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Budget 2024

The Irish Budget was framed within an economy at full employment and a Balance of Payments surplus on the current account of about 8% of GDP.

The Balance of Payments figure shows our trading balance with the rest of the world. Our surplus indicates the economy as a whole is saving. In a previous issue of the Irish Political Review it was suggested that this is appropriate for the Irish economy. We have a high income economy with relatively poor infrastructure. We need to invest more to sustain our relatively high incomes.

In an economy with full employment, any increase in consumption will only lead to inflation. The rational economic approach would be to suppress consumption in order to divert labour and material resources towards clearing infrastructural bottlenecks. The State must drive the necessary investment.

However, our political leaders are obliged, not just to run an economy, they also must manage a society. Apparently, we have a “*cost of living*” crisis, notwithstanding the statistics showing a high level of personal savings.

It is true that inflation was at about 8% in 2022 and wages have tended to rise at less than that level. However, the Minister for Finance thinks the inflation rate will be 5.25% for this year and 2.9% for next year or so, it is likely that the 'crisis' will abate.

Nevertheless, it does make sense to help the most vulnerable.

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The Disaster That Is Ursula Von Der Leyen – And Why!

The report in *The Irish Times* on President Michael D’s criticism of von der Leyen’s statements and her visit to Israel as “*thoughtless and even reckless*” says that:

“The bloc’s chief diplomat clarified that it was not Dr von der Leyen’s role to speak for the member states on foreign policy after concerns were raised about risks to the safety of EU diplomats and damage to its relations in the region as a result of appearing one-sided.”

And the paper also reported that:

“Speaking earlier, a spokesman for the European Commission said Dr von der Leyen had acted within her remit. “The president can travel wherever she wants, that should be very clear, as president of the European Commission. She went to Israel to express solidarity with a country that had been the subject of an unprovoked terrorist attack. That is entirely in her prerogatives”, the spokesman said”.

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Misunderstanding Islam, Misunderstanding Al-Aqsa

By giving its attack on Israel the code-name, Al Aqsa Flood, Hamas sent a message to anyone who will listen, especially to the two billion people who constitute the world’s Muslim population: the Al Aqsa Mosque—and the third most sacred site for Muslims after Mecca and Medina—has come under threat from Israel. Intimida-

tion by Israeli forces and Zionist extremists at the Mosque site, known for centuries as al-Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary), and now designated by Israelis as Har Ha-Bayit or the Temple Mount, is perceived by Palestinians as being of a piece with the policy of encroachment on Palestinian lands through settlements in the Occupied

Territories. In that way the Hamas attack, and the Israeli provocations at Al Aqsa that preceded it, have a dimension that is indisputably religious.

That is not to say the basic conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinian people is not due to political causes. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict has a well-documented and contested political history, but within its chain of

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Balfour's Israel

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In general Social Welfare payments will be above the inflation rate. The position of welfare recipients will be helped by an array of "lump sum" credits. This will help tide them over the high inflation environment, but can be easily withdrawn at a future date.

There weren't many changes to the tax system. Most credits went up by about 5%, as did the standard rate band. There was a substantial increase in the ceiling for the 2% *Universal Social Charge* [USC] rate (up €2,840 (more than 12%). This will help the low-paid. The 4.5% rate of USC was reduced to 4%, which will help the so-called 'squeezed' middle (income between €25,760 to €70,044). However, the other Bands did not change. So, the top 8% rate will still apply to income over €70,044.

There were two controversial measures.

In economic terms it is difficult to understand why it was necessary to give

any mortgage interest relief. It looks like the Government Parties were panicked into this measure by a similar proposal from Sinn Fein. Why support people who are already on the property ladder?

In defence of the Government, the relief is restricted. It is capped at €1,250 per annum. Taxpayers will be able to claim a 20% Tax Credit for increased interest payments paid in 2023 over 2022. It will only apply for mortgage holders with an outstanding balance of between €80,000 and €500,000 on their principal private residence. The thinking seems to be that anyone with a balance of less than €80,000 is doing fine. And anyone who has a balance of over €500,000 must be wealthy and in no need of help.

In truth the cohort that has been targeted for the relief consists of a mixed bunch. There may be some people who are struggling, but anyone who bought property after the Crash in 2008 will have bought

cheaply, and for most of the period will have made repayments at very low interest rates if they were on a tracker mortgage.

The only good thing about the relief is that it looks like it will only be operational for one year.

The second controversial measure was a *Tax Credit* for landlords. This will be worth €600 in 2024; €800 in 2025; and €1,200 in 2026. This compares to the €750 credit for tenants. The obvious question is why do landlords need help from the Government? There have been claims that they have been leaving the market for various reasons (e.g. rent restrictions). But is this a problem? Is there any reason to believe that the residence will be unoccupied under a new owner? In many cases the new owner could be the Local Authority.

There may be disruption for the tenant in situ but maybe the solution is for greater legal rights for tenants regarding the notice period.

The vacancy Property Tax has increased from three times the Local Property Tax to five times. This is welcome although it's still too small.

On the issue of housing: the supply seems to be improving. There are now about 170,000 employed in construction. This is 23,000 more than pre-Covid levels.

Wages are going down in this sector, suggesting there is a greater supply of labour. This may be because there has been a contraction in construction in Northern Ireland. Also, the vacancy rates in the commercial property sector are now quite high. There is no appetite to build more shopping centres, so the resources of the construction sector can be concentrated on house building.

The Government is predicting 31,000 new-build units this year. While this is encouraging, we need twice that amount. This is achievable with the political will. There needs to be about 250,000 working in construction: about the same level as during the Celtic Tiger years.

There were some generous Reliefs for small businesses, in particular the 50% rebate on commercial rates. But again, there was the sense that this was a once off.

It was good that the Government finally increased the VAT rate for hospitality to the level which applied before Covid. As

indicated in a previous issue of the *Irish Political Review*, there is no reason to stimulate this service industry.

There is no doubt that this was a generous budget. The effect of it will be to increase inflation by about 0.5%. Nevertheless, there will be a Government surplus of €8.8 billion, or 3% of national income, this year, and €8.4 billion or 2.7% of National income next year.

These are quite remarkable figures. However, a large part of the reason for the buoyancy has been Corporation Tax receipts. The Government estimates that the windfall benefit is between €10 and €12 billion. If there were any change in the regulations governing where multinationals pay their tax, the government surplus could very quickly be transformed into a small deficit.

This is why the Government is setting up reserve funds so that capital projects will not be affected if there is a sudden downturn in Corporation Tax receipts.

Overall there was an increase in capital expenditure of about 8% and current expenditure of 6%. It has to be said that the increase in capital expenditure is too modest, given the infrastructural deficit in the country.

Finally, there was an interesting exchange on RTE television between Fianna Fail Minister for Finance Michael McGrath and the Finance Spokesman for Sinn Fein, Pearse Doherty. McGrath made the point that SF neglected the economic consequences of increasing taxes on high earners. Doherty didn't really answer the question, but instead suggested that the business class was more worried about the shortage of housing for its workers.

Most statistics show that we have the most progressive tax system in the OECD. An Economic and Social Research Institute report shows that the 2024 Budget was also a progressive budget in that low-income earners benefitted by a greater proportion than other income earners.

In the present writer's opinion, the progressive nature of our tax system is entirely appropriate. We have a quite unequal distribution of income in this country. This is possibly a result of our two-tier economy, in which a highly productive world class multinational sector exists alongside a less productive indigenous sector. So, whereas there is an unequal distribution of gross incomes, our progressive tax system

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Gaza Ceasefire Motion: *United Nations Vote*

One-hundred and twenty countries voted in favour of the non-binding Resolution calling for a Ceasefire, which was introduced by Jordan. Just 14 voted against—including the United States, Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Fiji, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, and Tonga.

Forty-five countries abstained, including Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Greece, India, Iraq, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Sweden, Tunisia, Ukraine, and the UK.

Eamon Dyas

Philip O'Connor adds:

The EU countries who voted for the Resolution, rather than abstaining, were the three with no history of Anti-Semitism: Ireland, Portugal and Spain!

I don't go along with the argument that Russia and China are simply playing power-politics in the Middle East. They are, of course, but with an interesting caveat: their position is effectively pro-Palestinian.

The US can't escape the trap of being seen globally as compromised, and unequivocally on the side of Israel.

Russia has accused the US of having seized control of the Middle East 'peace process' in the 1970s (with the winning of Sadat and his signing of the Camp David Agreement), and of having hegemonised the disastrous course of events there ever since. Ever since the Oslo Accords (1993), the situation has been—as one Palestinian negotiator famously described it: we sit around a table negotiating the division of a pizza, while the other side continues to eat it. The US has acquiesced in all of this. That "peace process", with its ever shrinking Palestinian Authority territories, has now been ongoing for 40 years.

Biden is desperately trying to restore some international credibility for the US by claiming to have worked and continue to work for the "two-state solution". He is also desperately trying to create distance between the US and Israeli war-crimes, by calling on Israel to conduct its vengeance "proportionately", and "in accordance with International Law". The world sees through this farce, of course, as the actual bombs falling on Gaza are US-supplied (with these supplies now being massively accelerated).

Russia and China pose as the reasonable Powers, insisting on a Ceasefire, negotiated solutions and adherence to the decades-old UN Security Council formulae for resolving the conflict. The latter is important, as both have also spelt out what this means, viz creating a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Arab and Muslim world (including Turkey, Iran, Egypt and, after a little wobble, Saudi Arabia) are fully at one with Russia/China on all of this. They see Russia/China as the adults.

It is quite clear that this Russia/China position would entail removing the 600,000 illegal Israeli settlers out of the areas they occupy (or proposing that they remain and live within the Palestinian State). It also implies that Israel must formally accept the 1967 "Green Line", as its (internationally recognised) borders. No way will Israel, even the most liberal of the Ashkenazim, ever accept either of these conditions, and the US will back them up to the hilt.

Whatever about its actual viability, the Two-State proposal is the functional position that gives Palestine power in the situation.

ensures that the net income distribution is around the EU average.

But can we make our tax system even more progressive? At present our highest marginal tax rate is at 52% (40% tax, 8% USC, 4% PRSI). Can this be increased? In the 1970s and 1980s the top tax rate was 65% plus PRSI (7%?). But in that era there was massive tax evasion. Throughout the 1990s the top rates as well as the standard rate were gradually reduced—along with closing loopholes.

Sinn Fein's overall policy is "redistributionist", rather than socialist. It has identified a cohort of people with incomes below €100,000. It has ascertained what this—far from homogenous cohort—wants: no

Property Taxes, better Social Services; and, more recently, the possibility of their children owning their own homes. And this ambitious programme is to be financed by those on salaries over €100,000!

In the past the Left advocated similar policies (except for SF's policies on property), in tandem with a view of the economy which envisaged a greater role for the State in driving the economy. But Sinn Fein has no such policies. It relies on the private sector to continue to generate jobs.

Sinn Fein's policies may or may not be the right ones. But it must be admitted that McGrath has asked a good question. It is up to the leading Opposition Party to come up with a more convincing response.

wrong in his continuing to make irreverent statements about Islam. In an interview in 2005 he called for a "Reformation" within Islam to combat "not only the jihadist ideologues but also the dusty, stifling seminaries of the traditionalists". In an interview the following year he said that Islam makes it difficult to think new thoughts. But Rushdie is an avowed secular humanist and his thinking reflects a doctrinaire reading of the European philosophical tradition. Why should religious faith be reduced to being a branch of political thought? Why should people who are not intellectuals be expected to think new thoughts? Is not the idea of a society comprised solely of intellectuals the stuff of dystopian nightmares?

The point here is that Islam is commonly viewed contemptuously in the West, and that is without mentioning the prejudices of international feminism. In the context of the threat to the Al Aqsa Mosque highlighted by the Hamas attack, such thinking is adding to the danger of a Middle East conflagration that could become a World War. In the circumstances, extending to Islam the old-fashioned idea of religious toleration—refraining from criticism of a person's religion regardless of one's disapproval of it—deserves attention from the liberal globalists who currently dominate Western commentary.

ALASTAIR CROOKE ASSESSMENT

A very valuable commentary on Israel and Hamas was provided via YouTube by ex-British diplomat Alastair Crooke. The podcast is dated October 11th and Crooke was joined on it by Alexander Mercouris, a well-known contributor on The Duran website, along with a Norwegian political scientist, Glen Diesen: a regular presenter on RT (Russia Today), who is described on Wikipedia as a "Russian propagandist". The insights were all provided by Crooke.

Crooke demonstrated detailed knowledge of Middle East history and drew on his own diplomatic experience, which included a stint (2009-2011) with Barak Obama's Special Envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell. That he is a former Intelligence Officer with the British MI6 service underlines the modern phenomenon whereby some of the best critics of US foreign policy have a background in Western Intelligence.

On the question of the Intelligence failure that allowed the Hamas attack to go undetected, Crooke said the security services have become over-reliant on

Misunderstanding Islam

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causation a religious factor is at work. This aspect, within both the Palestinian resistance and Zionism, is rarely covered in media commentary.

As power has shifted from the Ashkenazi elite to the Mizrahi or Sephardic or Oriental communities in Israel, religious issues have moved to centre stage. One such issue is the belief of Zionist groupings that the ancient Jewish temple (Solomon's Temple, demolished by the Romans after a Jewish revolt) should be re-built on what they call the Temple Mount. And that entails demolishing the Mosque, which was built in 705. That project can no longer be dismissed as a fantasy of the lunatic fringe; under Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership of Israel, it has acquired a measure of mainstream support. Pressing for the realisation of that vision has been woven into the long-term aims of Zionism.

Outside of the Middle East prejudice against Islam as a religion has grown in recent decades. Sometimes it has arisen simply because of the presence of large immigrant Muslim communities in countries like France, Germany and Britain. Feminism also tends to have an anti-Muslim bias.

The basic picture changed after 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror waged by the US. And the response of radical Islamists to the US interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya—bombings and shootings in Western cities—generated successive waves of Islamophobia.

Contempt for Islam was and is also evident in the treatment of Muslim prisoners in the prison camps of the US naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba, itself a constituent element in the War on Terror (see below).

The other line of attack on Islam has been intellectual. Starting with the publication in 1988 of the *The Satanic Verses* by Sir Salman Rushdie, followed years later by satirical cartoons of the Prophet Mahomed in the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in Paris, and continuing in recent months in publicised burnings of the Koran in Sweden by "anti-Islam activists", a pattern has formed whereby deliberate insults against Islam elicit violent responses, not merely from unrepresentative radical Islamists but also from Muslim communities in various parts of the world. Each of the above events resulted in riots and assassinations by Muslims, many of them willing to sacrifice themselves in the process. Most recently, arising from the Koran burnings, two Swedish supporters of the Swedish national soccer team were murdered in Brussels by a Tunisian Muslim who was later killed by police.

The pattern in all these incidents has been that criticism of Islam is seen in the West as exercising the right to free speech, whereas Muslims see it as a blasphemous attack on the beliefs of their communities. Despite the death and destruction that have resulted from the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie sees nothing

technological surveillance. Hubris, he said, was another weakness—he gave the example of an Israeli security chief some years ago stating that Hizballah still travel on donkeys. Too many Intelligence operatives were concerned with demeaning, rather than understanding, the other side. These operatives rely too much on “mechanical rationality” and have little understanding of what Al-Aqsa connotes in the Islamic world.

On the subject of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Crooke said it was stormed two years ago by a throng of Israeli settlers. The Palestinian response was immediate: the West Bank rose in revolt, followed by Palestinians who are citizens of Israel. He said that, on the Thursday prior to the Hamas incursion on Saturday the 7th of October, 800 settlers invaded Al-Aqsa. The event received very little coverage on international media. It is not known whether it acted as the trigger for the Hamas operation.

In the process of giving a detailed account of what he called a “schism” in Israel between the older Ashkenazi elite and the Mizrahi “deprecated underclass”, Crooke explained how the Mizrahi had control of the Knesset and the Netanyahu Cabinet before October 7th, yet they had “never held full power”. The Supreme Court, having 14 members from Ashkenazi backgrounds and one Mizrahi, had been using its power to hold back the radical Right. He described how Netanyahu, having been indicted on corruption charges, faced prison if he lost Office. “The Coalition led Netanyahu, Netanyahu did not lead the Coalition”, he said.

Regarding Al-Aqsa, he said the full Israeli Cabinet had held a meeting in tunnels beneath the Mosque as a way of claiming the site for Israel. Whereas in the past the head of internal Israeli security had provided police protection for the Mosque, the position was now held by an official sympathetic to Mizrahi religious Zionists. Crooke considered the key aims of the Israeli Right as: first, rebuild the Jewish Temple on the ruins of Al-Aqsa; and second, establish Israel on the historic land of Israel, that is, ‘cleanse’ the West Bank of Palestinians.

It can be argued that the members of the religious lobby in Israel are entitled to their religious rights like any faith community, yes, but that is not a licence to foment religious war.

The campaign for Jews to gain access

to the Temple Mount has been couched in the language of human rights: since the site is considered the most sacred place in Judaism, whereas Al-Aqsa is only the third most important site in Islam, a case is made for allowing all three major religions (it also has significance for Christians) to share access to it.

But conceding ground on that point requires averting one’s eyes from Zionist intent. Believing that the dominant Mizrahi element in Israeli politics would be happy to share power at the Temple Mount is like believing that the West Bank settlements mean no harm to Palestinians.

Judging by Alastair Crooke’s well-informed account, the ambition of the Netanyahu Government prior to October 7th was annexation of the Temple Mount.

The Israeli claim on Al-Aqsa represents a potent threat to peace in the region and, in the reasonable speculation that it has international implications, a threat to world peace. Why, therefore, has there been no pressure on Israel from international opinion on that matter? Is prejudice against Islam a factor in Western thinking? There must surely be an onus on the United States and the European Union to clearly signal to Israel that, in the interests of averting a religious war, the future security of the Al-Aqsa Mosque must be guaranteed.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION OF MUSLIMS AT GUANTÁNAMO

At a public meeting in the European Parliament (28 September) hosted by Irish MEPs Clare Daly and Mick Wallace, one of the platform speakers, James Lee, shed light on the subject of anti-Islam prejudice (see Daly And Wallace Making Waves In Brussels in this edition). The meeting had the title, Close Guantánamo, and was addressed by ex-prisoners, legal professionals and campaigners. The account provided by Lee, who had been a Muslim chaplain at the Camp, was particularly memorable.

Lee reported to a superior officer that he considered that the treatment of the prisoners amounted to religious persecution, an action for which he was arrested. After being imprisoned for over a year, the all charges against him were dropped and he

later applied for and received an honourable discharge from the US military.

