action according to the UN, it justifies the current War against his action. No doubt the Russia narrative is also a tsunami of words that makes sense in Russia and to most of the rest of the world—i.e. that Ukraine is made up of national groupings, and one group staged a coup d’état, launching an 8-year War against another national grouping—of Russians—and Putin reacted to this in self-defence which is a legal right according to Article 51 of the UN.

Sovereign states with serious internal national conflicts are quite normal in the real world and practically every state is familiar with them. Like much else, Europe seems to have developed amnesia about this reality. The resolution of these conflicts can be so serious as to involve the disappearance of the state itself from history. Such was the case with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and the process can involve very bloody conflicts indeed.

‘*Fine words butter no parsnips*’ when it comes to the legalisms of sovereignty: when States seriously conflict with each other and when push comes to shove. And, if states collapse, like Humpty Dumpty, ‘all the king’s horses and all the king’s men cannot put them together again’. The art of statesmanship is to prevent such outcomes. That statesmanship was patently lacking in the Ukraine State.

So we have billions of words that are used to describe the same scenario in this war, but the way words are used—and the contexts in which they are presented—mean that there are totally conflicting implications. One of these, which is promoted by the West, could maintain the war, with a possible escalation to nuclear conflict on the horizon—an outcome all

would agree is to be avoided.

But relying on words, on abstractions, alone, rather than realities, to deal with the issue at hand could make that ‘final solution’ conceivable—if not inevitable.

Mentioning Humpty Dumpty reminds me of Alice’s discussion with him about what words can mean. She asked:

“Must a name mean something?”

“When I use a word”, Humpty Dumpty said in a rather haughty tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.’

‘The question is’, said Alice, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things.’

‘The question is’, said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master—that’s all.’”

In other words it is the controller of the narrative that decides the meaning. The reporting of the War in Ukraine is a perfect example of the validity of Humpty’s argument. The same facts can be used to create different narratives depending on who ‘the master’ is.

The winner of the War will be the final ‘master’ in Ukraine and will define ‘for history’ what the War was about and what the words that were used actually meant. The reality of war is the only reality check on the rhetoric and verbal diarrhoea that surrounds the reporting on it. Nuclear war would be the ultimate reality check, but some of our commentators and talking heads even seem oblivious to that reality. It would seem that, to most of them, it would be just another ‘breaking news’ event to be reported on—live of course—from the scene!

At best, all words are only an attempt to define the reality of various aspects of life but they can never do so definitively—they are only ever descriptions, but never reality itself. Reality always escapes total definition. However, the winning and losing of wars is very real, and all the words relating to this and to any war only have meaning in the context of that reality whenever and however it occurs.

Jack Lane

The Brian Murphy osb Archive

The Planned State Commemoration Of The RIC

Introductory Note:

Brian Murphy helped initiate a public debate about a proposed State Commemoration of the Royal Irish Constabulary [RIC] with his letter below to *The Irish Times*. The debate that followed forced the Government to abandon the project.

State Commemoration Of The RIC

I write concerning your news report by Ronan McGreevy on the planned commemoration, on January 17th, of members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police [DMP] who were killed in the War of Independence (*RIC and DMP policemen to be commemorated for first time by State*, News, January 1st).

Unfortunately the words of Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan, which are quoted in order to justify the commemoration, fail to recognise the real role of the police force at that time. He said:

“They were doing what police officers do. As they saw it they were protecting communities from harm. They were maintaining the rule of law.”

In fact, the law that they were maintaining was often Martial Law and was often opposed to the norm of civil rights. This was especially so after the appointment of Lord French as Governor General in May 1918, and the introduction of a new type of military administration into Ireland. Following a *Proclamation* of Lord French, on 16th, May 1918, the police were responsible for arresting and imprisoning without trial hundreds of Sinn Féin activists or sympathisers.

This new reality was recognised by Lord Wimborne, the former Lord Lieutenant, who wrote in the *Times* of London, on 25th March 1919, that “*popular leaders were incarcerated and a military regime was established*”.

The police were an integral part of that regime.

The manner in which the police, both the RIC and the DMP, contributed to that military regime was spelled out by many speakers at a meeting of Dáil Éireann on 10th April 1919. De Valera commented that:

“they are no ordinary civil force, as

police are in other countries. The RIC, unlike any police force in the world, is a military body armed with rifle and bayonet and revolver as well as baton”.

He added that “*they are spies in our midst*”.

This last point was endorsed by Eoin MacNeill who declared that:

“the police force in Ireland are a force of spies. The police in Ireland are a force of traitors, and the police in Ireland are a force of perjurers”.

He said more in the same vein and concluded that was “*why you should take such measures as will make police government in this country by the enemy impossible*”.

One could give many more examples but the historical record clearly shows that there are serious questions about commemorating a police force which combined with the British military to defeat the democratic wishes of the Irish people. – Yours, etc, **Dr. Brian P. Murphy, OSB**

Glenstal Abbey,
Murroe,
Co Limerick.
Murroe,
Co Limerick

Saturday, January 4, 2020.

Letter to the Irish Examiner on the RIC Commemoration (Unpublished)

I write concerning Michael Clifford’s article of Tuesday, 7th September, 2021, with the title ‘*Ireland has a problem remembering dead policemen*’. He mentions the term ‘*police force*’ some five times in his article. The problem is that the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) was not a police force administering civilian law.

From the passing of the *Defence of the Realm Act* (DORA) in August 1914, at the outbreak of the First World War, the RIC cooperated with the army in applying a system of military court martial law. The civil process of trial by jury was ended.

This system assumed an even more military character when Lord French was appointed, not only Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in May 1918, but also Governor-General. His letters to Lloyd George, in the library of the House of Lords, make it absolutely clear that he was not willing to take up his position, unless Lloyd George agreed to the military dimension of his appointment. In this way the RIC became inextricably linked with the military role of Lord French and they did so at a time when the Irish people were more unified than ever in their political aspirations.

On 18th April 1918 representatives from all Irish political parties—Sinn Féin, the Irish Party and Labour—had met at the Mansion House, Dublin, and issued a statement against the passing of a *Conscription Bill* by the British House of Commons and described it as “*a declaration of war against the Irish people*”. The Roman Catholic Bishops immediately aligned themselves with this *Declaration* and urged people to take a pledge against Compulsory Conscription on Sunday, 21st April.

It was in that context of a unified Irish people making a protest against Conscription that Lord French issued a *Proclamation* on 3rd July which declared that—

“the Sinn Féin organisation, the Sinn Féin clubs, the Irish Volunteers, the Cumann na mBan, and the Gaelic League to be dangerous”.

Members of these associations became open to arrest and the RIC rapidly moved to implement the draconian policy of Lord French. Hundreds of men and women were arrested, imprisoned without trial, and many sent to prisons in England.

When Dail Eireann met for the first time, on 21st January 1919, 33 elected representatives could not attend as they were in prison. The RIC were responsible for this situation by the way in which they were prepared to implement the Martial Law of Lord French.

This reality was clearly and forcibly expressed at a meeting of Dail Eireann on 10th April 1919 by which time all members were present.

At the meeting of Dail Eireann on 10th April, de Valera proposed

“that members of the police acting in this country as part of the forces of the British occupation and as agents of the British Government be ostracised socially by the people of Ireland”.

During the debate on the matter, de Valera said that:

“the RIC, unlike any police force in the

world, is a military body armed with rifle, bayonet and revolver as well as a baton... their history is a continuity of brutal treason against their own people."

Earlier Eoin MacNeill had said that:

"the police in Ireland are a force of traitors, and the police in Ireland are a force of perjurers. I say these things, not that your feelings might be roused, but to convince you of the necessity that exists why you should take such measures as will make police government in this country by the enemy impossible."

The message is clear: the RIC did not simply carry out civic duties; it was part of the Military Establishment in Ireland. Remarkably, the same view had been expressed by Lord Wimborne, the predecessor of Lord French, to *The Times*, on 25th March 1919, in which he said of his successor that

"Ireland was declared insurrectionary. Popular leaders were incarcerated and a military regime was established".

It would be hard, if not impossible, to find a more informed and damning verdict on the military character of the RIC than that of Lord Wimborne.

The role of the RIC, therefore, as part of the British military regime had been established before the military engagements known as the War of Independence had started and before the Black and Tans had joined the police force in January 1920.

In that conflict one could give many examples of the RIC acting in harmony with the British military. Two will suffice.

Firstly, the arrest of Robert Barton and his sentence by court martial process, on 30th January 1920, to ten years penal servitude in England, revealed much about the character of English rule in Ireland. There is, however, far more to his story.

Barton, who had a landed estate in Wicklow, had not only served in the British Army but also he had been in charge of republican prisoners at the time of the Easter Rising. He had joined Sinn Fein after the War had ended; he had been elected as a TD for Wicklow in the 1918 Election; and he had been appointed Director of Agriculture by Dail Eireann in August 1919. In that capacity he had set up a *National Land Bank*, in December 1919, which was designed to help Irish people acquire and improve their farms. The other directors of the Bank were Erskine Childers and Lionel Smith Gordon. All three men were of the Protestant tradition.

This reality exposes the falsity of some recent historians who have claimed that

Irish republicans were driving Protestants from the land. Barton's arrest also makes clear the manner in which the police participated in stopping the positive work of Dail Eireann.

Secondly, the verdict of the jury delivered, on 17th April 1920, in respect of the death of Thomas MacCurtain on 20th March, is of immediate relevance to the police force. It concluded that:

"the murder was organised and carried out by the RIC, officially directed by the British Government, and we return a verdict of wilful murder against David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of England; Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and

other civil and police officials."

