

IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

October 2023 Vol.38 No.10 ISSN 0790-7672

and *Northern Star* incorporating *Workers' Weekly* Vol.37 No.10 ISSN 954-5891

The Meaning of Armed Neutrality

In international law, an admittedly notional branch of the legal world, and in international relations generally, two forms of neutrality are recognised: demilitarisation (having no defence forces); and armed neutrality. Irish neutrality has always come under the latter heading.

As successive Irish Governments have worked to dilute the traditional neutrality policy, it has become a commonplace to argue that the policy never had much substance in the first place. A line has been sold that Irish neutrality in World War II was benevolent towards the Allies to the point of being an elaborate public relations exercise. That argument represents a deliberate distortion of the historical record.

Ironically, a relatively realistic assessment of Irish war-time neutrality, from a British source, is to be found in a 2008 book, *British Spies And Irish Rebels*, by Cambridge academic Paul McMahon. This book, a study of British Intelligence in Ireland from a British Intelligence perspective, hits the nail on the head regarding Irish neutrality. McMahon writes:

“De Valera summed up this attitude in September 1939, when he assured London that he did not ‘want Irish freedom to become a source of British insecurity’. Rather than a moral stance, this was a finely judged policy to protect Irish neutrality. De Valera gave enough concessions to dissuade Britain from using force to seize Irish territory; he ensured that, from the British point of view, the benefits of cooperation would always (just) outweigh those of coercion” (p. 284).

Well aware from the experience of the Irish national struggle, and from his own experience in the League of Nations, that the Great Powers—Britain, France, Ger-

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Northern Ireland

War and Peace!

We have not commented on the *Amnesty Bill* for Northern Ireland, which has been condemned by almost all parties on the ground that it undermines individual justice. Our only objection to it is that it is not a general amnesty which sweeps away the whole idea of individual justice in connection with war.

The Provisional IRA declared war in 1970 and it went on to make good that declaration. We opposed it at the time because we judged its war aim was unachievable—the ending of Partition. We did not deny that what it had undertaken was a War.

Belfast became a battlefield in 1971. It was obvious that the measures by which a State deals with individual acts of criminality were completely out of place in a War that was being waged by a people for a political purpose. When the Government introduced Internment, we recognised it as

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Irish neutrality and the *Irish Times*

With the outbreak of the Second World War the Irish State was determined to remain neutral. If independence was to mean anything, the State would cease to fight Britain's wars.

In order to implement such a policy, the Government decided to restrict the two subversive organisations within the State: the IRA and *The Irish Times*.

The Irish Times: a subversive organisation?!

A subversive organisation is one that does not recognise the legitimacy of the State and wishes to overthrow it by violent means.

Surely that couldn't apply to *The Irish Times*?

But why was *The Irish Times* censored?

In a note to de Valera, the *Controller of Censorship*, Joseph Connolly, described how he proposed to implement Government policy, which was to prevent publication of anything that would impair our neutrality. In particular he wanted to prevent suggestions that:

“a) we are not really neutral, b) that we cannot continue to be neutral, c) that

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Labour Comment, edited by **Pat Maloney:**
[The Thoughts Of Barry Desmond](#)

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Organised Labour:

Childcare Provision Profits; Firefighters' Deal;
ESB & Contract Workers; Autoworkers & Railwaymen in USA
(page 27)

many, Italy, Japan and the US—used war as a means for advancing their own supremacist interests, De Valera was in earnest about keeping Ireland neutral when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Not only was Irish neutrality a defiance of the dominance of the Great Powers in international affairs—made possible by the singular skill of De Valera and to a lesser extent that of Sean Lemass and Frank Aiken—it was also ably defended by a competent Diplomatic Corps (Joseph Walshe, Con Cremin, Robert Brennan, Frederick Boland, Sean Murphy).

Statecraft and diplomacy, obviously, loomed large in the Irish version of armed neutrality, alongside the military aspects, but the military side was far from inconsequential. The size of the Irish Army expanded from about 14,000 before 1939 to nearly 150,000 during the War, if the Local Defence Forces reserve is included. Invasion forces—whether from Germany, Britain or the US—would have encountered a military resistance

followed by a guerilla-type insurgency, with the additional threat that the Irish would collaborate with the enemies of the invading Power.

This article explores the concept of armed neutrality under a number of headings, and draws the strands together in a Conclusions section at the end.

(Following discussions at a public meeting of the Irish Political Review Group in the Teachers' Club, Dublin, on 1st September, in due course further sections will be added: covering Ireland's EU Membership, Lessons from Irish UN peacekeeping, and Neutrality in International Law. These will appear in a booklet, *Conserving Ireland's Foreign Policy Tradition*, currently in preparation.)

THE ROLE OF THE DEFENCE FORCES

On grounds of sheer practicality, the Irish Defence Forces provide services necessary to the functioning of a modern state. The responsibilities of the Naval Service include: maritime surveillance to

prevent people and arms smuggling and the transportation of illegal drugs; ensuring right of passage for shipping; protecting Ireland's 200-mile exclusive economic zone, its fishing grounds and its territorial seas defined by the 12-nautical-mile boundary; countering port blockades; and providing the primary diving team in the State. Militarily, the Naval Service is responsible for meeting contingent and actual maritime defence requirements. Non-military functions operated by the Air Corps include: the Emergency Aero-medical (air ambulance) Service, VIP transport, Search and Rescue (in support of Coast Guard search and rescue efforts), and maritime surveillance. In the military sphere the Air Corps provides support to the Army and the Naval Service.

The Army provides certain non-military services including: the provision of aid to the civil power (Gardaí) and to the civil authority (Government). An example of aid to the civil authority in recent years was the role played by the Army during Covid, when it augmented the efforts of the Health Service Executive by deploying its logistical planning, emergency planning, engineering and similar skills. The Army has also been called on to respond to extreme weather events, like the forest wildfire in Killarney National Park and gorse wildfires in Howth in 2021. A further non-military service is Irish Army crisis management and humanitarian relief operations in support of United Nations peacekeeping.

The military service provided by the Army is more complex. In recent history it has taken two forms: UN peacekeeping; and the provision of internal security, especially during the 1970-1998 Provisional IRA War. Strictly speaking, the latter was, from beginning to end, an aid to the civil power operation, but categorising it as non-military devalues the reality and scale of the duties the Army was required to perform.

Army involvement in UN peacekeeping, which began in 1958, has been a concrete expression of Irish Neutrality. Internationally, the Irish peacekeeping tradition is highly regarded, having the longest record of continuous service of any UN member state. Over the sixty-five years of its duration, 172,000 personnel of the Defence Forces, male and female, have served on UN missions, 87 of whom were killed while on duty.

A famous engagement known as the Siege of Jadotville, testifies to the strengths and weaknesses of the Army's role with the UN. In 1961 an Irish unit on a UN

mission in the Congo was ordered to proceed to the mining town of Jadotville to assist in the protection of its citizens. As a result of anti-UN sentiment among pro-Katanga elements, the troops were not universally welcomed. The unit, designated "A Company" and commanded by Commandant Pat Quinlan, had a complement of 155 men. On September 13th a combined force of between 3,000 and 5,000 local tribesmen, Belgian settlers and mercenaries from Belgium, France and Rhodesia attacked the unit. The assault came in waves of 600, preceded by artillery and mortar bombardment. A Support Platoon of A Company was able to knock out most of the Katangese mortar and artillery positions and, according to the Wikipedia account, defensive fire proved accurate and effective. A ceasefire was eventually agreed; whereas 300 of the attacking force, including 30 mercenaries, had been killed, there were no Irish fatalities—although five members of A Company were injured.

The Irish unit eventually ran out of supplies including water, leaving Quinlan no choice but to accept a second offer of surrender. Quinlan's leadership of a relatively small force is cited in military textbooks worldwide as the best example of the so-called "perimeter defence".

The weakness exposed by Jadotville was that the Army top brass back in Ireland, because of the surrender, allowed an implied black mark to sully Quinlan's reputation. It was not until the publication of "*The Siege of Jadotville—the Irish Army's Forgotten Battle*" (2005) by Declan Power, forty years after the event, that Quinlan (posthumously) and the members of A Company received the recognition they deserved. I have used the Siege of Jadotville here, not to glory in a military exploit, but simply to show that the military arts were studied and practised in the Irish Army in the 1950s; that the Army could produce someone like Pat Quinlan testifies to its competence.

The service provided by the Army during the long years of the Northern conflict is not directly relevant to the subject of Neutrality but needs to be examined in the context of the argument that the Defence Forces should be abolished. The story of that service has been described in detail in a book by Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Dan Harvey, *Soldiering Against Subversion* (2018). Harvey explicitly states in the Preface that what his book describes shows "the need for an army" (Kindle Edition, p. 14).

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What Was 'The Long Acre'?

If you're not rural, and not in an older cohort, the term "*long acre*" might not be understood nowadays. Before modern road traffic became common in the 1950s, roadside grass/vegetation was grazed by the cow, mostly of nearby cottage-dwellers. (Their acre of ground grew food etc, just like the *betaghs* (*biataigh*) of old.)

For a good while subsequently, tinkers (also known as 'itinerants', 'travellers') continued to graze their horses on the roadside, often tethered.

Post-decline of Big House horse culture, tinker horsiness is still going strong, sulky racing etc etc. They are given patches of ground for this by Local Authorities.

The Long Acre was common sense, checking roadside overgrowth and providing a free fodder resource. (Before motor traffic.)

It could also be a residue of *rundale/booleying* (*buaille*): common land used by communities, mentioned by John O'Donovan, Brehon Laws etc.

The new planted landlords from late Elizabethan era (Spenser, Mountjoy, Carew) through Cromwell, 18th c. etc, did not acknowledge historic law and practice, and had to be forcefully reminded by Whiteboys, Ribbonmen etc.

A "*Rule-Of-Law*" ideology came about in 19th century. It was supposed to remedy the system of unfettered piracy described by William Cobbett.

For "Rule-Of-Law", read Rules-Based Order. There wasn't too much "Rule-Of-Law" in the centuries of Conquest/extermination, in Ireland or anywhere else.

Keep the law, oh, keep it well - keep it as your rulers do;

Be not righteous over much, when they break it so can you!

As they rend their pledge and bond, rend you too their legal thongs;

When they crush your chartered rights, tread you down your chartered wrongs.

(From *Hold the Rent* by Fanny Parnell)

Despite their origins, Fanny and Anna Parnell were not taken in by the Rule-of-Law cant. They acknowledged the historic role of *Assassination in Tempering Despotism*.

Anna called out the shock-horror pearl-clutching over the Phoenix Park "Murders", while noting that the very same day the RIC opened fire on a children's band in Ballina. Everybody has heard of the first, what about the second? (*Au contraire!* The Party made a commotion about *Ireland of the Welcomes*, which committed this atrocity to their New Friend from England.)

The Land League and Ladies Land League innovation was to use some elements of Whiteboy practice, while turning Rule-of-Law against itself. This proved to be effective.

With Davitt's connivance, Charles Parnell broke up this campaign.

William O'Brien salvaged it, sufficiently to break the back of the Conquest/Landlords. This was the Irish Revolution of 1879-1903, which removed the aristocracy. Not by killing and expelling them as in France and Russia, but using the method pioneered by Stein and Hardenberg in Prussia—as proposed by Fanny Parnell.

The 1916-22 episode was not itself a revolution—Lenin called it a "*putsch*". But, by insisting on democratic practice, it consolidated the actual social revolution which was accomplished by the previous generation.

With respect to academic revisionists, calling 1916 a *revolution* is their euphemism for "*putsch*". The Aubane Historical Society book, "*Cork Free Press*" explains all this.

Pat Muldowney

The 'Cork Free Press' In The Context Of The Parnell Split, The Restructuring Of Ireland, 1890-1910, by Brendan Clifford.

Redmondism; Fenians; Clericalism; The Land War; Russellites; Land & Labour League, and All-For-Ireland League—an Irish pluralist political development, originating in Co. Cork. 168pp. Index. ISBN 0 9521081 06 10. AHS, Jan. 1998. €15, £12

This book can be read online at: **Cork Free Press** —

<https://aubanehistoricalsociety.com/cork-free-press/>

He says:

“This book is necessary because it is too easy to forget those difficult days and it is dangerous to do so, because the complexity of the fractured identity that was at the essence of the Troubles in a sense still remains to be resolved today. The Defence Forces played a crucial part in its containment” (Ibid, p.15).

Harvey lists the many valuable security functions performed by the Army in those years as:

“duties on cash, explosive and prisoner escorts, at mines during blasting, as guards on vital installations, with bomb-disposal capability and frequent deployments in Cordon and Search operations, riot (crowd) control and, of course, constant border operations” (Ibid, p. 216).

Moreover, his hint in the Preface—that the experience of these aid operations to the civil power may be needed in the future—is apposite.

A weakness in Harvey’s general position is his treatment of the 1970 Arms Crisis. He makes no mention of the role of the Northern Citizen Defence Committees or their relationship with Captain James Kelly, an Irish Military Intelligence officer. He implies that attempts were afoot to illegally import arms, to be supplied to the Provisional IRA. In fact, the Provisionals barely existed at that time and a Government Sub-Committee had planned for arms to be imported and supplied to a grouping of Defence Committees, legitimate local bodies solely concerned with protecting otherwise defenceless communities. In short, he rehashes the line of the Republic’s governing elite, making out that the Lynch Government saw off a hothead element in Fianna Fáil, when in reality it capitulated to pressure from the British Government.

But it is not altogether surprising that Harvey, a retired Army officer, should choose to toe the Government line: the function of a national Army is to implement the decisions of the properly constituted political authority, the elected Government of the day. In that context, the Army cannot be blamed for the political course decided on by the Republic’s political leaders during the Northern conflict.