At the meeting he recounted the disrespect shown to the Islamic religion as follows. The wearing of beards has religious significance for some Muslims so the prison warders engaged in forcible shaving off of all beards. Prisoners were in some cases forced to wrap themselves in the Israeli flag. At other times the Koran was kicked about and urinated on. Satanic symbols were used and prisoners forced to show obeisance to them. “Female torturers”, as he described them, performed lap dances and sexual actions in front of prisoners.

Presumably, the point of these tactics was to break the prisoners by alienating them from their religious faith. Such tactics, however—being a denial of a prisoner’s religious rights—would not be permitted in institutions governed by the rule of law. The use of these interrogation techniques testifies to a mindset of contempt for Islam on the part of the US military.

*

In conclusion, the religious aspect of the Israel/Hamas War deserves attention. In particular, the threat to the Al-Aqsa Mosque posed by the emergence of a powerful religious lobby within Israeli politics, needs to be noted. An anti-Islamic bias in Western culture may be a factor inflaming religious tension and distrust between Palestinians and Israelis. These matters have international implications and require consideration at international forums like the UN and the EU.

Since this is being published in the Irish Political Review for a mostly Irish audience, it would be most welcome if, following through on the need to counter anti-Islamic prejudice, the Irish Government offered to re-settle some of the small number of prisoners passed for release but still incarcerated in Guantánamo. At the very least, such an action would demonstrate the even-handedness of Irish foreign policy.

Dave Alvey

Further Reading:

Gaza Launches Special Military Operation Against Israel

MILITARY SUMMARY

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=HrTmZfwdNnc&si=ffODcZOePba393V7>

Britain And Israel

Britain conquered the Middle East, in its Great War, with the support of the John Redmond's Irish Home Rule Party, and the active personal assistance of Tom Barry.

In 1917 it decided to impose a Jewish State on the Palestine region, where there was no Jewish population on which a Jewish State could be based. In order to lay the foundation for a Jewish State, it opened Palestine to Jewish colonisation.

When, late in 1914, Britain extended its Great War against Germany and Austria to include War against the Turkish Empire of which Palestine formed part, the Irish Independent declared that that made it a war of universal liberation.

Colonisation and national self-determination are polar opposites. The establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, in defiance of the will of the actual population of Palestine, could not conceivably be understood as an act of self-determination.

John Redmond, who still had 80 MPs in Parliament, and who supported the War as a crusade for Democracy and the Rights of Nations, did not, as far as we know, condemn the Balfour Declaration as a fundamental breach of the declared war aims.

Balfour himself admitted that his project for a Jewish State in Palestine was incompatible with the principle of national self-determination, but he did not think that Britain, which was becoming the biggest dog that there had ever been in the world, should be deterred from doing interesting things by pedantic adherence to the principle of national self-determination—which was, after all, only an expedient propagandist slogan.

So the project of over-riding the will of the actual population of Palestine, by establishing an alien colonising state over them, went ahead. And that is how the matter stands today.

A former Taoiseach—a most moderate man—has described Gaza as the biggest Open Prison in the world. But, within that prison—all of whose borders are controlled by the Jewish State—a commando group was formed, and conducted a raid into Israel, where it collected hostages in the course of seven hours, and took them back to Gaza.

According to Israeli accounts, the Hamas group spent their time in an orgy of destruction: beheading babies, raping young women, slicing open the bellies of pregnant women in order to tear out the unborn children, and engaging in indiscriminate massacre, before returning safely to Gaza with the hostages.

It is an incredible story on many accounts, and it is stretching the credulity even of people who were predisposed to believe it. And it is now being suggested in many quarters that much of the indiscriminate slaughter was done by detachments of the Israeli Army that went berserk under the shock of finding that the despised Palestinians were fighting back.

The immediate question on October 8th was whether the event, as described by the Israeli authorities, would give sufficient cover for an all-out campaign for a Final Solution of the Palestinian problem.

The Israeli Government clearly thought that it would. And the would-be President of the World, who spoke about the beheading of babies, seemed to be inclined to allow it. But there is little doubt that the Secretary of State imposed a delay. American dominance of the world has been slipping, and the consequence of free Jewish-nationalist action against the Palestinians has become incalculable.

The world might have been rushed off its feet by immediate action ten years ago. Delay gave the world time to give the matter some thought, and to register the changes that have been happening in it during recent years.

In 1948 the world, in the form of the General Assembly of the UN, authorized the implementation of the British project of imposing a Jewish State on Palestine. On British initiative, responsibility for the matter was transferred from the Security Council to the General Assembly. (Britain still hoped to dominate the Arab world, and therefore transferred responsibility for the Jewish State to others. The French used to call that kind of thing British hypocrisy, but the term is much too kind.)

But now the world has turned against its creature, with the General Assembly vote hostile to it.

Israel, secure behind the US Veto, was

accustomed to ignoring the United Nations. But its sense of security against world opinion is not now what it was a month ago.

It is now openly accused of War Crimes on the mainstream media. That it engaged in massive ethnic cleansing is no longer disputed. And its orders to the population of Gaza to move out of the way has been described as giving them a choice between Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide.

In the matter of war crimes, there is an extensive literature about it that would be law, if an operative system of world law existed. It is part of the UN system, which the UN system has no means of putting into effect. Israeli interviewers always ignore it when questioned, and they cite the precedent of American and British action in justification of what they do.

Britain weaponised food in the Great War. It declared that there were no civilians in modern warfare, which was waged by peoples. It imposed a food blockade on Germany which killed half a million people. In the next War it fire-bombed Dresden after German military power had been broken by Russia. And the USA nuclear bombed two Japanese cities far away from the Front Line in a war that Japan had already lost.

The German leaders were subjected to events called Trials at Nuremberg. They were not trials under any existing body of law—not even a widely-agreed literary one. They tried to plead the actions of those who were trying them as precedents justifying their actions. But precedent was not allowed.

There is now a comprehensive body of paper law, covering every eventuality, which is sponsored by UN Agencies. But Israel ignores it and pleads precedent.

Gaza has no means of feeding itself, and its borders are blocked by Israel. Israel declared its intention of stopping food, water, fuel and medicine from going into Gaza from Egypt.

The British Labour Leader (Keir Starmer), who has an Irish master strategist (Morgan McSweeney of Macroom) to assist him, declared his support for this total Blockade of Gaza. His Shadow Cabinet, sensing that the wind was beginning to blow against Israel, felt uneasy. None of them appeared on the BBC to support him. But a political adviser to Tony Blair in the last Labour Government, John McTernan, appeared on BBC's Newsnight in support of him.

The essence of his case was that the Labour Party should not bother its head with such issues because it was not in Office and had no power to influence events. And, even if it was in Government, it would still have no power to influence them. Britain was a spent force in world affairs. It was a small weak country that counted for nothing!

A Muslim Councillor, who had resigned from the Party in protest against the Leader's support for consigning the population of Gaza to oblivion, pointed out that Britain had begun all that trouble over Palestine. But Blair's echo would not

discuss that. And the voice of the great man himself was silent.

McTernan said that Jeremy Corbyn had "poisoned the well". What Corbyn did was apply to Israel the standards that are applied to all other states. The new leader (Kier Starmer) said that was anti-Semitic and expelled him from the Parliamentary Party. Israel was a privileged state, exempt from ordinary criticism. That was the thing that actually poisoned the wells and caused the remarkable rise in anti-Semitism that has happened recently in England—unlike Ireland, where Israel is not privileged.

He participated in Zionist congresses and opposed the *Uganda Scheme* in which Uganda was proposed as a country where Jews might settle. (The indigenous people of Uganda weren't consulted of course) His whole concept was of Jewish exclusiveness in the midst of the indigenous Arabs of Palestine.

Jaffa, has existed as a port-city since the 18th Century BC. It was named *Jaffa* (The Beautiful) by the Canaanites. Most of the early Jewish settlers came through Jaffa.

One Polish settler called David Ben-Gurion came through it in 1906. He had a particular hatred for the Arabs and he is quoted as saying he wouldn't rest until Jaffa was destroyed. He was especially resentful and envious of the wealthy and the successful Arabs of Jaffa. His ire was apparently due mostly to these Arabs seeing themselves as more than equal to European settlers like himself.

In his arrogance he didn't like being answered back in kind with dignity. In one statement he said he would like to take an axe to them after he and an equally pompous party were stoned from the streets of Jaffa by some youths.

In 1948, with Israel established as a settler-colony, three quarters of Jaffa was bulldozed, leaving only small pieces of the old city intact. The city had had a 120,000 Arab population, 3,500 were left after 1948.

Attacked by the Haganah, and with the very recent knowledge of the massacre of Deir Yassin village (the Lidice of Palestine), most of the population fled. The port was eventually closed down and in 1954 Jaffa became a suburb of Tel Aviv.

Tel Aviv, Hebrew for *Hill of Spring* or *Spring Hill*, is associated with the image of rebirth and revitalisation and tied in with the vision of Ezekiel (of Bible fame) in order to try and outdo the beauty, history and imagery of Jaffa. This piece of land was grabbed in 1909 by 66 Jewish families who gathered on a sandy shoreline to divide up lots of what was to become Tel Aviv.

Meir Dizengoff, the self-appointed civic leader, led a brazen racist opposition to the authorities in Jaffa. Soon this new Jewish neighbourhood of Tel Aviv was to break away from that Arab city.

Dizengoff is described as a man who could reminisce about the future with faith and a vision that could make it real. This vision was realistically underpinned by Rothschild and other European bankers or it would have remained a vision.

A Greater Israel!

David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founding leader, had a dream that one day Israel's natural border would run from the Jordan River in the east to the Litani River of Lebanon in the north.

It was stated as far back as 1919 by Chaim Weizmann, head of the World Zionist Organisation that the Litani River was essential to the future of a Jewish national home.

Another consideration for today, according to Kavel L. Afrasiabi, writing in the *Asian Times Online* (7th August, 2006):

"Access to the Litani (by Israel) would translate into an annual increase of water supply by 800 million cubic meters." (sic)

He also mentions that the occupied Golan Heights gives Israel a third of all its fresh water supply.

Their secret agenda is a Greater Israel. After all they have been at war since 1948 and have acquired seventy percent of Palestinian land, Lebanese (Sheba Farms) land, and the Syrian Golan Heights. Peace Agreements signed by this belligerent settler-colony is only window-dressing. A colony's function is to destroy the indigenous people by making them flee in fear of their lives by carrying out atrocities, killing them or breaking their will to resist, and then to use the survivors as cheap labour. With its hunger for land, a colony attacks its neighbours, brings in thousands upon thousands of more settlers, finds it still needs more room for them and then cries *Lebensraum* (living space).

The Hidden Agenda

One very noticeable feature to be seen in the towns and cities of Israel are the clothes lines full of drying khaki clothing at the back of houses or on balconies.

You sit down outside a cafe to have a coffee on the main drag of Tel Aviv—Dizengoff Street, known as *The Dizengoff*—and there sitting at the next table is a girl army reservist with her Uzi sub-machine gun on the table next to the sugar bowl. Soon after an old fellow with jam-jar-bottom-glasses trundles past with an old .303 rifle on his shoulder, accompanied by what looks like his fifteen year old grandson who carries a slightly more modern weapon. These are the *Z-Reservists*. You are reminded that this country is indeed at war.

Meir Dizengoff, whom this three-kilometre-long Parisian-style boulevard is named after, was born in Russia in 1861. He settled in Palestine in 1905 and made himself Mayor (Jewish mayor) of a patch of ground which was already within the precincts of Jaffa, the ancient Arab city. Jaffa already had an Arab mayor, or its equivalent, and his municipal territory included this miniscule area which was now being created as a Jewish neighbourhood and named Tel Aviv.

Dizengoff died while still being the self-appointed Mayor of Tel Aviv in 1936. He was a member of the Zionist Executive during 1917–1919 and was a Zionist from maybe before the inception of the movement, having been an activist since the 1880s back in his native Russia, which once landed him in a Tsarist prison.

One day he invited newspaper reporters to the opening of a new port. They saw nothing but water, sand and blue sky. He took a stick and hammered it into the sand.

“*Ladies and Gentlemen*”, he is supposed to have said, “*I still remember the day when Tel Aviv had no port*”. He was having another of his visions of the future.

No water was being changed into wine but it doesn't take a miracle for bankers to reach for their wallets when assured that a colony is being built.

Following the tearing-off of this artificial creation from Jaffa City proper in the early days of the 20th Century, he founded the first Municipal Police Force made up of 25 Jews for this stamp-sized area called Tel Aviv. Apartheid was to have an early beginning in Palestine. It was declared a city in 1921, and also cited as the first Hebrew city in Palestine. By 1937 it had a population of 160,000.

Today Arab Jaffa is known as *Tel Aviv-Yafo*, a district of Tel Aviv. The population of *Metro Tel Aviv* is two and a half million.

So-called *Israeli Arabs* now number up to 20,000. They live in unsanitary overcrowded conditions. Drug addiction and Aids is prevalent among this despairing people in what was once called Jaffa.

I have already said that Israel has been at war since 1948. Maybe that should be corrected to 1909, when early Jewish settlers activated hostilities against the indigenous Arab population after much planning in the previous century.

The Turkish Ottoman Empire seemed tolerant of Dizengoff and his followers until WW1 when they expelled him to Damascus. The official Zionist line was that he had only been helping the refugees and the victims of war. These wretched of the earth turned out to be wounded British soldiers and other anti-Turkish elements.

After WW1, the Ottoman Empire was no more: through the scheming and wiles of British Imperialism. Dizengoff was able to continue his activities against the indigenous people of Palestine.

There had been many Arab riots or acts of resistance during Dizengoff's time. The worst were in 1920 and 1921. Severe Arab unrest showed itself again in 1936. Dizengoff, whose activities had caused much of the unrest, intensified the conflict with his last dying breath by campaigning for

Government Offices (Jewish Government offices) to be opened in Tel Aviv.

He lived long enough to see separate Jewish seaport facilities in Tel Aviv built, despite the existence of seaport facilities in ancient Arab Jaffa. There were now two seaports practically side by side—one Arab, one Jewish. Monies greater than the UK annual budget poured in to these settlers during this time. Today the US Government pours in nine billion dollars a year. [That was at the time this article was written: in 2022 the figure was \$150 billion, Ed.]

The State of Israel was declared on the 14th of May, 1948 by David Ben-Gurion at the late Meir Dizengoff's house in 16 Rothschild Blvd, in Tel Aviv, now called Independence Hall.

In their book, *O Jerusalem*, Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre say:

“For the Arabs and above all for the 1.2 million Arabs of Palestine, the partitioning of the land in which they had been a majority for seven centuries seemed a monstrous injustice thrust upon them by white Western imperialism in expiation of a crime they had not committed. With few exceptions the Jewish people had dwelt in relative security among the Arabs over the centuries. The golden age of the Diaspora had come in the Spain of the caliphs, and the Ottoman Turks had

welcomed the Jews when the doors of much of Europe were closed to them.”

Holocaust or no Holocaust, a predatory Jewish state would be foisted on the indigenous population of Palestine. Despite Dizengoff's and Ben-Gurion's pleas for Jews to settle in Palestine, there were very few takers up to 1936, when the true face of Nazism was revealed. Even then many Jews preferred to go to the US, Australia, white-dominated South Africa, and Canada.

It was mostly the disorientated survivors of the camps, and Displaced Persons without influences or moneyed relatives, who were to be carted off to this new Israel.

Early newsreel films in the cinema, just after WW2, showed overcrowded ships full of these distressed, ragged, poor and hungry refugees attempting to land in Palestine against British Government orders. They looked like the bedraggled working class whom no one else wanted.

Later Zionist recruiters for Israeli population expansion set out conditions for new settlers, through Jewish publications in the UK—they had to be conscious of personal hygiene, be educated, reasonably religious, and not be work-shy.

They were appealing for more of the respectable to come.

Wilson John Haire
7.8.2009

The Disaster That Is Von Ursula Der Leyen

continued from page one

Michael D commented —

“I don't know where the source of those decisions was. I don't know where the legitimation for it was, and I don't know where the authority for it is, and I don't think it is helpful” (16 Oct. 2023).

Here the President asks very good questions which nobody else asks—who and what exactly is Ursula von der Leyen? The EU is clearly confused in issuing different interpretations about her role. If the EU is confused about such things, then the public might be as well. Michael D. is honest enough to admit he is confused. But the confusion underlines the current state of EU governance—make it up as you go along as far as von der Leyen is concerned.

One problem that highlights the confusion is the number of EU Presidents nowadays — more than you could shake a stick

at—six at the last count. Ursula is one but she is not the President of the EU.

Insofar as there is a President of Europe that is the European Council President, Charles Michel. Other Presidents recognise him as such. Ursula tries to play that role, but she has been put in her place by world leaders such as Xi and Erdogan—the latter sat her on a couch; and she had to make her own way home from China —because they appreciate knowing who's who in State matters. They politely ignore the fact that the EU is not a State, but merely has the trappings of one. The EU speaks loudly but carries no stick to misquote Theodore Roosevelt.

Michel said he was not made aware of von der Leyen's recent visit of solidarity with Israel. He read about it in the press: and now has to play catch up—as our own dear leaders are doing.

Again, Michael D. led the way. He is the conscience of the nation.

The EU is very insistent on the 'rule of law', and a favourite mantra is that, if it is not for the rule of law then it is nothing. Not only its own law, but the law of its member states is also its concern. States can be criticised, fined and generally gas-lighted, according to the EU's interpretation of their laws. It is rather ironic then that its own rules and regulations can be confusing to itself and to others.

How has it come about that a Commission President is treated as speaking for the EU? That was never the intention of the founders and no rules allow it but it is the case.

Ursula von der Leyen became President of the Commission because of disagreements among the major states: she got the job on the basis of being the lowest common denominator and the least known. And, insofar as she was known, she was a political failure as a Minister of Defence in Germany. She is there by default.

One of her first acts was to declare that 50% of the Commissioners should be female. This changed the relationship between Member States and the Commission—which is the most important and delicate of all the relationships within the EU, and of which she seemed totally unaware. But feminist ideology took precedence over well-established and well-founded rules. France had at least two proposed Commissioners rejected, which no doubt caused Macron to despair of the EU and induced him to set up an alternative, looser, multi-speed European body: which recently had a meeting of 57 European states.

Member States used to have an absolute right to appoint their Commissioners unconditionally. This was crucial for very practical reasons, but also constitutionally to highlight that Member States were in charge of the Commission: which was one of their instruments for political integration. This object was seen, quite rightly, as 'work in progress', to culminate in the far distance future and not yet a fact. The Commission was the hard-working servant, not the master, of the project.

Ursula does not accept that and assumes a right to make the rules, not just obey them.

The founding leaders were then realistic enough to know that such a unique project as the political integration of European

nation-states was a very long-term project, and that the various natural tensions that would arise in such a project would be unique and need very careful handling.

The project involved the changing of hearts and minds in a major way for a number of European nations—and of their feelings towards each other! Wars and revolutions had done so in the past and they hoped a better way could be found.