If the RIC was simply a police force, as presumed by Michael Clifford, then there would be some grounds for commemorating them; but the evidence is clear: they were an integral part of the British military operation to oppose the democratic movement of the Irish people towards national independence. In that context it is probably fitting that they should be commemorated in a cathedral in England, the country that they chose to serve. They do, incidentally, already have memorials in some Churches in England, including the Catholic Westminster Cathedral.

Brian P. Murphy OSB

What Is History?

Professor Michael Laffan of University College, Dublin, made some general remarks on the business of historians in his response to President Higgins' observation on commemorations a couple of years ago. (These remarks have only just come my way due to my profound computer illiteracy.)

I have read two books by Laffan (both on the generation of the independence movement, one published by Cambridge University and the other by the Royal Irish Academy), and I glanced through a third, on Weimar Germany, and I was interested to see how his ideas on how history should be written had been put into effect in the history he had written.

He says:

"Elizabethan England should be remembered for massacres in Ireland, but for many other estimable reasons as well. Gladstone's conversion to Irish Home Rule was important, but so was Disraeli's commitment to Empire. It can be too easy to fall into a Hibernocentric view of our neighbouring island. And, in return, particularly during a phase of Brexit insularity, the English people should be better informed about the present and past of other European countries including Ireland. An openness to multiple narratives involves seeing the Irish Revolution in a wider international context. From this standpoint it is striking how mild and moderate were the changes that resulted from years of upheaval..."

"Despite persistent urban poverty there was little social unrest, largely because many Irish grievances had been resolved. Under British rule (particularly under Conservative rule) Ireland had already experienced its great social revolution: the change in ownership of most of the

country's land... The violence that played a central role in bringing about the new Irish state was limited in scale, especially when it is seen against the background of the Great War."

Laffan gives the figure of 27,000 Irish soldiers killed in the Great War, while the casualties the British suffered in Ireland in the whole period of 1919-21 "were less than those of an average day in the Western Front".

It seems that "*Irish revolutionaries were fortunate in their opponents*"! Only 15 were executed in 1916, while 15,000 were shot after the Paris Commune in 1871, and 1,500 were shot after the Kronstadt revolt in Russia in 1921,

"let alone the murder or expulsion by the Turks of one and a half million Armenians between 1915 and 1922. Empires normally fight to retain their possessions."

How is it possible, if one is a being produced by nationalist Ireland, not to have a Hiberno-centric view of things? The world can only be viewed from a particular vantage point. There is no worldview of the world. What exists is a multiplicity of vantage points. If the world as a whole is ever amassed into a vantage point, human existence as we know it will have ceased to exist.

Contemporary England may look on Elizabethan England with admiration because that is where it originated. It was created by a popular monarchical despotism that pieced together a new religion, which it made the ideology of an Empire, and set about turning the world

upside-down with it. Life in Ireland was repeatedly smashed up by it. It culminated for us in the organised mass starvation that we call The Famine, which destroyed half the population in a few years, leaving the other half sufficiently thinned out to be able to mount a campaign within the ideology of political economy, backed by the menace of assassination, to end the imposed land settlement, which had resulted in potato-patch economy.

When, by intimidatory agitation, the value of the land to the colonial landlords had been undermined, a Unionist (not Conservative) Government agreed to buy them out and enable the tenantry to gain ownership of the land by hire-purchase.

That event set the scene for 20th century Irish history, but it remains an event unknown to University historians.

Professor Foster said that, whatever else the English may have done in Ireland, at least they conferred on us "*the priceless gift of the English language*". In another context, the conferring of such a gift would be called "*cultural genocide*".

What substantial ground for comparison is there between the Easter Rising and the Paris Commune? The Rising was a small-scale military incident in a British provincial city, easily dealt with in a state actively mobilised for total war. The Commune was a Communist system established in the capital city of France after the French Emperor had made war on Prussia and had been defeated, and the French State was in disarray.

The suppression of the Commune by the restored Republic, so that Capitalism might flourish, was class war in earnest, and was therefore conducted with great slaughter.

There was a class war in Finland at the time when Sinn Fein was establishing itself in power in Ireland. It was short and venomous. The number of Social Democrats killed by the victorious national capitalists has, as far as I recall, usually been given as 28,000.

There were minor class war incidents in Hungary and Munich in that period, in which there was sufficient slaughter to secure the capitalist mode of life. The greatest class war was probably Indonesian in the 1960s. The capitalist future was secured there by the slaughter of about a million Communists, and the capitalist world in which we live rests content with that.

There was no class conflict element whatever in the Easter Rising. Irish society

was stabilised within the capitalist order by the formation of a widespread system of small scale property ownership in the predominant countryside. The killing of a mere 15 was, in those circumstances, excessive. And it was clearly counter-productive.

I gather that Louise Richardson, who was born in Tramore and became Vice Chancellor of Oxford University, who chaired the Forum designed to bring Ireland into NATO, is of the opinion that English influence on Ireland was beneficial, and she cites herself as proof of it.

England exercised a wrecking influence on established ways of living all around the world. Individuals emerged out of the wreckage and did well for themselves in England. The pattern was set long ago. It seems that Louise Richardson is one such individual. It is not reasonable to expect them to condemn the system in which they have done well for themselves. But what is their opinion worth on the general question of whether English influence on Irish life was beneficial?

And, apart from that, where does one find an objective standard to apply in the judging of these things?

England wrecked many societies which disappeared without trace. At the high point of the Liberal era, Sir Charles Dilke exulted in the fact that the Anglo-Saxons were the greatest exterminating race the world had ever seen. The book in which he said this, *Greater Britain, A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries During 1866-7*, was a best seller and went through numerous editions. It caused no unease. It was a matter-of-fact statement of the condition of things. And, for a long generation afterwards, it was the view of the influential intellectual elite of English society that there were many peoples in the world who needed to be exterminated in the cause of Progress. And, if they needed to be exterminated, I suppose it can be seen to have been a beneficial act to put them out of their misery?

Dilke used the terms "*cheap*" and "*dear*" to describe the various peoples in the world. The use of those terms is now out of order, but that does not mean that the feeling behind them is no longer there.

The Irish were for a long time a very cheap people—a worthless people—in the British view, and the British view went a long way towards determining what was the case.

A little-known German Historian that I read many years ago, and whose name I have forgotten (Dibelius ?) was of the opinion that, leaving Ireland aside, England had acted admirably in the world. I did not see what grounds there could be for leaving Ireland aside. It seemed more reasonable to treat Ireland as the test-case. It was in Ireland that the new English regime of Imperialist Protestantism first exerted its power, and that power continued to be exerted against the Irish for about four centuries.

Religious sectarianism in Ireland was an English creation. England invented a new religion and set out to impose it on the world, beginning with Ireland. It made religious difference a basic political issue. It conquered and governed in the name of that difference—and colonised. Gaelic/Catholic Ireland was not inclined to embrace the new fanaticism—and was therefore judged to be fanatical.

It was given a Protestant State in 1691, and a Protestant colonial stratum to conduct it. It was then encouraged to submit to the new truth—which presented itself as a force of Destiny that would dominate the world—but it remained attached to the twin abominations of a Gaelic and Catholic culture, and was therefore sectarian.

Edmund Spenser was a pioneering part of the English New Order both at home and in his colonial estate in Ireland. His big poem, *The Faery Queen*, was written in praise of Elizabeth. I was once confined to barracks for a month and, as it happened to be the only book available to me, I read it. Nothing of it remained in my mind except certain words, of which I think one was "*blatant*". When I was released I looked him up. I thought that, as his name was still so well known after such a long time, there must have been something to him that was not evident in the *Faery Queen*. I found that he had written some verse about rural life in England, and a pamphlet outlining a scheme that would assure the English position in Ireland by means of exterminating the Irish. (As far as I recall, he had a sense of the attractiveness of the Irish way of life, which was the thing that made it necessary to destroy it.)

In Belfast in the early 1970s I noticed that a new kind of literary poetry was being written—poetry freed from rhythm and rhyme and therefore designed to be read on the page, rather than to take flight in the memory. And I noticed that the writers of this kind of poetry were becoming interested in the Elizabethans, who they looked on as their source. Their

immediate source seemed to be an English lecturer in English at Queen's University, whose name as far as I recall was Philip Hobsbaum.

And then there was the issue of whether Seamus Heaney, who was getting to be well-known, could agree to be included in a poetry collection that had "British" in the title. I believe he agreed to inclusion. I could not see why—leaving other things aside—he hesitated on aesthetic grounds. His writing was British regional—anaesthetic. It never left the page. I doubt that Hugo Wolff could have made it sing.

Anyhow, Irish verse did its best in that generation to de-Hibernise itself, and succeeded.

Professor Laffan continues:

"In Liam Kennedy's words we must continue to shun the old, absurd idea that the Irish were MOPE—"the most oppressed people ever". They weren't. In the past century the Jews, the Poles, the Kurds and the Palestinians were among those whose experiences were vastly worse than those of the Irish. The British Government could be, and were, shamed into changing its actions and policies. Irish rebels benefited from the fact that they were fighting a democracy whose leaders were responsive to domestic and international opinion. The centenary commemorations must also acknowledge that a quarter of the Irish population wanted to remain loyal subjects of the British crown...

"A century ago, if a war between Nationalists and Unionists was to be averted—a war that might have been comparable to that which destroyed Yugoslavia in the 1990s—partition was the obvious, natural solution. John Redmond accepted it as a temporary expedient..."

I was fairly closely involved in Northern affairs since 1965 or 1966, trying to make political sense of them. The University historians had produced nothing that was to the point so I had to become a historian myself, and in order to be a historian I had to be an observer first. And what I saw was that, when the country was partitioned by the British democracy, the part that was retained within the British state was systematically excluded from the system of politics that made the state functional. And it seemed pretty obvious that exclusion from the political structures that produced the British sense of normality would tend to make the excluded region abnormal to some extent.