As can be deduced from the title of Harvey’s book, he sees the Army’s role during what he terms ‘the Troubles’ as a war against subversive elements, primarily the Provisional IRA. He is, however, critical of the tactics employed by the British Army during the early years and conscious

of a different culture and approach to security between the British and Irish militaries. He identifies the more ‘highly politicised’ security approach of the Irish Army in contrast to the ‘more securitised’ tactics of the British Army as a reason why there was no communication between the two armies along the Border. Developing the point, he quotes a statement made by Lieutenant Colonel Louise Hogan during an interview on the BBC TV Panorama programme. She was being pressed as to why there was no cooperation.

“I don’t see the point of it (co-operation with the British army); we have a mission to perform and presumably they have a mission to perform as well. I don’t know what their mission is, nor do I wish to know. We have a job to do and we do it in our own way, and as far as I’m concerned, I am satisfied that we do it effectively” (Ibid, p. 94).

Harvey also shows that, in addition to countering IRA activity in Border areas, the Army played a role in defending against loyalist paramilitaries and “*inadvertent or advertent*” British incursions into the Republic.

Amid the difficulties and hardships of the Army’s work during the Northern conflict and its spillovers into the South, there were gains in terms of institutional learning, or capability development as military people call it. In 1980 the Army Rangers Wing was initiated as a special operations force: focused, among other tasks, on hostage release operations. A high level of expertise was also developed in bomb disposal techniques. Capability development occurred across the range of military skills. As Harvey puts it, having described the development of the Army Rangers:

“Apart from preparing an elite military unit for highly specialised interventions, a keener, more honed intelligence capability and a cadre of EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] and counter-IED [improvised explosive devices] personnel are viewed as amongst the best and most highly trained in the world. With much of their expertise being developed during the Troubles of the 1970s and 1980s, and overseas in challenging mission areas, the ATCP [aid to the civil power] ‘soldiering situation’ in the Republic required that the performance of internal security duties be regularised and regulated, particularly the daily threat of violence being faced by troops. An excellent and fully elaborate set of Current Operational Directive Guidance Documents and Standing Operating Procedures were drawn up for commanders to consult” (Ibid, p. 207).

So, there are strengths and weak-

nesses in the military capabilities of the Army; it would be foolish to overlook the strengths.

THE PLANNED TRANSFORMATION OF THE DEFENCE FORCES

The military capability of the Irish Defence Forces has always been modest but, since the Crash of 2008, under-resourcing has been allowed to take its toll to the point where the viability of the services has come into question. The present Government’s *Programme for Government* in 2020 contained a commitment to establish a *Commission on the Defence Forces* (CoDF) and this duly published its Report in February 2022. A recent Government document describes the progress from that point as follows:

“The report proposes significant changes for the Defence Forces, including change to Defence Forces’ culture, high-level command and control structures, HR and staffing and for the level of defence provision in Ireland. In July 2022 the Government approved a decision to move to Level of Ambition 2 (LOA2), as outlined in the CoDF Report, together with an increase in the Defence budget rising to €1.5 billion, in 2022 prices, by 2028. This represents the largest increase in Defence funding in the history of the State” (Building for the Future – Change from Within, update from the High Level Action Plan for the CoDF, March 2023, p. 6)

So total Budget expenditure on Defence will have risen to €1.5 billion by 2028. Defence spending in 2023 is estimated to be €1.21, but this figure may not be reached since staff shortages are causing certain services to be cut back. The Commission Report describes three Levels of Ambition, leaving it to Government to choose which would be implemented. The Government has chosen the middle Level. If the Defence Budget rises to €1.5 billion in 2028, this will represent .72 per cent of Gross National Income, a percentage significantly below what other states spend (NATO members are expected to spend a minimum of 2 per cent of Gross National Product on Defence).

Arising from the Commission Report, a transformation of the Army, Naval Service and Air Corps is starting to be implemented. The planned changes to the Command and Control structure of the Forces is described as follows in a report for the Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA, a Government think tank):

“The Commission has recommended that the Naval Service and the Air Corps

be renamed to the Irish Navy and to the Irish Air Force respectively,[xiii] and have made several recommendations for changes in the C2 [Command and Control] structures of the Defence Forces. Amongst the most significant of these is the creation of the new roles of the Chief of the Army, Chief of the Navy, and Chief of the Air Force, overseen by the Chief of Defence, who will oversee the branches of the Army, Navy, and Air Force respectively [xiv]...” (A *New Level of Ambition: The Capability Recommendations of The Commission on the Defence Forces*, Cian FitzGerald for IIEA, 18 May 2022. The two footnotes, indicated by roman numerals in the above extract, have been omitted here, as they are not relevant).

Criticism has been made of the *Commission Report*, some in the public domain, some not. In a webcast on 31st May 2022, available on the IIEA website, Renata Dwan and Ben Tonra discussed the Report. Tonra opined that, while the Government had chosen *Level of Ambition 2* (LO2) from the Report, word was that the Department of Defence “was committed to Level 2.5”. Tonra considered that this was not enough. Any funding short of LO3 implied that, in some areas of our national security, we would need to depend on other states like France, the Netherlands or the UK. He considered that this implication should be made known publicly, especially if the State wished to retain the neutrality policy.

Renata Dwan welcomed the Report but was critical of the way Ireland’s position as an international Internet Technology hub was ignored. She said this had security implications that needed to be addressed.

A problem with the contributions from Dwan and Tonra is that they take for granted the assumptions underlying the propaganda of the West and NATO. Dwan has been the Deputy Director and Senior Executive Officer of *Chatham House* since 2020. Chatham House has pretensions to being an independent body, but is well known as a traditional think-tank of the British Government.

Tonra is a *Professor of International Relations* at University College Dublin (UCD). In March 2022 it was reported that he had resigned from one of his posts at UCD because he viewed the University’s response to the Russian intervention in Ukraine as “*underwhelming*”. The UCD response, which is assumed to be related to the funding it receives for its Confucius Institute from the Chinese Government,

caused Tonra to be “*deeply, profoundly ashamed*”. Clearly, Professor Tonra is no supporter of the emerging multi-polar world order which threatens the US’s role as world policeman. Some interesting insights were provided by both speakers on the IIEA webcast, but the distorting influence of their pro-US bias was ever present.

Informally, we have heard a line of criticism of the Commission Report from people with a knowledge of military matters. It is that the present Government is committed to the integration of the Defence Forces into the EU’s security structures and ultimately into those of NATO, and that the transformation of the Irish forces arises from that end goal.

A security and defence re-organisation based on Irish neutrality would, it is argued, start from a different place and have very different ramifications. That is unquestionably a valid criticism worthy of investigation.

Proposals from the Commission Report include: re-organisation of the Command and Control system; parity between the army, navy and air forces structured under a joint command; enhanced cyber defence; acquisition of air and maritime radar; purchase of two fixed wing aircraft with strategic reach capability; and replacement of the naval fleet and the fleet of armoured personnel carriers. Furthermore, an explainer document on the IIEA site contains the following insight regarding Irish dependence on the RAF:

“Finally, with the purchase of Air and Maritime Radar Systems, the government may consider the purchase of an air-intercept capability in line with the CoDF’s recommendations. At present, the Defence Forces will continue to rely on the UK’s Royal Air Force (RAF) to intercept potentially hostile aircraft. This may pose challenges to policing Irish airspace, particularly in potential crisis situations should the RAF be otherwise engaged and leaves potential ambiguity concerning who can authorise the use of force in Irish airspace” (Explainer: Ireland’s High Level Action Plan to Enhance its Defence Forces, 2 September 2022, IIEA website).

Plainly, in these matters deep understanding of military matters and perhaps a degree of insider knowledge is required. Yet there can be no doubt but that, before engaging in a major transformation of the Defence Forces, political clarity on the neutrality question needs to be established.

The idea of abolishing the Defence Forces was summarily dismissed on security grounds at the beginning of this paper. Yet the point crops up in Irish public discourse fairly regularly, if sometimes as a whisper in backroom conversation. In 2009 Gill and Macmillan published a book by Anthony Sweeney called *Banana Republic* in which the case for not having the Defence Forces was argued on economic grounds. Sweeney is not a well-known author and the tyranny of economic thinking over political, historical and social matters is not what it was before and immediately following the 2008 Crash. But consideration of Sweeney’s logic is nonetheless a useful exercise if only in showing the flaws inherent in ahistorical thinking.

For a start the heightening of geopolitical tension that has followed the Ukraine War has made his views on security matters out-of-date. He argues that Ireland is a neutral country with no known adversaries and no recent history of defensive or offensive military action. Even if Ireland was threatened by another power, he says,

“it is highly likely that other power would be a much bigger geographical entity, with far superior resources, so our army could offer only token resistance” (p. 186).

Yet, as was seen during the Second World War, any decision by an outside Power contemplating invasion would be influenced by the amount of trouble it would encounter. The existence of even a small army that could in adversity resort to guerrilla tactics would need to be taken into consideration and was considered by Churchill. Thus, during the US’s second Iraq War, a decision to allow the defeated Iraqi Army to disband allowed its military expertise to pass to Islamic State, a decision now seen as a tactical blunder. The existence of military expertise is an asset that Sweeney does not understand or appreciate.

Regarding Irish involvement in UN peacekeeping, Sweeney misses the point completely. He sees UN missions as providing the Army with experience and asks what use such experience is, other than to serve in other UN arenas. But Irish support for the UN’s peacekeeping role is a foreign policy statement from a neutral State with a colonial past, that says: we favour an international order that, as much as possible, guards against the machinations of the Great Powers.

Concluding his case, Sweeney says:

“These are the arguments, but if the Defence Forces were dissolved, what would Ireland need in their place? There are three things needed. Number one, a coast guard service that can handle fisheries protection, sea rescue, drug enforcement, etc. Number two, a professional Civil Defence Force comprising a permanent core of professionals who are well resourced and well trained in all civil emergencies. They would need to specialise and train in dealing with floods, medical emergencies, mountain rescues, etc. This body could be supplemented with volunteers drawn from the local community and having local knowledge and expertise, which would in turn bind the service to the community. Number three, a better resourced, better funded and better supported police force. Abolishing the military might seem unusual, but there are precedents: Panama did it in 1990 with a constitutional referendum, and a number of smaller European countries have opted for very limited or no military forces, such as Andorra, Liechtenstein and Monaco...” (Ibid, p. 188).

Economists like to design new arrangements that address particular economic problems but are not good at devising how we get from the present problem to the new system. Dissolving the Defence Forces and replacing them with new and cheaper organisations would likely provoke public controversy and dissent that would sidetrack and distract the political system unnecessarily. It would entail the formation of new organisations, no easy task, that might or might not prove effective. On the other hand, the accumulated knowledge, experience, expertise and traditions of the Army, Naval Service and Air Corps would be scattered to the four winds. Building State institutions may resemble the building of a business in superficial ways but the two activities are fundamentally different. Sweeney doesn't understand politics and has no appreciation of the role of history and tradition in affairs of State. He certainly has no understanding of the service given by the armed forces. Thankfully, as a result of the 2008 Crash, the days when people who have chosen a career in public service need to defer to the superior knowledge of veterans of the business world are no longer with us!

More than any other branch of the public service the Defence Forces represent the unique world institution that is the independent Irish State, with its faults, achievements and historical identity. Their abolition, and Sweeney is right on this one point, would reduce Ireland to the status

of Andorra, Liechtenstein, and Monaco. Different people will have different views on this: you either get it or you don't.

USING THE ARMY RANGERS TO MAKE A POLITICAL POINT

A tweet by RTE political correspondent Paul Cunningham on 6th August contained a link to an article in the previous day's edition of *The Journal* on the Irish Army Rangers. Written by Niall O'Connor and carrying the title, 'Inside the Army Ranger Wing: Prep for overseas deployments as new laws beckon', the article contains strong hints about Government plans to remove the Triple Lock. It also unwittingly shows how the Defence Forces are being used in the political drive to erode neutrality.

In the article O'Connor describes a recent training exercise undertaken under cover of darkness in the Wicklow mountains by the Army Rangers Wing. Behind the group of Rangers, known as operators, he says, is a much bigger crew of support soldiers who work on communications, controlling hi-tech drones, weapons maintenance, and managing the needs of the operators. As O'Connor says, the whole operation takes minutes but had taken days or even weeks to prepare. It is followed by an assessment of each operator's performance known as the circle of truth. O'Connor quotes the Commanding Officer saying:

“Professionally no offence is taken, it's part of the mind-set, critical appraisal from those most important to you, rehearse, refocus, re-engage. Self-empathy has no place here.”

The Rangers wing came into existence as an elite unit of the army in the early 1980s, although the size of the unit may not exceed sixty operators. O'Connor refers to the “9-month terror of the selection process”. He says the skill sets of the Rangers have been tested in recent years in the evacuation of Irish personnel from Kabul, the deployment of a 14-member squad in Mali over three years (1919-22), and the evacuation of Irish citizens from Sudan. The unit has seen service in Liberia, Mali, Lebanon, East Timor, and Somalia, among other places.

Thus Niall O'Connor informs his readers about an interesting unit of the Defence Forces but in a subtle way he also softens the ground for the Government's intended legislation to remove the Triple Lock. Tying Government plans to the reform of the Defence Act, passed in 1954, to the popularity and prestige of the Rangers, his opening sentence reads:

“AS THE GOVERNMENT reviews legislation which could lead to more frequent deployment overseas by Irish Defence Forces personnel, the elite Army Ranger Wing trains for scenarios that are likely to occur in peacekeeping or peace enforcement missions.”

He also takes care to emphasise links between the Rangers and other Special Forces around the world:

“As the State is set to redraft laws which govern the deployment of the Army Ranger Wing and other units, its members look to those missions and other special forces around the world to keep on top of an ever-changing landscape.”