It was understood that declarations, rhetoric, treaties, constitutions etc. about the project did more harm than good and gave a false sense of the realities involved. The founders knew, with Joseph de Maistre, that the truly fundamental things in this area are not written and cannot be written about—and the more written about, the less effective they would be as they are intangible.

And there is certainly oceans of ink and tons of paper emanating from Brussels,

and if either or both could unite Europe it would have happened by now.

But, in the real world of politics, the most important European feeling that is encouraged by Brussels now as some sort of unifying virtue is Russophobia, which overrides all else. This, despite the historical fact that such negative feeling led to the destruction of the two major European states, France and Germany.

Such feeling is already impoverishing and diminishing Europe before our eyes and this will only accelerate. Hardly a beacon of hope for uniting Europe. Quite the contrary.

As well as personifying this attitude towards Russia, von der Leyen spouts the weasel verbiage about Palestine that condones genocide and which Michael D. deplors. What a wonderful vision she has for Europe.

Jack Lane

Daly and Wallace Making Waves in Brussels

By their actions in the European Parliament Irish MEPs Clare Daly and Mick Wallace are confounding their critics in both Ireland and the EU. In late September they chaired three events in the Parliament building in Brussels, any one of which would have been enough to highlight the short sightedness of the EU's current subservience to US foreign policy.

Taking place on three consecutive days starting on Tuesday 26th September, the well-attended meetings covered the fiftieth anniversary of the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile, tension surrounding Georgia's application to join the EU and the plight of Muslim prisoners still incarcerated in prison camps at the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Of the three events the Guantánamo meeting was the most internationally significant because of the authority of the speakers, but all three meetings were informative and valuable in the insights they offered on present-day international affairs. Because of the Ukraine war and related shifts in the global balance of power, the international dimension and defence of human rights were uppermost in most of the discussions over the three days.

CHILEAN EVENT

The subjects of Allende's death and the Pinochet coup of 11th September 1973 were discussed at a short plenary session of the European Parliament on the 12th September at which the lead speaker was EU High Commissioner Josep Borrell. Borrell stated that 2% of families controlled 50% of the national income of Chile when Allende came to power. And two hundred out of every thousand children died early. Otherwise, he confined himself to bland platitudes. Allende, he said,

“deserves respect and deserves recognition. For what he symbolizes. I believe that his name is inseparable from the fight for justice.”

That was a clever way to damn Allende with faint praise and skate over the uncomfortable reality of America's role in instigating the Chilean coup.

Borrell's few words set the tone for the rest of the debate. The only dissident voice came from a member of the Spanish VOX party, Herman Tertsch, who delivered a fiery rant against Allende. Fine words were the order of the day as Spanish MEPs from the Social Democratic and Greens Groups made their contributions but, as befits the

EU's place in the current global pecking order, nobody delved too deeply into US support for Pinochet.

In contrast the event chaired by Daly and Wallace fourteen days later gave a platform to politicians who had been directly involved on the Allende side and made no bones about laying the blame for the coup at the feet of Nixon, Kissinger and the CIA. The first speaker, Carmen Hertz, was a veteran of the Chilean Left and a human rights lawyer and the second, Pierre Galand, was a former member of the Belgian Senate who had been president of the Comité National Chili that was responsible for settling thousands of refugees from Chile in Belgium following the coup. German MEP Özlem Demirel of the German Die Linke Party and the Parliament's Left Group also made a brief statement of solidarity with the people of Chile.

The credentials of the main speakers tell their own story. Carmen Hertz is a Communist representative in the Chilean Chamber of Deputies and President of the Chamber's Foreign Relations Commission. As a lawyer she was appointed human rights director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the end of the dictatorship. In the early days of the *coup*, Carmen's husband, Carlos Berger, a broadcaster and member of the Communist Party, was executed. Like many relatives of the victims of secretive political violence, she spent years searching for details of her husband's death and seeking justice.

Pierre Galand represented the Belgian Socialist Party in the country's federal Senate (2003-2007). The list of associations he has headed include: the European NGO Coordination Committee on Palestine, the Belgian-Palestinian Association, Oxfam Belgium, and the United Nations Association. He told the audience he joined a protest against the Soviet invasion of Hungary in the 1950s, his first experience of international politics.

A subject that came up in the speeches, and one that EU leaders are unusually quiet about, was the concept of a new multipolar world order which both speakers welcomed; Galand waxed lyrical about the "world's shifting tectonic plates" and Hertz defended the independence of the Global South and welcomed the movement away from US hegemony, pointing out that Chile does more trade with China than with any other country or trading bloc. Speaking about present-day Chile, she acknowledged that defeat in a referendum on a new Constitution had been

a disappointment for which she blamed media misrepresentation. She prefaced her remarks by saying she was expressing an opinion that like all opinions was open to question.

Picking up on a point made by another audience member who said he was born in a state that no longer existed [the German Democratic Republic] and was concerned that the Left sometimes got things wrong, I put a question to Carmen. I asked what was being done in Chile to counter polarisation? Were alliances being forged with religious or conservative elements, for example?

In reply she alluded to various efforts to achieve national unity, adding that such efforts were challenging. She gave the example of the Chilean pension scheme which had been based on stock market investments in line with liberal thinking. The investments had come up short and the state had been forced to heavily subsidise the scheme. How, she asked, could there be consensus on such unstable neo-liberal reforms?

At the end of the meeting, which was held jointly by *Die Linke* and *Independents for Change* (the designation used by Daly and Wallace), Clare Daly thanked Kerstin Eekman, a political advisor with *Die Linke*, for initiating and doing much of the organising for the event.

Arguably, the meeting marked the anniversary of the Chilean coup in a more authoritative and thoughtful manner than the pious event held in the Parliament some weeks beforehand.

GEORGIAN EVENT

The purpose behind this event was to give a platform to various political groupings in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia who favour EU membership while wishing to avoid ending up like Ukraine. In other words, they wish to join the EU while retaining trade and cultural ties with Russia, pure anathema, obviously, to the Russophobic EU elite.

Six platform speakers from Georgia gave accounts of the political situation from different perspectives. The translation service of the EU does not include the Georgian language so there were some communication issues between the speakers and the audience. Points made by the speakers included the following.

It appears that the EU is penalising Georgia for being insufficiently Russo-

phobic; that is ridiculous; such a policy would be madness given Georgia's extensive border with Russia. For Georgia to be accepted as a Candidate Country, the EU is advising that the country is currently too polarised; but opinion in most states is polarised on some issues, even on important Constitutional issues! This was grossly unfair on Georgia.

The former President of the country, Mikheil Saakashvili, currently imprisoned for abuse of power and a figure greatly admired by the EU leadership and Volodymyr Zelenskyy, incarcerated 10% of the Georgian population at one time. The very name, Saakashvili, evoked strong passions in Georgia. There was a groundswell of opinion that the conditions he enjoyed in prison were far too comfortable.

Neo-liberal policies aimed at creating an oligarchy were having disastrous effects on working class living standards in Georgia. Trade unions faced an impossible task and workers were having to make individual choices to emigrate. Many Georgian women were emigrating to Italy and Spain to support their families at home—their status in EU countries was as virtual indentured servants. A trade union official researching the welfare of these workers found widespread demoralisation.

Proceedings at the event were greatly enlivened by a contribution from a Georgian national who hated Russia, a sentiment that is probably widespread among some sections of the population. Identifying herself as Christina, she asserted that Russia's policy towards Georgia was not mentioned in the discussion, nor was the number of people dying every day in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression.

Later she said the rights of LGBTI people were similarly ignored by the platform speakers. Responding to an earlier point that Saakashvili had roughly 30% support in Georgia, she said that he was the past; at most he would currently garner 5%. She said that Georgians needed to overcome their differences but there could be no dealings with Russia. One imagines she will report back to more sympathetic ears what transpired at the Georgian meeting hosted by 'renegade' Irish MEPs!

As Christina had been critical of the meeting, Mick Wallace replied saying that neither Clare Daly nor himself were puppets of Putin; on the contrary they saw him as a neo-liberal nationalist of the worst sort. The necessary response to the suffering of the people of Ukraine was to

open diplomatic negotiations immediately so that peace could be re-established.

A member of the audience said there was obviously much to learn about Georgian politics. As the meeting concluded there was a palpable sense of curiosity having been aroused about Georgia with many members of the audience continuing to discuss the issues in small groups. Voices from Georgia not heard before in the buildings of the European Parliament had received a hearing, and a contrary viewpoint more in line with the EU leadership had also been expressed. The meeting thus lived up to expectations.

In preparation for the meeting Daly and Wallace had travelled to Georgia in August where, as I learned, they met trade unionists, academics, journalists, politicians and workers. The Irish and the Georgians share some cultural traits, or so they say. One could see Irish-Georgian bonds of friendship arising from this event.

GUANTÁNAMO

‘Close Guantánamo’, the mantra of an international support group for the thirty remaining detainees in the camp, was the title of the last of the three Brussels meetings. This was the longest and most memorable of the three meetings, accurately described as “*the most significant gathering ever assembled on Guantánamo*”. The international campaign is based on a group of former inmates whose mission in life is never to forget their comrades who remain incarcerated. The whole event was organised in the name of one former prisoner, a tireless advocate in the cause, Mansoor Adayfi.

Three former prisoners addressed the meeting: Mansoor, a Yemini held for fourteen years (2002–2016); Lakhdar Boumediene, an Algerian who was resettled in France after seven years detention; and Mozzam Begg, a British Pakistani detained first in Bagram, a ‘black site’ [CIA unofficial torture centre] in Pakistan before being transferred to Guantánamo for three years. Lakhdar spoke very briefly and explained that talking about his imprisonment and forced feeding for two years was too painful for him. Mozzam said that Bagram had been his worst experience but both prisons had been unspeakable and outside of legal controls. He revealed that seven former inmates of the camp had been members of the Taliban. On their release in 2014 they had resumed their work with that organisation and were now somehow managing to hold down senior positions in the Afghan Government.

Mansoor spoke in English but interspersed his contributions with greetings and snatches of song in mellifluous Arabic. For effect he wore the prison garb of the camp. Mansoor came to international prominence in 2022 when he alleged that Florida governor Ron DeSantis oversaw beatings and force-feedings of detainees at Guantánamo. He is the author of “*Don’t Forget Us Here: Lost and Found at Guantánamo*”, a memoir that has been described as simultaneously harrowing, hilarious and full of humanity.

The meeting ran from 9 am till 1 pm on Thursday 28th September in the Chamber reserved for the Left Group and was addressed by nine speakers in all. As in the other events, the first part was chaired by Daly, the second by Wallace. The initiative for the Guantánamo event came from an English journalist, Andy Worthington, who is a long-term campaigner on the issue and author of “*The Guantanamo Files: The Stories of the 774 Detainees in America’s Illegal Prison*”. The organisational heavy lifting was done by Daly’s staff with advice from Worthington and Adayfi. When Worthington addressed the meeting, he said: “*If you want to get something done in the European Parliament, you talk to Clare and Mick*”.

What was said at a long meeting like this cannot be squeezed into an article but an idea of it will be gleaned from the list of speakers with some added notes. Apart from the three former prisoners, the speakers were:

James Yee, a former Muslim chaplain at the camp who argued that the treatment there amounted to religious persecution of Muslims. He was himself arrested for espionage and treason and imprisoned for over a year before all charges against him were dropped. A graduate of Westpoint holding the rank of colonel in the US military, he applied for and received an honourable discharge in January 2005. He said:

“The people down in Guantánamo probably know as much about Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida as any private in the military would know what’s going on inside the Pentagon”.

Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, a native Irish speaker from Connemara and lecturer in human rights law, was appointed in 2017 as U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism. She was the first Rapporteur to visit Guantánamo in early 2023. Her report, published in June, described an ongoing regime that, despite some tinkering by Presidents Obama and Biden, constitutes, as she described it, “*ongoing cruel, inhuman,*

and degrading treatment,” which “*may also meet the legal threshold for torture.*”

Beth Jacob, a Human Rights attorney [solicitor] in Washington DC well known in the States, represents four of the men who have been approved for release but who remain in detention. These prisoners require countries that will allow them to be re-settled in their jurisdictions.

Alka Pradhan is a human rights counsel [barrister] representing Ammar al-Baluchi deemed a high-value detainee. She argued that the military commission trial system used in Guantánamo was badly broken. The cases needed to be moved to federal criminal courts or traditional military courts where constitutional guarantees still apply.

Valerie Lucznikowski was from the *September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows*. She testified on behalf of some of the thousands of Americans who lost relatives in 9/11. At a meeting of the American Civil Liberties Union in 2008 she stated:

“I lost someone I dearly loved on September 11, and have waited too long to see those responsible brought to justice. But these special military tribunals that are stained by politics and deny detainees the basic American principle of due process smack of revenge rather than justice, and mock our legal system and those we lost.”

Andy Worthington was focussed on achieving practical outcomes from the European Parliament. His hope was that more EU countries would step forward and volunteer to accept for re-settlement former Guantánamo prisoners who have been passed for release. In many cases the ex-prisoners needed to be re-settled in Western countries where the rule of law afforded them security.

The Guantánamo event was exceptional. Every word from each of the speakers demanded attention. Defending human rights sometimes gets a bad press on the justifiable grounds that it can be presented as an alternative to politics. But in instances like Guantánamo, and indeed the aftermath of the Chilean *coup*, human rights lawyers are the only people who can help the victims of injustice. Their defence of the principle of *habeas corpus*, the right of prisoners to challenge the authorities in a Court of Law as to why they are being detained, was most impressive. The three female legal representatives at the meeting — Jacob, Pradhan and Ní Aoláin — each bore testimony to the value of their professions. From an Irish

perspective it is strange that Ní Aoláin is not better known.

It will be interesting to see what if any action is taken at the highest levels of the EU to hasten the release of the remaining Muslim prisoners at Guantánamo.

CRITICISMS OF DALY AND WALLACE

After the Georgian meeting a member of the audience who had travelled from Ireland spoke to me about her unease regarding the stance of some of the Georgians and her sympathy for the anti-Russian speaker. She may have been in a small minority in the audience but back home in Ireland many more people would undoubtedly share her views. Earlier in the week another woman who had travelled from Wexford with her husband opined that Mick Wallace was losing popularity in Wexford. Word was, she said, that Wallace was too fond of exotic causes in faraway places and not sufficiently attentive to issues nearer home.

This anecdotal evidence bears out the conventional belief that public representatives driven by conviction provoke opposition more often than they gain support. Far better for everyone, so the thinking goes, if they put aside their convictions and settled for career politics so that nobody's feathers get unduly ruffled. But where exactly does that model of politics bring us? Into mindless group think more likely than not.

The records of the European Parliament and the Dáil, which are freely available online, show that Daly and Wallace are competent parliamentarians who can deal with the detail of Committee work and legislative formation as well as the high politics of international affairs. Wallace is a member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and contributes regularly on the subject of food additives. He is a Substitute on Economic and Monetary Affairs as well as Foreign Affairs (being a Substitute means having speaking rights on the particular Committee). Daly holds the position of Vice-Chair on the Delegation for Relations with Afghanistan and is a member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. She is a Substitute on International Trade, Transport and Tourism and Security and Defence.

Both MEPs take seriously the idea that the European Parliament legislates for the entire Union but also contribute on Irish affairs. In the recent past Wallace made a statement (14 September 2023) in the Parliament in support of the Retained Firefighters

during their recent dispute, highlighting that they are three times more likely than the general population to contract cancer, and Daly tabled a question (21 July 2023) defending the interests of architects in Ireland whose qualifications were acquired informally but who are nonetheless recognised in the profession, and who, in breach of the Professional Qualifications Directive, are excluded from the general system covered by the Directive (she was saying that the Directive is being misread in Ireland).

There has also been criticism of Daly and Wallace in the public domain. Shortly after the start of the Ukraine War, Nathalie Loiseau, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Security and Defence in the European Parliament and a member of the Delegation for Relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, gave an interview to the *Drivetime* programme on RTE Radio. In the interview, to which Daly and Wallace had no right of reply, Loiseau made known her disapproval of the stance being taken by the Irish MEPs. Her criticism was later echoed in a number of articles and opinion pieces in the Irish Times. Since that time media criticism has died down.

Against this criticism, much can be said but the basic point is that on the Ukraine war Nathalie Loiseau aligns with the pro-US position of the EU whereas Daly and Wallace have been critical of that position. It seems that many in prominent positions in the European Parliament would like if the two MEPs from one of the smaller Member States could be got to cool their ardour.

But pressure, whether from heavy hitters in the EU or the media, has had no effect; Daly and Wallace have continued to play their gadfly role to good effect. A notable example was when, from the floor of the Parliament, Wallace asked a question (16 February 2023) that no one else dared to ask: why has the EU failed to instigate a proper investigation into the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines?

It would be untrue to say that Independents for Change are overly focused on EU foreign policy debates to the neglect of Irish issues; the Ukraine war and related foreign policy developments are just as much a focus of public debate in Ireland as in Europe. On the one hand the Irish Government has adopted a strong pro-Ukraine position, on the other, a majority of the electorate continues to support the traditional neutrality policy.

In an IPSOS opinion survey conducted in April 2022 after a torrent of media attacks on the neutrality policy, 65% of those surveyed opted for retaining the policy. The main opposition party, Sinn Féin, a party

that generally supports neutrality but is anxious at the present time to assure the political class that they are fit to exercise power, joined in the chorus of denunciation of Russia, going a step further than the Government by demanding the expulsion of the Russian Ambassador. In this unusual set of circumstances, Daly and Wallace have emerged (along with President Michael D. Higgins it should be said) among the few public figures prepared to give voice to the wishes of the pro-neutrality majority.

These issues were to the fore at a public meeting which the two MEPs organised last June on the subject of neutrality in the Morrison Hotel, Dublin (see Pro-Neutrality: Dublin Meeting, Irish Political Review, August 2023). The venue was packed and the meeting was addressed by an impressive group of speakers from the US, Germany, Britain and Greece. At that meeting Daly stated to audience applause:

“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.”

The relevance of that defence of the Irish foreign policy tradition was underlined when a member of the audience stated that as someone who was not especially Left-wing he considered that Daly and Wallace were doing a good job in representing Irish opinion in the European Parliament. They are in these circumstances representing, not merely the many shades of Irish socialist opinion, but a much wider pro-neutrality constituency; they are defending the Irish foreign policy tradition at a time when it has come under sustained attack.

Daly and Wallace have been making waves in the European Parliament and are confounding their critics. The effect of their representations has been to challenge the EU's Ukraine policy, a policy that seems increasingly unstable and increasingly unpopular among the electorates of Europe. Their activities in Brussels went up a notch in the last week of September when they chaired and helped organise three events in the chamber used by the Left Group. The quality of these events testifies to their effectiveness and the esteem with which they are regarded across a broad range of international opinion.