And the composition of the Six Counties at the moment of Partition, and the dynamic that was operative in them, suggested that exclusivist devolution was about the worst system that could have been imposed on

them. Neither Unionists nor Nationalists wanted it, but the British Democracy insisted that they must have it.

Liam Kennedy, from Tipperary I believe, who became a Professor in Belfast, seems to have an animus against the Southern state, and I assume that is why he could not see that Westminster—in constructing Northern Ireland, instead of enacting a simple Six County partition (leaving them under direct Westminster rule, as would have been implemented in 1916 if Redmond had agreed)—bore the ultimate responsibility for all that happened within the Northern Ireland hot-house.

I think the first time I heard of MOPE was when Professor the Lord Bew picked it up from somewhere in the middle or late 1970s and ridiculed it. I had never come across that idea in use in West Belfast. The closest to it I had ever heard was the white negro idea suggested by some elements in the People's Democracy. In the bewilderment of 1969/70 comparisons were groped for, and in the circumstances of the moment one could see why that idea sprang to mind.

At the outset I rejected comparison as a way of understanding the North. Northern Ireland was unique. Nothing else could be found in the political universe to compare it with: a region of the most durable liberal-democratic state in the world, that was excluded by the State from the political system that made it what it was, and forced into a subordinate arrangement consisting of two hostile communities.

If that Northern Ireland arrangement had been established in all the regions of the territory of the state, the state as we know it would not exist. It would have had a structure similar to that of Yugoslavia. But the British State, though largely responsible for the creation of Yugoslavia as a flimsy political structure spread over a series of antagonistic communities, had ensured that it was not itself constructed in that form. And I can see no grounds for Professor Laffan's suggestion that, if Ireland had not been partitioned by the setting up of Northern Ireland, the state would have suffered a Yugoslav-type collapse.

It was the setting up of Northern Ireland that led to a war that bore some resemblance to the communal conflict by which, with a nudge from the EU, the Yugoslav State was destroyed. But that resemblance is slight. The existence of the British State was never at issue—not in 1914, or 1919, or 1970.

And the War of 1970-1998 was not fought between the Unionist and Nationalist communities, Yugoslav style. It was fought between the Nationalist community and the British State. It was so declared by Rory O'Brady (the Sinn Fein leader), as I recall, and it was so continued when the Gerry Adams group changed its immediate purpose.

The British Government, in the person of Secretary of State Merlyn Rees, tried to "Ulsterise" the conflict in 1974—to make it a war between the Catholic and Protestant communities—but he failed.

As to MOPE: if one discusses candidates for it, as Professor Laffan does, then the Irish must surely be contenders, as being the longest under an oppression which almost always tended towards genocide without ever achieving it.

What other people was accorded such intimate attention over such a long period by an oppressive Power? It began under Elizabeth in the 16th century. When was it discontinued? Possibly around 1860, when the survivors of the 'Famine' generated a tenant-right movement and a Home Rule movement.

The Poles have not been a people under continuous oppression. They have had their moment as oppressors, in the Ukraine. They have been a State actor in European affairs twice in modern times and suffered accordingly.

The Jews, in pursuit of an exclusivist vision, chose a dangerous mode of existence as a nation dispersed amongst the nations, living by providing commercial services. They survived the anti-Semitism of the new nation-state system established by the Versailles Powers, in which the thrusting native middle-classes saw them as an obstacle to national development; and they survived the concentrated extermination campaign against them conducted by Germans and Ukrainian nationalists: largely because of their position in Communist Russia.

Then they themselves very quickly became an oppressive colonial force, acting on the Palestinians and engaging in ethnic cleansing. And their leaders have at various times declared that the Palestinians have no legitimate existence—they are not a people. Was this not the kind of thing said about the Irish under the Penal Laws—that Catholics were presumed not to exist amongst His Majesty's subjects.

It seems to me that MOPE was dragged up from some obscure quarter by Queen's academics for use as propaganda against Republicans. That is regrettable. But

it has been dragged up and kept going. And the closest I can see to the historical position of the Irish under the English is the position of the Palestinians under the Jewish nationalists.

"Irish rebels benefited from the fact that they were fighting a democracy" (Laffan)!! But wasn't it the case that it was the Democracy that was fighting them?

And what were they? In the 1918 Election they were a national democracy availing of the Right of National Self-Determination, proclaimed by the United States when it entered Britain's War on Germany and saved Britain from possible defeat.

Britain had reasons for not dissenting noticeably from the American Declaration, but it did not feel itself bound by it. It took part in constructing the League of Nations, but used its influence to get the representatives of the Irish Government locked out.

Four years later Britain admitted an Irish Government to the League, but it was not the Republican Government locked out in 1919. It had in the interim arranged that the Republican Government should be destroyed in 'Civil War' by a Provisional Government—a Government under Crown authority.

Democracy seems to be in need of having good things said about it just now, but the place to find those good things is not in British/Irish relations following the Election of 1918.

The inhibiting influence on destructive British activity in nationalist Ireland in 1919-21 was not "democracy": it was the fact that Britain had weakened itself by its War of Destruction on Germany; that it was no longer the free Imperial agent in the world that it had been in 1914; and that it had to be very careful not to offend American opinion, not because of the Irish element in it, but because there was a conflict of interest between it and the USA with regard to the Empire and Naval Supremacy, and it had become America's debtor.

It had to play its Irish game with America in mind.

Brendan Clifford

**Next month: Further Remarks on
What is History?**

What is Democracy?

There are numerous definitions of democracy. Perhaps the most popular is Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address which described the Government as: "of the people, by the people, for the people".

I've heard other definitions from Brendan Clifford along the following lines:

"Democracy is a system in which the people are made responsible for the actions of the government".

This emphasises the compliance aspect of the system. The people feel that, since they elected (even indirectly) the Government, that they are obliged to acquiesce to its actions.

Another definition is that it is a system in which two or more political parties compete for the most unprincipled, superficial and fickle section of the electorate; otherwise known as the floating voter.

Alexis de Tocqueville considered these issues almost two hundred years ago. He looked at democracy in its most pristine form which, at that time (1830s), was in America.

Democracy in America did not result from a long historical evolution; it was imported by English puritans. They didn't have an aristocratic power to overcome, but had the opportunity to create a society from scratch.

De Tocqueville doesn't deny the effective Genocide perpetrated against the American Indians. Nor does he deny the pernicious effects of Slavery. Nevertheless, he thinks the religious beliefs of the new settlers was an important factor in the development of democracy in America.

One of the basic ideas of democracy is Equality. We take this idea for granted but, in de Tocqueville's time, it was relatively new. In feudal times different laws applied to different classes of people. About the only institution that was open to all classes in Europe was the Church.

In America de Tocqueville found everyone among the white settlers was "equal". The nearest he could find to an aristocracy was the Southern Plantation Owners. But

he felt that even this class was being undermined by capitalist developments.

Everyone is free to pursue wealth in America and the potential to accumulate wealth in the inexorable movement westwards was greater than other societies. But he detects a restlessness among the people. While each pursues his dream of wealth, the wealth is ephemeral: it can be lost as quickly as it is gained. As a result, there is no stable ruling class that can consider the good of society in a disinterested way.

However, he admits that in an aristocratic form of government the ruling class sometimes neglects the interests of the lower classes. But not always. Marx, for instance, noticed that the British aristocrats sometimes implemented reforms in the working class interest so as to constrain the power of the emerging bourgeoisie.

In a democracy, according to de Tocqueville, the political leaders are corrupted whereas in an aristocratic form of government the people are corrupted. What he meant by this is that in a democracy the political leaders have to pander to the whims of the people. Whereas in an aristocratic society the people have to grovel to their masters.

As democracy evolves, the most talented members of society withdraw from politics rather than abase themselves before the electorate. It is only in times of great crisis that the great men step forward and can be appreciated by the electorate. De Tocqueville remarked that the generation of politicians which emerged during the American War of Independence was far more impressive than the subsequent generation which in his view was mediocre. Once democracies settle down to a stable routine the requirement for high quality leaders diminishes.

Indeed, he believed that democracy tends towards mediocrity throughout the society. Everyone is so busy attempting to earn money that they don't have time to perform quality work. He didn't think there was as many great scientists or writers as in aristocratic societies. The defect is compensated for by the fact that the general level of education is higher in democracies. So, in the case of science,

the sheer number of scientists ensures that progress is made.

In a democracy people have equal power, but another way of looking at this is that they are equally powerless. For this reason, there is a tendency for individuals to withdraw from political life and concentrate on personal and material concerns.

De Tocqueville noted that the condition of man in democratic societies was paradoxical. On the one hand he feels he is independent of his fellow man, in the sense that he has the means to live comfortably above a subsistence level. On the other hand, he is overwhelmed by a social power which can be more oppressive than aristocratic or authoritarian societies.

Here is what he says on this subject:

“Under the absolute sway of an individual despot the body was attacked in order to subdue the soul, and the soul escaped the blows which were directed against it and rose superior to the attempt; but such is not the course adopted by tyranny in democratic republics; there the body is left free, and the soul is enslaved.”

The social power confronts the individual thus:

“You are free to think differently from me, and to retain your life, your property, and all that you possess; but if such be your determination, you are henceforth an alien among your people. You may retain your civil rights, but they will be useless to you, for you will never be chosen by your fellow-citizens if you solicit their suffrages, and they will affect to scorn you if you solicit their esteem. You will remain among men, but you will be deprived of the rights of mankind. Your fellow-creatures will shun you like an impure being, and those who are most persuaded of your innocence will abandon you too, lest they should be shunned in their turn. Go in peace! I have given you your life, but it is an existence incomparably worse than death.”