Later in the article, having spoken to a number of soldiers participating in the training exercise, he says:

“They speak of their connections with other countries and how those connections help them complete missions—whether that is through offers of transport or bases to operate. The operators spoke warmly of those connections, particularly, with European countries.”

The implication here is clear. These highly-trained soldiers are looking forward to having closer links with their counterparts in European countries; they favour greater involvement in the EU's security and defence apparatus. O'Connor's political subtext is: if you admire the professionalism of the Rangers and wish to see their expertise deployed overseas more often, you should support the Government's plan to remove the Triple Lock.

While Niall O'Connor's article on the Rangers is somewhat circumspect regarding neutrality, in an earlier article in *The Journal* he was far more explicit. In a piece entitled, 'Govt plans to review 'Triple Lock' system and how foreign missions for Ranger Wing are approved' back in January, he stated:

“THE GOVERNMENT is considering new legislation this year that could allow Irish special forces to be dispatched on foreign missions.

It has emerged that reviews of the so-called 'Triple Lock' system and a 70-year-old piece of legislation which prevents the deployment of the Army Ranger Wing (ARW) are both on the table this year.

The Triple Lock system is a policy measure whereby there needs to be separate approval by the Government, the Dáil and a UN Resolution to mandate a mission in order to send more than 12 Irish troops abroad.

A major stumbling block to send Irish troops abroad, at present, is the need for

a UN resolution on a matter. However, it is a given that in most situations, such a resolution would be vetoed by Russia or China.

A change to the Triple Lock system was mooted by then Minister for Defence and Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney in November, and it has now been included in a Government policy document" (*The Journal*, 17 January 2023).

This is false information and is shown to be so by the fact that the Rangers have been dispatched on numerous foreign missions over the years, as testified by O'Connor's own article of 6th August.

He is also wrong to say that in most situations at the present time a UN resolution to send Irish troops abroad would be vetoed by Russia or China. All the previous Irish UN missions were allowed by the Security Council. Possibly, Russia might block an Irish mission on behalf of the UN to Kiev or to anywhere that might affect the present War, but even that is debateable: a UN peace-keeping mission would most likely arise only if a settlement of some sort was agreed over Ukraine. In such circumstances the only factor preventing an Irish mission would be the extent to which the present Government has damaged the credibility of Irish neutrality.

O'Connor's article in January was written before the debate surrounding the Consultative Forum had begun. The public is now better informed about the Triple Lock.

CONCLUSIONS

Irish neutrality has taken the form of armed neutrality since World War II and should be defended and developed through that form.

Having in the past provided services necessary to the functioning of the State like marine surveillance, the air ambulance, and aid to the civil power (Gardaí) and the civil authority (Government), and having undertaken UN peacekeeping and the defence of the State's internal security, all with sometimes severely constrained resources, the record of the Irish Defence Forces should be recognised as an invaluable heritage.

The concept of armed neutrality requires a major transformation in the resourcing and organisation of the Defence Forces.

While pertinent proposals seem to be contained in the Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces, the envisaged transformation is hamstrung and compromised because of Government ambivalence on the question of neutrality. A clear commitment to neutrality is a prerequisite to the planning and execution of a major reform of the Defence Forces.

The policy of paying lip service to the neutrality policy, while undermining it in practice, is based on deceit of a fundamental nature. It represents a radical departure from the State's foreign policy tradition and should be ended.

The possibility that the Government is deliberately predisposing Defence Force units to base their training exercises on future membership of EU security structures, is worrying and should be investigated.

Dave Alvey

Northern Ireland

War and Peace!

continued from Page One

a kind of Prisoner Of War status.

The demand was made by the SDLP and others that, in connection with the War, there should be no imprisonment without trial. This was an evasive tactic of 'constitutional nationalism'—which could not legitimise what the Provisionals were doing by recognising it as war. Supporters of the Provisionals had other reasons for going along with the SDLP demand.

The principle of No Imprisonment Without Trial was adopted. Republican soldiers were subject to the law for murders and were convicted in Special Courts set up for the purpose.

The demand was then raised for political status for Republicans who were imprisoned as convicted criminals. That demand was backed by the Dirty Protest and the Hunger Strike.

Peace movements of various kinds came and went. Some of them mounted large demonstrations. We took little heed of them as they were expressions on a sentimental level about incidental phenomena associated with the War, and evaded even the fact that it was a War.

The Provisional movement effectively split, discarding the anti-Treaty position and adopting realisable aims for the purpose of transferring the momentum of the War into politics, but keeping up the military activity to ensure that this transference would actually be realised.

The Government was obliged to see that it could not win the War, and it made a deal

under which the pretence that Northern Ireland was an actual democracy—or even a possible one—was given up. The two communities who make up the region were given equal status in a restored and re-arranged devolved government, in which it was made impossible for one of them to govern the other.

Others were given ceremonial roles in the inauguration of the 1998 Agreement—the Dublin Government and the SDLP—in order to camouflage the fact that it was a deal between the IRA and Whitehall.

Implicit in the Agreement was that the public arrangements made by the Westminster Parliament in 1921 for the governing of the Six County region of its state were profoundly undemocratic, and that War resulted from them.

(The SDLP complained at the time that the Government was not taking heed of it to the extent that its righteous behaviour over the decades merited. It was deeply hurt when Prime Minister Blair explained that the problem with the SDLP was that it didn't have an (illegal) Army).

A weakness in the 1998 Agreement was that, while it released a number of detainees, it did not proclaim a general Amnesty over all that had happened in the War, and pass an Act Of Oblivion (as had been done by Westminster with regard to other conflicts in the past).

It seems that Blair would have considered a general Amnesty, but the Irish parties were strongly opposed to it, all for different reasons. That is why things are left festering—twenty-four years later.

The condition for dispensing individual justice for particular acts is the existence of a settled State, in which anything else would be wrong, and in which War would not just be wrong but would be impossible.

The refusal to acknowledge that what happened in Northern Ireland was a war, that a war is a public event, and that amnesty is the way to conclude a war following a settlement, is a recipe for continuation of war by feuding.

For the War to be concluded, it must be recognised that it was a war; that war has its place in the scheme of things; and that the means by which a public event like a war is laid to rest is not individual punishment, and is still less "reconciliation".

Books, Culture and History

Sir Martin Amis died on 19th May 2023 at one of his homes in the US—he had bought a brownstone residence in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn (when he relocated from Camden Town in London), but spent more of his time in Lake Worth Beach, Florida. He had been a prolific smoker all his life and needed a warm climate, which he found in Florida, but he succumbed at the age of 73 to oesophageal cancer. His best friend Christopher Hitchens, also a prolific smoker, had died in 2011 from complications of the same cancer. It would be hard, in my opinion, to find two more unlikeable people, especially where their politics were concerned. And the politics were very evident in the novels Amis wrote and in the books that the 'pubic intellectual' Hitchens wrote.

I was surprised to find that Amis had been knighted, but there is some doubt as to whether this happened after Amis died: the new King, Charles III, bestowed the title in his Birthday Honours or on the night of the Amis's death. Whatever, he is now to be known as Sir Martin, while his father, Sir Kingsley Amis, received his gong in 1990: after a literary career which, if it had included only one book—his debut *Lucky Jim* (1954)—was well deserving of such an award.

I was reading something or another and had the TV on when I became aware that one of my favourite English authors, William Boyd, was on and I upped the sound to hear him announce the death of Amis fils. Boyd, born to Scottish parents in present-day Ghana, Africa, is a thoroughly decent man, unlike the rather detestable Amis whose works reflected his own world view. But Boyd, true to his nature, only stated how important Martin Amis was in the English canon of writing, something

that in the days ahead was repeated. 'The New York Times' stated:

"To come of reading age in the last three decades of the 20th century—from the oil embargo through the fall of the Berlin Wall, all the way to 9/11—was to live, it now seems clear, in the Amis era."

As far back as 2008, 'The Times' named him "one of the fifty greatest British writers since 1945". So his canonical status was assured and Boyd echoed that for the BBC that night. He said that Amis's first book, 'The Rachel Papers' (1973), was a very fine book, which won the Somerset Maugham Award, and that his fifth, 'Money' (1984), was also just as good with a wonderful central character—an anti-hero called John Self. 'Time' magazine "included the novel in its list of the 100 best English-language novels of 1923-2005".

What I find interesting is that, whatever recognition is given to the Irish contemporary novelists (or even the former Anglos), with longlists and shortlists on various prizes—in the end, it is the English novelists that make the cut for the canon.

Julianne Herlihy ©

* It Is Time

Irish neutrality and the *Irish Times*

continued

we are wrong in being neutral, d) that the big majority of the people are opposed to the enemies of Britain" (note 1, p102: see below).

Connolly saw the chief threat to this policy coming from *The Irish Times*.

It is interesting to note that many of the Anglo-Irish—including some associated with *The Irish Times*—were quite sympathetic to the policy of Neutrality. Tony Gray, in his hagiography of *The Irish Times* Editor, R.M. Smyllie, notes that Sir Lauriston Arnott joined the Local Security Force (LSF), which was set up to defend our neutrality (note 2).

Arnott had served with the British Army during the First World War but was now being put through his paces by officers in the Irish Army.

He was asked how he reconciled his career as an officer in the British Army during the war—and as a Director of *The Irish Times*—with his present role as an officer in the LSF of the Irish Free State. Arnott replied:

"Well, you know, I always think of it like this. My house out in Shearwater, in Howth, that's my home. Well, if I saw a British Tommy walking across my meadows... I'd simply have to shoot the bugger, wouldn't I?" (Note 3, p146).

This suggests that, even among the Anglo Irish, the working assumption was that the threat to Neutrality would come from the British.

Whatever about Arnott, Smyllie did not join the LSF and mocked those who did.

The problem with analysing censorship

is that, once an item has been censored, it can be difficult to know what exactly was excised. Fortunately, in the Irish case there was very little censorship at the beginning of the war. The Censorship Board was hoping that the newspaper editors would exercise their discretion. So, in this lax period we can form a very good idea of why *The Irish Times* upset the Censor.

The newspaper published advertisements for the British Admiralty, as well as the King's war-time message to the "navy", and the "army". It never said the "*British Navy*" or "*British Army*" because the newspaper didn't recognise the existence of the Irish Navy or Army.

Readers' Letters referred to—

"our Tommies" (note 1, p102).

The Irish Times, like the IRA, did not recognise the State: but from the State's point of view it had a much more destructive potential. The newspaper had the most extensive foreign coverage of all

Irish newspapers, and it was the only Irish newspaper allowed by the British Government to go through neutral countries to Germany (note 1, p107).

When Germans started leaving this country, Smyllie expressed surprise that:

“...so many admirable citizens should feel themselves compelled to abandon their posts, their property and their homes precisely as if they had been living in a belligerent country” (The Irish Times, 12/9/1939, note 1, p103).

The *Irish Times* had been featuring a “*Roll of Honour*” in respect of the death of British Army personnel. It claimed to the Censor’s Office that this only applied to the First World War — before the existence of the Irish State. But this turned out to be a lie. It also included British Army deaths of more recent times. Accordingly Frank Aiken, the Minister responsible for Censorship, decided to prohibit the heading “*Roll of Honour*” altogether and also the heading, “*Killed on Active Service with his Britannic Majesty’s Forces*”, and similar headings. (Note 1, p110).

The Minister also took exception to the newspaper’s “*Court and Personal*” Column, which reported on British high society. The Column appeared under the Royal Coat Of Arms. The head of the Censor’s Office, Joseph Connolly, was of the opinion that the Column —

“...merges the State and its personnel in a subordinate way with the British Court as though the State were part of the life and government of Britain” (note 1, p110).

The emblem of the royal court of arms; the heading “*Court and Personal*”; and reports of the social or other activities of foreign citizens not ordinarily resident in Ireland were prohibited.

Smyllie complained that the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*, which expressed similar views to *The Irish Times*, were not censored by the Irish authorities. But this — wilfully or otherwise — misses the point. The *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* are straight-forward right wing jingoistic British newspapers. But what is *The Irish Times*? Or, to get to the nub of the matter, what would a senior official in the German Government make of such a newspaper with the word “*Irish*” on its masthead?

On one occasion, the issue of Censorship was discussed in Seanad Eireann (note 4). It was raised by a Sir John Keane. One of the items that he complained of was the suppression of a photograph that

The Irish Times wished to publish. Since the photograph was suppressed, the only way Keane would have known about it was through representations from the newspaper itself.

So, what was so objectionable about the photograph? It showed an LSF parade in College Green with a picture of the royal coat of arms in the background (note 5).

This follows a consistent pattern. The *Irish Times* wanted to pretend that the Irish State was completely subordinate to Britain, and therefore was in effect at war with Germany.

In the debate the Minister, Frank Aiken, made no apologies for suppressing the picture:

“That was done quite deliberately. We were not going to let the editor play the little game that he had in mind. He had quite a number of photographs to publish of the same thing if he wanted to do it, and he could have done it.”

But what was “*the little game*” that *The Irish Times* was playing?

By pretending to be, in effect, part of Britain, the newspaper was setting up Ireland as a target for Germany. If Germany attacked the country in earnest (as distinct from a few stray bombs), there would have been tremendous pressure on the Government to enter the War on the side of Britain. There may be another explanation for the behaviour of the newspaper, but the present writer can’t think of one.

When the War ended, the Censorship was lifted, proving that it was only there because of the specific circumstances pertaining. Aiken invited all the Editors, including the Editor of *The Irish Times*, to a celebratory dinner to show there were no hard feelings. Smyllie took the opportunity to regale the attendees with stories of how he outwitted the censors. Apparently, much fun was had by all.

Perhaps Aiken felt he could afford to indulge Smyllie, now that the War was over. The State’s policy of Neutrality was one of the toughest tests of its independence, and it proved that it could sustain that policy over the duration of the War.