Dave Alvey

The Brian Murphy osb Archive

Our Lady Of Limerick

continued from October *Irish Political Review*

Bishop Terence Albert O'Brien of Cappamore, County Limerick

Terence O'Brien, of the family of O'Brien Arra, was born in Cappamore, County Limerick, in 1600. He was the son of Murtagh O'Brien and the family home was at Tuogh, or Tower Hill, on the south side of Cappamore. His mother was also of the noble family of Arra. According to the Civil Survey of 1654/1655, the family owned the manor, town and lands of Tuosgreny; in all a total of 1,590 acres. As their home was only some five miles from Brittas Castle, it is possible that he may, as a young boy, have attended Mass at Sir John Bourke's castle. In 1621 he joined the Dominicans at Saint Saviours on King's Island, Limerick City, where his uncle, Maurice, was the Prior; and he took Albert as his name in religion. After a year, he was sent to Toledo in Spain to study for the priesthood and was ordained in 1627, although it is not known where he was ordained. At that time there were 50 Irish students studying in Spain; and three of O'Brien's Dominican companions were also to be put to death for their faith. They were Arthur Geoghan, who was executed at Tyburn, England; John Collins, who was hanged in Limerick in 1652; and Thadaeus Moriarty, who was hanged in Killarney in 1653. Father O'Brien returned to Ireland and in 1637 was appointed Prior at Saviour's. It was in that capacity that he received the gift of the chalice and the statue of Our Lady from Patrick Sarsfield.

Prior O'Brien held Office at an extremely difficult time: King Charles 1 (1625-1649) was implementing the same policy as his father, James 1; and, in May 1642, a Confederation of Irish Catholics had been formed to resist this policy. The Confederation was made up of the native, or Gaelic, Irish along with the Old English—those who had been granted land in Ireland after the Norman Conquest and who were Roman Catholic.

Their aim was to gain control of the administration of Ireland and to secure full civic and religious rights for Roman Catholics. A Confederate army laid siege

to Limerick from May to June 1642 and, assisted by the mayor, Dominick Fanning, gained access to the city. By 1643 the Confederates controlled many parts of Ireland; they had an army of c60,000; and they were receiving financial and military support from France, Spain and the Pope. It was in this context that Fr. O'Brien was, in 1643, appointed Provincial of the Dominican Order in Ireland which, at that time, numbered about 600. In that capacity, he attended a general chapter of the Order in Rome in 1644. The Pope, Innocent X, like his immediate predecessors, was personally concerned about the situation in Ireland, and a papal envoy had been appointed in 1643. A second envoy, Archbishop Rinuccini (1592-1653), arrived in Ireland on 21st October 1645: and the character of his mission may be discerned from the fact that, when he landed at Kenmare, County Kerry, he had both money and arms for the Confederate forces.

However, the situation in Ireland changed dramatically in 1646, when, on 28th March, a Peace Accord was agreed with the Duke of Ormonde, the King's representative in Ireland, and the Confederate Supreme Council. Neither the Confederate military leaders, nor Archbishop Rinuccini, were consulted about this peace treaty, and they set up a rival Supreme Council of their own. For a short time the Confederates associated with Rinuccini had some military success, notably the victory at Benburb, County Tyrone, 5th June 1646, of Owen Roe O'Neill against a combined force of Scottish and English troops. Closer to Limerick, there was also a significant success with the taking of Bunratty Castle, after a siege, on 14th July 1646. These victories were followed by a military procession through Limerick City to St Mary's Cathedral where Rinuccini presided over a solemn Benediction and hymn of thanks giving. The chalice that he used while saying Mass was preserved in the Cathedral but is no longer in their possession.

The deep divisions in the Confederate ranks, however, ultimately led to failure. The army was defeated near Dublin, in August 1647, and Cashel surrendered at the same time. The defeat at Cashel, after which several Catholic clergy were executed, brought the war very close to the people of Limerick. Prior O'Brien was inextricably caught up in these events, as Archbishop Rinuccini had consecrated him as Bishop of Emly on Easter Sunday, 2nd April 1648 (he had been coadjutor bishop since March 1647). And he had also signed the Declaration against the Ormonde Agreement. He was, incidentally, to be the last Bishop of Emly as subsequently the diocese was amalgamated with that of Cashel and became the diocese of 'Cashel and Emly'.

The character of the war in Ireland then changed dramatically with the execution of King Charles 1, on 30th January 1649. This led to the rule of Oliver Cromwell (1649-1658), and his personal intervention in the war in Ireland from August 1649. One of his first Decrees was issued in Limerick, when he declared that the practice of the Catholic religion was no longer permitted. Archbishop Rinuccini had left Ireland from Galway, on 23rd February 1649, and a divided Irish people faced the highly organised forces of Cromwell.

Bishop O'Brien and 18 other Bishops responded by meeting at Clonmacnoise and issued a Decree asking for prayers and calling for a united resistance to Cromwell. However, by May 1650, when Cromwell left Ireland, most of the country was under his rule. Only the West of Ireland, including Limerick remained to be conquered. The Irish bishops, including O'Brien, did make overtures to the Duke of Lorraine, in August 1650, for his help but this was declined. It was in this context that General Henry Ireton (1611-1651), Cromwell's son-in-law, who had been appointed Lord President of Munster, began the siege of Limerick on 14th June 1651.

The Irish army under General Hugh O'Neill numbered some 2,000 troops, and they attempted to defend the citizens of Limerick who were confined behind the fortified walls of King's Island and Irishtown. The walls in Irishtown, especially at the gates of St John's and Mungret, were raised by several metres to prevent an attack. After several abortive attacks, peace negotiations did take place, only to break down when Ireton made it clear that there would be no freedom to practice the Catholic religion and no pardon given to Catholic clergy.

Ireton then resolved to starve those inside the city in to submission. Some were prepared to surrender but Bishop O'Brien was resolute in his call for continued resistance, despite the effects of starvation and an outbreak of the plague. Lenihan's history of Limerick (page 177) recounts from original sources that—

"the conduct indeed of the Bishop of Emly throughout the siege was of the most patriotic, noble and self-sacrificing character. He was offered an enormous sum of money—no less than forty thousand golden crowns, and permission to retire wherever he would out of the kingdom, provided he ceased to exhort the people against surrender; but his heroic soul spurned the temptation."

Bishop O'Brien was supported by Hugh O'Neill and by the former Mayor, Dominic Fanning, in opposing Ireton's demand to surrender. The current Mayor, Thomas Stritch, also rejected the call to surrender and led a public procession to the statue of Our Lady soon after his election. As narrated by Lenihan (page 182)—

"on receiving the keys of the city he laid them at the feet of the Blessed Virgin's statue, praying her to receive the city under her protection, whilst at the same time, as an act of homage, all public guilds marched with banners flying to the church."

Stritch urged all those present to be faithful to God, to the Church and to the King. This event shows the esteem in which the statue of Our Lady was held by the people of Limerick. Finally, on 27th October, after some 5,000 citizens and 700 troops had died, the city surrendered on Ireton's terms which specifically named about twenty people who would not receive a pardon from the death penalty.

Ireton's troops entered the city, on 29th October 1651. Ireton himself lived for a short time in a house in Nicholas Street. A pinnacle of that house has been preserved and may be seen in the grounds of St Mary's Cathedral.

Following Ireton's successful entry into Limerick, Bishop Terence O'Brien was arrested in the Pest House, a building on the north side of Mungret Street, where he was caring for those who were wounded and sick. He was then tried by court-martial, which was held in St Mary's Cathedral, and, having been given the chance to speak, simply said that, as he had many sins to confess, he simply desired time to prepare himself for death. He was then sentenced to death.

Before the death sentence was carried out Bishop O'Brien made his confession to a fellow Dominican, Father Denis Hanrahan. On the following day, 30th October 1651, he was executed by hanging, on exactly the same location as Sir John Burke—the Townland of the Gallows.

There is a lack of clarity about the last words that he spoke before his death: Lenihan's history of Limerick provides one version; an article by Fr. Hugh Fenning in *Collectanea Hibernica* (1996) provides another. From Lenihan's account (page 180), which in turn was taken from Bishop Thomas Burke's history of 1762, a few words of Bishop O'Brien are recorded, urging the people surrounding the gallows to—

"preserve the faith, keep the commandments; do not complain of God's will, which, if you do, you will possess your souls; and do not weep for me, but pray that, being firm and unbroken amidst this torment of death, I may happily finish my course."

These words were taken from the original account of Fr. Denis Hanrahan, who was present at Bishop O'Brien's death.

The article by Father Fenning does not contain these words but is based on a very early account of the Bishop's death, which was published in London on 21st November 1651, only three weeks after his death. For that reason, the account merits attention but some questions arise as to the authenticity of this document as it contains certain factual errors: for example, it refers to O'Brien as being the Bishop of Clonmel; it gives the date of his execution as 9th November; and it states that General O'Neill was executed, although, in fact, his life was spared. The document reports Bishop O'Brien as saying that:

"I was born and baptised in the bosom of the Church of Rome (the ancient and true Church) and in that profession I have ever since lived, and in the same I now die. As touching my engagement in arms, I did it in two respects: first, for the preservation of my principles and tenets. And secondly, for the establishment of the King, and the rest of the Royal issue in their just rights and privileges."

Questions arise about this account because, by stressing the Bishop's fidelity to the Crown, it served a political purpose which is lacking from Fr. Hanrahan's account.

Both accounts agree that he concluded by forgiving his enemies and repeating his request for prayers. He was then hanged but, while still hanging, his dead body was cut to pieces with blows from muskets and swords until it was completely disfigured.

Almost twenty others were executed at the same time; among them were Thomas Stritch, Sir Patrick Purcell, and several priests including Fathers Francis Woulfe and Laurence Walsh. Bishop O'Dwyer of Limerick is said to have escaped by disguising himself as a Cromwellian soldier. Shortly afterwards, on 26th November 1651, Ireton died in Limerick from the plague and his body was taken to England for burial in Westminster Abbey. On the accession to the throne of Charles II in 1660, Ireton's body and those of the others who had signed the death warrant for the execution of Charles I were exhumed and publicly mutilated on 30th January 1661, the 12th anniversary of the king's death. It was said that these misfortunes of Ireton were a result of his treatment of the Bishop.

Bishop O'Brien was venerated as a martyr immediately after his death and, as early as 1656, following a General Chapter of the Dominicans, his name was placed in their list of saints. He was formally canonised in 1992, and a public park in Clare Street which faces the place of his execution was named after him.

The statue of Our Lady, which he had received earlier in his life, has survived to the present day. Throughout the months of the siege, the statue had its place in the Church of St. Saviour's Priory where Bishop O'Brien lived with his fellow Dominicans. The Priory had been designated a papal university, or special place of study, by Pope Julius II in the 1640s. However, when Ireton's troops entered King's Island, they destroyed the Priory and the Church, although some of the city walls which surrounded the Priory are still visible.

The statue of Our Lady and the chalice were somehow preserved safely in a private home during these turbulent times. Tradition relates that the Bishop gave his pectoral cross to his mother shortly before his death. It was given to St Saviour's Church, Limerick, in 1927.

(To be continued)

A China Strategy!

Having considered content and wording over 83 weeks of "intensive" work, the German Government has adopted a 'China strategy'. It was published on July 17th, (see English version at Google: *Strategy on China*).

The Government justifies such a strategy with the following meagre statement: "China has changed—and therefore our China policy must also change".

It should be noted at the outset that China has been our most important trading partner for about 30 years. In 2022 alone, goods worth 298.9 billion Euros were traded between Germany and the People's Republic of China, according to interim results. And China has topped the list for the seventh year in a row, according to the Federal Statistical Office. Not only that: China has never caused Germany the slightest difficulty as regards trade.

Nevertheless, Germany is adopting a new policy as regards China, with the following aims, and I quote:

"It is intended to set out the German Government's view of the state of, and prospects for, relations with China.

"The arrangements are intended to enable the German Government to better further our values and interests in the complex relationship with China.

"Ways and means are to be found, to enable the Federal Government to work with China without compromising Germany's liberal-democratic way of life, our sovereignty, our prosperity, or our security and partnerships with others.

"It is intended to set out a framework within which German Government Departments can coherently shape their policies toward China.

"It is intended to form the foundation for strengthening policy coordination with regard to China."

Yet, despite undertaking an intensive and lengthy study of the extensive explanation of this German-China strategy, it is impossible to find a single concrete statement setting out how mutual trade and economic and political relations are to be shaped. Instead, there are a plethora of strange terms—such as "de-coupling", "de-risking", "resilience", "diversification", and so on, which we will not go into here!

But—having carefully studied all these terms, intended to obscure, rather than illuminate—we come across the central, and most significant, indication of how the relationship of the Federal Republic of Germany with China is to be defined: and it is composed of just three words! China is Germany's—

Partner, Competitor, Systemic-Rival

The concept of "Systemic Rival", deriving from American foreign policy, when translated into German suggests mistrust, delimitation, and even hostility. It confines discussion and poisons the atmosphere.

And that is exactly how China has understood it: and it has been deeply angered by this sweeping politicisation of economic relations between the two states. The representative of the Chinese Department for Foreign Affairs immediately declared that—

"the German Strategy-Paper politicises normal cooperative relations between the two countries, is counter-productive, and threatens stable relations. Those who, in a so-called competition of systems, use their own values and ideologies to create barriers are acting in contradiction with modern trends and can only intensify divisions in the world."

And he added:

"There are far more areas of consensus between China and Germany than there are differences. Co-operation far outweighs difference: collaboration far outweighs competition. The two sides are partners rather than rivals."

However, there has been another, very surprising, response to the Berlin Government's China strategy: the reaction of German business to the strategy.

Large sections of the business community are openly taking a stand against their own Government's China strategy! The Presidents of the leading German business associations are urgently warning against a break with the People's Republic of China. They point out that the German economy gets almost half of its strategically important goods from China, and they draw attention to the fact that the most important sectors of German industry have vital trading interests in China.

Thus, in his response to the strategy paper, Volkswagen's China CEO, Ralf Brandstätter, insisted on seeing China not just as a rival, but

also as a partner. "Despite systemic differences, we need bilateral cooperation with China in this highly interconnected world", he said.

Here, in this specific instance, we find a highly interesting reversal of imperialist practice: Up to now, taking a historical perspective, it was Capital that, in its greed to expand and maximise its profits, forced its respective state or government to aggressively expand geopolitically and create neo-colonialist conditions. But here it is the other way round: Representatives of Capital demand that government keeps its fingers out of German foreign enterprise arrangements!

Now we have to ask: What has prompted the German Government—counter to the interests of its own economy—to develop anti-China strategies?

The reason for this fundamental re-ordering of security policy with regard to the Indo-Pacific region, which is being conducted at America's behest, is simply to further American interests under guise of providing global leadership—a role claimed by the US for decades.

It seems that, not only Germany, but also NATO and the European Union, will have to "learn the language of power", on the United States model, in this geo-strategic space, as German EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen instructed back in the Summer of 2019. Little wonder that, even before Defence Minister Boris Pistorius's recent visit, the German media was loudly proclaiming: "*Bundeswehr shows the flag in Indo-Pacific region*"! Showing the flag is intended to signal that Germany stands firmly alongside its valued partners in the project of strengthening and enforcing the Western rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

By expanding its strategic and operational scope of action in that part of the world, Germany is yielding to the long-standing pressure and demands of the USA—as a loyal vassal!!!

Let us leave aside all other the other angles of this strategy aimed at China and concentrate only on the military aspect.

It is not that German military activities in the Indo-Pacific are kept quiet here in Germany: no, they are mentioned here and there. But they have not, and do not, really feature in the mass media and in journalism.

Now for specifics:

A first step towards a greater German military presence in the Indo-Pacific region was the deployment of the German Navy frigate, "Bayern", to the Indo-Pacific in August 2021 (see: *Irish Political Review*, August 23: *German Perspectives— Militarisation and Re-armament*).

The German military then participated in the following Pacific manoeuvres:

"Rapid Pacific 2022".

On 15th August 2023, to demonstrate operational preparedness, the Air Force deployed a formation of the following aircraft to the Indo-Pacific region: six Eurofighters, four A400Ms, and three A330 MRTT tankers/transporters were tasked with reaching Singapore in just 24 hours. And, with a subsequent redeployment to Australia, the Air Force took part in the following manoeuvres there.

Talisman Sabre 2023.

This was a major international exercise led by the US and Australia, involving military personnel from 13 nations. It was divided into three sub-exercises.

Around 100 aircraft took part in the "Pitch Black" manoeuvre, including six Eurofighters from German Air Force Squadron 74. Air defence and air attack were practised, with a total of about 1,400 takeoffs during the manoeuvre.

This manoeuvre was immediately followed by the Royal Australian Navy's "Kakadu" manoeuvre, which took place in Darwin and its adjacent waters, as well as in its airspace. Participants included marines from the German Army's maritime battalion and paratroopers from Regiment 31. The exercises were primarily amphibious landing exercises.

After these manoeuvres, the German fleet split up: One tanker is to visit South Korea, three Eurofighters flew to Japan,

and three more German fighter jets will practice with the Singapore Air Force in a joint manoeuvre!

The nature of all the exercises listed here shows they are directed against one enemy: China!

The most recent report concerning the deployment of German military outside Europe dates from 10th October 2023—just 12 days before the time of writing. It reads:

" 'Desert Air': Six Eurofighters of Air Force Squadron 73 Steinhoff from Laage (a town in Mecklenburg, HR) leave for exercises in Jordan. The fighters are to take part in the 'Desert Air' military exercise, which has been planned for some time in conjunction with the Jordanian and US air forces. Furthermore, 80 soldiers from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern will take part."

The German military is spreading its wings.

Herbert Rimmel

Book Review

Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War,
Robert Cole, Edinburgh University Press, 2006

Irish Neutrality In WW2

This book describes the efforts of Britain and America to undermine Irish neutrality during the Second World War. The author takes a chronological approach quoting extensively from media and other sources at the time. This is a useful approach since very often this period is looked at from a post war perspective which is dominated by our knowledge of the concentration camps.

The big issue of contention was British demands for access to the Treaty ports. Most of the British media didn't hesitate to denounce the Irish for being cowardly, stupid and responsible for the deaths of British seamen. De Valera, in particular, was the target of their ire. But while this went down well with readers of the Daily Express and Daily Mail, it was completely counterproductive in influencing people in the twenty six counties.

As modern readers will know - from even a cursory knowledge of data analytics - in order to manipulate and influence people it is necessary to understand their values, beliefs and prejudices. This was well known by the British Ministry of Information (MoI) in the 1940s.

Two key people tasked with collecting information from influential Irish political figures were the future poet laureate John Betjeman and the novelist and journalist

Elizabeth Bowen. It was well known that Betjeman was working for the British State, but it was not widely known that Bowen was reporting back to the MoI.