In this era of woke ideology it is interesting to note what de Tocqueville says about the dangers of a Government regulating ideas:

“A government can no more be competent to keep alive and to renew the circulation of opinions and feelings amongst a great people, than to manage all the speculations of productive industry. No sooner does a government attempt to go beyond its political sphere and to enter upon this new track, than it exercises,

even unintentionally, an insupportable tyranny”.

De Tocqueville thought that religion could provide an antidote to the “insupportable tyranny”. Indeed, he thought that democratic societies had far more need of religion than aristocratic societies because they enabled the individual to rise above his own personal concerns. Democratic societies, on the other hand, tended to encourage the individual to isolate himself from society.

The most remarkable thing about de Tocqueville is that his insights seem more relevant now than in his own time. The capacity of society to manufacture pleasures is now immeasurably greater. In this regard he says:

“In the principle of equality, I very clearly discern two tendencies; the one leading the mind of every man to untried thoughts, the other inclined to prohibit him from thinking at all. And I perceive how, under the dominion of certain laws, democracy would extinguish that liberty of the mind to which a democratic social condition is favourable; so that, after having broken all the bondage once imposed on it by ranks or by men, the human mind would be closely fettered to the general will of the greatest number.”

A cynical view of modern society is that among a small minority there is a cacophony of incoherent ideas which rages impotently against a stultifying consensus.

The problem that de Tocqueville identifies is that the human desire for equality far exceeds his desire for freedom.

In this respect it is worth quoting de Tocqueville at length:

“The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men all equal and alike, incessantly endeavouring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest—his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind; as for the rest of his fellow-citizens, he is close to them, but he sees them not—he touches them, but he feels them not; he exists but in himself and for himself alone; and if his kindred still remain to him, he may be said at any rate to have lost his country. Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications, and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and

mild. It would be like the authority of a parent, if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks on the contrary to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labours, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness: it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances—what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living? Thus it every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range, and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself. The principle of equality has prepared men for these things: it has predisposed men to endure them, and oftentimes to look on them as benefits. After having thus successively taken each member of the community in its powerful grasp, and fashioned them at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community”.

De Tocqueville assumes that the source of this tutelary power is the will of the majority, but can we be even sure of this? If the majority have disengaged from politics, the Government may be subjected to other influences.

It seems that the dangers of a democratic tyranny are far greater now than in de Tocqueville’s time.

For much of the twentieth century there was a rival to the “tutelary power” in the West. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a liberal globalist ideology has been dominant.

But in recent years there has been a challenge to Western dominance. The conflict in Ukraine has exposed the vulnerability of Western military power. However, the challenge that Russia has posed has not been just a military one, it has presented an alternative ideological view, based on conservative Christian values, which has resonated with some in what is called the “*Global South*”, and also in America itself.

A defeat of the NATO Powers, by undermining Western ideological values, may be the best hope for a more tolerant, diverse and less belligerent model of democracy in the West.

John Martin

The Morrison Report

Ashkenazi vs Mizrahi ?

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is out of favour with Joe Biden at the minute. He began his sixth term as Prime Minister in December 2022 but, more than six months later, he has yet to visit the White House. However, the Israeli President Isaac Herzog was been allowed to visit and to address the US Congress.

The principal reason for Biden's displeasure has been Netanyahu's continuing commitment to introducing judicial review, to shift the balance of power in Israel away from the Supreme Court towards the Government by limiting through legislation the occasions on which the Court can take action against legislation passed by the Knesset. Given Biden's recent disagreements with decisions by the US Supreme Court on affirmative action and student loan forgiveness, you might have thought that he would have some sympathy with Netanyahu's attempt to shift the balance of power away from the unelected Israeli Supreme Court.

NO WRITTEN CONSTITUTION

Israel hasn't got a written constitution like the US. But it has a set of Basic Laws, which are meant to be the building blocks for a future constitution. However, these can be amended by the Knesset, usually by a simple majority vote. Individuals can petition the Supreme Court to determine if a Bill passed by the Knesset, or an action taken by the Government, conforms to the principles laid down in the Basic Laws.

From the outset, the opposition in the Knesset led by Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid and Benny Gantz of National Unity have opposed any change in the existing powers of the Court and for the past seven months there have been widespread street demonstrations broadly supporting that principle. The overriding theme from the Opposition, echoed from the White House, has been that the any change of the kind being proposed by the new Government, which was elected last November, would do grave damage to democracy in Israel.

FIRST PIECE OF LEGISLATION

In March, Netanyahu paused the implementation of changes while attempts were

made by the Israeli President and others to find a compromise. These attempts failed and the first piece of legislation reducing the powers of the Supreme Court was passed by the Knesset on 24th July 2023. It eliminates the so-called "reasonableness standard" in the Basic Law on the Judiciary, which allows the Supreme Court to override Government decisions on the grounds that they are "unreasonable". All 64 members of the Government Coalition in the Knesset voted in favour and all 56 members of the Opposition walked out in protest.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid termed the enactment of the Bill "*the defeat of Israeli democracy*" [1], despite the fact that —

- the bill was passed by a parliament elected last November,
- the bill enhances the powers of the elected parliament and government at the expense of the unelected Supreme Court, and
- the bill can be repealed by Yair Lapid and his Opposition colleagues if they win a majority of seats in the Knesset at the next election.

NULLIFIED?

It is possible that the bill will be nullified by the Supreme Court long before the next election on the grounds that it conflicts with Israel's Basic Laws. Petitions seeking nullification have already been submitted to the Court. Lapid himself has said that he will submit another in the coming days. If any of these petitions are successful and the Bill is nullified, there would be a stand-off between the Court and the Knesset. It's not obvious how that would be resolved.

After the Bill was passed, Netanyahu indicated that he would now seek to negotiate with the Opposition about further measures of judicial review and that further legislation would not be introduced until October when the Knesset returns from its recess. It's unlikely that negotiations will lead to agreement since months of negotiations prior to the passing of the Bill failed to do so. Will Netanyahu press ahead without agreement? If he doesn't press ahead, his coalition partners may bring down his Government.

PALESTINIAN DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

Lapid's characterisation of these changes as "the defeat of Israeli democracy" is absurd for another reason, namely, Israel isn't a democracy. The most basic principle of a democracy is that everybody subject to the rule of the elected government has a vote. But, while Jewish settlers who live on the West Bank have a vote, millions of Palestinians in the occupied territories don't and are excluded from the election of the Government that rules over them. This enormous democratic deficit penalising Palestinians is of little or no concern to the tens of thousands of Jewish demonstrators, whose objective is to maintain the existing powers of the unelected Supreme Court.

ASHKENAZI VS MIZRAHI?

The reasoning expressed publicly by the Opposition for its resistance to the judicial reform makes no sense — a rebalancing of the political system to reduce the ability of the Supreme Court to curtail the operation of the Knesset is not a threat to the electoral system that operates in Israel. So there must some underlying unspoken reason why there has been such widespread and prolonged opposition to what is rather minor, and reversible, change to the political system. At its root this seems to be attempt by Ashkenazi Jews, that is, Jews from a European background, to overthrow a government put in power largely by Mizrahi voters, that is, Jews whose background is the Middle East or North Africa.

Ashkenazi Jews were responsible for the establishment of Israel and dominated its political life during its early years. Ashkenazi parties — the Labour Party and its predecessors — governed Israel for its first 25 years. The Labour monopoly was broken by Likud, formed by Menachem Begin in 1973. Though an Ashkenazi Jew himself, he successfully attracted Mizrahi voters to Likud in the 1977 election and became Prime Minister. That was a major turning point in Israel's political history, marking the first time the left lost power.

Likud has been the leading party in Israel ever since, being in power for most of the 1980s and almost continuously since 2000. It continues to be the party for Mizrahi Jews. Benjamin Netanyahu, like Begin an Ashkenazi Jew, has been Likud Prime Minister since 2009, apart from a short interval in 2021-22. The last Labour leader to be Prime Minister was Ehud Barak — from 1998 to 2000. Today the Labour Party barely exists.

It is not that Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews live separate lives. Intermarriage is common: today over 30% of Jewish marriages are mixed [2]. The 1995 census shows that 25% of the Jewish children born that year had at least one Ashkenazi and one Mizrahi parent or grandparent [3]. With this level of "mixing", it's difficult to see how distinct Ashkenazi and Mizrahi groups persist. But they do—and that's what lies behind the present political turmoil in Israel.

Keeping Jewish Towns Jewish

On 25th June 2023, the day after the Knesset amended the Basic Law on the Judiciary, it passed an amendment to the Cooperative Societies Ordinance [4].

Prior to its amendment, this law allowed small Israeli Jewish "community towns" of up to 400 households to operate "admissions committees" with the power to select applicants for housing units and plots of land. These committees, which at present exist in the Galilee and in the Negev, have the power to approve or to deny applicants who wish to reside there, based on their perceived "social suitability" to the "social and cultural fabric" of a community. Needless to say, Jewish Admission Committees have used these powers to exclude Palestinian citizens of Israel from these communities, which are built on State-controlled land.

The amended law allows this discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel to be applied in larger towns with 400-700 households. Admission Committees will be allowed to operate in them too. Furthermore, in five years' time, without further legislation, the Israeli Government will be able to permit Admissions Committees in towns with more than 700.

The Knesset passed this amendment to the Cooperative Societies Ordinance by 42 votes to 11. It had support from both Government and Opposition Parties in the Knesset. Only the Arab parties opposed it.

David Morrison
27 July 2023

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Housing: Response To Criticism

I'd like to thank Dave Alvey for his constructive criticism of my article on housing (*Irish Political Review*, July 2023)

Dave thinks that, while taking a long-term perspective I'm missing some of the details. In particular, he thinks there was an ideological shift towards free market thinking beginning in the late nineties and perhaps accelerating.