Meanwhile *The Irish Times* returned to business as usual. But things were not quite the same. When the Censorship restrictions were lifted, it resumed its reporting of British titled people but no longer under the heading “*Court and Personal*”; It was now “*Social and Personal*”. Also, the royal coat of arms emblem was never used again.

The State had survived and the newspaper felt that it had to adapt.

John Martin

NOTES

Note 1: *The Irish Times: a History*, Mark O’Brien, Four Courts Press, 2008.

Note 2: The LSF reserve force was formed in May 1940 after the fall of France. It was under the control of the Garda Síochána. However, most transferred to the Local Defence Force (LDF), which was under army control and was set up in 1941. Arnott must have made that transfer since Tony Gray says he was “*put through his paces.... by officers of the Irish Army*”.

Reflecting the patriotic spirit of the time, the two organisations grew from nothing to a total of 152,000 volunteers in 1942 (*Bright, Brilliant Days*, essay by Col Ned Doyle, p38).

Note 3: *Mr Smyllie, Sir*, Tony Gray, Gill & Macmillan, 1994.

Note 4: Seanad Eireann debate, 4/12/1940.

Note 5: Mark O’Brien in his book (note 1) describes the picture accurately as “*the royal coat of arms*”. Tony Gray, who had a long association with *The Irish Times*, in his book (note 3) is a little more coy. He describes it as “*an emblem of the old days of cruel ascendancy*” and then as the “*Lion and Unicorn*”. But the “*Lion and Unicorn*” is the British Royal Coat of Arms. Gray could hardly fail to know this since he worked for *The Irish Times* from 1940 to 1959.

From his *Irish Times* perspective, it looks as if Gray is a little embarrassed by the incident. He has every reason to be!

Sir John Keane also used the expression “*emblem of the ascendancy*” in the Seanad Eireann debate.

***Irish Times:
Past And Present, a record of
the journal since 1859,***

by John Martin.

Index. 264 pp. ISBN 978-1-872078-13-7.
BHES 2008.

€21, £17.50

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Our Lady Of Limerick

Part One

The statue of Our Lady of Limerick has a place of prominence on an altar in Saint Saviour's Dominican Church, Glentworth Street, Limerick City. It was carved in the seventeenth century and was directly connected to the death by hanging of Sir John Burke for practising the Roman Catholic religion in 1607. The first part of the story, therefore, relates to Sir John Bourke of Brittas Castle, County Limerick. The second part of the story relates to Fr. O'Brien OP who was given the statue and, in turn, was put to death for practising the Catholic religion in 1651.

Part One

Sir John Bourke of Brittas, County Limerick.

Sir John Bourke was born about 1574 into the Clanwilliam Bourke family (his father was Richard), which was descended from the Fitzadelm de Burg family. One of his ancestors had fought under the Earl of Pembroke, 'Strongbow', and had acquired vast amounts of land in Counties Limerick and Tipperary via Henry II (1154-1189), who had been granted the Lordship of Ireland by Pope Adrian IV in 1171.

By the sixteenth century the family, which was always Roman Catholic, had taken Gaelic titles and had embraced Irish traditions.

Brittas Castle was a handsome fortified residence with a large keep, a fine courtyard, and a deep moat which surrounded the outer walls of the castle. The castle was some ten miles to the east of Limerick City, and was very close to Abbey Owey, a large Cistercian abbey, which had been founded in the reign of King John (1199-1216). It was designed to secure the English takeover of Irish land and no Irish Catholics were allowed to join the monastery.

The Abbey, which was dissolved after the Act of Supremacy of Henry VIII in 1534 and the start of the Protestant Reformation, serves as a forcible reminder that politics and religion were inextricably connected during this period. On the eastern edge of Limerick City the remains of Castletroy Castle are still visible, and Sir John Bourke's uncle, Sir William Bourke, was the first Baron of Castleconnell and lived in the castle for some time.

Sir John's mother was Honor, the daughter of Conor O'Mulryan, the Chief of Owey, a vast area of land in the Counties of Limerick and Tipperary. Although a lot of the land had been distributed to English

settlers, the Mulryan family retained some influence.

His mother's ancestral home, Mulryan Castle, was a few miles from Brittas and the foundations of the castle are still discernible on the edge of Capperullen Glen, which is now part of the land of Glenstal Abbey.

Before her marriage to Sir Richard Burke, Honor had been married to William de Lacy of Bruff, who was killed in action in 1572 while fighting against the rebels in the first Desmond Rebellion (1569-1573). She married Sir Richard in the following year, 1573, and John was born soon afterwards.

The Desmond Rebellions (the second took place between 1579-1583) were motivated by national and religious considerations: the Pope had excommunicated Queen Elizabeth in 1570 and he then sent troops to support the Irish rebels.

Sir John married Grace, the daughter of Sir George Thornton, who had supported the Crown during the Desmond Rebellion and who had been rewarded with some 1,500 acres of land near Kilmallock. George Thornton had come to Ireland in 1569, at about 19 years of age, and in the late 1570s he had married Elinor Lacy of Athlacca, County Limerick. (Noel Murphy, Sir George Thornton).

There were several children of the marriage and Grace, born in 1582, was in her teens when her marriage to Sir John took place in the 1590s. Granted Sir John's strong religious convictions, the marriage was somewhat surprising as the Thornton family was of the Protestant faith. The de Lacy connection may have helped the relationship, as Thornton had not only married a de Lacy but also he was leasing a castle at Bruff from Piers de Lacy, the stepbrother of John Bourke. Eight children were born of the marriage, and Grace was

pregnant with her ninth child at the time of her husband's execution.

One of the few personal records of Sir John's activities relates to the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when, in May 1600, he wrote to his father-in-law, George Thornton, stating that he planned to go on pilgrimage to Rome and Compostella in Spain. He was concerned about Grace and the children and requested his father-in-law to be mindful of their needs.

In the end, Sir John was refused permission to leave Ireland, in case he might be planning armed assistance for the Irish cause and was detained for a short time. However, the list of pardons shows that he received his freedom in 1601 and was able to return home, where he arranged for Mass to be said secretly until Queen Elizabeth died in 1603.

The advent to the throne of James I (1603-1625) offered some hope to Catholics that there might be more freedom of religious practice. He was the son of Mary Queen of Scots, a Catholic, who had been executed in 1587, and the State Papers record that, at the start of his reign, he expressed the view that,

"though he would much rejoice if the Irish Catholics would conform themselves to his religion, yet he would not force them to forsake their own".

Even Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, the Lord Lieutenant, who had played a significant role in the victory at Kinsale in 1601 against the native Irish and their Spanish allies, was prepared to give the more tolerant policy of James a chance.

However, Mountjoy soon changed his mind when Catholics in Munster not only practised their own religion freely but also reclaimed the civic positions which had been reserved for Protestants. In May 1603 Mountjoy arrived in Waterford with 5,000 men and restored the local authorities. He did the same in other parts of Munster, including Limerick, and there he confronted Sir John Burke

Sir John was summoned to appear before Mountjoy in 1603 on the charge that Brittas Castle was a "*sure and safe refuge for the clergy of the proscribed religion*". Sir John was found guilty and imprisoned in Limerick and then in Dublin Castle.

A contemporary account by Bishop Rothe of Ossory, who was Bishop from 1618-1650, records that, while in prison, Sir John spent much time reciting the *Little Office of the Blessed Virgin and the Rosary*. Thanks to the intervention of Sir George

Thornton, his father-in-law, who happened at that time to be acting as Governor of Munster, he was soon set free.

Following his release from prison, Sir John and his family were enrolled in the Confraternity of the Rosary by Fr. Edward Halligan, a Dominican priest, with whom he was friendly, and he continued to practise his religion at Brittas.

The Dominicans had been established at St. Saviour's Priory, King's Island, Limerick, since the thirteenth century and some friars remained in Limerick, despite the fact that the friary had been seized in 1541 during the Protestant Reformation under Henry VIII.

The Franciscans, who had also come to Limerick city in the thirteenth century, suffered in the same way as the Dominicans and lost their abbey. The locations of these two sites are clearly delineated on John Speed's map of 1610. The Abbey River remains as a memorial of their time in the city. There was no Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick for the years 1591-1602, and the succeeding bishops—Richard Cadan (1602-1620), Richard Arthur (1620-1646) and Edmund O'Dwyer (1646-1654)—all carried out their ministry with extreme difficulty and some danger.

To return to the political scene: when Mountjoy left Ireland in early 1604, he was succeeded by Sir Arthur Chichester, who acted as Lord Deputy of Ireland from February 1605. Chichester had played a major role in defeating the native Irish rebellion in Ulster, and he continued to act resolutely against those who practised the Catholic religion. However, it was Sir Henry Brouncker, the Lord President of Munster from 1603 until his death on 3rd June to 1607, who initiated the main actions against Catholics in Limerick. He was motivated by a Proclamation of King James in October 1605, which stated that he was not prepared to tolerate the practice of the Catholic religion, and he ordered the Catholic clergy to leave the realm by 10th December. He also instructed the laity to attend religious services in accordance with the law.

Inevitably, the enforcement of these regulations was imposed more severely after the Gunpowder Plot of 5th November 1605, in which eight Roman Catholics attempted to blow up the House of Lords. The plot failed and the men were executed. Firmer measures were taken against those refusing to attend Protestant services and, by the end of the year, over 5,500 people had been convicted and fined for non-attendance.

This policy of enforcing conformity to the State Religion on individuals was accompanied by measures to restrict the independence of civic institutions. Limerick, which had been granted the status of a Corporation by Queen Elizabeth in 1583, suffered from these restrictions.

In December 1606 Sir Henry Brouncker visited Limerick and deposed Edmund Fox from his position of Mayor because he would not take the Oath of Supremacy and attend Protestant services. He was succeeded by Andrew Creagh, the first Protestant to be the Mayor of Limerick, and he, in turn, was succeeded by Edward Sexton, another Protestant, whose family was to be very influential in Limerick in the coming centuries as the Earl of Limerick.

Although Brouncker died in June 1607, his policy was continued and Sir John Burke was one of the most significant victims. Some of Burke's relations and neighbours informed the authorities that he was continuing to practice the Catholic religion. Among these were Theobald Bourke of Castleconnell and Edmund Walsh of Abington—who hoped to obtain some of his land in return for their information. This led to a raid on Brittas Castle on the first Sunday of October 1607; a day which Sir John Burke had specially chosen for members of the Confraternity of the Rosary to attend Mass. There were many people inside the great hall of the castle preparing to attend Mass, which was to be celebrated by Father John Clancy. Among those present were members of Sir John's family from nearby Dromkeen and Caherconlish, the O'Mulryans of Annagh and Clonkeen, Donal Barry of Ballyguy, and many other neighbours.

When news came that troops were coming from Limerick City to Brittas, most of those present managed to cross the River Mulcair and to make their way to safety. Bishop Rothe's contemporary account records that a Captain Miller laid siege to the house for fifteen days and adds the interesting information that "Sir John's mother and wife importuned him to surrender". Some sources say that it was his mother-in-law and not his mother.

Eventually, Fr. Clancy managed to escape, disguised as an old woman, and Sir John also escaped through a tunnel especially built for that purpose. Sir John reached Waterford but failed to secure a voyage to the continent and was finally arrested at Carrick-on-Suir. There he was imprisoned and visited by his wife, to whom he gave a letter to Fr. Halligan in which he asked the priest to instruct his

wife in the true faith. Sir John was then taken to Limerick for trial.

Two Lords Justices in Limerick were unwilling to conduct the trial, knowing that a death sentence was expected to be delivered. Finally, Judge Dominick Sarsfield, the King's Procurator for the Province of Munster, presided at the trial. He was born in Cork, c1570, and had studied law at the Middle Temple, London, before returning to the Irish Bar in 1600. He had been appointed the Chief Justice for Munster at the start of the reign of King James.

Sarsfield questioned Sir John about his religious practices and on his loyalty to the King. Finally, he assured Sir John that he would obtain a pardon, if he conformed and recognised the King's supremacy. The reply of Sir John, as recorded by Bishop Rothe of Ossory, was a blunt refusal: as to "*the King's supremacy*", Sir John replied, "*I know of no king or queen, who renounced the Law and Faith of the King of Kings*".

On hearing this defiant reply, Judge Sarsfield pronounced Sir John guilty of High Treason and sentenced him to die on the 20th December 1607.

The contemporary account of his death by Bishop Rothe tells a compelling story. He recounted that, as the cart carrying Sir John left the walls of Irishtown near the present Saint John's Hospital, he asked permission to approach the place of execution on his knees, a distance of some 100 metres. This request was granted and he approached the Townland of the Gallows, Farran-na-Croghy, praying and kneeling as he went. A plaque high on the wall of the former Good Shepherd Convent, where Old Clare Street meets Pennywell Street, marks the place of his execution.

There Sir John told those present that he was happy to offer his life to Jesus, who had given his life for all. He thanked the Dominicans for their kindness to him and regretted that he no longer had any material possessions to give them. However, he hoped that his unborn child might be offered to God in honour of St. Dominic. This promise was realised when the female child became a nun in the Irish Dominican convent in Lisbon.

Finally, having asked those present to pray for him, he was hanged on the gallows. Sir Thomas Browne of Hospital, County Limerick, obtained possession of his body, which was not drawn and quartered, and it was buried in the nearby

graveyard of St. John's Church near the present Catholic Cathedral. There is no trace of the grave to-day.

As a postscript it should be added that the child, who became a nun, was named Eleanor, and that she entered the Dominican convent of Bon Successo in Portugal, when she was 33 years of age. She died in 1651 having gained a reputation as a writer on spiritual matters. Sir John's widow, Grace, married a Maurice Hurley, who died in 1632, and she was still living as a widow in Kilmallock in 1653.