Betjeman, who was a high church Anglican, advocated emphasising the idea that Britain was defending Christianity against NAZI atheism. He also favoured highlighting NAZI atrocities against Polish Catholics. British Catholic leaders and British Catholic media were deployed to exert an influence on Irish public opinion.

Another approach was to highlight the heroics of British soldiers of Irish origin even though there were far fewer soldiers from the South than in the First World War.

There was no reference to NAZI anti-semitism. An Irish person of a certain age living in the 1940s might well have concluded that there was not much difference between British propaganda then and the First World War.

British propaganda efforts were somewhat undermined by Northern Unionists who didn't take kindly to Southern heroics been highlighted when there was a more substantial contribution to the war effort from the North. In particular, the Northern Ireland Prime minister and the head of BBC Northern Ireland objected to some of the propaganda lines being pursued.

The alliance between Britain and the Soviet Union in June 1941 also undermined the line that the war was about defending Christianity.

A key battleground in the propaganda war was America. From the outset the Irish American press was virulently opposed to American involvement in the war and very supportive of Irish neutrality. But interestingly in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbour (December 1941), some of the Irish American press were supportive of going to war against Japan. It wasn't immediately obvious that there was a connection between American interests in the Pacific and the war in Europe until Germany declared war on the United States.

From the beginning of the war the American State was pro British, but their criticism of Irish neutrality before Pearl Harbour lacked credibility since the United States itself was neutral.

Its propaganda was ramped up after Pearl Harbour. Relations with the United States soured when de Valera objected to American troops stationed in Northern Ireland on the grounds that it was recognising partition. Although Irish censorship was not quite as strict on the Americans as with the British, it did censor American films that were pro War.

However, the overall conclusion is that British and American propaganda didn't succeed in their objectives. Well over 90% of people in the South supported neutrality and that level of support remained until the end of the war.

John Martin

Professor O'Halpin: Defending Ireland?

Professor Eunan O'Halpin, who never fails to remind his readers that he is the grand-nephew of Kevin Barry, wrote a book for Oxford University Press with the title, *Defending Ireland: The Irish State And Its Enemies Since 1922*. It is a very big book, 380 pages, considering that Ireland had no foreign enemy—actual, anticipated or desired—during the entire period covered by the book, which was published in 1999. It had no foreign enemy until 2022, when it decided to make war on Russia vicariously.

So who was it defending itself against during all those years? Well—against the Irish. Against the generations that were inspired by Professor O'Halpin's grand uncle.

The Ireland of 1922 that Professor O'Halpin writes about was born of War against the Irish. The British had to fight the Irish between 1919 and 1921 in order to establish an appropriate State in Ireland—a State capable of subduing the Irish to British interest.

The State appropriate to British requirements was established in mid-January 1922. It was called the Provisional Government. It was established on Crown authority by a 26 County Parliament called by the Viceroy. It was equipped with an Army dressed in uniform, just as the British Army had been, and it undertook the defence role had until then been performed by the British Army. And it fought the same enemy that the British Army had fought between 1919 and 1921: the IRA.

The British Army had been defending Ireland against the Irish for many centuries. The Irish were a restless, disorderly people. They lacked a sense of the fitness of things. They needed to be disciplined with a firm hand, and mastered into a sense of what it was possible for them to do and what was beyond their reach. In 1919-21 they had groped for what was beyond their reach. Britain had chastised them firmly, but with restraint.

A moment came when Britain put it to them that it would be obliged to crush them utterly if they persisted in their moonstruck waywardness, but that it would place re-

sponsibility for the defence of Ireland in their hands if they undertook to govern on British authority and in accordance with essential British requirements.

There was a rebel assembly in Ireland that called itself a Parliament and asserted its sovereignty. That self-styled sovereign Parliament sent delegates to London to see if London would make a Treaty with it. London would not even allow the possibility of a Treaty with the so-called Irish Parliament to be on the agenda. But it put it to the delegates that, if they agreed to assist with the calling of a 26 Co. Parliament under Crown authority, and to establish a 26 Country Provisional Government from that Parliament on Crown authority, it would provide that Provisional Government with an Army, and would make a Treaty with it when it proved that it could do the right thing.

The Irish Parliament (the Dail) had declared itself a sovereign body and appointed its own Government. The delegates that were sent to London by the Dail Government came back to it with a deal they had made to assembly as the 26 County Parliament of Southern Ireland, and establish a Provisional Government on it, in place of the Dail and its Government. After three weeks' debate in the Dail, the delegates gained a small majority in support of what they had done. But they did not attempt to implement their Treaty project in the Dail. They did not propose to the Dail that it should revoke its Declaration of Independence as an all-Ireland Parliament and become a 26 County Parliament under the Crown.

What they did instead was to take their small majority to another place, where it sat as the Parliament of Southern Ireland in accordance with the British 1920 Act, which the Dail had rejected, and appoint a Provisional Government.

That Provisional Government had lawful authority in part of Ireland under British law. The Dail had been declared an illegal assembly by the British Government in 1919, and I do not know that that declaration was ever revoked.

The act of the 26 County Parliament of Southern Ireland, in establishing a

Provisional Government, on 14th January 1922, now seems to be recognized by all the parties in the present Irish Government (Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Greens), as well as by the Opposition parties (Sinn Fein and Labour) as the foundation act of an Irish State—of the Irish State.

I have not come across the official record of the meeting of the Parliament of Southern Ireland, which is now officially recognized as founding the Irish State. I have looked in the places where such records are usually found and I did not see it there. I m not saying that there is no record of the debate in the Parliament that 'founded' the Irish state. It would be a remarkable thing if Britain did not arrange for an official record to be kept of the proceedings of the Parliament by which it caused an Irish State to be founded. I am only saying that I looked for that record, as far as I was able to do so without internet skills, and did not find it.

I gather, from the hearsay about it, that the Parliament of Southern Ireland sat only once. And I take it on trust that it did sit one, and that it established a Provisional Government, and that, having established it, it immediately set it free of itself.

The Provisional Government was bound by the Agreement of the British Government with the delegates (whom it did not recognize as representing the Dail) to make a Treaty with Southern Ireland if a sufficient number of elected representatives attended a Parliament of Southern Ireland to enable a Provisional Government of Southern Ireland to be established.

If that Provisional Government was established in due form, it would be empowered by Britain to make arrangements for subordinate statehood, and it would be installed as the Government of a Dominion at the end of a year if it behaved itself, and Britain would make a Treaty with it.

When its twelve-month probationary period was up, on 6th December 1922, the Provisional Government was making war on the IRA, reconquering the country from it. Its trustworthiness was established beyond question. It was defending the State against its enemies, and it was immediately installed by Britain as the Government of the Free State under the Crown.

That War ended in April 1923. The Free State never fought another war, nor did its successor, the Republic. For almost

the whole period covered by Professor O'Halpin's book the Irish State had no enemy to defend itself against, except the Irish.

The War against the IRA, which the Provisional Government of the Free State took over from the British Government in 1922, was the only War ever fought by that Irish Army.

It is true that another War was fought in Ireland, and that the IRA was a party to it, but the Irish State was studiously neutral in that War.

When Collins was killed in his War against the IRA, his simultaneous War against Northern Ireland was called off by the Government which he left behind him, and no subsequent Irish Government returned to it. The Nationalist community in the undemocratically-governed 6 County region of the British State were left to fight their own war.

The Irish State did not recognize the British Government in the Six Counties as legitimate. It asserted Irish sovereignty de jure over that region of the British State, but it did not support the de facto challenge by war, made by the Northern Nationalists, against the illegitimate authority of the British State.

Professor O'Halpin does not deal at all with the War fought in Northern Ireland between 1970 and 1998. Neither does he deal with the War of Independence of 1919-1921. Neither of these was about defending Ireland.

The War in defence of Ireland with which he deals began when the Provisional Government, based on the Parliament of Southern Ireland, took over from the British Government the task of defending Ireland against the Irish.

The members of the Provisional Government, who took over the task of defending Ireland from the Irish in January 1922, had until then been part of the Irish against whom Britain had been defending Ireland.

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A civil war is a war within a state, caused by a profound difference within the body politic of the state about how it should be governed. The State which launched the Irish Civil War sprang into existence on 14th January 1922. It had no body politic. It had never held an election. It had no Army. How could there be a civil war under such circumstances?

Professor O'Halpin asks on page 2 this very strange question: "*Where was the provisional government to get its military forces and its police?*"

A Government governs a State. A State has military forces and police. If it does not have military forces and police, then it is not a State.

Civil Wars are fought between components of states. When differences arise between the components of states that are so great that they can be resolved only by war, then there is civil war.

The means by which a civil war is fought in the State come from the State in which it is fought. The disputing parties must, if their disagreement is to lead to civil war, have substantial involvement in the State—in which case one would expect that part of the coercive apparatus of the state is available to each of them.

Pompey had an Army. Caesar had an Army. If one of them had no Army there would have been no war.

But Professor O'Halpin asks, at the beginning of his chapter on The State and Civil War,

"Where was the provisional government to get its military forces."

This suggests that, while the other side had forces, the "Government" had none!

Michael Collins, who was hailed by Arthur Griffith as "the man who had won the War", was head of the Provisional Government. So how could it be that the man who had won the War, and who was head of the Government, did not have at his disposal the military forces with which he had won the War?

Had he, on winning the War, improvisely become a pacifist and impetuously demobilized his Army?

But that can hardly be the case. Did he not, on becoming head of the Provisional Government, on January 16th, immediately appear in the full dress uniform of a General? Or was it only the uniform of a General that he had?

*

Professor O'Halpin creates a mystery by starting his story in the middle.

Michael Collins had, until 6th December 1921, been one of the Irish against whom the British Government had been defending Ireland. On December 6th he made an agreement with Britain to take over from it the job of defending Ireland

against the Irish who he had been leading against Britain until then. On January 16th he became head of the Provisional Government which undertook to govern Ireland on British authority and in accordance with British advice. By doing this he lost the Army with which he had fought Britain.

Collins had never actually been the leader of that Army. Its official leader was Cathal Brugha, whom Collins despised. Brugha was Minister for Defence in the Dail Government. But the Army was largely self-made in the various regions. Brugha was engaged in centralising it, and commissioning it as the Army of the Republic, while Collins was in London trying to negotiate a Treaty.

Collins regarded this activity of Brugha's as being directed against himself—as being designed to diminish his personal influence by establishing the Army as an instrument of the Dail Government, and marginalizing the influence of the secret society of which he was the leader, the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

When Collins became leader of the Provisional Government on British authority, he lost most of his influence with the Republican Army. He was a General without an army. But there was an easy answer to Professor O'Halpin's question: the British would supply him with an Army.

Collins military role in the War against the British was organizing Intelligence and Supply—and Assassination.

He carried most of his Assassination Squad with him in the new Army, where it assassinated Republicans with more gusto than it had ever assassinated British agents.

The greater part of the Army which had fought the British in the field did not support the Provisional Government and did not become its Army.

The Provisional Government was a Government without an Army. Professor O'Halpin is right on that point. But it is a point that would have been better not made, as it deflates the idea of the War of 1922-23 as a Civil War, and lends credence to the opinion of the followers of his great-uncle that it was a second War of Independence.

Brendan Clifford

Politics and Economics

The war in Ukraine has exposed the weaknesses of western economies. Reports suggest the Ukrainians are running out of ammunition. The West just doesn't have the industrial capacity to supply Ukraine with the necessary armaments to sustain the war. The ratio of artillery fire may be as much as ten to one in Russia's favour. The idea of Senator John McCain that Russia is a gas station masquerading as a country has been disproved by events.

Indeed, the opposite is the case. The West has been shown to lack industrial substance. So, where did it all go wrong?

It could be said that the seeds of the current crisis in capitalism were sown nearly ninety years ago. In the 1930s western capitalism was in crisis. The crisis was both economic and political. It was not just that the West was in the midst of the Great Depression it was also that there seemed to be a political alternative in the form of Soviet communism which was underpinned by a sophisticated theoretical framework.

Marx placed Labour at the centre of the economy. All value had its source in labour. Capitalism had socialised labour by forcing it to work collectively. This had resulted in a massive increase in productivity. But there was a contradiction: while production had become socialised, ownership remained in private hands.

Marx also analysed the various sectors in the economies. He was of the opinion, that only in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors does Labour create value. The surplus generated in these sectors is distributed to the distribution and services sectors. The latter two sectors do not create value.

How could western capitalism withstand such a theoretical onslaught? Its existing intellectual tools were not up to the task. It had been assumed that the laws of supply and demand would resolve all economic problems. By the 1930s this assumption had been proved to be false. In 1936 John Maynard Keynes seemed to provide an answer. He didn't deny the laws of supply and demand, but suggested that an equilibrium point could be reached at a high level of unemployment. There were various reasons for this, but by far the most important was that there was a greater propensity to save than to invest.

In short, the problem was one of consumption. The policy implication was that

a shortfall of consumption in the market should be ameliorated by increased consumption by the state.

Keynesianism is the antithesis of Marxism. It shifted the focus of economic thought away from labour and production towards consumption. Probably the most famous quote from Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* is the following:

"If the treasury were to fill old bottles with banknotes, bury them at suitable depths in disused coalmines which are then filled up to the surface with town rubbish, and leave it to private enterprise on well tried principles of *laissez faire* to dig the notes up again (the right to do so being obtained, of course, by tendering for leases of the note-bearing territory), there need be no more unemployment and, with the help of the repercussions, the real income of the community, and its capital wealth also, would probably become a good deal greater than it actually is. It would, indeed, be more sensible to build houses and the like, but if there are political and practical difficulties in the way of this, the above would be better than nothing."

To use Marxist terms, Keynes believed that exchange value was of primary importance and use value didn't matter. Money is the measure of all things!

This famous quote is not just a rhetorical flourish. The theme of his classic work is that production doesn't really matter.

In chapter 16 there is the following quote:

"It is much preferable to speak of capital as having a yield over the course of its life in excess of its original cost than as being productive. For the only reason why an asset offers a prospect of yielding during its life services having an aggregate value greater than its initial supply price is because it is scarce; it is kept scarce because of the competition of the rate of interest on money. If capital

becomes less scarce, the excess yield will diminish, without its having become less productive—at least in the physical sense" (emphasis as in the original).

So, it is all about supply and demand. The more scarce the capital, the greater will be its yield. Keynes doesn't even accept, as Marx does, that the concentration of capital will have the tendency to increase the productivity of labour.

Here is what he says on this subject.

"It is true that some lengthy or round-about processes are physically efficient. But so are some short processes. Lengthy processes are not physically efficient because they are long. Some, probably most, lengthy processes would be physically very inefficient, for there are such things as spoiling or wasting with time."

Keynes succeeded in shifting the economic focus away from labour, productivity and manufacturing towards consumption. A pound or euro earned in the service industry has as much value as one earned in manufacturing. Economics can be reduced to manipulation of demand through monetary or fiscal policy.

While Keynes is probably the most influential economist of the twentieth century not every country adopted his policies. For example, in Ireland policy makers always believed in the importance of manufacturing. Up until the 1970s companies in Ireland had a zero rate of corporation tax on profits earned from the export of goods. This benefit was mostly availed of by manufacturers. Goods and services which were not exported were liable to corporation tax at 50%.

When the EU prevented this tax policy the government replaced it with a new 10% tax for manufacturing companies whether they exported or not. The EU also considered this in breach of competition law. The government's response was to reduce the standard 50% rate over many years until we had a uniform corporation tax of 12.5%.

Another feature of Irish industrial policy was the creation of enterprise zones. These were tax free zones which allowed manufacturing clusters or "ecosystems" to develop in these areas.

It would be a little fanciful to suggest that Irish industrial policy has been guided by Marxist principles. But it is a fact that Chinese communists came over here to study our enterprise zones and applied those policies in their own country.

In truth, it doesn't take a Marxist understanding of economics to conclude that Manufacturing is of more significance to an economy than retail or other services. If Tesco or Lidl pulled out of Ireland there would be no serious economic consequences. The other retail companies would take up the slack. The retail companies are merely feeding off value generated elsewhere in the economy. On the other hand, if Intel pulled out of Ireland there would be devastating consequences. The value which is generated from the sale of goods abroad would disappear from the Irish economy.

The logic which applies to retail services applies to other services such as financial services. When Ulster Bank and KBC pulled out of the Republic of Ireland there were no significant economic consequences despite the loss of thousands of jobs.

With the exception of the 1977-1981 Fianna Fáil Government Ireland has never been Keynesian. It is widely believed that the overspending and tax cutting of that government was disastrous for the economy. It is also generally believed that the failure of the subsequent FG/Labour coalition government to tackle the large budget deficits prolonged the economic crisis.

Following the economic crisis of 2008 the political establishment in this country decided to implement austerity policies. It was determined not to repeat the mistakes of the 1980s. The Fine Gael/Labour coalition implemented the policies initiated by the outgoing Fianna Fáil/Green coalition.

By rebalancing the economy away from consumption towards production the economy recovered.

This is a view that is not shared by the IMF economist Ashoka Mody who believes that austerity policies (supported by the IMF) postponed the recovery. But if Keynesian orthodoxy was valid austerity policies should never have worked. We would have entered a downward spiral of lower incomes and higher unemployment.

Keynes has had more influence in his native country. However, one British leader who eschewed Keynes's economics was Harold Wilson. He inherited a very significant balance of payments deficit from the Tories in 1964, but made a valiant attempt to defend sterling and restore Brit-

ish manufacturing. Many of his economic policies were orientated towards increasing the productivity of labour.

If Labour is at the centre of economic policy the question arises as to whether it or its institutions should be given a greater role in the running of the economy. This was on the agenda in the early 1970s in Britain but was scuppered by a combination of free market and ultra left opposition.

The defeat of the Labour Party in 1979 marked a return to liberal economics. Monetarism and Keynesianism are different sides of the liberal coin. Monetarists believe in reducing the money supply in order to reduce inflation. Unemployment is acceptable because it reduces the price of labour. This is sometimes called a neoclassical theory.

Keynesianism and its Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) variant seek to create full employment. If the market does not create full employment the State must step in. MMT advocates recommend financing government expenditure by printing money.

Neither the monetarists nor Keynesians distinguish between the various sectors in

the economy or consider the question of the productivity of labour as an important issue.

Since the advent of Thatcherism/Reaganism manufacturing has been devalued. Economies with a large manufacturing sector and small services sector were considered backward.

Donald Trump was probably the first American President since the Second World War who advocated bringing manufacturing back to the United States. The pressure of war in Ukraine has reinforced the perception among the political establishment in the United States that there is a problem.

Herbert Remmel in the October issue of the Irish Political Review pointed out that the US was trying to take manufacturing from Germany. But the Americans will not find it easy to replicate the manufacturing plants in Germany. The industrial culture in the United States has been undermined by decades of outsourcing and neglect.

The new policy of the Americans might temper its decline, but it will not reverse the increasing political and economic power of China and Russia.

John Martin

Who Was The Most Influential Person In The Last 150 Years?