My memory is that there was no housing problem up until 2011. On the contrary, it was perceived that we had made too many houses and far too many of our workers were in building and ancillary services (conveyancing, Estate agents, property advertising etc etc).

When the 2008 financial crisis hit, building just stopped following the arrival of the 'Troika'. A large part of the reason was that the economy was considered to be destroyed. The opposition to the Fianna Fail-led Government had a vested interest in this narrative. Also, after the hubris of the Celtic Tiger era, FF was accused of arrogance if it dared to suggest that things were not quite as bad as they seemed.

The resumption of growth and high net immigration, without there being invest-

ment in housing caused the crisis. In my opinion, the lack of investment in housing was due an overly pessimistic view of future economic prospects, which was shared by both Government and Opposition, regardless of political orientation.

I am sceptical that this under-investment was caused by an ideological opposition to social housing. If that was the case, there has been a dramatic *volte face*. At present all the main parties are in favour of increased social housing.

However, if any political party is to blame, it is Fianna Fáil, but not for the reasons Dave suggests. Fianna Fáil buckled under the media onslaught and replaced Brian Cowen with Micheal Martin in order to distance the party from the Government's record. Martin talked about electoral and Seanad reform: anything except the economic crisis.

The Party should have either retained Brian Cowen or replaced him with Brian Lenihan. That way Fianna Fail would have been forced to explain and justify itself and give a more realistic view to the Irish people of the true economic situation which was very far from a complete collapse.

John Martin

Looking Back At The Korean War

The American magazine, *Foreign Affairs* in July carried an article entitled, *Why America Forgets And China Remembers The Korean War*, directed at Chinese 'historical distortions'.

The Korean War (1950-53) was not a UN war, as the USSR's absence from the United Nations Security Council invalidated the UN authority.

The fact is that Syngman Rhee's brutal fascist regime made several military feints, at the very least, across the 38th Parallel. There were many popular, communist actions, perhaps insurrections, against Syngman Rhee (America's man, or at least puppet). These were not all 'instigated' by 'the North', as is often alleged.

Korea was one country, arbitrarily divided. Such points were already being made in the early 1950's by James Cameron

(in *Tribune*) and William Pomeroy—the latter had served his time with the Hukbong democratic and progressive forces in the Philippines (a political slum since US defeated the Huks), and gave credibility to allegations of US biological warfare in Korea.

There is no mention of the many massacres of civilians by 'UN' troops—basically made up the US and a 'coalition of the willing'. At least the best known, or least censored, such massacre—at No Gun Rhi—has not been totally redacted.

That US genocidal war in Korea is still celebrated in the long-running and widely-repeated MASH 'comedy', with "hotlips" Houlihan to remind us of the good ole days.

As for the vaunted US 'restraint', even the war criminal Truman (see Miss Anscombe's Mr. Truman's Degree in her collected essays) urged MacArthur not to cross the Yalu River and sacked him largely for doing so.

Ben Cosin

They Can't Leave It Alone!

Militarisation and Re-Armament

Sitting out in the open with coffee and cake, enjoying the Summer sunshine, is a traditional German pleasure. But this year, here, in Mecklenburg (North Germany), there was no peace and quiet for us: Again and again, at irregular intervals, airplanes thundered overhead at a height of 300 to 400 metres. Everything NATO has to offer by way of aircraft gathered here, in our north German airspace, between June 12th and 23rd: American F18s and F35/IIs, A10 Fairchild, German Eurofighters, Tornados, and Airbus A400M Transporters.

A grand total of 25 nations, with 250 combat aircraft and around 10,000 soldiers, took part in the "Air Defender 2023" manoeuvre: the largest Air Operations exercise in NATO history.

And it was all going on above our heads. And—what is particularly noteworthy—under German military leadership !!!!!

In fact the occupation of Germany, physical and mental, began right at the start of June this year. That was when the Evangelical Church held its 38th Church Congress in Nuremberg (7th-11th June). Its slogan was, "Now is the time!". (The Church Congress or *Kirchentag* was founded in its present form in 1949 because of the failure of the Church Establishment to resist National Socialism. The idea was to provide a counterweight to the official Church and to act as an interface between the Church and the world. The event takes place every two years.)

Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmaier gave the opening Address, and said: "Besides all our other efforts, now is the time for weapons".

This is absolutely outrageous: never before in the history of German Church Congresses has there been such hawkish language from the highest political authority in the country! Of course what the President had in mind was German arms deliveries to Ukraine.

Nevertheless, there was an immediate response from one of the regional Evangelical Bishops: "How are we to conduct ourselves as followers of Jesus Christ, who took the weapon from his disciples?"

In fact, this is the first time ever that a high-ranking military officer has been invited to

a panel discussion at the *Kirchentag*: the officer in question was the Chief of Staff of the German Armed Forces, Carsten Breuer! Yet there was once a time when the Evangelical Church was the mainstay of the Anti-War Movement in West Germany.

Militarisation is clearly now the fashion of the moment.

Then there is the trip of our Defence Minister, Boris Pistorius, to Asia at the beginning of June to attend a local security summit, the "Shangri-La Dialogue". But it was India, the second largest country in Asia, that he was particularly courting: what he claimed from India was a "strategic partnership"—naturally against China and Russia. In return for this, Pistorius was offering reliable assistance in the field of military cooperation and the arms economy, which is to say: Germany supplies India with precision weapons—and probably also the possibility of producing them itself.

In fact, there are already ongoing German/Indian negotiations over the delivery of six conventional, but highly modern German submarines (U-Boote) from the company TKMS (Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems).

On top of all that, Pistorius has already trumpeted the German plan to enhance its presence in the Indo-Pacific by sending another frigate and supply ship to the area, where the frigate Bayern is already sailing. Here again we see something unique: never before in our history has a German Defence or War Minister gone to Asia on an aggressive mission like this. The trip heralds a new stage in the return of German militarism to the region.

Berlin's megalomaniac plans to stand shoulder to shoulder with the USA against the Nuclear Power, China, in the South China Sea, suggest a warlike continuity with erstwhile German Imperialism. Let us recall that, on 27th July 1900, Kaiser Wilhelm II gave his infamous "Hun Speech" in Bremerhaven: on the departure of the German East Asian Expeditionary Corps. This event was the prelude to the brutal suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China and probably a first step towards World War I.

Given this global megalomania, it is now becoming clear why the Federal Parliament last year set up a "special fund for the Bundeswehr [armed forces] of 100 billion

Euros" (!!). Of this, the Air Force is to receive 40.9 billion, the Navy 19.3, the Army 16.6, the Bundeswehr Command 20.7 billion, etc., etc.

On top of that, more than 2% of the Gross Domestic Product is spent on armaments every year. In short: the 100 billion Euro Special Fund is money is to be used exclusively for rearmament.

And the number of soldiers is to be increased from the present 183,000 to 203,000 by 2031.

So it is no surprise to find that the German armaments industry is on the verge of an upswing. For example, Rheinmetall, the mega-sized armaments group, recently applied to build a factory in Mecklenburg to produce components for the F-35 fighter jet, which is probably being built in cooperation with the USA. Thyssenkrupp Marine System (mentioned above) has bought the former East German MTW shipyard in Wismar with a view to building submarines there. And in Rostock-Warnemünde, the old East German Warnow Shipyard has been converted into a naval arsenal, and equipped for the repair of warships.

But of course all this means new jobs for north German Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, so political resistance to such militarisation is not to be expected: just as there was none to when the Army recently ordered 18 "Leopard 2AB" tanks, with an option for a further 105, from tank manufacturer Krauss-Maffei Wegmann in Munich—from whom, incidentally, the Army also ordered 12 tank howitzers 2000.

The fact is the militarisation and 'hardening up' of West German society has become all-pervasive. Last year saw the revival of "Homeland Security"—which amounts to voluntary service in the armed forces. The idea is to appeal to the patriotism of young men and women from the age of 17, using the catchphrase, "Your year for Germany". In fact, in 2011 Conscription was deferred in Germany, and young people have little interest in volunteering for military service.

That suggests that there is no way that the numbers in the armed forces can be increased to 203,000 by 2031 using voluntary recruitment. Hence the lousy trick of *Homeland Security*. Here is the official advertisement for "Homeland Security":

"In Your year for Germany you as a soldier will make your contribution to society and to your homeland. And here

is how it works:

3 months of basic military training
4 months of specialist training,
5 months of exercises and assignments
in the reserve service."

After this 12-month service in homeland security, the volunteer has "to be available for six years as a reserve service provider..." (of the German armed forces).

There has been a huge outcry from civil society organisations against this militarising recruitment policy. At the moment young people who perform their voluntary 'social year' in civil society organisations are paid a maximum of 400 Euros a month. But the "homeland security soldiers" are to get a monthly salary of 1400 to 1500 Euros.

There is some opposition to this plan. Caritas, a voluntary social body, stresses that voluntary services are a prerogative of civil society: not of the State.

Others fear that "homeland security" forces could be used to police domestic problems or in terrorist situations. And the Left is outraged by the term "Heimatschutz" [Homeland Security], suspect as a term misused by the Nazis.

As for the increasing militarization of society, let's take a brief look at our schools. A recent newspaper report notes:

"The Saxon Minister of Education, member of the CDU [Christian Democratic Union], along with a Major-General from the Bundeswehr will sign a Cooperation Agreement between the school and the Bundeswehr in Dresden. The CDU parliamentary group wants to strengthen the connection between civil society and the Bundeswehr—the Bundeswehr is to pay regular visits to schools for this purpose."

Such attempts by politicians to introduce the armed forces into schools are happening across virtually the whole Federal Republic. Here are some recent comments on this problem from Zaklin Nasti, the Human Rights policy spokeswoman for the party, "Die Linke". in the Frankfurter Rundschau: Despite "increasingly aggressive attempts to recruit among schoolchildren", young people are "less and less willing to potentially give their lives for senseless wars".