The tragic story of Sir John Bourke had an unusual and happy ending. In 1640 Patrick Sarsfield, the nephew of the judge who had condemned Bourke to death, donated a chalice and a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary to the Dominicans at Saint Saviours of Limerick in reparation for the action of his uncle. The statue was carved from oak and was made in Flanders. Patrick, born in 1593, was the son of John Sarsfield, the Recorder of Limerick.

The family had land in Limerick and Clare and was wealthy enough to send Patrick to Europe for his education. On his return to Ireland he, like his father, was appointed Recorder of Limerick and he managed his estates at the same time.

He married Eleanor White and her name is linked with his in the engraved Latin words on the chalice. The words read:

"Orate pro anima Patritti Sarsfield et Eleanora Whitae, qui hunc calicem fieri fecerunt. Spectat ad conventum Sancti Salvatoris Limericanensis, Ordae Predicatorum".

In translation the words read: "Pray for the soul of Patrick Sarsfield and Eleanor White who arranged the making of this chalice. It belongs to the community of Saint Saviour's, Limerick, Order of Preachers". The date is clearly marked as 1640.

Although there is no date on the statue, the Dominicans have always connected the two gifts from Patrick Sarsfield and his wife as being made at the same time. By good fortune the Dominicans were, at that time, once again in possession of St. Saviour's Priory on King's Island, which had been founded in 1227.

Fr. Terence Albert O'Brien, a Dominican, received the chalice and its history then became linked with him in dramatic circumstances.

(To be continued)

The Irish Times And Fascism

The *Irish Times* editorialised about the scenes outside the Dáil on 20th September, saying "*Far right must be resisted by all*". After graphic descriptions of what occurred it goes on to say that:

"Just over a century since Mussolini's march on Rome introduced fascism as a political concept to Europe and the world, its contours remain instantly recognisable. The valorisation of violence. The accusations of betrayal. The peddling of hate against outgroups and the marginalised. The vainglorious assertion of blood and soil nationalism and of a spurious ethnic identity. All of these were on show on Wednesday."

The *Irish Times* claims to be a journal of record. It commented on that march and Mussolini's accession to power and welcomed it because—

"Under her new autocrat Italy is a well-managed, peaceful and economically progressive land" (29.3.1926).

The *Irish Times* said the same about Hitler and its famous Editor, Smyllie, said—

"there is no doubt whatsoever that Adolf Hitler has done great things for the German people" (6/11/36).

And he said in his obituary of his hero Carson that—

"If he had been forty years younger, Lord Carson of Duncairn might have been a British Hitler, or even a Mussolini" (The *Irish Times*, 3/10/35).

So the journal of record knows all about Fascism. In fact it had a love affair with it. So it must know what it talks about when discussing it.

But what sense is there in making analogies with the local 'right wing' groups and condemning them as fascists when, at the same time, it is claimed that their predecessors brought about a "*well managed, peaceful and economically progressive land*?"

How does the *Irish Times* hold such a contrast of views on the outcome of similar political behaviour with contours in both cases that were "*instantly recognisable*"?

Could the Dáil protesters perhaps bring us a "*well managed, peaceful and*

economically progressive land"? They could take great succour and hope from the history of the *Irish Times* on Fascism.

It is very comforting for lazy, or empty minds, to claim they know what will happen because it will be similar to what has already happened. Such is the case here with the *Irish Times*.

Can we suggest the paper looks at the source of some of the protestors' complaints and seek to address them?

The protestors single out issues that concern them, such as the *Hate Bill*. Perhaps the *Irish Times* could help them and our legislators by giving us its considered view on a sustainable legal definition of *hate*? That would be very useful to everybody. (If they did the same for love it would be even more useful and very welcome indeed.)

The Bill creates groups that are to be protected and safeguarded against *hate*—who are these exactly and why are they in such a category?

And it would be very useful to define those who are not in such a legal category— who are not protected? If we must have two classes of citizens it's surely useful to know who's who!

And it's surely most sensible of all to avoid two classes of citizens!

Another is the issue of gender. Again the *Irish Times* could help with a considered legally sustainable definition of gender and of how many there are.

The protesters argue for an independent foreign policy that incorporates Neutrality as one of its expressions. Much like President Higgins does.

Perhaps the *Irish Times* could convince him and the clear majority of the electorate why that is not a sensible view.

Jack Lane

On-line sales of books, pamphlets and magazines:
<https://www.athol-books-sales.org>

What Fintan O'Grundy Says

Channel 4 television, when exposing Russell Brand as a scoundrel, broadcast a clip to show the infamous kind of thing he has been saying:

"That war that you're funding between Ukraine and Russia, and participating in, is privately believed to be ultimately unwinnable. So why are top brass from the military lying under oath that there is a plan, that it can be won..." (18.9.23).

Fintan O'Toole, who has been at a loss for a point of orientation since the sun that lit his world for half a century was quenched by Brexit, took up the Russell Brand issue in his *Irish Times* column (Sept 21) under the headline, *In Russell Brand's World, Seeing Is Disbelieving*.

He exposes Brand's world as a world in which—

"You didn't see what you saw. What happened didn't happen, it's all created by the media. There are no objective truths only partisan and political constructs... Gaslighting is the technique of reality distortion in which the abuser... manipulates a victim... into disbelieving her own experiences. One of the classic signs is 'insisting that an event or behaviour you witnessed never happened and that you are remembering it wrong!...'.

"Seeing is disbelieving. Experience is fantasy. Memory is false. Evidence is fantasy. Memory is false. Evidence is fake. Testimony is performance. The accuser must be accused. The perpetrator is the victim..."

So Brand's world is a paradoxical world. If that is the case, then it belongs to the world of Wilde's *Importance Of Being Earnest*, and the world of Bernard Shaw.

We are at a loss when it comes to discussing this aspect of the matter because all we know about Brand's view of things is the statement of his which Channel 4 chose to broadcast as the thing that damns him. And there is nothing at all paradoxical in that statement.

O'Toole gives no sample in support of his contention that Brand is a diabolical paradoxicalist. His Column is just a general rant against paradox—which comes strangely from a worshipper of Anglo-Irish theatre.

What Brand says in that statement is that the British Establishment has been urging

on the Ukrainian nationalists to continue to the bitter end in a War with Russia which it knows they cannot win. There is no paradox there. It is a clearly stated opinion about an event that is going on in the world.

O'Toole says:

"The aim, as Brand openly boasts, is to 'undermine the news'. Just as victims of personal and intimate assaults must be convinced that they 'remembering it wrong', the same trick can now be pulled in relation to public events witnessed live by hundreds of millions of people..."

What hundreds of millions of people saw in the news, not very long ago, was that the European Union-inspired a *coup d'etat* in the Ukraine against an elected Government which sought to make trade deals with the EU, for agricultural goods, and with Russia for industrial goods; that the EU insisted that the Ukraine should make an exclusive trade deal with it; that fascist elements inspired by the wartime Ukrainian Nationalist co-operation with Germany against Russia during World War appeared on the streets; that the *coup* Government launched an assault on the Russian minority in the state, which defended itself with support from Russia; that an attempt was made to negotiate minority rights for the Russian element, which the *Coup* Government agreed to but did not implement; that there was continuous war between the *coup* Government and the Russian minority; and that the *coup* Government—with the encouragement of NATO—raised the issue of joining the NATO military alliance against Russia: posing a deadly threat to the latter.

All of this appeared in the news that was heard by hundreds of millions of people. It was taken out of the news early last year. The EU Ultimatum, the *Coup*, the sudden revival of Fascism during the *coup*, the assault on the Russian population, were taken out of the news.

The absolute right of national sovereignty by the Ukrainian Government to de-Russify its Russian minority, and to join a military alliance against Russia, was not stated—but was implied for anybody who remembered what was in the news before it reverted to war mode.

It used to be a general understanding that Truth was the first casualty of War. The famous Editor of the *Guardian*, C.P. Scott,

opposed British entry into the European War up to the moment when the Liberal Government (kept in Office by the Irish Home Rule Party) decided to enter it. Once Britain entered the War, the *Guardian* supported it, and engaged in fuelling its propaganda. On the day before the Declaration of War, Scott said that this would be the case. But he could not bring himself to write the War Editorials, and he handed the job over to his Assistant Editor, Montague. That was a watershed event in the history of Truth and War.

Churchill, in the next War, said that truth was too precious to travel without a bodyguard of lies, but not to worry because what the truth would be determined by what the victors decided it should be. This means that memory is discounted. To remember is to raise existential problems for yourself.

At the start of the Falklands War, the BBC reminded its listeners that Truth is the first casualty of War—thus preserving an oblique connection with it. There has been no such reminder this time.

Charles Haughey—another hate figure of the *Irish Times*—kept Ireland clear of the Falklands propaganda, and was accused of damaging the Irish national interest by doing so.

Fianna Fail has returned Ireland to the safety of the Redmond position of August 1914 by its completely blinkered stand on the proxy NATO war on Russia by way of Ukraine.

If truth is the first casualty of war, then somebody must fake the news. Or is that a conspiracy theory?

The British liberal intelligentsia moved as a herd on 4th August 1914. They all started telling lies about Germany together. And then in the 1920s some of them started boasting about how well they had done it.

Was that done by conspiracy? Somehow that word does not seem to account for the scale of what was done. It all seemed to be spontaneous, like the flight of a flock of starlings.

At any rate, England was deluged with lies. Or did it deluge itself with lies? It was a herd event—a stampede. And, in the life of the herd, what event is greater than the stampede? The one who does not participate in the stampede is trampled on by it.

In Ibsen's play, *An Enemy Of The People*, a doctor stands against a community on a matter on which there is strong communal feeling, and prevails. The last sentence

of the play is, "*The strongest man in the world is the man who stands alone*". Ibsen has been listed among the precursors of Nazism.

The historical treatment of Fascism is so hazy that there is no solid ground for saying which—if either—was fascist in that conflict of individual and community.

On the evidence of the statement by Brand, broadcast in the Channel 4 indictment of him, he has gone strongly against the sentiment of the herd. He asserts memory and evidence against it, and an objective truth in place of it, or its performance. It appears that he has mustered a little group of his own for protection, but that its defences are being broken down.

O'Toole says that: "*a fawning Brand*" interviewed "*the far right governor of Florida*", who hopes to be President of USA, and gave him free rein to express the opinion that the protest at the Capital on 6th January 2021 was not an insurrection organised by Trump. He comments: "*You didn't see what you saw. What happened didn't happen... There are no objective truths*".

Differences of opinion over how that protest should be described are not allowable. O'Toole's belief about it is his objective truth.

In the USA—the founder and continuing director of post-fascist democracy—that matter is to be decided by the Courts. Will a Court decision, if it goes against his belief, determine what is objective truth for O'Toole—or is he a total narcissist in these things?

In the USA law and politics are closely interwoven, and that must be disturbing for a liberal propagandist. But, if law and politics are not inter-active, then what exists is not Democracy.

A system of government in which political life is subordinated to an autonomous legal system, lying beyond it, needs another name. It is not a democracy.

The subordination of Politics to Law seems to be what Liberalism now means in Europe. In American democracy it survives in the old-fashioned form of freedom of opinion. And that is upsetting for our fragile totalitarian liberals.

On the sexual dimension of the Brand affair, we are not so rash as to comment. Women's Lib has been developing in different directions. Brand apparently played to one wing of it, which is the most numerous, and was reviled by the other wing—which

is the more influential in the licensed media and party politics.

It seems that Russell Brand is (or was) the Don Juan of our time. Don Juanism is simultaneously admirable and deplorable, as witnessed by Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. O'Toole is the 'stone statue', whose role is to send him to perdition. But Brand gave up his rakish ways and became sexually respectable, so O'Toole can only play the part of Mrs. Grundy.

Surely O'Toole should be demanding that *Don Giovanni* should be banned from the stage? The Don may have been sent to Hell in the final scene, but we have abolished Hell, and what is memorable in the opera is the listing of his conquests—which, if we remember right, culminated in Spain, where they were a thousand and three.

In the days when he was Don Juan, Brand exulted in his reputation as seducer—and seduced. In this dimension of things, it can be difficult to tell which is seducer and which is seduced.

O'Toole suggests that the reason Brand exulted in his reputation as seducer/seduced is so that the idea of him as a rapist should be unbelievable.

And, anyway, even if it was all consensual, he was still a predator because of the way his flaunting of his escapades acted on the imagination of the weaker sex.

Brand was not demonised in the days of his Don Juanism. He is now being demonised for his past as a sexual predator because, in his reformed life of sexual responsibility, he has been asking pertinent questions about the War in the Ukraine.

It is unfortunate for the cause of Political Correctness that, just at this moment, a Banderist Ukrainian—who took part in the extermination of Poles and Jews as a member of the SS—was given a Standing Ovation by the Canadian Parliament as a hero of both the Ukraine and Canada, with President Zelensky raising a clenched fist in appreciation. (This notable event would probably have been passed over, but for the intervention of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.)

We have not noticed any expression of shock from O'Toole on this event. We assume he was not shocked. Nobody who took the least trouble to inform himself on Ukrainian Nationalist affairs could be shocked by the revelation that Canada became a safe haven for Ukrainian Nazis after the World War.

Canada might be described fairly as a whitened sepulchre in this matter—in which it probably was performing a service for the United States, which took Russia to be the enemy as soon as Russia had defeated Nazi Germany.

The Churchillian mythology of the Second World War needed to be debunked. The Irish Universities should have been doing that work from the start. They had not participated in the British War Propaganda. But, unfortunately, a British spy was put in command of history-writing in Ireland. Professor T.D. Williams was active in British Intelligence during the War, was bound by the British *Official Secrets Act*, and remained part of the camaraderie of the British Secret Service.