Karl Marx? Albert Einstein? Vladimir Lenin?
Theodor Herzl? Adolf Hitler? Leon Trotsky? Mao Tse Tung?
Mahatma Gandhi? Josef Stalin? Kemal Attaturk? Sigmund Freud?
Walt Disney? Pablo Picasso?
Salvador Dali? Andy Warhol? Bob Dylan?

My own choice would be Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) Philosopher and Politician.

Arthur was blessed with great intelligence and wealth, and more to the point, with luck.

For he was the nephew of Robert Talbot Cecil Gascoyne, 3rd Earl Salisbury, Prime Minister, who in 1887 appointed as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, giving to the language (of England) the expression "*Bob's yer Uncle*".

Arthur made his mark there promptly, when the Royal Irish Constabulary opened fire on unarmed demonstrators in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, killing three of them. For this he earned the soubriquet "BLOODY BALFOUR".

"*Tus maith leath na hOibre*" goes the Irish proverb, "*a good start is half the work*".

The Mitchelstown Massacre was but a tiny part of Balfour's life work.

As Prime Minister in 1904 Balfour established the *Committee of Imperial Defence*, whose existence was not advertised to the populace or known to most members of Parliament.

It was composed of senior Tory imperialists and Liberal Imperialists including Asquith and its object was the destruction of Germany by war. German goods were competing with those of Britain, and Germany was building a welfare state and a skilled industrial workforce.

In 1905 Britain, which had given free access to foreign radicals such as Karl Marx, and fleeing despots such as Napoleon III, for the first time in its history established an *Aliens Act* to restrict Immigration to the United Kingdom.

Balfour was the author of the Act. Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russian-ruled territories had refugees fleeing west and Balfour frankly confessed that he didn't want them in Britain.

In 1917 after his War on Germany and Turkey had secured Palestine for his Empire, he offered a Home for Jews in Palestine. This was to serve British interests. The Bolsheviks included many Jews disenchanted with Tsarist Rule, and Zionism was less of a threat to Balfour's Imperial projects. Besides, they would not be over-running Britain.

While handing Palestine to Zionists,, the British had created Arab Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, where it had no history. Jews, Christians and Muslims lived amicably together in much of that Empire, including Mesopotamia (IRAQ), Syria, and Palestine.

The late, great, British journalist, Robert Fisk, spent decades reporting from Ireland, the Middle East, Afghanistan and other theatres of war. He traced all of them conflicts to the arrangements dictated by the British and its allies at the end of the war planned by Bloody Balfour from 1904, the Great War of 1914-18.

I would contend that *Bloody Balfour* was the most influential person of the last 150 years.

As I finish this piece the Israeli Government, with the backing of the United States, is waging a genocidal war on Palestinians.

Donal Kennedy

The Real Economy!

Some commenttors compare Marx to Thatcher. Marx was interested in the real economy. He distinguished between Manufacturing, Distribution and Finance. Thatcher, like the MMT advocates, didn't make any distinction. A pound made in the financial sector had the same value as a pound made in manufacturing.

Marx had Labour and Productivity as the centre of his economic thinking. But such thinking never features in the liberal economic thinking of Thatcher/Keynes/ Modern Monetary Theory.

Meddling with the triple lock

Forum On Neutrality Report

The following letter appeared in the *Irish Times* on 20th October 2023

Your editorial on Dame Louise Richardson's report on the Consultative Forum on International Security Policy suggests that "*The most likely outcome of the report would seem to be a review of the triple lock, specifically the veto held by the UN Security Council on the overseas deployment of Irish troops*" ("The Irish Times view on the latest report on Ireland's neutrality: reflecting a unique approach", October 19th).

In her report, Ms Richardson opines that, "While there was not a consensus on this point, the preponderance of views, especially among the experts and practitioners, is that it is time for a reconsideration of the triple lock as it is no longer fit for purpose." Evidence for this "preponderance of views" in favour of reconsidering the triple lock, we must assume, will be provided when the 833 public submissions are published online. That said, Ms Richardson notes that "it must be borne in mind that the [public] submissions were not a random or representative sample of the population, rather the views of citizens engaged in these issues; therefore, it would be unwise to extrapolate from these views to the population at large."

Does it not follow that the views of the "experts and practitioners" invited to speak at the forum—the majority of them aligned with Government thinking—should also not be extrapolated to the population at large?

In which case, the Government has no right to cite this flawed report from a flawed consultative forum as evidence of public support for its planned meddling with the triple lock.

Is mise,
DOMINIC CARROLL,
Ardfield,

The UK, like many Western countries, has had its manufacturing base hollowed out. It doesn't have a consumption problem, it has a productivity problem. It has been borrowing from the rest of the world to sustain a standard of living which is not warranted by its level of production, despite having full employment. Its Balance of Payments on its current account has been running at about negative 7% for many years. I think it's about negative 4% now (from memory). Ireland had similar figures during the Celtic Tiger era but is now running surpluses of 8%.

The Conservatives are not wrong in saying that the private sector needs to generate the wealth to enable the Government to spend in a sustainable way. That is how Japan can sustain high levels of

Government Debt (it generates massive trading surpluses).

Where the Conservatives are wrong is in believing that this can be achieved by leaving the market to its own devices.

The Government, at a minimum, can attempt to increase productivity by improving Apprenticeship Schemes. It can direct resources towards Manufacturing by tax incentives, grants etc. It can invest in Infrastructure, such as transport. A more ambitious Left Government might consider developing State Enterprises.

The focus on money or stimulating the economy is a way of avoiding thinking about these things.

John Martin

The 'Western Front Association' presents A Cork Conference on 'Aspects of the Great War'

On 7th October 2023, the Cork Branch of The Western Front Association held a one-day Conference on 'Aspects of the Great War'. As the title suggests, during the Conference a panel of six leading academics and historians examined different military, social and political aspects of the conflict. There was also be a display of artefacts from the War, and members of the Association were manning a research desk for anyone seeking information about an ancestor who served in the armed forces of one of the Allied nations during the conflict. Some of the speakers' books were also on sale.

Speakers and Topics

Prof. Mark Connelly: Why and How the Allies Won

Mark Connelly is Professor of Modern British History at the University of Kent.

Nick Perry: Oliver Nugent and the Ulster Division—A Modern Major-General?

Nick Perry read history at Trinity College Dublin and then spent thirty-seven years as a civil servant in London and Belfast.

Dr. Phylomena Badsey: Vera Brittain and her experience of both ends of the Chain of Evacuation

Dr. Phylomena Badsey MA was awarded her PhD from Kingston University in 2005

Dr. Dominiek Dendooven: Ireland in Ypres 1914- 2014, places, personalities, pilgrimages and projects.

Born in Bruges, Dominiek Dendooven obtained a PhD in History from the University of Kent and the Universiteit Antwerpen.

Andrea Hetherington: Deserters of the First World War—The Home Front in Ireland

Andrea Hetherington is an independent researcher and writer with a particular interest in the social history of the First World War

Prof. Stephen Badsey: The End of the War on the Western Front

Stephen Badsey PhD MA (Cantab.) FRHistS recently retired as professor of conflict studies at the University of Wolverhampton.

The *Irish Political Review Group* distributed the following leaflet at the meeting:

Great War Factsheets

No. 1: War Responsibility

There were 3 wars that combined to make up the Great War but they were distinct and did not need to develop from one to the other.

War number 1 was the only unavoidable and justifiable one - a Balkan war involving Austro-Hungary and Serbia. Serbia was responsible for this war. As a matter of prestige Austro-Hungary had to react forcefully to the assassination of the heir to its throne by terrorists on 28th June. This was a massive provocation that had to be dealt with. Austria believed that Serbian intrigues and ambitions constituted a deadly menace to the continued existence of the Empire, and was aware that she must either curb the capacity of Serbia for further provocations or see the Empire perish. The British press was sympathetic to Vienna with the most popular paper in England saying "To Hell with Serbia" and demanding it be wiped from the face of the earth, lest this rogue-state endanger the peace of Europe. The Manchester Guardian suggested it be towed out into the Atlantic and sunk. Capt. Grenfell (RN) says this about the Serbian reply: "It has been the fashion among British historians to describe the Serbian reply to the Austrian note as extraordinarily conciliatory, all but two of the Austrian demands being conceded. The present author does not take that view. The two rejected demands were the key ones that alone could have made the rest effective. All the remainder, even if nominally complied with, could easily have been evaded in practice and reduced to nullity by the Serbs. The Serbian reply, which was unquestionably drawn up with the advice of France and probably Russia, could therefore be regarded as a very skilful one designed, without making any genuine concession, to put the onus of war guilt on to the Austrians." (Unconditional Hatred: German War Guilt and the Future of Europe by Captain Russell Grenfell, RN). Both Austro-Hungary and its German ally wished to confine war to this local Balkan context. It was in Germany's interest to localise the Austro-Serbian dispute, so that the Serbs might be suitably dealt with by the Austrians without anyone else being

involved. Russia, on the other hand, was interested in the support of Serbia and also resolved to use the Sarajevo assassination to bring on a general European war, as her actions during the crisis clearly indicate. Russia was in no way endangered by an Austro-Hungarian victory over Serbia and was assured that Vienna had no inclination toward including any more troublesome peoples in its Empire. This Balkan war would have been the only war in 1914 if Russia did not enter it. Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28th July. This was the start of the Austro-Serbian war not the start of World War I. It was not until August 6th, 2 days after the beginning of the world war, that Austro-Hungary declared war on Russia and Serbia declared war on Germany. France did not declare war on Austro-Hungary until 11th August and Britain until 12th August. This tends to suggest a disconnection between the Entente Cordiale and the Balkan war and that the real war was the one against Germany.

War number 2 was a European war involving the Balkan participants plus Russia, France and Germany. Russia was mainly responsible for this war since it depended entirely on Russian mobilisation. Russia began mobilising on the day of the Serbian reply to Austria, 25th July, and the Tsar ordered full mobilisation on 30th July. Germany clearly warned Russia (and France) of the implications of its mobilisation and only begins mobilising itself on 31st July, the day after the full Russian mobilisation began. France was also responsible because it refused to restrain its ally Russia and actually encouraged its mobilisation. Poincare assured Russia that it could count on France in any war on Germany no matter the issue since it wanted to engage in a European war to recover the mixed-nationality provinces of Alsace/Lorraine it had lost to Germany in its aggressive war of 1870/1. Germany was tied by treaty obligations to Austro-Hungary and could not allow its ally to be crushed by an inherently expansionist state which had no concept of borders. Once Russia refused Germany's demand to stop mobilising its massive forces on Germany's eastern frontier and France mobilised as Russia's ally Germany had to mobilise to protect itself from encirclement. French mobilisation began on 26th July, 5 days before Germany began, and the French ordered full mobilisation on 1st August, an hour before German full mobilisation is ordered. Germany declares war on Russia on 1st August and France on 3rd August. This is the start of the European war but not the world war.

War number 3 was the world war or Great War. This was Great Britain's responsibility. If Britain had not entered the European war it would have remained a European war. The world war officially began on August 4th when Britain declared war on Germany. The Royal Navy was secretly mobilised between 23rd and 29th July by Churchill and took up pre-arranged battle stations off the German coast on August 2nd, 2 days before war was declared. The British Expeditionary force of 100,000 men was ordered to be despatched to France by Asquith on August 5th. It arrived complete in France less than 48 hours later on August 7th.

The Great War was Britain's war because Great Britain made it what it was. It would not have been the Great War if it was without Britain's participation. It was a war of gigantic scale and long duration. The only 2 previous world wars were also British wars (i.e. the Seven Years War of 1756-63 and the War on France of 1793-1815). The following factors provided distinctly by Britain gave the Great War its distinct character:

The globalised maritime character was provided by the Royal Navy which had the objective of seizing German shipping and trade on a world-wide basis. No other European navy had this capacity or intention.

The globalised land character was provided by Britain's Imperial ambitions to seize German territory in Africa, Ottoman territory in Asia and facilitate its allies to do likewise—something which would have been beyond their capacity to do without the help of the Royal Navy and Britain's acquiescence.

The moral character of the war which made it unstoppable was provided by Liberal England (and Redmondite Ireland). The war was proclaimed to be about good versus evil, civilisation against the barbarian, Europe against the Hun, Democracy against autocracy etc. This gave the Great War its distinctive character which made peace attempts very difficult since there could be no negotiating with evil.

The last element was Britain's insistence in concluding secret treaties with its allies and neutrals to draw them into the war. Parts of the middle-east, Europe etc. were promised in secret deals with France, Russia, Italy, Greece, Zionists, Arabs etc. that made peace negotiations proposed by the US and Germany on the basis of no annexations impossible to accept by Britain and its allies.

Great War Factsheets

No.2: Britain's War

From 1904 to 1908 there was a revolution in British Foreign policy in which England made a strategic readjustment to direct its Balance of Power strategy away from its former enemies, France and Russia, toward a new enemy, Germany.

Germany was singled out as the Carthage to Britain's Rome largely for reasons of commercial rivalry. German goods were outselling British goods in the world's markets and it was capturing a greater and greater share of world commerce. Its goods had a competitive edge over British products both in price and quality and it was felt that Britain could not compete in the free market with the Germans.

In response to the increase of its commerce and in joining the world market in which it became necessary to import food to supply its industrial workforce Germany began to construct a navy. It was a much smaller navy than Britain's but England saw this as a threat to its command of the seas. There were public threats made by Royal Navy men, such as Admiral Fisher, to "Copenhagen" the German naval development – i.e. destroy it in port before a formal declaration of war was made as Nelson did to the Dutch fleet a century before. In response Britain doubled its spending on naval construction until it reached a quarter of all state spending and represented three times what Germany was spending.

An *Entente Cordiale* was signed with France in 1904 by the Unionist Government. In January 1906 Sir Edward Grey the incoming Foreign Minister in the new Liberal Government sanctioned ongoing military conversations between the British and French General Staffs concerning cooperation in a future war with Germany. These were organised by Colonel Repington and General Henry Wilson but were done behind the Prime Minister's back and only known about by Grey and Richard Haldane, the Secretary of State for War.

The *Entente Cordiale* gave the French hope of recovering Alsace/Lorraine in a future war with Germany, aided by Britain and Russia.

The Liberal Imperialists, Grey, Haldane, Henry Asquith and Winston Churchill had the intention of organising preparations for war on Germany behind the back of both the cabinet and parliament knowing that the bulk of the Liberal Party would be greatly opposed to such measures.

War planning, including Royal Navy contingencies for economic warfare and a starvation blockade on Germany were planned with meticulous detail. The overall strategy was coordinated through the Committee of Imperial Defence, a cross-party body containing military specialists. Plans were also devised for war on the Ottoman Empire, including an attack on the Dardanelles and landings in Mesopotamia. As Captain Grenfell noted "Preparations for war against Germany had been in progress for ten years; intensively for three years at least." (Sea Power)

Haldane reformed the British Army and created a British Expeditionary Force of 160,000 that could be transported in 2 days to the left of the French line for engaging in a war with Germany. This was a revolutionary change in British military affairs. The biggest army England had put on the continent was at Waterloo in 1815 of 30,000 men. It had been a long-standing strategy not to commit large numbers of soldiers to the continent but to leave allies to do the fighting there. The Navy was concerned at this military intervention since it implied a commitment to continental warfare in conjunction with allies and a relegation of the senior service to a support role. It signified a definite and innovative plan for war that bound Britain in to continental warfare at the French insistence. Haldane also militarised British society through the promotion of gun clubs, territorial's, popular military lectures etc.

In 1907 Britain concluded an agreement with Tsarist Russia involving a settling of accounts in the Great Game and the partition of Persia between England and Russia. Edward Grey sold the agreement in England as a peace policy and that was music to the ears of the Liberal backbenchers, who despite their detestation of 'Russian autocracy' were prepared to celebrate the agreement as securing the peace of the world. An alliance with France was, by itself, of no use to England against Germany. The great prize was also an understanding with Russia coupled with the *Entente Cordiale*. Britain was an island nation and it was primarily a sea power. It did not have a large army and it had opposed conscription. Therefore, it would have been impossible for Britain to have defeated Germany by itself. It needed and wanted the large French army and the even larger Russian army to do most of the fighting on the continent for it. The Russian Army was particularly important and it was seen to be like a 'steamroller' that would roll all the way to Berlin, crushing German resistance by its sheer weight of numbers.

Britain's main weapon of war and her instrument for the strangulation of Germany was the Royal Navy. A British blockade of Germany could only be effective if Russia was at war with her at the same time and sealing off her supply of food from the east. If not, Germany could derive an inexhaustible supply of food and materials from Eastern Europe and could not be strangled by the Royal Navy - despite its immense power. And even an alliance between England and France could not achieve the crushing of Germany since only one frontier could be blocked.

The agreement with Russia gave the Tsar the chance to expand into the Balkans and possibly to the Straits at Istanbul where he desired an exit point for his fleet - a desire of Russia's for centuries and the Tsar's first strategic priority which Britain had up till then taken great care to prevent. Half of all Russian trade went through the Straits and grain exporting was essential in creating the agricultural reforms necessary to produce a stable class of Russian peasantry. Britain forbade Russian naval entry into the Mediterranean and war involved the closure of the Straits to shipping. So the Tsar was desperate to secure this outlet with British consent. Grey turned the foreign policy of a century around to organise the war alliance against Germany. In doing so he made war on, and the destruction of, the Ottoman Empire a prerequisite of the new British Foreign Policy.

In April 1915 Grey formally agreed in the secret Constantinople Agreement, later published by the Bolsheviks, to hand over the Ottoman capital to the Tsar. The British did this to keep the Russians fighting when they showed signs of wavering and perhaps exiting the war. In doing so the British Government, in conjunction with the Tsar, ensured a catastrophe for the Russian State, and the subsequent triumph of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

All these secret plans, conversations and arrangements were not revealed to the cabinet until 1911 when they were partially revealed in response to the Agadir crisis and not fully until July 1914.

Asquith, Grey and Haldane denied all knowledge of them continually to Parliament using language that was very careful but conveyed the impression that nothing was in place that committed England to a war on Germany in conjunction with France and Russia.

John Dillon of the Irish Party subjected

the Government to scrutiny on the matter but the necessity of the Home Rule alliance encouraged him and Liberal backbenchers who were suspicious to drop it.

The fleet was mobilised to battle positions prior to the declaration of war on Germany. The British Expeditionary Force was landed in less than 48 hours in France after Asquith's orders.

The Royal Navy cut the German undersea cables on the opening day of the war making the Germans reliant on the British cables for communicating across the Atlantic and to other parts of the world.

On 5th August 1914 the British war plans were revealed in a series of *Royal Proclamations* on the day after war was declared: It was made an act of treason for any British subject to trade with any German individual or organisation; owners of British merchant ships were warned that their ships would be confiscated if they carried 'contraband' between foreign ports; exporters were warned not to sell 'contraband' to any foreign buyers.