Nevertheless, she continues, the Federal Government is pushing "the militarization of society" further:

"Even in the schools, which should be a safe space, war is presented as something ordinary and killing as a job among many."

People abroad need to take note of what is happening in contemporary Germany.

Herbert Rimmel

De Valera, The *Irish Times*, Hitler, Fine Gael, David Gray, Eduard Hempel, the Varadkarish *Irish Times*, And Leo Varadkar

I was searching for information on what Varadkar had done now, and kept finding reports so intent on endorsing his lies that they couldn't give a clear account of what he actually said. Enough though for me to be astonished that Ireland could have such a slimeball at the helm.

At core the lie is that the Irish tradition is to be militarily neutral, and not politically neutral.

In fact, Dev kept Ireland neutral when war ravaged Europe, but he was not neutral about Nazism.

Varadkar is not neutral politically or militarily. He supports the Ukrainian Nazi-driven war against Russia. He turns upside down the comparison of Dev's actions and his own, in the precise context where he is escalating Irish support of military aggression.

In February 1933, De Valera, who had led Fianna Fail into Government with the support of a handful of Labour Party TDs a year earlier, sought re-election to secure an overall majority for his party in the Dail.

The *Irish Times* Editorially predicted woe and ruination for Ireland if he was re-elected.

But the electorate, lacking the Editor's erudition, ignored his warning and, in a succession of General Elections, gave Fianna Fail overall majorities until 1948.

In March 1933, weeks after warning of a De Valera-led disaster, The *Irish Times* Editorial, Herr Hitler's Way rejoiced in Herr Hitler's accession to power in Berlin, and heartlessly applauded his rough treatment of Socialists and Communists, invoking the thuggish slogan that one cannot make an omelette without breaking an egg.

In 1934 De Valera was instrumental in having the Soviet Union admitted to membership of the League of Nations.

At the time, and until 1939, Soviet Foreign policy was directed by Maxim Litvinov and promoted peace and disarmament.

In 1934 Poland signed a 10 year Non Aggression Pact with the Third Reich. Following Britain's Munich Agreement with Hitler, Poland joined the Third Reich in seizing Czech territory.

Stalin asked Litvinov to resign and, understandably in the circumstances, had Molotov sign an agreement with Ribbentrop (August 1939). Perhaps someone might unearth *Irish Times* Editorials on the 1934 and 1939 pacts?

In 1935 German Jews were stripped of their citizen rights by the Nuremberg Decrees. Speaking for Ireland's majority, Eamon de Valera publicly condemned the Nazi measures.

But speaking for Fine Gael, which had adopted Fascist uniforms, salutes and tactics following Fianna Fail's democratic arrival in Office in 1932, Desmond Fitzgerald criticised De Valera's comments.

In 1936 Fine Gael organised an Irish unit to join Franco's onslaught on Spanish democracy.

The Irish Free State had diplomatic relations with many countries and, when Hitler came to power in Germany, de Valera made it clear that he would not accept a Nazi party member as Minister in the German Legation in Dublin.

A career diplomat with impeccable credentials, Eduard Hempel was appointed: and his conduct was irreproachable. He remained in Office until the collapse of the Reich in May 1945.

David Gray, a playwright and novelist, related to Eleanor Roosevelt, served as American Minister in Dublin from 1940 to 1947. He despised Ireland and hated de Valera; and had not the diplomatic skill to disguise his feelings.

Gray lived in the Phoenix Park, in a house which had been the official residence of Britain's Secretaries of State for Ireland in former days.

Despite American know-how, the US Envoy was at a loss in his dealings with De Valera.

So he regularly consulted a former occupant of his residence.

But, since the ex-occupant, Arthur Balfour, had been buried since 1930 the consultations were effected through occult media.

Readers of "The Comedians" and "Scoop" can imagine the sport Grahame Green and Evelyn would have made of all this, had the American Minister been A Darker Shade Than Gray!

US President Franklyn D. Roosevelt died on April 12th 1945. A special meeting of Dail Eireann was called for the next day. Eamon de Valera heaped praise on the departed statesman for many achievements. Not least of these was the unprecedented (and never to be repeated) election to the Presidency on four occasions.

Dev had himself been elected head of Irish Governments in 1919, 1921, 1932, 1933, 1937, 1938 and 1944.

In 1920, in New York, Dev had employed the lawyer FDR to establish how he could issue Irish Republican Bonds in the States without infringing American Law.

The Irish Tricolour hung at half-mast at on all public buildings for days after FDR's death.

A few weeks later, as Soviet forces surrounded Hitler's Bunker, having liberated most of Europe from Fascism, Hitler shot himself and the Third Reich expired. De Valera, leader of a neutral state which had retained diplomatic relations with the Reich, followed strict protocol by calling on Dr. Hempel giving him his condolences. David Gray, representing the conquering Americans took custody of Hempel, who was never charged let alone convicted of any offence.

British, and American anti-Irish propagandists, together with their parroting collaborators in Ireland itself, accused the Doctrinaire Democrat de Valera of being an admirer of Hitler.

Visiting the heirs of Hitler's most enthusiastic genocidal assistants in Europe, Leo Varadkar, today's leading Blue Shirt, appears to support those smears.

I find it hard to believe that he is so ill-informed about de-Valera, or about his hosts in Kiev.

Donal Kennedy

More On The Turf Board!

In my last reference to the Turf Board Dispute of 1936 I said that, before I returned to the topic of Todd

Andrews, the villain of the piece, I would single out instances which have earned my admiration.

ON THE CREDIT SIDE

The first thing is, that on his decision alone, as Chairman of CIE in 1966, he had the major railway stations named after Clarke, Connolly, Pearse, MacDonagh, MacDiarmada, Ceannt and Plunkett: executed signatories to the Declaration of Independence, and others executed with them, including Heuston and Kent.

Another thing was that, as Chairman of RTE, he telephoned its Director General and demanded that he fire "that Fucker, Gay Byrne". Alas, in vain.

Furthermore, which surprised me when I read his two volumes of Memoirs, "Dublin Made Me" and "Man of No Property", they may well be masterpieces.

He recalled that RTE refused to censor staff there with left-wing opinions.

Preparing for this piece I checked Wikipedia, though it is not always reliable. But I believe it is accurate about the stories of Todd being wounded and making two prison or internment escapes during the War of Independence and the Civil War.

I particularly noticed that he had been released after a ten-day hunger-strike: because a few weeks ago I read the Diary of Frank Gallagher written in April 1920.

Gallagher was imprisoned in Mountjoy without charge or trial with a group of others. They decided to demand Prisoner of War status. Most, like Gallagher were soldiers in the Army, answerable to Ireland's democratic Government, elected some sixteen months previously. They told the prison Governor that they would go on Hunger Strike if refused. More prisoners kept coming in, and all of them joined the strike. After ten days they were released.

Scholars with DBEs [Dame of the British Empire, ed.], who have lunched and been charmed by Lockheed's Largess, would have little time for the likes of Frank Gallagher. But the likes of Frank Gallagher—and he had hundreds if not thousands of followers down the years—would have had no time whatever for her. Anyhow Todd Andrews was not always a bad man.

THE DEBIT SIDE

My father, two years older than Todd, was taken aback by his rough tongue, and probably under-estimated his culture. (Todd himself tells us that he used to pronounce school as "Skewell".)

He recalls Todd organising a competition for cutting turf using a sleen when there was a downpour of rain. The cutters ran for cover. Todd complained that "*the Fuckers wouldn't work in a Fit*" whilst he, Todd, was himself diving for cover.

The *sleen* (prn. SCHLANN) is a traditional spade designed for cutting turf, used since time began. In Russia/Ukraine/the Donbass at the time, Aleksei Stakhanovitch revolutionised coalmining by persuading miners to work in teams, one of them using a power drill. He used brainwork not sweat.

In the 1930s, I understand, the Vickers Company in England discovered that milled peat produced more heat than sods, and the Soviets adopted that method,

In 1952 Bord Na Mona first produced milled Peat. They used it for ESB Power Stations. I'm no Engineer but I remember my father, who knew about the Vickers and Soviet use of peat, was critical of the 20 years taken by Bord na Mona to wise up.

My Father also reported Todd bemoaning the fact that in his youth he had banged his head against a Brick Wall. Presumably during his revolutionary career.

Accordingly Todd had vowed that he would not let his sons do that.

Though from the losing side in the Civil War, Todd never had to emigrate. Many of the losers left to escape murder, or destitution. One such was Mike Quill, who with fellow losers founded a Transport Union in New York, and died in the struggle in 1966.

Martin Luther King said of Quill:

"A fighter for decent things all his life, Irish Independence, labor organisation and racial equality... this is a man the ages will remember..."

Todd was interned briefly at the end of the Civil War, was released in 1924, completed a Degree in Commerce and got a job as an Accountant with The Irish Tourist Association, and edited their publications. His spell as a 'Man of No Property' was fast receding.

In 1925, at the age of 23 he got married and in 1930 started as an Accountant with The Electricity Supply Board—all at a time when men with his record found it hard to make a living under the vengeful Free State "Government of Satraps". My paternal Grandfather (1866-1939) who had nothing to do with the Civil War so categorised the Cosgrave Regime.

For the 99 years following Todd's release, the was little or nothing of head-banging for him or his progeny.

Two of his sons became Government Ministers, and his Grandson, Ryan Tubridy, tried to bully Martin McGuinness into Felon-Setting.

Donal Kennedy

**Letter To Irish Times
Unpublished**

Schools Abuse Inquiry

Patsy McGarry reported (July 20th) that the Government's scoping inquiry into "historical sexual abuse in day and boarding schools run by religious orders [...] is not limited to private fee-paying schools". But it is limited to Roman Catholic-ethos schools! No abuse victim in a Protestant-ethos school may participate in the Inquiry's "survivor engagement process".