What Irish academia failed to do from the standpoint of an independent observer is beginning to happen bit by bit through incidents like the Canadian ovation for a Nazi hero. □

The Nazi Green Policy WAS Ahead Of Its Time

"In 1935 a law was passed to protect the landscape 'whose preservation on account of rarity, beauty, distinctiveness or on account of scientific, ethnic, forest, or hunting significance lies in the general interest'. This was the German Imperial Conservation Law passed by the Nazi government. 'It was only the transformation of the German man which created the preliminary conditions necessary for an effective system of protection of natural beauty', declared the law. In Britain it was warmly recommended by the Lord of Penrith, Esme Howard. Writing in 1938 he said, "*whatever were may think or feel about Nazi political philosophy*" this was a law "*which I hope will in many things become a model for the rest of the world*"..." (*Outskirts: living life on the edge of the green belt*, by John Grindrod. Published by Sceptre, 2018, p.115).

The leader of the London County Council, Herbert Morrison, in the late 1930s devised the concept for the first operative Green Belt, which became the (*London and Home Counties*) *Green Belt Act of 1938*. This empowered Local Authorities to buy land in order to keep it undeveloped, and made provisions for landowners to enter into Covenants for their land to become Green Belt in return for compensatory payments.

Jack Lane

Saudi Arabia: Just easing the life of Palestinians?

You could be forgiven for thinking that Saudi Arabia is about to strike a deal with Israel leading to the normalisation of relations between them. That's the impression given recently by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia and by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In an interview with *Fox News* on 20th February 2023, the Crown Prince said that "every day we get closer" to normalisation with Israel.

And, in his *Address to the UN General Assembly* on 22nd February 2023, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared:

"The Abraham accords heralded the dawn of a new age of peace. But I believe that we are at the cusp of an even more dramatic breakthrough—an historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Such a peace will go a long way to ending the Arab Israeli conflict. It will encourage other Arab states to normalize their relations with Israel. It will enhance the prospects of peace with the Palestinians."

ARAB PEACE INITIATIVE

In his UN speech, Prime Minister Netanyahu didn't mention that an historic breakthrough of this kind has been available to Israel since 2002, when Saudi Arabia proposed the Arab Peace Initiative, which was endorsed unanimously by the Arab League at its Beirut summit in March 2002. This offered the normalisation of relations between the Arab world and Israel in exchange for the establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, with its capital in East Jerusalem, plus a solution to the Palestine refugee problem.

The essential elements of it are as follows:

"Emanating from the conviction of the Arab countries that a military solution to the conflict will not achieve peace or provide security for the parties, the council:

1. Requests Israel to reconsider its policies and declare that a just peace is its strategic option as well.
2. Further calls upon Israel to affirm:

- a. Full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights to the lines of June 4, 1967 as well as the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in the south of Lebanon.

- b. Achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194.

- c. The acceptance of the establishment of a Sovereign Independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories occupied since the 4th of June 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza strip, with east Jerusalem as its capital.

3. Consequently, the Arab countries affirm the following:

- a. Consider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region.

- b. Establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace.

...

5. Calls upon the government of Israel and all Israelis to accept this initiative in order to safeguard the prospects for peace and stop the further shedding of blood, enabling the Arab Countries and Israel to live in peace and good neighbourliness and provide future generations with security, stability, and prosperity."

Having been adopted unanimously by the Arab League in 2002, the Initiative was re-adopted in 2007 and again in 2017. It was also endorsed by the 57 Muslim states of the Organisation of the Islamic Co-operation (OIC), including Iran. Had Israel been prepared to accept its terms, normalisation of relations with the whole Muslim world was a possibility.

ABRAHAM ACCORDS

Benyamin Netanyahu has been the Prime Minister of Israel since 2009, apart from eighteen months in 2021-22. In all that time, he made no attempt to seek normalisation of relations with the Arab world via the Arab Peace Initiative. He was not prepared pay the price which was ending the occupation and the creation of a Palestinian State.

Now, thanks to President Trump, Israel has hopes that it can have normalisation of relations with the Arab world without paying that price. In the so-called *Abraham Accords*, three Arab states—Bahrain, Morocco and UAE—have been persuaded by the US to normalise relations with Israel while its occupation of Palestinian land continues unabated. To pressure Morocco into ratting on the Palestinians, the Trump administration recognised Morocco's long-standing claim to Western Sahara, having refused to do so in the past, and to persuade the UAE to do likewise, it was promised that it could buy F-35 fighters from the US, though as yet no deal has been finalised.

In his speech to the UN, Netanyahu listed Sudan as a fourth Arab state that had normalised relations with Israel. To persuade Sudan to sign up, President Trump had to remove it from a US Government list of terrorist-promoting states, and provide it with a \$1 billion bridging loan so that it could clear its arrears to the World Bank. At one point back in late 2020, the then Government in Sudan said that a final decision on normalisation with Israel would rest with an elected parliament, which has yet to materialise, so the precise status on the issue today is unclear (Reuters, 7 January 2021).

A few weeks ago, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen met his Libyan counterpart in Rome to discuss normalisation. News of the meeting made public by Cohen himself provoked riots in Tripoli two nights running and the Libyan Foreign Minister fled the country in fear of her life.

NETANYAHU SAYS NO TO CEDING SOVEREIGNTY

The Biden administration has taken up Trump's Abraham Accords initiative with enthusiasm. It is now actively engaged in negotiations with Saudi Arabia and Israel about normalisation, which if successful would likely be a catalyst for other Arab states to follow suit. That would provide Biden (and Netanyahu) with a major foreign policy success and upstage China's diplomatic activities in the region.

On the face of it, success is impossible at the moment, unless Saudi Arabia reneges on the principle that normalisation must be preceded by the creation of a Palestinian State—since it's impossible to believe that Netanyahu will agree to the creation of a Palestinian State.

Below are some of his statements over the years in opposition to Israel ceding sovereignty over any of the territory it

presently holds. He has made a habit of stating this principle unequivocally prior to every election. For example, prior the February 2009 Election (as a result of which he became Prime Minister for the second time), he told supporters in Beit Aryeh, a small settlement in the West Bank:

"The election on Tuesday will be about one issue—whether this place will remain in our hands or will be handed over to Hamas and Iran. We will not withdraw from one inch. Every inch we leave would go to Iran" (Al Jazeera, 26 March 2009).

And, on the eve of the election in March 2015, he had a similar message for the electorate. Any handover to Palestinians of territory on the West Bank would, he asserted, threaten Israel's security:

"I think that anyone who moves to establish a Palestinian state and evacuate territory gives territory away to radical Islamist attacks against Israel. The left has buried its head in the sand time and after time and ignores this, but we are realistic and understand" (Netanyahu: If I'm elected, there will be no Palestinian state, Haaretz, 16 March 2015).

Asked if that meant there would be no Palestinian State during his tenure of office, he replied: "*Indeed*" (see *Binyamin Netanyahu rules out Palestinian state if he wins*, Guardian, 16 March 2015).

On 28th August 2017, at an event in the Barkan Settlement to celebrate 50 years of Israeli occupation and colonisation of the West Bank, thousands cheered Prime Minister Netanyahu as he restated his determination that Israel will hold on to the West Bank permanently. Here's an extract from his speech:

"We are here to stay forever. There will be no more uprooting of settlements in the land of Israel. ... This is the inheritance of our ancestors. This is our land.

"Imagine that on these hills were the forces of radical Islam. It would endanger us, it would endanger you, and it would endanger the entire Middle East" (Times of Israel, 28 August 2017).

In the days before the 2019 election campaign, he yet again made his opposition to a Palestinian State abundantly clear:

"There will be no Palestinian state, not as people talk about it. It will not be because I am making sure of it. I am not uprooting settlements, rather applying sovereignty to them. I am maintaining a united Jerusalem and I am maintaining our control on the entire area west of the Jordan River to prevent another Gaza. This is my policy" (Arutz Sheva, 7 April 2019).

1999 LIKUD PLATFORM

This Netanyahu stance isn't surprising, since it is consistent with the 1999 Likud Platform, which—

- rejects the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, and
- supports unlimited Jewish colonisation of the West Bank (referred to as Judea and Samaria by Israel).

Here are the relevant points from the platform:

- a. "The Government of Israel flatly rejects the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state west of the Jordan river."
- b. "The Jordan Valley and the territories that dominate it shall be under Israeli sovereignty. The Jordan river will be the permanent eastern border of the State of Israel."
- c. "Jerusalem is the eternal, united capital of the State of Israel and only of Israel. The government will flatly reject Palestinian proposals to divide Jerusalem"
- d. "The Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza are the realization of Zionist values. Settlement of the land is a clear expression of the unassailable right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and constitutes an important asset in the defense of the vital interests of the State of Israel. The Likud will continue to strengthen and develop these communities and will prevent their uprooting."

This Likud platform may be over twenty years old, but the principles enshrined in it have never been repudiated by Likud.

It's impossible to believe that the present leader of Likud would agree to the creation of a Palestinian State. Needless to say, he didn't mention a Palestinian State in his UN speech. In it, he offered nothing to Palestinians, dismissing them as a mere 2% of the total Arab population who must not have a veto over new peace treaties with Arab states and who must not be in a position to abort his plans for reconciliation between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East.

JUST EASING THE LIFE OF PALESTINIANS

It will be up to the Crown Prince to determine if the creation of a Palestinian State must precede normalisation with Israel. What has he said about this recently? In his Fox News interview, he was asked:

"What would it take for you to agree to normalise relations with Israel?"

and

"What concessions would Israel have to make to Palestinians?"

In neither case did he respond by saying "*the creation of a Palestinian state*". To (a), he replied:

"For us, the Palestinian issue is very important. We need to solve that part. We got to see where we go. We hope that will reach a place that will ease the life of the Palestinians, get Israel as a player in the Middle East."

To (b), he said that's a matter for negotiations.

However, speaking at the UN General Assembly on 23rd September 2023, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said:

"Security in the Middle East region requires the acceleration of a just, comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue; the solution must be based on resolutions in the international arena and must bring about a peace that allows [the] Palestinian people to have an independent state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital."

However, he didn't say that Saudi normalisation with Israel was conditional on this State coming into being. He didn't mention normalisation with Israel.

So, what is Saudi Arabia's position? Is it going to renege on the principle enshrined in the Arab Peace Initiative: that normalisation with Israel must be preceded by the creation of a Palestinian state? It looks likely.

As I write this, for the first time since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank began in 1967, Saudi representatives are in the West Bank for talks with Palestinians.

There would be no need for such an unprecedented visit if the Saudi position was that normalisation with Israel must be preceded by the creation of a Palestinian State. However, if the Saudi position is, in the Crown Prince's words, merely "*to ease the life of the Palestinians*" under continued occupation, then it would be appropriate for a Saudi delegation to be in Ramallah to discuss the details.

No doubt, the bitter pill will be sweetened by a large influx of funds, and the promise of continuing funds, from Saudi Arabia to the Palestinian Authority.

David Morrison
27 September 2023

Germany—Back To Being The Sick Man ?

Negative Growth In The German Economy^o

According to the most recent prognosis of the International Monetary Fund, Germany's Gross Domestic Product will shrink by 0.3% in 2023. This means that, taking the forty strongest economies, Germany will be the only one which will have to reckon with negative growth this year. That is to say, Germany's economic performance is ailing—and there is no improvement in sight at the present time.

And of course our media has switched into panic mode: "Germany is threatened by De-industrialisation" is the prognosis of one newspaper; another asks: "How serious is the De-industrialisation situation?". And the matter has attracted attention abroad. The British journal, *The Economist*, is already asking: "Is Germany the sick man of Europe once more?"—recalling the situation of 20 years ago, when Germany limped along behind the rest of Europe: at the bottom of the class.

Naturally there is no shortage of analyses claiming to have the answers as to why the German economy—and particularly Germany industry—is stagnating or shrinking. And there is no lack of explanations. These range from the War in the Ukraine, the astronomical rise in energy prices, the shortage of skilled workers, the rise in raw material prices, the burden of taxes, the poor trading conditions, the high interest rates, and to the particularly German burden—the bureaucracy. All this, and much more, has had a huge effect in unsettling the economy, and it is discouraging the investment required to secure growth and secure our prosperity.

And, having been instructed as to how badly things are going with the economy and industry (the enterprises), we are induced to take a look at the balance sheets. Take the example of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of 20th March 2023, which informs us: "German Concerns Earn More Than Ever". It continues "Despite the Ukraine-War, Energy and Economic Crises, and inflation: the big German undertakings report record sales and profits".

In order to appreciate the extent of

Company Profits, let us take a glance at DAX (the German Stock Exchange Index—*Deutscher Aktienindex*), which is the most important of them. It measures the current performance of the 40 biggest and most financially-powerful undertakings in the German Stock Market, representing about 80% of the limited companies registered with the German Stock Exchange.

Despite the Pandemic, the Ukraine War, and despite the astronomical rise in the price of energy, the DAX companies achieved record profits: 129 billion in 2021 and 120 billion in 2022.

But what did these concerns do with these fantastic profits?

First of all it must be said that, in this country, what is actually meant by the "de-industrialisation of the German economy" is the transfer abroad of German industrial production—in short, the flight of capital! That means that probably the greater part of these record profits are not invested in the further development of local industry but flow abroad in the form of the export of assets or investment, in an expectation of greater profit. The Dax companies in particular have expanded their business in North America by 23%, and in the Asia/Pacific area by some 21%. As a whole, these companies generate 30 – 40 % of their profits in those parts of the world. Taken together, the DAX Companies took in record profits of 250 billion Euro in each of the years, 2021 and 2022. That is the second-best result in the history of the German economy!

Nonetheless, the renowned German Economic Institute in a recent study came to the conclusion that the flight of capital out of German concerns and undertakings has reached a worrying level.