The War Room which had been monitoring and plotting the position of every German naval vessel and large merchantman at eight hourly intervals since 1907 communicated its information to the Royal Navy. Within a week all German maritime trade was driven from the seas.

Lloyds of London issued an order for all ships to proceed to the nearest British port or lose insurance cover. Any carrying foodstuffs and proceeding east were seized and their cargoes confiscated and declared 'prize.' All German owned ships were declared 'prize'.

Neutral ships were prevented from leaving British ports unless they surrendered their cargoes.

The Blockade of Germany and Europe as a whole began.

Great War Factsheets

No.3: Belgium

Belgium had been artificially constructed by Lord Palmerston and Britain by splitting off the Catholic French-speaking Walloon part of the Netherlands and joining it with the Flemish territory to form Belgium - an unusual thing for Protestant England to do in helping to construct a Catholic state. But such was the Balance of Power policy! The important point was to prevent the Flanders coast becoming

part of France. Belgium was not a natural entity and was a state rather than a country, made up of two distinct peoples who did not like each other.

Belgium was kept together to serve a strategic purpose for Britain, which then claimed a right of hegemony over it. Because Britain had helped create Belgium it believed it had the right to use the country as an instrument of its foreign policy (as it similarly did with Greece).

Belgium was not as neutral as it was suggested. It was well known in Belgian governing circles that England was pursuing a secret policy of war against Germany. The Belgian Ambassadorial record tells us this. The Belgian state was really part of the political front against Germany and a kind of unofficial member of the Entente. Belgium had its own war aims of an Imperial kind - and subsequently did very well out of the spoils of victory in 1919. Prior to 1909, the Belgian army numbered 100,000 men recruited by volunteering. In 1912 Belgium adopted a military programme raising the war strength of its army to a massive 340,000. In 1913 the Belgian Parliament introduced the principle of universal compulsory service, in preparation to meet her obligations and responsibilities to her 'allies.' In August 1914, Belgium was able to put a larger army in the field than Britain - despite, in theory, being a neutral country.

Belgium was not "*poor little Belgium*". When W.T. Stead (a well respected author) visited Belgium in 1888, he took it for granted that it would be implicated in any future European conflict - despite its supposed 'neutrality'. He described not the "poor little Belgium" of future British war propaganda but a highly militarised society at the centre of the world's arms industry. And Stead made it clear that if there was a war between France and Germany an attack by either nation would have to cross Belgian territory if it was to be a success because since the Franco-Prussian War "the two Powers have been busily engaged in rendering their respective frontiers impassable, by constructing lines of fortresses against which an A invading army from the other side will break its head in vain" (*The Truth about Russia*, p.2).

It was one of the most brutal and reactionary of the Imperialist powers. One of its possessions in Africa was referred to, before the war in Britain, as "The Congo Slave State", where the Belgians worked millions of natives to death. Britain had the moral ascendancy over Belgium at

the time, on account of the atrocities in the Congo, revealed shortly before in the Casement Report, which it had pigeon-holed, but which could be used as a means of exerting pressure in the future.

In 1887 the official organ of the Conservative Party, *The Standard*, made it clear that Britain would not regard the violation of Belgian neutrality by either France or Germany as a cause of war as long as the intention of either country was to merely cross Belgian neutrality because of military necessity. In such a circumstance Britain would not see itself obliged to defend Belgium because its existence as a neutral state was not threatened. In August 1914 the Germans were careful to make it clear that they were crossing Belgium merely to engage France and had no territorial ambitions with regard to Belgium.

The Government press did not believe there was any treaty obligation binding England to protect the neutrality of Belgium. Both the Manchester Guardian and Daily News debated the matter on 1st August 1914 and quoted Lords Derby and Granville, the architects of the treaties in 1839 and 1870, to the effect that:

“Such a guarantee has...the character of a moral sanction to the arrangements which it defends rather than that of a contingent liability to make war. It would no doubt give a right to make war, but would not necessarily impose the obligation. And that is the view taken by most international lawyers. We are, therefore, absolutely free; there is no entanglement with Belgium.”

The Government’s legal advisers did not believe there was any treaty obligation binding England to protect the neutrality of Belgium. The Treaty of 1839 only bound the signatories not to violate Belgian neutrality themselves. It did not in any way bind them to intervene to protect Belgian neutrality. The Treaty’s purpose was to maintain the separation of Belgium from Holland and did not take into consideration the matter of military incursions.

From Britain’s point of view, as Lord Loreburn, the former Lord Chancellor, pointed out, the objective was simply that Belgium

“should be a perpetually neutral state. We bound ourselves, as did the others, not to violate that neutrality, but did not bind ourselves to defend it against the encroachment of any other Power.” (*How the War Came*).

Dr. J.S. Ewart, the British jurist, agreed:

“The Belgian treaty (really treaties) of 1839 contains no obligation to defend Belgium or Belgian neutrality” (*The Roots and Causes of the Wars*).

Britain did not go to war over Belgian neutrality although this was proclaimed to be the issue. On 1 August the German Ambassador asked Sir Edward Grey if Germany gave an assurance not to violate Belgian neutrality would Britain give Germany an assurance of British neutrality. Grey refused. The German Ambassador then asked Grey to specify the conditions under which Britain would remain neutral in a European war. Grey replied that Britain could not do so and would “keep her hands free.”

Grey would have gone to war on Germany even without Germany violating Belgian neutrality. He makes this clear in his memoirs (Twenty Five Years). On 2 August Bonar Law, leader of the Unionist Party, made it clear to Grey in a letter that

his party would support immediate war on the side of Russia and France against Germany. This was before the Germans entered Belgium and there was no precondition of support based on a violation of Belgian neutrality. The conclusion, therefore, is that Belgium was only an excuse which the British Government made use of to lead Britain into war on Germany. If Germany did not a Liberal Imperialist/Unionist coalition would declare war. And Grey confirmed as much when he used the threat of resignation and formation of coalition with the Anti-Home Rulers to rally the Liberal Cabinet behind the war at a subsequent cabinet meeting.

If Germany hadn’t violated Belgian neutrality England and France would have done it. The Franco-British military plans of 1911, 1912 and 1913 were based on the assumption of an advance through Belgium.

The Morrison Report

UN Security Council resolutions contravened by Israel

Israel is contravening over 30 UN Security Council resolutions [HYPERLINK "http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/vCouncilRes"](http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/vCouncilRes)[1], dating back to 1968, resolutions that require action by it and it alone [HYPERLINK "http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0210unres.html"](http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0210unres.html) [2]. They are listed in the Appendix below. This doesn’t include resolutions violated by Israel for a number of years that have subsequently been implemented, such as those dealing with Israel’s 20-year military occupation of southern Lebanon.

In these resolutions, the Security Council demands action by Israel on, amongst other things:-

(1) Jewish settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Resolution 446, passed on 22 March 1979, demands that Israel cease building Jewish settlements in the territories it has occupied since 1967, including in East Jerusalem, and that it remove those already built. Paragraphs 1 & 3 state:

[The Security Council]

1. Determines that the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. Calls once more upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention,

to rescind its previous measures and to desist from taking any action which would result in changing the legal status and geographical nature and materially affecting the demographic composition of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, not to transfer parts of its own civilian population into the occupied Arab territories;”

The Fourth Geneva Convention bans the planting of settlers on territory under occupation. Article 49, paragraph 6, of the Convention states:

“The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.” [HYPERLINK "http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/7c4d08d9b287a42141256739003e636b/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5"](http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/7c4d08d9b287a42141256739003e636b/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5) [3]

Israel’s failure to comply with this resolution prompted further resolutions

—452 on 20 July 1979 and 465 on 1 March 1980 – demanding compliance.

(2) The annexation of East Jerusalem Resolution 252, passed on 21 May 1968, demands that Israel reverse its annexation of East Jerusalem. Paragraphs 2 & 3 state:

[The Security Council]

2. Considers that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and properties thereon, which tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot change that status;

3. Urgently calls upon Israel to rescind all such measures already taken and to desist forthwith from taking any further action which tends to change the status of Jerusalem;

Israel's failure to comply with this resolution prompted further resolutions – 267 on 3 July 1969, 271 on 15 September 1969, 298 on 25 September 1971, 476 on 30 June 1980, and 478 on 20 August 1980 – demanding the reversal of its annexation of East Jerusalem.

(3) The annexation of the Golan Heights

Resolution 497, passed on 17 December 1981, demands that Israel reverse its annexation of the Golan Heights, which were captured from Syria in June 1967. Paragraphs 1 & 2 state:

[The Security Council]

1. Decides that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect;

2. Demands that Israel, the occupying Power, should rescind forthwith its decision;"

(4) Nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards

Resolution 487, passed on 19 June 1981, demands that Israel open its secret nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA). Paragraph 5 states:

[The Security Council]

5. Calls upon Israel urgently to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards".

By refusing to open its nuclear facilities to IAEA inspection, Israel is violating this

resolution.

It is important to emphasise that these resolutions (and others in the Appendix below) place obligations on Israel, and Israel alone. It is therefore within Israel's power to fulfil those obligations of its own volition, without negotiation with the Palestinians or with any other state in the region. It doesn't need to negotiate with anybody before ceasing settlement building, or undoing the annexation of East Jerusalem or the Golan Heights, or opening its secret nuclear facilities to IAEA inspection.

Had Israel wished to do so, it could have implemented these resolutions at the time they were passed by the Security Council, or at any time since. Had Israel done so, the political landscape in Palestine would have been transformed.

Resolution 242

These resolutions are qualitatively different from the well-known resolution 242, the so-called "land for peace" resolution, which requires action by other states and by non-state actors, as well as Israel.

Resolution 242 was passed on 22 November 1967, a few months after Israel had acquired large swathes of territory (the West Bank and Gaza plus Sinai and the Golan Heights) by war, contrary to Article 2 of the UN Charter. One might have thought that the Security Council, as the guardian of the UN Charter, would have required Israel to withdraw unconditionally from the territory it had recently acquired by war, contrary to the UN Charter, as Iraq was required to do after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

But, although the preamble to resolution 242 emphasised "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war", the operative part of the resolution didn't demand any action by Israel at all. On the contrary, it allowed the "withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" to be conditional on the "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force".

Implicit in 242, therefore, is that Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders would be the subject of negotiations with neighbouring states and non-state actors. As such,

242 has provided the perfect excuse for Israeli prevarication about withdrawal from the territories it took over by force in 1967, contrary to the UN Charter, and has occupied by force ever since.

ISRAEL'S DEFENCE

All of the resolutions concerning Israel passed by the Security Council are so-called Chapter VI resolutions and don't specify measures to enforce compliance, that is, economic or military sanctions. By contrast, most resolutions concerning Iraq in the past and Iran today are Chapter VII resolutions and do contain economic sanctions.

The Security Council may apply economic sanctions under Article 41 of the UN Charter and may authorise the use of military force under Article 42. Both of these Articles are in Chapter VII of the Charter and hence resolutions containing one of these enforcement measures are referred to as Chapter VII resolutions.

The vast majority of the almost 2,000 resolutions passed by the Security Council since it came into existence in 1945 are Chapter VI resolutions, but it has never passed a Chapter VII resolution authorising economic or military sanctions against Israel.

Israel has occasionally been called upon to defend its failure to comply with Security Council resolutions. See, for example, the Israeli Ambassador to the Security Council, Yehuda Lancry, speaking to the Council on 17 October 2002 [HYPERLINK "http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/scps/20021017.pdf"](http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/scps/20021017.pdf) [4] and the Israeli Embassy in London in correspondence with me a few months later [HYPERLINK "http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/pal-estine/israeli-embassy-corr.htm"](http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/pal-estine/israeli-embassy-corr.htm) [5].

As expressed in the latter, Israel's defence is that the resolutions are all Chapter VI resolutions (which is true) and therefore (a) are "non-binding recommendations" and (b) "can only be implemented through a process of negotiation, conciliation, or arbitration between the parties to a dispute". By contrast, according to Israel, Chapter VII resolutions are "binding on all UN members".

(b) is not true of the resolutions we are discussing here, since they require action by Israel and Israel alone.

As for (a), there is nothing in the UN Charter to justify the view that Chapter VI resolutions are merely "non-binding

recommendations”, whereas Chapter VII resolutions that are “binding on all UN members”. On the contrary, Article 25 of the Charter says that:

“The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter.”

The International Court of Justice took the view that this applied to both Chapter VI and Chapter VII resolutions. In an Advisory Opinion on 21 June 1971 (which arose from a request by the Security Council for an advisory opinion on the legal consequences for member states of the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia), it stated:

“It has been contended that Article 25 of the Charter applies only to enforcement measures adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter. It is not possible to find in the Charter any support for this view. Article 25 is not confined to decisions in regard to enforcement action but applies to ‘the decisions of the Security Council’ adopted in accordance with the Charter. Moreover, that Article is placed, not in Chapter VII, but immediately after Article 24 in that part of the Charter which deals with the functions and powers of the Security Council. If Article 25 had reference solely to decisions of the Security Council concerning enforcement action under Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter, that is to say, if it were only such decisions which had binding effect, then Article 25 would be superfluous, since this effect is secured by Articles 48 and 49 of the Charter.” (Paragraph 113)

That leaves no room for doubt that, in the opinion of the International Court of Justice, Chapter VI and Chapter VII resolutions of the Security Council are equally binding on UN members.

Are Chapter VI resolutions non-binding?

So, according to Israel, Chapter VI resolutions are “*non-binding recommendations*” that don’t have to be implemented. To be fair to Israel, it seems to take a different view of Chapter VI resolutions that demand action by states other than itself.

For example, Israel justified its military assault on Lebanon in the Summer of 2006 in part because of Lebanon’s failure to implement Security Council resolution 1559, passed on 2nd September 2004, which “*calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias*” (HYPERLINK "<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/vCouncilRes>"[1]).

Here’s the Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Dan Gillerman, on the subject, addressing the Security Council on 11th

August 2006:

“The way to avoid the crisis between Israel and Lebanon has been clear: implementation of the unconditional obligations set out in resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006) [my emphasis], which set out issues for resolution between Lebanon and Syria. The clear path forward required the disarming and disbanding of Hizbollah and other militias, and the exercise by Lebanon, like any sovereign State, of control and authority over all its territory. But the will to implement this way has been lacking, and over the past month the peoples of Israel and Lebanon have paid a heavy price for that inaction.

“In the face of the failure to ensure that the obligations set out in those resolutions were implemented, Israel has had no choice but to do what Lebanon has failed to do.” HYPERLINK "<http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/scps/20060811.pdf>"[6]

So, according to Dan Gillerman, resolutions 1559 and 1680 contain “*unconditional obligations*” which Lebanon failed to obey. Both 1559 and 1680 are Chapter VI resolutions.

If Israel applied the same principle to the Chapter VI resolutions requiring action by it and it alone, then

it would have removed all the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,

it would have reversed its annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and

it would have placed its secret nuclear facilities under IAEA inspection.

Had it done so, the political landscape in Palestine would have been transformed.

Appendix: List of UN Security Council Resolutions contravened by Israel

There follows a list of 32 resolutions being violated by Israel, resolutions which require action by Israel and Israel alone. It is based on an article by Stephen Zunes, entitled United Nations Security Council Resolutions Currently Being Violated by Countries Other than Iraq HYPERLINK "<http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0210unres.html>" [2]. It does not include resolutions that were violated for a number of years but have now been implemented, such as those dealing with Israel’s 20-year occupation of southern Lebanon.

252 (21 May 1968)

Urgently calls upon Israel to rescind measures that change the legal status of Jerusalem,

including the expropriation of land and properties thereon.

262 (31 December 1968)

Calls upon Israel to pay compensation to Lebanon for the destruction of airliners at Beirut International Airport.

267 (3 July 1969)

Reiterates the demand that Israel rescind measures seeking to change the legal status of occupied East Jerusalem.

271 (15 September 1969)

Reiterates the demand that Israel rescind measures seeking to change the legal status of occupied East Jerusalem.

298 (25 September 1971)

Reiterates the demand that Israel rescind measures seeking to change the legal status of occupied East Jerusalem.

446 (22 March 1979)

Calls on Israel to cease, on an urgent basis, the establishment, construction, and planning of settlements in the territories, occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

452 (20 July 1979)

Reiterates the demand that Israel cease, on an urgent basis, the establishment, construction, and planning of settlements in the territories, occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

465 (1 March 1980)

Reiterates the demand that Israel cease, on an urgent basis, the establishment, construction, and planning of settlements in the territories, occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

471 (5 June 1980)

Demands prosecution of those involved in assassination attempts of West Bank leaders and compensation for damages; reiterates demands to abide by Fourth Geneva Convention.

484 (19 December 1980)

Reiterates request that Israel abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

487 (19 June 1981)

Condemns Israel’s attack on Iraqi nuclear reactor and calls upon Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguard of the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency.

497 (17 December 1981)

Demands that Israel rescind its decision to annex the Golan Heights.

If This Is Peace Then What Can War Be Like?

he Palestinian has had so much peace over the years they now give war a chance.

Peace has brought 6,000 Palestinian deaths in 15 years.

Peace has brought a 16-year blockade of Gaza in which this prison camp, measuring 41 km by 12 km, 6 km at its narrowest, and holding 2.3 million of mostly impoverished people, has seen them being constantly attacked by the Israeli Defence Forces, said to be the strongest, best equipped army in the Middle East. How often have we seen mothers and babies, grey from the dust of the debris, been pulled dead from the rubble, on our TV screens?

Peace has brought 4,500 adult Palestinian prisoners to Israeli prisons, plus 147 Palestinian children, during 2023.

Peace has brought constant settler attacks on Palestinians living in the West Bank. During 2022, 100 Palestinians were killed. There is no total so far for 2023: but they are murdered in dribs and drabs as settlers take pot-shots at them in their paranoia.

Peace has seen settlers seize 25,000 acres of land from the Palestinian back in 2019, through 1,250 military orders by the State of Israel. Another 4,700 acres were seized in 2022-2023.

Olive groves, there for centuries, have been bulldozed in order to build houses. The final humiliation is that the unemployed Palestinian builds them.

Peace has brought the biblical renaming of the West Bank by the settlers as Judea and Samaria, ready for the eventual ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian.

Peace has brought the desire, by Palestinian resistance fighters of obtaining shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles to bring down the peaceful US-supplied fighter bombers attacking Gaza.

continued on page 29,
bottom of page

Ireland's Call = Irish National Anthem?

In top level sport the winning or losing of the game is usually a matter of small margins on and off the field of play. Skill, speed, talent, strength, and conditioning equal out on both sides in team games. Every nook and cranny, at the top level sport, physically, mentally, and emotionally, as part of the pre-game training, is exploited, or so it seems, in Irish rugby.