That is sectarian.

In 2016 Patrick O'Brien, a St. Patrick's Cathedral Dublin volunteer, Treasurer of the Friends of St Patrick's fundraising body, was convicted of sample charges of sexual abuse, during the 1980s, of choristers, pupils of St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School.

In an unreported 1989 case, O'Brien was given a two-year suspended sentence for abusing one pupil. Though previously aware of O'Brien's activities, Cathedral and School authorities did not make parents aware of an abuser stalking the Cathedral and its precincts. They failed in their duty of care. Astonishingly, the 1989 victim saw O'Brien working in the Cathedral in 2004, and contacted former classmates.

Some who were abused had no knowledge of O'Brien's conviction. Part of this subset of O'Brien's victims contacted gardai. That resulted in the 2016 conviction and custodial sentence. Unlike with Roman Catholic institutions, the Church of Ireland has not responded to a request for information on civil cases arising from this debacle.

Though deceased, the apparent failure of a duty of care by then Dean of St Patrick's Victor Griffin, and by Grammar School headmaster Brian Weir, should be investigated. So too should the fact that in 2002 O'Brien admitted additional abuse to gardai, but was not prosecuted then. Twice, therefore, an abuser was effectively permitted to occasion more misery.

On May 25th McGarry reported refusal by other Protestant-ethos schools to respond to an Irish Times request for information on abuse in those schools. In 2012 he reported 1999-2012 St Patrick's Dean Robert MacCarthy saying his Church was, 'lucky that there was no inquiry into sexual abuse within the Church of Ireland—if there had been, I doubt if we would have been found to be blameless'.

It is in the public interest, and that of victims of abuse, that this luck runs out: and that the issue is publicised. The Government Inquiry's sectarian terms of reference should be changed.

Dr. Niall Meehan

Correction IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW, July issue

Page 24: bottom of Column 3—2nd last paragraph:
beginning should read:

The Emperor resigned following the French defeat at Sedan.

Does It Up

Stack ?

Minister Ryan, Green Party, And Climate Change

As I write this I am looking out the kitchen window at a sky with white clouds and a patch of genuinely blue sky. What sailors call a Dutchman's Trousers, because apparently Dutch sailors wore blue trousers.

It is a rare thing in the past year or two to see a really blue sky. Mostly the skies are covered by 100% grey clouds of smoke from the wild fires in Oregon and Canada and a volcano in Iceland erupting clouds of smoke, and sulphurous gases: all carried to us by the usually prevailing westerly winds.

Supporters of global warming do not want to discuss the cloud cover because they want us to believe that climate is influenced entirely by the burning of fossil fuels. And they are winning the battle for their false allegations because they brazenly lie or have totally bought into the prevailing propaganda.

Many electricity-powered vans have been acquired by An Post, for example, and on each of them is stated "Zero Emissions": written several times on each van. They are fuelled by electricity—which is 35% generated from fossil fuels, according to the ESB (Electricity Supply Board), and transmitted by copper cables and steel pylons—which are manufactured by processes which are certainly not "Zero Emissions".

Society should not allow itself to fall for the codology of "Zero Emissions". "Zero Emissions" is not possible. Even a woodcarver who makes a chair or a table cannot do so without eating and the eating of food causes emissions. Even a vegetarian woodcarver will cause emissions because it is impossible for vegetables to grow without using carbon, nitrogen etc.

Carbon is one of the basic building blocks of our world. This is a fact of life which everybody should be made aware of in Primary School. Somebody should tell Minister Eamon Ryan because he is not aware of it. Minister Ryan has repeatedly called for "businesses to decarbonise".

If Minister Ryan himself decided to decarbonise he would be left standing naked in a field: because all cars, all bicycles, all clothing, all footwear, and all streets and road surfaces, are heavily dependent on carbonisation of one sort or another. So, Minister Ryan needs some lesions in basic physics.

Wildfires

Minister Ryan has produced the following statement:

"Look what is happening in Rhodes and in Greece. Our world is burning and we need to make a shift to lower our emissions in transport." (This is from the 'Irish Examiner' 26th July 2023.)

The burning of wildfires in Rhodes has nothing to do with transport emissions or with climate change. Local police and governmental authorities in Rhodes and Greece have stated it is their forensic investigations that heavily suggests that arsonists have caused the catastrophe.

To date there have been no deaths, and airlines like Ryanair and others have stated they will continue to fly their tourists there and the bookings have taken no hit. These are businesses who make it their mission to know what is going on, or otherwise they would soon be bankrupt. Our own Government (at least the members who are not abroad!) sdeclared on RTE News 1 (Monday, 24th July 2023) that travellers should take the precautions that the locals were giving out—no noontime sunbathing, but to stick to early morning and late night—which is basically what life is like in siesta-land. No change!

Concrete Jungle!

Under Minister Ryan's direction to Local Authorities (which are under his Ministerial remit), thousands of tons of concrete (a very energy intensive product) have been spread out around Cork City at street junctions, so as to make car lanes and bus lanes narrower and more difficult to negotiate.

Pleasant grass areas are concreted over to make bike lanes which few cyclists use.

The principal road entrance to Cork City at Silversprings has been narrowed to about four metres—or less, just about the width of the wheelbase of a bus.

Minister Ryan and his Department are making it very very clear that he is against road traffic. One of our local environmentalists recently made the very good point that, as Cork is basically a marsh, it needs lots of earth for water-run-off: be it rainwater or tidal flooding—yet the opposite is happening! Concrete is ev-

erywhere. And the minute the Cork City Council see a bud blooming, they tear it out and with monstrous machinery pull up all the soil and then flatten it and concrete it over, per the wishes of the Green-Party, Dublin-centric Minister Ryan!

Yes, there is the bicycle that makes the odd appearance: but that old shick is wearing very thin.

We know that all the Ministers of Government have the latest in upscale vehicles—mostly Mercedes, Lexus and BMWs, driven by a rota of 6 Gardaí each—yes that is not a mistake. I know Minister Ryan still likes us to see him on the bike but truly that is all old hat. He goes to Climate Change meetings on the Government jet (is the rumour true that they have bought a new one but after the RTE fiasco are afraid to announce it?), and am I the only one to notice that these meetings always seem to take place in lovely foreign destinations. It just does not stack up Minister Ryan.

Misguided!

I do not want to suggest that Minister Ryan is a hypocrite because, in my opinion, he genuinely believes in what he is doing, but he is misguided—and he seems to be misled by those, for instance, who just will not tolerate a much-needed motorway between Cork and Limerick, which has been thirty years in the planning and which has been 'announced' several times, but several times deflected.

And quite clearly a "light rail" system cannot be run though Cork City. A quart will not fit into a pint pot!

What is needed in Cork are two railways, in the two hills on either side of Cork, with exits/entrances going out on each side of each hill: to the city on one side and the suburbs on the other side of each hill. On the southern side there should be a branch to Cork Airport, and the southern-most rail line should go to Ringaskiddy and, by high level bridge, to Cobh.

The hills around Cork are of soft sandstone and limestone, and are easily tunnelled using modern machinery. Let us get on with it and preserve the ancient city centre for tourists and for ourselves and our children and grandchildren.

Cork City Infrastructure.

The ancient city centre of Cork is getting a thrashing recently. Partly due to bad planning and partly due to inadequate policing.

The main road system outside the city is incomplete on its western and north western side. To complete it will need a six-lane tunnel from the motorway near Ballincollig through the hill under Kerry Pike and through Blarney (or near Blarney) to join the Cork –Mallow Motorway, then on towards Sarsfields Court Hospital, and on to join the Cork-Dublin motorway. And, as a future plan, from that junction with the Cork-Dublin motorway it would complete the infrastructure if the motorway continued eastwards towards Killeagh to join the Cork-Waterford motorway.

It is now time for Cork to get decent infrastructure. Limerick and Waterford are well provided with road infrastructure and now it should be Cork's turn. Cork has great potential to have a National impact on the Irish economy when we get the road planning we deserve.

Policing

The Government recently has been doing much talking and Press releasing about how well tax collections are going. And yet the numbers of Gardai in An Garda Síochána are falling for want of funding and from want of legal protection.

Adequate funding is essential and must be provided immediately. It is an urgent matter. A US tourist was badly mugged by a 14 year old child in Dublin recently in mid-afternoon. A man was stabbed and killed by another man in Daunt Square at the centre of Cork City and the assailant used a broken bottle. Mass in the nearby Catholic Church is frequently interrupted by disorderly conduct. The city streets are not safe, even in broad daylight. Drunken and drug-fuelled violence has become the norm on a daily basis.

The Gardaí are needed on the streets and not in their offices.

Michael Stack ©

Poem

UKRAINE JUMBLE!

Let me ask you a question:

The ground is still squishy where a million lie in Iraq,
the soft bones gone of a quarter million babes

under five through sanctions, dried flesh still on the
Guantanamo torture racks.

Blood and tears in equal measure still torments Afghanistan.

Gaddafi's adopted toddler daughter dead in a British

air-strike, he himself knife-raped to death, the hollow,

echoing laugh of an also-ran Clinton, Madeline Albright

says the under-five deaths were worth it, Television cameras welcomes back British pilots, with

their wives and children, at an airbase...?

Let me interrupt you there.

I'm not finished.

You call that a question?

Here's another question: What's special about the Ukrainian civilian?

You're accusing me of favouring the blue-eyed blond-haired.

I'm accusing you of wanting more of them under the rubble.

A long war can bog down Russia, ending it's development.

Turn this recording off..!

Lastly, why can't I hear or read a different point of view?

Erase this interview right now!

You're running a propaganda campaign.

Erase now, I said?

Once propaganda starts it becomes a plague.