But why is there a flight of capital? Old Karl [Marx] has already explained what a flight of capital is, movement in search of profit—and he also pointed to the horror of an absence of Capital. When there is an expectation of profit, according to Karl, Capital is ready for anything and to go anywhere. Then it leaves Germany to

itself and goes off to the North American or Asiatic economic spheres: and it makes profits there which cannot be realised at home.

Examples: BMW—just recently this German car giant invested 1.7 million dollars in its Spartanburg works (South Carolina), in order to focus more on electric cars. Apart from BMW other large German companies, such as Audi and Siemens, have been lured to the United States. Such foreign investment has been made most attractive because the American Government's "Inflation Reduction Act" has poured billions into Green Technology for the manufacture of E-cars.

Then there is the Siemens Energy Group, which wants to build Green Power Plants in the USA. It has already planned ahead: logging up 5.5 billion Euro from a USA order up to the end of this financial year—even though 2.5 billion Euro had already been invested in the same period last year.

In China, the investments of German undertakings in 2021 generated profits of 15 billion Euro. In the same period Mercedes Benz alone increased its profits by 12% and produced 183,600 cars. In this instance we are concentrating on the German automobile industry, because it is the beacon of the German economy in general. "And that economy", as the most prominent German economist, Professor Han Werner Sinn points out, "has developed heart trouble". And the car industry is at the heart of this trouble—and this must include the extensive sector which supplies it.

The reasons for this "heart trouble" have been set out and explained above and further include: the explosion in energy costs, the lack of skilled labour, and red tape must not be left out—and neither must be the Ukraine.

It must be said that most of the grounds for the "heart trouble" are self-inflicted: a chaotic Green Energy policy, the rejection of Russian gas supplies, and the continuing decommissioning of the coal-mines. These policies have meant that there has

been a shortage of energy and a steep rise in its price. And that has resulted in the flight of capital.

The Red-Green-Yellow legislation on energy supply and on heat levels has caused unrest in the whole of society. The general rule is that the total energy supply must derive from renewable energy. A disaster is in progress, and it threatens to get worse—what if the wind does not blow, the sun does not shine, and the waters do not flow?

In addition, the complaints made by industry, and by employers generally,

about the lack of skilled labour are fully justified. The Training System must be reformed, and the shortage of teachers must be remedied. Yet the 2024 Budget for Education and Research faces a -5.4% reduction over the previous year, while the Budget for the Military and Defence is to rise by +3.4%!

No: Germany is not yet the Sick Man of Europe—but it has a heartache. This can be cured by a Social Democrat Government—but only if it does that which it was elected to do. Unfortunately, however, that does not look very likely at the moment.

Herbert Rimmel

Book Review: *Fodder, a novel by Tara West*
Published by Blackstaff Press, Belfast.

A Northern Ireland Novel!

This is the memoir of a 16-year-old boy who seems very grown up most of the time.

But it is, in reality, the female author herself expressing herself. You realise this when the boy becomes interested in what people are wearing—mostly females—and his interest in the sagging skin of others. Nevertheless, this doesn't deflect from its goal of entrancing the reader. I read its 287 pages in a day and a half.

His mother is a punk who feels she has the right to do-her-own thing: like disappear to London for a weekend, leaving her two teenage boys to cope on their own. Later in the novel, she begins to disappear for weeks on end, at one point, seemingly to never return:

"She thought she had the right to do her own thing. She thought she had the right to give me and my brother devastatingly Irish names, even though she came from a Protestant family, and lived right in the middle of Weirtown, an estate built in the sixties and known for its violent loyalism. She thought she had the right to ignore politics and religion and still live there..."

Weirtown, is of course the Rathcoole social housing estate, a number of miles north of Belfast. This huge estate was built, like many others, with the idea of social engineering, which meant a Catholic and Protestant mix with their own schools, and facilities. Orange parades are not allowed on the estate, nor any militant

Catholic demos. However, these would be unlikely because they are held within the Catholic enclaves, while Orangeism felt it had the right to demonstrate anywhere in Northern Ireland because they thought they owned it all.

Ian Paisley, once a hell-fire preacher and head of the Free Presbyterian Church would be against social engineering, which was thought up by a more thinking Unionist group within Stormont. He was against it, even though its success could have won Catholics over to the ideas of Unionism. Gusto Spence had revived the Ulster Volunteer Force, and shot dead a Catholic barman in 1966, who had been happily working in a bar on the Protestant Shankill Road, Belfast.

That inspired the attack on Catholic West Belfast and the eventual pogroms at the Rathcoole estate, when Catholics were driven out by murderous threats. Protestant paramilitaries had taken over. The author renames them as the *People's Protestant Army* (PPS). She herself lived on the estate until the age of 28, leaving in 1998. She would have experienced the workings of the place.

The pogroms, to reiterate what I have previously written for this journal, were carried out by a group of men. One had a clipboard with the names and addresses of people to be warned to leave at once, or being told to leave as quickly as possible. Along with clipboard, another carried a

large tin of red lead and a paint brush. Selecting those who had to leave soon had *BW* (*Break Windows*) painted in red lead on the path leading to their front door. *BO* (*Burn Out*) meant to leave now or be burnt out. That meant getting a furniture removal van immediately. This happened when the author was still a young girl. It isn't mentioned in her book.

The mixed family of Bobby Sands had *BO* painted on their path. Bobby was into football at the time and had a lot of Protestant friends in the team. He was not part of any Republican organisation. The windows of the Sands house had infested painted on them, as well as those of many other Catholics. All that could be heard over the estate was the sound of scrubbing as Catholic women tried to scrub away the red lead. But it was shipyard red lead. There was, throughout this pogrom, also the screams of women and girls echoing across the estate.

What followed next were painted signs on wall with the letters: *KAC* (*Kill All Catholics*). That must have seemed too polite for it was changed to *KAT*, (*Kill All Taigs*).

Getting back to the novel: The punk, the ever disappearing mother, names one son *Cuchulain*, the sixteen-year-old, now calling himself Cookie. His brother was called *Oisín*, but was nicknamed Prince at his school. The family's surname was Fitzpatrick, which makes things worse: even though the boys attended a Protestant school and were Protestant. That didn't save them from been beaten up on the bus home and called *Fucken Fenians* and *Taigs*.

Tara West is unique among Protestants—she knows Catholics were kept down and persecuted with a 24/7 dose of sectarianism. Sections of the Protestant community will never forgive her for this attitude. No reviewer of her book mentions this. There seems to have been a concerted effort to run her and the book down.

Some say *Weirtown* is not the Rathcoole estate. They say she is anti-Protestant, but she is anti the Protestant People's Army, which deals in cheap contraband and drugs. The author claims that even parking in the wrong place can get you a beating. Her grouse is that the average Protestant has their head below the parapet.

The story continues: Cuchulain, (AKA) Cookie, because of his treatment, and that of his brother, has it in for the PPA and

decides to humiliate the leader by very devious means. He is now living alone in a house in Weirtown. His acid-imbibing brother, Oisin (AKA) Prince, has moved to Belfast. Cookie is determined not to leave, despite knowing there will be retaliation once the PPA find out who was responsible. It comes as a warning to leave—smashed windows. He doesn't move. Then it is a petrol bomb. Because everything is damp due to the smashed windows, and the rain coming in, it only partially burns the porch. Defying them further by staying, he is then beaten to a pulp.

During the day demolition squads from the Housing Executive are demolishing houses that have stood empty for a long time, turning the spaces into green areas. It doesn't seem to be the place that people want to live in anymore.

Cookie is now living in Belfast, getting to know people like Boo, who is a successful restaurateur. It is rumoured he is a Catholic and was one of those pogromed out of Weirtown. His restaurant is in the Botanic area of Belfast which Tara West, voicing through Cookie, says is the only cosmopolitan part of Belfast. I could live with Cookie expressing the author's comments, though he does seem to be very observant and even sophisticated as a 16-year-old!

There is one long chapter on Cookie at a drag party, which becomes a drag to read.

Other than that, I was happy to find that Belfast slang and dialect still survives as very colourful and metaphorical. I was dreading it had gone. But here it is kicking away in what we call modern times. Tara West's understanding of Catholics and her uninhibited use of slang and dialect make this the novel for me.

Seamus Heaney, whom the author mentions, once said that such variations on English was reminiscent of An older Ulster. It was after this statement I knew he was not going to be the Rabbie Burns of Ulster but part of US, Britain and Ireland's university system: where influential American poets will push you towards the prizes if you patronise their style of poetry. The talented Heaney could have chosen any path but this is the one he decided on.

During the Long War this brought him Faber & Faber as a publisher and British recognition, and being presented on TV with a full-length spade by a British Tory

Government Minister—it is now difficult to find a photo of this happening—in honour of his poem, *Digging*. He joins Titanic Quarter as a tourist 'must-see' at the Derry village where he once lived.

Tara West mocks the innumerable community workers who only see one community, with the result that two into one doesn't go. She recognises that there is the Irish and the British in Northern Ireland and that the community worker on conflict resolution is a waste of time. She believes that the kids are already poisoned. I take that to mean the kids have already taken the side of their respective communities.

Through Cookie she says:

"I couldn't stand the news. Even when I heard it on the radio, in a shop. I'd get frustrated, I just didn't want to hear it—because the local news always drew me in and had me taking sides. And the worst of it was, I was always taking the Prod side. I hated myself for it. I didn't want to be a Prod. Prods were really embarrassing. Any time a Prod from here appeared on TV, they were either waving a bible or doing a stupid walk. It wasn't that reasonable Prods didn't exist. It was that they kept their heads below the parapet..."

And what Cookie says his punk mum said:

"Mum said Catholics had a more developed social conscience than Prods, that the difference being, they actually have one. That explained why it was underdog eating underdog in places like Weirtown."

On the edge of Weirtown was Weirtown Meats, where quite a few people from the Weirtown estate work at meatpacking—that is members of the PPA and those who keep their head below the parapet. They are making good money and those with their heads below the parapet are able to move off the estate and live in more peaceful areas. Unfortunately, some members of the PPA decide to do the same, and they again end up living together.

Weirtown Meats is robbed blind by its workers who carry out a lot of packed meat to fill their fridges. Corruption reigns among the management and the PPS may be protecting it. A person is said to have fallen into the machinery that chops up whole cows. They are thought to have been unnoticed and only missed long after that person can't be found. The meat is packaged just the same. Being very fond of meat, Cookie ends up eating

the dad he never met. He wonders if he is unconsciously Oedipus. Quite a bit of thinking for a sixteen-year-old.

But, never mind, the book is entertaining!

This scene reminds me of the Upton Sinclair novel, *The Jungle*, about the meatpacking industry in the Chicago Stockyards in 1904, where the workers are Polish immigrants. A fallen person is said to have been minced through the machinery. For it to stop it would have cost a lot of money. He reports this and the poor working conditions, *incognito*, for the socialist newspaper *Appeal of Reason* in 1904, when it is serialised. In 1905 it is published as a novel to show the condition of the working-class. These Polish immigrants he sees as working-class and not mere immigrants. Anyway, top marks if Tara West was aware enough to read this novel.

Weirtown Meats comes to an end and is demolished.

A witticism is: when Cookie goes to visit a friend of his, an anorexic girl, in hospital. He reckons she won't want grapes or any other fruit, as she still refuses to eat. He brings her up some uneatable wax fruit.

The problem with NI for a writer is the lack of decent critics, or if there are one or two, they are usually divided by their national grouping. You can get a Protestant critic praising a Catholic writer, and the Catholic can suffer for this as if he or she has collaborated. A Catholic critic praising a Protestant writer can suffer similar retribution. Each usually stick to their own community.

The Catholic media have made no comment on this novel as far as I can find. It seems difficult for them to go outside their own community. *An Phoblacht* has in the past reviewed books and plays, but only because they are Republican pure. It's a bonus if you come from their area of West Belfast.

Literary criticism during the Long War could consist of the windows of a Catholic theatre being machine-gunned or a hoax car bomb outside the BBC!

A few Southern critics have reviewed this novel but they lack reality about the North.

Wilson John Haire. 28.9.2023

C. Desmond Greaves

Brendan Clifford is mistaken in the references he makes to Desmond Greaves, Raymond Crotty, the Connolly Association and the Irish Sovereignty Movement in his article on Professor Laffan On History in the September 2023 Irish Political Review.

As Desmond Greaves's literary executor and legal heir and someone who knew him well, I would like to say that it is just not true to write that Greaves "was anti-Common Market on the ground of Soviet policy". Desmond Greaves was a completely independent-minded person who was opposed to the EEC primarily on the ground that Europe's states/countries/nations should make all their own laws and decide their own policies rather than have these decided in Brussels and Frankfurt by supranational institutions under the domination of European transnational capital and the bigger EU States like Germany, France and Britain. Any coincidence of this view with Soviet policy at the time is just that – what Greaves would have regarded as a happy conjunction.

It was Desmond Greaves's view, as it is still my own, that it was/is the failure of the Left to uphold this democratic stand for national independence vis-à-vis the EU in the different European countries that has left the Left, whether pink, red or scarlet variety, more or less high and dry across most of Europe today.

Brendan is being too simplistic also in referring to the Connolly Association as a "front organisation" of the British Communist Party. The CPGB, of which Desmond Greaves was a critical member all his adult life, dissolved itself in 1991, three years following Greaves's death in 1988. The Connolly Association continued in being and did much good work for a further thirty years in the Irish community in Britain, until it wound itself up earlier this year.

Also contrary to what Brendan writes, neither Desmond Greaves nor the late Raymond Crotty had anything to do with the formation of the Irish Sovereignty Movement, which functioned as a lobby-group in Ireland in the 1970s and early 1980s. I should know, as I was the prime initiator of that body and acted as its General Secretary throughout its existence.