Even in the moments before the ball is thrown or kicked in (Gaelic football, hurling, rugby) teams line up and sing their National Anthems, connecting with fans in the stadium and at home via radio and tv, to stoke up their resolve for the heroics ahead. That is an accepted connection of the protocol between sport and politics when it's done right.

It's an accepted substitute for real life war. It's good use of politics in sport—unlike the useless virtue signalling of bending the knee in soccer against racism. Ask James McClean about that!

The New Zealand rugby team, as well as their National Anthem, get to perform a wonderful warlike magical *Haka* dance. This is their accepted emotional attempt to get under the skin of the opposition. In the recent Paris match with Ireland, in the 2023 red hot World Cup quarter-final against the current rated No.1 Rugby team in the World, Ireland, in Paris, the All Blacks Haka'd in spades! All that was missing at that moment was the sound of screeching, wailing, warlike, bagpipes. The Irish rugby team are required to stand in passive silence before the intimidating Haka.

But, before the protocol of the Haka, the stadium Public Address in Paris announced in a very tense atmosphere that the fans should now stand (in respect) for the Irish National Anthem. The Irish team is an All-Island team, not an All Ireland team. The "anthem" played in Paris was not the the Irish National Anthem, "*Amhràin Na Bhfiain*" (the Soldiers Song), but Phil Coulter's Derry dirge called, "*Irelands Call*".

The stadium announcer in Paris is only doing her job, following protocol. In a game of small margins, even before the game starts, this limp, flat, confusing, tuneless effusion of politically-correct emotion qualifies as a defeat for the players in the heroic task facing them in the 80 minutes ahead. The song does not fit the occasion from an Irish winning point of view .

So it plays out after 80 minutes of a very tight,tense game. . .

The players said, after their 4 point defeat, that they gave everything they had, but came up short by the tightest of margins. And so they did; a missed chance here, a small mistake there: but no mistake, in my opinion, compared with the likes of Munster's Peter O Mahoney being forced to sing the deflating 'National Anthem' of *Ireland's Call*!

As for Bundee Aki (a Kiwi-born Connaught player in an Ireland shirt), it's a double insult to ask him to sing *Ireland's Call* as our National Anthem. I noticed he refused to sing, it unlike Peter O Mahoney .

The ruthless winning aggression of the Kiwis included the emotional inspiration of the *Haka*. Small, but vital, margins on the day.

The Powers That Be behind the Irish rugby players decided they didn't need the *Soldier's Song* inspiration to get them off to the necessary flying start against the marauding Kiwis. Such is the arrogant West Briton rugby culture, always deferential, always politically correct, always losers when it matters most, in the heat of a World Cup quarter final.

The players deserve better leadership off the field.

Malachi Lawless

Does It Up

Stack ?

NATIONAL IDENTITY

At present, Ireland is supposed to be ruled by a democratically elected Government consisting of people elected to Dáil Eireann and who represent three political parties – Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party. The Government was not elected by the people of Ireland. In its formation, for example, no account was taken of Sinn Féin or of the Labour Party.

The system in Ireland is derived from the English system which took hundreds of years to arrive at where it is now. In England, there is still a “loyal opposition” so called because, not so long ago, to be in Opposition risked being labelled as a traitor under the English 1314 Act.

No system is perfect because citizens are not perfect. Some countries of the world are governed by elected Dictators, and maybe this is an effective system. Other countries are governed by their Army, which appoint a Dictator and this obviously is not a democratic system.

The Government of Ireland are very well aware of their deficiencies as a government and for that reason, among others; they take good care not to allow the Irish Army or the Gardaí to get any notions of taking things over. Funding is seriously

controlled. And the Gardaí is headed up by a man who swore an oath of loyalty to the English State! How disruptive is that?

To be English seems to be a qualification to be head of State Broadcasting in Ireland. Ireland is failing to establish its own culture and literature because anything English is promoted as being a superior culture. There is no substantial Irish book trade. Good Irish writers have to go to London to be published especially if they want to have serious careers. And really good Irish writers are purposely omitted from Irish school text books. As for writers of Gaelic prose and poetry, forget it. These are treated, even within Ireland – especially within Ireland – as an aberration. Like, who would read Gaelic poetry?

Every Irish child is taught Gaelic at school for twelve years in such a way that the children of the Irish nation leave school without being competent to speak or write Gaelic! Does the Minister for Education, in this present case, Norma Foley, Fianna Fáil, TD feel ashamed (and she a teacher for many a year before her election at the last general election)? Does she WHAT? It is intentional. A couple of weeks ago there was a programme on TG4 with the title: ‘Peig – the most hated woman in Irish history’. Peig refers to Peig Sayers – the Irish author who was a text book presence in all our school days and her dreary memoirs left us with a lasting hatred for all things Gaelic because of the way it was purposely taught.

FARMING

Likewise, does Mr. Charlie McConalogue, our Minister for Agriculture and the Marine feel that he has failed our fishermen when, as a direct result of

Brexit, fifty seven Irish trawlers have to be scrapped? The biggest fishing ports are now the airports with their imports. And what about our farmers – who under the present EU Derogation Agreement, which should never have been signed, every dairy farmer has to cull 12% of their cows by 1st January 2024. This is simply monstrous. Urban dwellers may not recognise the awful and wholly unnecessary consequences of 12% cull. What it means is that a farmer with, say, 100 milking cows will have to send twelve pregnant cows to the Beef Factory by 1st January.

So twelve pregnant cows will be slaughtered to satisfy an EU regulation. Pregnant, because to enable the cows to be milked they have to produce a calf each by January or February and so on 1st January all the cows in Ireland are, where possible, pregnant. An EU deskbound bureaucrat did not apparently know this. If Minister Charlie McConalogue did not know such a basic fact he should not be the Minister and in any event he was told the facts of life by the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) and by the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA).

So why won't the Minister support the Irish farmers? The EU says it is environmentally necessary but Teagasc says the science does not stack up and there is no scientific logic behind the changes in levels of nitrogen fertilisers as proposed by the EU for Ireland. Or is the Minister supporting the EU so as to enable the Tánaiste Micheál Martin to secure an egotistical ‘big job’ in Brussels? Why are the officials of the IFA and ICMSA taking all this lying down for the EU? Democracy?

It just does not stack up.

Michael Stack ©

If This Is Peace Then What Can War Be Like?

continued from page 28

Peace has brought the West Bank Palestinians being ghettoised as their villages, towns and city are isolated as the IDF close the roads.

Peace has seen Mahmoud Abbas, seemingly eternal president of the Palestinian West Bank, hoover-up up most of the EU and US funding, while the IDF and settlers kill his people.

Wilson John Haire.
12th October, 2023

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BALFOUR continued

throughout. Lord Sydenham of Coombe, once, as Sir George Clarke, secretary to Balfour's committee of Imperial Defence, declared 'the Jews have no more valid claim to Palestine than the descendants of the ancient Romans have to this country'. Sydenham feared the influx of Jewish settlers, for at least 'the Arabs would have kept the Holy Land clear from Bolshevism'...'' (p.314).

"Balfour's defence of the mandate, after stating his belief that Jew and Arab could co-exist in Palestine under the aegis of the League of Nations and the British government, mentioned the prosperity that must come to the country from the resources of Jewish capital and 'enthusiasm of the Jewish communities throughout the world'.

"He ended by declaring 'it may fail: I do not deny this is an adventure. Are we never to have adventure? Are we never to try new experiments?'

"To Balfour 'surely it is in order that we may send a message to every land where the Jewish race has been scattered, a message which will tell them that Christendom is not oblivious of their faith, is not unmindful of the service they have rendered to the great religions of the world, and that we desire to the best of our ability to give them an opportunity of developing, in peace and quietness, under British rule, those great gifts which hitherto they have been compelled to bring to fruition in countries which know not their language and belong not to their race?'" (p.314).

"To Balfour and others, the Palestine Arabs appeared but a small part of a vast race, easily accommodated to Jewish aims. He misunderstood the extent of their religious and nationalistic feeling, also the impasse that must develop when the Jews acquired their own nationalistic attachment to the new Israel, again fortified by intense historic religious sentiment. The adventure had begun; but 'the peace and quietness of British rule' was to prove a forlorn hope..." (314/15).

Balfour: "I am a Zionist." (p.293); (Stein, Leonard, *The Balfour Declaration*, London 1961-p.293).

"In 1916 the secret Sykes-Picot agreement, concluded by the young English Arabist, Sir Mark Sykes and the French diplomat Francois-Georges Picot, divided the Ottoman Middle East in a scheme of future partition. (p.292)

"Weizmann and the Zionists, hearing of this settlement in April 1917 through their sympathizer C. P. Scott [Manchester Guardian] who had obtained the information from a French source, did not like the idea of Palestine under joint control. By this date too they had another powerful friend. Sir Mark Sykes, previously no admirer of the Jews, was converted to their cause first by Herbert Samuel and then by the realisation that Zionism could well assist in furthering British ambitions and influence in the Middle East.

"Zionists had, since the offer of a settlement in East Africa, believed there was more to hope for from British goodwill than from the other powers" (p.292/93, Balfour, *A Life of Arthur James Balfour*, Max Egremont, Phoenix Giant, 1998, p.p. 391).

On 24th July 1922, the League of Nations confirmed the British mandate — A legal document adopted by the League established the United Kingdom as a Mandatory in control of Palestine, which had been officially under military government since the British occupied it from the Ottoman Empire during World War 1.

The Irish Free State was accepted as the fifty-third member of the League of Nations a year later, 10th September 1923.

Balfour died on the 19th of March, 1930.

A Failed State?

One of the earliest English (Gentile) propagandists for the construction of a Jewish State in Palestine was Herbert Sidebotham of the Manchester Guardian. But he was insistent that a Jewish State would only be functional under British Imperial hegemony. In his book on the subject he surveyed the earliest Jewish states (of 2,000 years ago). He concluded that they were a menace to their neighbours, and that a new Jewish State would probably be so again if uncontrolled and left to its own devices. And he has not yet been proved wrong.

Britain never negotiates with terrorism, we are told. It did not negotiate with the Jewish nationalist terrorism directed against its administration in Palestine in 1945-47. It just walked away from its responsibilities, and left the Jewish State to its own devices—and a free hand for cowing the Palestinians. But, if moral responsibility means anything, Britain bears the chief responsibility for the working out of what it started in 1917, just as if it was doing it all itself. As it never tires of telling others, people must bear the consequences of their actions.

Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour, also known as Lord Balfour (1848-1930), was a British statesman and Conservative politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1902 to 1905. He had been Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1887-91.

George Nathaniel Curzon, (1859-1925) 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, styled Lord Curzon of Kedleston between 1898 and 1911 and then Earl Curzon of Kedleston between 1911 and 1921, was a British statesman, Conservative politician and writer who served as Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905.

Edwin Samuel Montagu PC (1879-1924) was a British Liberal politician who served as Secretary of State for India between 1917 and 1922. Montagu was a "radical" Liberal and the third practising Jew to serve in the British Cabinet.

Chaim Azriel Weizmann (1874-1952) was a Russian-born biochemist, Zionist leader and Israeli statesman who served as President of the Zionist Organisation and later as the first President of Israel. He was elected on 16th February 1949, and served until his death in 1952.

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ORGANISED LABOUR

Self-Employed?

A Supreme Court judgment classing Domino's Pizza delivery drivers as employees has rewritten the rules for service workers nationwide.

The drivers, working for Domino's Pizza, argued they were employees for tax purposes, while Karshan (Midlands) Ltd, trading as Domino's Pizza, said they were independent contractors under "contracts for service".

The Supreme Court has found that delivery drivers for a pizza restaurant should be treated as employees and not contractors. The decision has important implications for workers in the gig economy.

"The case concerned delivery drivers engaged under contracts in 2010/11 by Karshan (Midlands) Ltd, trading as Domino's Pizza. The drivers argued they were employees for tax purposes and Karshan said they were independent contractors under "contracts for service" ..."(Irish Examiner, 20.10.2023).

The judgement was the result of an appeal by the Revenue Commissioners over a €215,718 tax bill it said Karshan owed for the drivers for the years 2010 and 2011.

"Owen Reidy, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, said Ireland and the EU now need clearer legislation to prevent more cases of what he called "bogus self-employment".

"It's a good thing for those workers and it should send a message to those companies that use bogus self-employment"(Irish Independent-21.10.2023).

The Domino's case is not the only action of its kind.

A similar case taken to the Workplace Relations Commission by a group of four University of Limerick councillors saw them lose a claim to €50,000 each for holiday pay they said were due over 17 years, when their employer was treating them as contractors.

Poland

"Thirty years ago, post-communist Governments abandoned the full employment that had been agreed with the

Solidarity trade union by Poland's last Communist rulers in their Round Table talks in Gdańsk.

"In accepting mass unemployment, those governments and the democratic parties that constituted them removed the economic foundation for Poland's democracy. It is full employment, rather than free markets, that is the precondition for democracy. As the largest party, PiS will have first shot at assembling a coalition. But it is hardly the only danger for Poland's democracy." (*After Poland's Elections: Democracy and Keynesianism?* By Jan Toporowski, Institute for New Economic Thinking, 16.10.2023).

Budget Surplus!

"Ireland had the second-highest budget surplus in the EU in the second quarter of the year and the eighth-lowest debt level, according to Eurostat.(Irish Independent, 24.10.2023).

The EU's statistics agency said Ireland's seasonally adjusted budget surplus—where tax and other revenues are greater than expenditure—measured 2.4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between April and June, compared to a deficit in the EU overall.

The Government prefers to measure Ireland's debt and deficit using modified statistics which strip out some multinational transactions.

Only Denmark fared better, with a surplus of 2.8% of GDP. Portugal came a close third after Ireland, with a surplus of 2.3%.

The average deficit in the 20-member Euro area stood at 3.3% of GDP in the second quarter, stable compared to the first quarter.

Ireland also recorded one of the biggest reductions in debt-to-GDP compared to last year, with the debt falling more than seven points compared to the second quarter of 2022.

The Government estimates Ireland's surplus will come in at €8.8 billion this year, or 3% of modified gross national income (GNI), with debt of €222.7 billion, working out at 76.1% of GNI.

Trade Unionists!

The median age of Union members has increased between 2004 and 2014. Many members are in their mid-40s to early 50s.

The percentage of people under 25 joining a Union has fallen since 2004. This is worrying because there is a strong association between joining young and remaining a member—people who do not join a Union when they are young are much less likely to join later. Recruitment of more young people is therefore crucial for the survival of the Trade Union movement.

Data collected by the ETUI show that across Europe, Trade Union members earn considerably higher wages than non-members, with a special premium for young and female workers.(The European Trade Union Confederation)

The European Trade Union Confederation is the major Trade Union organisation representing workers at the European level. In its role as a European Social Partner, the ETUC works both in a consulting role with the European Commission and negotiates agreements and work programmes with European employers.

ONE HUNDRED years ago—

"The industrial crisis, which paralysed the trade of Cork for nearly four months has now concluded. The terms of settlement were signed this morning by both sides and work is to be resumed as early as possible.

"The dockers' dispute, which commenced on July 16th 1923, was settled on October 23rd after fourteen weeks. The other disputes, which commenced on August 21st, lasted nearly three months and were finally settled to-day.

"The conference met again at the offices of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to-day, Professor A. O'Rahilly, TD being present, and a settlement was arrived at in the case of the carters' section. At the conclusion of the meeting the following official statement was issued:—

"CORK CITY DISPUTES—The proposed terms of settlement, which were balloted on and accepted by the several unions affected, and by the Cork Employers Federation, were signed by both sides to-day at 12 noon. All work will be resumed as soon as possible.— Alfred O'Rahilly, November 9, 1923." (*The Freeman's Journal*, 10.11.1923).



Balfour's Israel

"He ended by declaring 'it may fail: I do not deny this is an adventure.

Are we never to have adventure?

Are we never to try new experiments?"

**Lord Balfour (Hansard (Lords)
5th Series, Vol. 50, col. 71008-1019)**

ISRAEL: "He ended by declaring 'it may fail: I do not deny this is an adventure. Are we never to have adventure? Are we never to try new experiments?" Lord Balfour (Hansard (Lords), 5th Series, Vol. 50, col. 71008-1019).

Balfour's 'Israel'?

"'It was Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel) which converted A.J.B. [Arthur James Balfour]', Mrs. Dugdale wrote. There was a mystical element in Balfour's Zionism, encouraged by the messianic faith of Weizmann [Chaim Azriel Weizmann]. Sir Robert Vansittart remarked 'I have never known A.J.B. care for anything but Zionism', and Balfour came to relish his role as protector of the Jews, even writing to golf clubs in the Home Counties in an attempt to move their ban on Jewish membership. Politically the declaration of 1917 had been only the beginning" (*Balfour—A Life of Arthur James Balfour*, Max Egremont, Phoenix Giant, 1998, p.391).

"After the war [1914-18] the opposition to Jewish ambitions in Palestine continued. In August 1919 Curzon wrote to Balfour complaining of claims by 'that astute but aspiring person' Weizmann 'to advise us as to the principal politico-military appointments to be made in Palestine, to criticise sharply the conduct of any such officers who do not fall on the neck of the Zionists (a most unattractive resting place) and to acquaint with the "type of man" who we

ought or ought not to send'. To Curzon it seemed that 'Doctor Weizmann will be a scourge on the back of the unlucky mandatory; and I often wish you could drop a few globules of cold water on his heated and extravagant pretensions'..." (p.313).

"Despite cabinet opposition from both Curzon and Edwin Montagu, the government obtained a British mandate over Palestine. Lloyd George being particularly moved by the land's biblical associations and the prestige of Jerusalem. Balfour was determined to achieve strong foundations for the Zionist enterprise there. 'Our Jewish friends, who are not always easy to deal with, sometimes get dreadfully perturbed over the matters of comparatively small moment', he told Lord Hardinge on the 29th September, 1920" (p.313).

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"... 'But the question of frontiers is really vital, because it affects the economic possibilities of developing Palestine, and on these economic possibilities depends the success or failure of Zionism. The experiment is, in any case, a bold and rather hazardous one, though, in my opinion, well worth attempting. But it must be given a fair chance'..."

"In July 1921, at a meeting in Carlton Gardens, Churchill, Balfour and Lloyd George told Weizmann that by the Declaration, they had always meant an eventual Jewish state" (p.313).

"For Balfour the Arabs—'A great, an interesting, and an attractive race' as he told a Zionist audience in July 1920—should remember that Britain 'had freed them, the Arab race, from the tyranny of their brutal conquerer' the Turk; therefore he hoped they would not grudge 'that small notch in what are now Arab territories being given to the people who for all these hundreds of years have been separated from it" (p.314).

"Indeed he was sure that such a difficulty 'can be got over and will be got over, by mutual goodwill'. In June 1922, after Balfour had been made an Earl, a debate in the House of Lords initiated by Lord Islington led to further examination of the local difficulties. Jewish involvement in Bolshevism and revolutionary activity was causing an upsurge of anti-semitism

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