Remember what happened to Solomon Grundy?

Who?

He died in the Great Plague of London in 1665.

Then he's cancelled, erased!

Born on Monday

Joined the mercenaries on Tuesday.

Reached Ukraine on Wednesday

Got wounded with the Azov Brigade on Thursday

Festered on Friday

Died on Saturday

Liz Truss lays him a Whitehall wreath on Sunday.

That was the end of Solomon Grundy.

Wilson John Haire

21st March, 2022.

ORGANISED LABOUR

continued from page 31

does not publicly disclose its membership numbers, but the tech industry is its fastest-growing sector when it comes to new sign-ups.

The tech sector has traditionally been very hostile to Trade Union activity, but in recent times an increasing number of staff in the industry have started organising.

Those familiar with the industry say that the change has come about because of major cost-cutting measures that have been implemented by tech companies over recent months.

Google, Meta, Microsoft, Stripe and more have all cut jobs since the start of 2023, and less famous tech companies like Hubspot and Workhuman have also reduced their employee headcount.

"It's night and day", Laura Nolan, an Irish software engineer and long-time labour activist, has told the *Business Post*, referring to the change in attitude to Unions among tech workers.

"Going back a couple of years, em-

ployees felt relatively well treated and well compensated, and didn't have fear for their jobs. Now we're in a situation where people do have fear for their jobs, and that is driving them to a union."

Nolan left Google in 2019 over its involvement in the Pentagon's *Project Maven*, which used the company's Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to analyse drone footage. She had previously worked at the company for five years.

Nolan said the idea of joining a Union never gained major traction while she was at the company, or during Covid-19 lockdowns.

"During the pandemic, there was a huge shortage of technology staff, and there was quite significant salary inflation", she said.

But the FSU is hoping to capitalise on the changing dynamics in the sector and attract more workers to join. (Acknowledgement: DONAL MacNAMEE, 19.7.2023.) WHENJOURNALESE BECAME WORLD NEWS

CONNOLLY continued

these Jim Connolly and Dick O'Carroll were leading spirits at our Congresses.

Mackin being an active members of the Painters' Society and Vice-President of the Dublin Trades Council. I shall not easily forget the speech of O'Carroll during the Dublin Congress of 1914 when responding to the toast of "*The City of Dublin*" at the banquet provided by the Labour Party, and the intense fervour of his closing words, "*Dublin, I love you!*" There was the keynote of his civic spirit. He loved his city and his country. He took pride in his public work, in his work for his Union and his class, and it was the intensity of his conviction, the enthusiasm of his nature that led him (impulsively, without premeditation, as I have been told) to throw in his lot with the insurgents.

I had a more intimate knowledge of Jim Connolly. For several years—from the first day of his arrival in Belfast until the outbreak of the war two years ago—I was closely associated with him. Having that intimate knowledge of him, and after a careful study of his public speeches, his private conversations, and his written work, I say that never was there a man who more thoroughly saturated himself with the hopes, the aspirations, and the sufferings of the working class. We cannot fully appreciate his work until we have cast aside all those ideas and impressions which we have received from current literature, history or philosophy, based as they are on a capitalist conception of society. We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of "*the bottom dog*"—the oppressed—be it nation, class or sex.

Jim Connolly saw everything from that standpoint, and his life was one long sustained effort to voice the aspirations and stimulate the ambitions of the poor and disinherited, to break down the forces of Capitalism, and all those social, political, and economic tyrannies which are but the expressions of Capitalistic power. His researches into the history of the Irish people—his interpretation of causes and effects as outlined in his book "*Labour in Irish History*"—are acknowledged by all students as noteworthy, and by many as pointing the way to a truer explanation of some of the otherwise unaccountable phenomena in the social history of this country.

We who knew him must feel that in his death the working class of Ireland has lost

a champion they could ill afford to lose. We looked forward to seeing him take a very active leading part in the direction of the Labour Movement in the civil life of this country under a new regime, but he conceived his duty lay in another direction. We mourn his death, we honour his work, we revere his memory.

And while laying these wreaths on the graves of our comrades who gave their lives for what they believed to be the Cause of Ireland's Freedom—let us also remember those many others (some of whom had been chosen in years past to attend our Congresses) who have laid down their lives in another field, also for what they believed to be the Cause of Liberty and Democracy and for Love of their Country.

It is a great tribute to the chivalry and humanity of the workers of all lands, that before the rulers can obtain popular support for a war, or before armies can be raised, enthusiasm can only be aroused by appeals to the people in the names of Liberty, Justice, Humanity, Religion, and the Defence of the Weak. I suppose there is not one of us but knows some who responded to the call for recruits with a single eye to the defence of right, the enlargement of the bounds of liberty, and a passionate zeal for the overthrow of tyranny. Many of these have lost their lives, many have been crippled or maimed for life, and we must, alas, look forward to the loss of many more!

It is told that James Connolly when preparing for execution, on being asked by the priest if he would say a prayer for the men of the firing party, replied, "*I*

pray for all men who do their duty according to their lights". In that spirit I ask all present, whatever their views may be in regard to the war or the rebellion, to rise for a moment in token of respect for all our comrades who have been brave enough to give their lives for the cause they believed in.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has sacked his country's ambassador to the UK. Vadym Prystaiko had recently criticised the president's response to a row over gratitude for British military aid. He had called Mr Zelensky's promise to thank the UK defence minister every morning "unhealthy sarcasm" (BBC, 21.7.2023).

President Higgins accused of '*pushing boundaries*' in neutrality row

Coalition reacts after President Higgins describes Ireland as "*playing with fire*" during a dangerous period of "*drift*" in its foreign policy (President Michael D Higgins has come under fire for criticising the composition of the panels on the *Consultative Forum* on International Security. 19 JUN, 2023, Ciara Phelan, Political Correspondent)

President Michael D Higgins' input on a debate around Ireland's neutrality was "*extraordinary*" and "*pushed the boundaries*", Government sources have said.

Tánaiste Micheál Martin was forced to release a statement on Sunday defending the Government's *Consultative Forum on International Security* after criticism from President Higgins.

ORGANISED LABOUR

'Big Tech' Workers Unionise?

It's understood that a few dozen staff members across a number of tech companies—including Stripe, Google, Indeed, Red Hat and Workhuman—are participating in the five-week course, which began last week.

A leaflet circulated to those participating says the "*activist training course*" aims to drive reform in the tech industry after some of the biggest employers in the

sector implemented swingeing layoffs this year.

It offers workers training in organising, collective bargaining, Union recognition and employment rights, as well as advice on "growing your union in your workplace".

"People are realising that work won't love you back": Why tech workers are turning to unions.

The Financial Service Union (FSU)

continued on page



LABOUR

Comment

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James Connolly: *Irish Trade Union Congress*

(*Workers' Republic*, 15 April, 1916)

The approach of Easter reminds us that on the next succeeding National Holiday, Whit Monday, the Congress of the Irish Trade Unions will open at Sligo.

The Congress of last year was not held as it was felt that the intense political feelings engendered by the war [World War One-1914-18] would probably inject themselves into the proceedings of Congress with the possible result that in the heat and passion things might be said and done that would cause irreparable breaches in the ranks of Labour.

Notably it was appreciated that the position of many delegates from Unions in the North would be seriously compromised, and the adhesion of their unions to the Congress endangered, if any discussion of the War should be brought on, and result in the deliverance of any anti-British pronouncement from leading delegates. It was also realised that no amount of caution could prevent some delegates from perhaps inadvertently raising some point connected with the administration and regulation of Labour under war conditions.

In the then temper of the people of Ireland any spark might have set fire to a big conflagration such as might have consumed the whole edifice so painfully set up by the labours of past Congresses. For these reasons it was agreed to abandon the holding of the Congress in 1915.

But the prolongation of the war, and the increasingly evil condition of Labour in face of the greater power exercised by departments of the Government, the alarming increase of prices, the dearth of employment in the country, and the thousand and one other questions pressing for

treatment make it imperative that this year the Congress be held.

The delegates will have a hard and difficult task set before them, and will need to bring to bear upon it all their wisdom and forethought. Timidity and rashness will be alike out of place, the delegates must be cautious, yet bold and courageous once a course of action is determined upon. They will be handicapped by the bad example set by the Labour Leaders of Great Britain in so shamefully surrendering all their hard won rights, but that handicap can be overcome. The arguments that justified the holding of separate Congresses for Trade Unions in Ireland will also serve to justify the setting aside of the evil examples of so many of our British brothers.

We trust that all the bodies represented at previous Irish Trade Union Congresses, and more besides, will strain every effort to make the representation this year, alike in num-

bers and in quality, the greatest yet held.

Time presses. The date is Whit Week, the place is Sligo.

(James Connolly (Aged 68 years), along with Sean MacDiarmada (Aged 32 years) were both executed in Kilmainham Jail in Dublin on Tuesday, May 9, 1916.)

Address by Thomas Johnson, President Irish Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference on August 7th, 8th and 9th, 1916 in the Town Hall Sligo

Friends and Fellow-Workers:

Before proceeding with the business of the Congress I feel that it is my sad duty to say a word or two regarding the loss which we and the working class movement have sustained through the death of those of our comrades whose lives were sacrificed in the recent rebellion.

As a Trade Union Movement we are of varied minds on matters of history and political development, and, consequently, this is not a place to enter into a discussion as to the right or the wrong, the wisdom or the folly of the revolt, but this we may say, that those amongst the rebels who have been associated with us in the past, who have led and inspired some of us with their love of their country and their class, were led to act as they did with no selfish thought but purely with a passion for freedom and a hatred of oppression.

Amongst those who have given their lives are three men who were well known in the Irish Labour World—James Connolly, Richard O'Carroll, and Peter Mackin. Of

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continued on page 31