The truth of these points can be confirmed by anyone who cares to consult Desmond Greaves's two-million-word "Journal" and his "Table-Talk", which I have edited and have recently put on the internet at www.desmondgreavesarchive.com. The final volume of the Greaves Journal, No.38, covering the last three months of his life, will be put up there before Christmas, when the entire original Journal will be deposited in the National Library in Kildare Street, where it was Greaves's wish that his papers should go.

Incidentally, the full file of the Connolly Association's monthly newspaper, the "Irish Democrat", previously "Irish Freedom", which ran from 1939 to 2004—and which Desmond Greaves edited from 1951 to 1988—is also being put on this archive web-site at present. All this material should help make this a valuable source for historians of the period, as well as containing much that may interest "Irish Political Review" readers.

Anthony Coughlan

Brendan Clifford replies

I doubt that many members of the British Communist Party who were also members of the Connolly Association would regard the Connolly Association as having been independent of the Communist Party. I knew many of them. Some of them had joined the Association at the urging of the Party, and a couple may have

gone to the Party by way of the Association in order to be at the source of things—but all agreed that, when Greaves seemed to be getting into difficulty with members of the Association, they were instructed to attend meetings of the Association and support him.

The Association was not founded by the Party. The Party took over during the Second World War. The Party took it over and systemised it ideologically—stopped it from thinking.

One of the founders (Pat Dooley, as I recall) did not take the Party line on the events in Hungary in 1956. He felt obliged by the Party attitude to part company with it, and he associated himself with the Trotskyist movement, which was still very weak at that point. When he died the Association could not ignore the event. It dealt with it as I recall by being sympathetically dismissive of his lapse into ultra-leftism.

Anything that was said that did not comply with the answers in the Party Catechism was either Ultra Leftist or a Rightist Deviation. The path of orthodoxy between the two was very strait and narrow indeed.

The idea of Greaves as a "completely independent-minded person", whose views happened to coincide with the views of the Party, of which he "was a critical member all his adult life", would need some strong evidential support to be credible.

I suppose it was possible to be a completely independent-minded person and to be critical of the Party while being a member of it, but I would say it was possible only for a person who was a member of the elite, and who kept his views to himself in his public statements.

The view of the Party members I knew who were associated with the Connolly Association was that Greaves was very much a member of the Party elite, and that he acted in consultation with Palme Dutt, the Party ideologist. I know nothing which suggests that he was not a member of the inner core, and much that suggests that he was.

The Connolly Association was an amateurish organisation until he was put in command of it. He gave it a durable structure and a steady line that persisted unchangeably through thick and thin. If this had been done simply through internal development, there would surely be some evidence of it. Some degree of turbulence and conflict would have been involved. I could find none.

The Connolly Association had a staffed office in Gray's Inn Road (Central London), a stone's throw from King's Cross

Station, and it issued a commercially-produced monthly periodical.

The opinion of Party members of the Association was that these things were made possible by Party resources, ideological and financial.

John Haire observed in the *Irish Political Review* some time ago that the CPGB maintained itself as the apparatus of an alternative State, ready to take over when the opportunity arose, rather than as a mere party of the State. And that is how it struck me as an outsider who got to know a fair bit about it. I take it that Greaves covered the Irish department of that alternative State.

One would expect the main business of a Connolly Association to be the publication of Connolly's writings and the encouragement of political activity on the lines indicated by them. That is not what it did.

In the mid-1960s I got to know some members of "The Communist Party, Northern Ireland". I got into contact with them through Gusty Spence's brother, Eddie, who had married a Catholic (woman) and lived around the corner from Athol Street, in a street that has long since disappeared. They put it to me that the Party, in adopting the Party line developed by Greaves, was representing Connolly as having made his way towards Leninism before Lenin had ever been heard of in these parts. They said that this view was entirely false. But they could not question Greaves's picture of Connolly within the Party, which they were active members of for other reasons.

So I went into the matter and found that they were right. On the great issue of the First World War, Connolly and Lenin travelled in opposite directions.

Lenin characterised the War as an Imperialist War, and urged socialists in every country to act for the defeat of their own state. Connolly characterised it as The War Upon The German Nation. He presented Germany as the country closest to Socialism. He supported the German socialists who committed themselves to the defence of Germany. After August 1914 he never again mentioned Karl Liebknecht, who continued to advocate the revolutionary overthrow of the German State.

Connolly's one reference to Liebknecht was in August, in the context of the Second International resolutions, committing socialists in each state to prevent European war by means of co-ordinated class war. Connolly was willing to take

part in class war to prevent war between capitalist states, and he published an article in praise of Liebknecht when it was rumoured that he had been killed in a revolutionary attempt.

By September it was clear that the Second International was a flop. The capitalist states were at war, with the bulk of the working class in each state actively supporting its own state on nationalist grounds.

Connolly obviously reconsidered the situation realistically in the light of what was actually happening, judged that the War was essentially a British attempt to destroy Germany as a strong capitalist rival, and that the social composition of German Capitalism made a German victory far preferable to a British victory from a socialist viewpoint.

This was said clearly many times in the second run of the *Workers' Republic*, but I came across no hint of it in Greaves' book on Connolly, published by the Communist Party, or in anything issued by the Connolly Association.

Jack Lane discovered that Joseph Pilsudski was the only Continental socialist leader praised by Connolly in both runs of *The Workers' Republic*, fifteen years apart. Pilsudski was the leader of the Polish Socialist Party, who held that Socialism should be developed in a national state.

Lenin condemned this position outright.

This was a matter of some consequence, as both Lenin and Pilsudski became leaders of states. Lenin made war on Pilsudski in 1920 and was defeated by him. And European developments followed Pilsudski's example rather than Lenin's. And yet Greaves represented Connolly as having become a virtual Leninist.

I raised this matter with the late Roy Johnston, who had been a member of both the British Communist Party and the Connolly Association, before returning to Ireland and engaging in the Marxist make-over of the IRA, which led to the split. He did not quibble about it—as a Party member he had better grounds for knowing its relationship with the Association than Anthony Coughlan has.

With regard to Leninism, he said that Greaves had tied Connolly up in a Leninist knot which nobody would ever succeed in untangling.

Our discussions were not confidential. They began during and after a public meeting at which I spoke. I published what he said about the Leninist knot. In later

discussions he never complained about that, nor disagreed with it.

With regard to Greaves' critical membership of the CPGB: I knew a number of critical members, including Monty Johnston who was a leader of the Young Communist League. I thought they were very foolish people. They believed in an illusion called "Leninist democracy", which Stalin allegedly curbed. They believed that Gorbachev was releasing it.

After Gorbachev weakened the State, and the Archives were opened, there was a frantic search for this Leninist democracy which Stalin had spoiled. It could not be found. Anti-Stalinism became anti-Leninism.

I'm sure Greaves did not believe any of those stories for children. His handling of Pat Dooley and others shows him to have been a competent apparatchik. It was as an orthodox Leninist structure that the CPGB played a useful part in British life in certain respects. It had no critical life of its own. It ended along with the Soviet Union.

I take it that Anthony Coughlan is right about organisational details of the Irish Sovereignty Movement, but it was only in connection with Raymond Crotty and Greaves that I noticed it. If it no longer exists, that is a good thing. An Irish Sovereignty Movement directed against the EU is an absurdity, and when it leads to Irexit it becomes an Anglophile monstrosity.

It might be said that Ireland failed Europe, but I cannot see how Europe disabled Ireland.

And the value of Irish membership of the EU is increased by Brexit.

I noticed that Anthony Coughlan was given a Lifetime Award by British Brexiteers for his contribution to the cause of national freedom against EU dominance.

There is no comparison whatever between Ireland's former position in the UK and Britain's position within the EU.

Britain used all its extensive powers of persuasion to get into the EU. And its purpose of entering was to prevent European development along the lines laid down by the original Six. It succeeded in this to a considerable extent. Then it left. It will in future attempt to exploit contention between European states in order to restore its Balance-of-Power manipulations which served it well for a few centuries.

As to Greaves' Journal: Roy Johnson told me that I was in it, even though I never had any kind of personal association with him. I once exchanged a few conventional words of no consequence with him when I went to buy something at his offices, but never spoke to him otherwise. I went with Pat Murphy to a lecture about Northern Ireland at the Marx Library. Pat quizzed him in detail about the purely sectarian content of the lecture and asked him what was the use of it. I did not comment or question. And that was the only meeting of his that I ever attended. But I was excluded without explanation from a publicly-advertised showing of an old Republican film put on at the Co-op Hall near Finsbury Park by the Connolly Association.

I gather that Liam Daltun, who undoubtedly had once had a close political association with him, is not mentioned in the "Journal". But, in his book on

O'Casey, Greaves had a venomous description of a person who could only have been Daltun—who after involvement in the 1956 escapade went to London and to the Connolly Association in search of enlightenment, but then shrugged himself clear of its Byzantine narrowness by turning towards the Trotskyist movement, in which Gerry Healy was a vigorous force. (The founder of the CA, Pat Dooley, had done the same thing in recoil from the Party line in 1956.)

Brendan Clifford

Editorial Note:

A number of Republicans who moved to London after the failure of the 1956 Campaign joined the Connolly Association in the belief that they were joining an organisation based on the Connolly principle of promoting Socialism in a national context. They were severely disillusioned, and went off in different directions.

Armenia and Azerbaijan:

Nagorno Karabakh goes into the Dustbin of History!

The President of the Armenian "Republic of Artsakh", Samvel Shakhramanyan, signed a document on 28th September which decreed the dissolution of all "state institutions and organisations" by 1st January 2024. This effectively ends the existence of "Artsakh" and signalled the absorption of the Armenian minority of the population as full and equal citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

What the West continued to call Nagorno Karabakh is, therefore, no more. It has gone into the dustbin of history, to coin a phrase of Trotsky. It fell like a pack of cards in little over 24 hours on September 19th when measured force was applied to it by the Azerbaijan Army in a lightning offensive.

Without Armenia, and without Russia, it was nothing. It had claimed self-determination for decades, ever since it found it could not join with Armenia (Miatsum) without bringing Armenia down with it, as an affront to international law. But it was incapable of actual self-determination, being only a pseudo-state, a false front of Armenia, which the Armenian Prime Min-

ister decided he could do without, after the trouble it had caused him in 2020.

The Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was an arbitrary construction of Stalin. In 1920-1 the Bolsheviks recaptured the South Caucasus for Russia, after seeing off the British and defeating the Whiteguards in the Civil War. When it was decided in the 1920s by the Soviet Kavburo, after much discussion, that the Karabakh region should remain a part of Azerbaijan, the Bolsheviks were faced with the problem of a large community of Armenians who inhabited the mountainous region of the province. It was decided to create a small autonomous region within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, with boundaries that would create a population of three-quarters Armenians and one-quarter Azerbaijanis. Around it lay 7 regions with large Azerbaijani majorities, some of which lay between it and the neighbouring Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. For the previous five years war and massacre had characterised relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis over territory that was in dispute between them.

The settling of the national question in the South Caucasus by Stalin cannot be described as a failure. It was the Soviet Union itself that failed and took the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast with it.

This happened when General Secretary Gorbachev went in for "Leninist democracy"—a contradiction in essence – and destabilised the very thing that held everything together, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In the interests of improving what could not be improved, Gorbachev rubbed the bottle in which there was a genie—and let the genie of Armenian nationalism out to wreak havoc. Yerevan took to the streets en masse and the Armenians took Gorbachev's freedom to mean their freedom from Azerbaijan, and the catastrophe began. Brotherly Comrades did not do such things and Soviet leaders did not let them. But between 1987 and 1990 they did—and everything unravelled.

Did the Armenians prompt the meltdown of the Soviet Union or did the meltdown of the Soviet Union prompt the meltdown of Nagorno Karabakh? That is a moot question.

In the chaos of the meltdown, the Armenians, who organised an army and managed to import an effective force of volunteers from Lebanon and elsewhere, led by Monte Melkonian, repulsed the efforts of the dysfunctional and disorganised Azerbaijan Republic to defend its territory, and won the First Karabakh War. In the course of the war around 18,000 Azerbaijani civilians were killed, along with 12,000 hastily organised soldiers thrown into battle. 750,000 Azerbaijani civilians were driven out of Nagorno Karabakh and 7 adjacent regions, conquered by Armenian forces in its extravagant victory.

Heydar Aliyev, who came back to rescue his country, signed a ceasefire with Yerevan in 1994 to cut the losses of the Azerbaijan Republic. He sensibly resisted the signing of a treaty and set about the long task of building a functional state and army. His work was continued by his son, Ilham, to fruition in 2023.

But, all the while, the Armenians, resting on the laurels of victory, and confident on their martial superiority over a race they considered inferior, refused to make a settlement that involved the trading of land for peace. Any Armenian who even contemplated exchanging some of

the occupied territories, like Levon Ter Petrosyan did, was quickly dispatched to obscurity. Gerard Libaridian, adviser to Ter Petrosyan, tells it like it is in his new, wonderfully informative book, 'Precarious Armenia'.

It was the Armenians who killed Nagorno Karabakh. They replaced it with "Artsakh"—a vast newly created ethnically homogeneous entity carved out of the old Oblast and seven surrounding regions of Azerbaijan, emptied of their population.

And they killed and ethnically cleansed on a vast scale in the name of "Genocide prevention".

Nagorno Karabakh could only exist in the context of Socialist fraternity among Brotherly Proletarians and it was inappropriate to the new era of nationalism.

The Soviet national settlement in the South Caucasus lasted for 70 years and it enabled Armenians and Azerbaijanis to peacefully live together in Karabakh. It also enabled 350,000 Armenians to live peacefully and prosperously in Azerbaijan, while 210,000 Azerbaijanis remained safely and securely in their homes in Armenia. However, it was the mass movement from 1987, to detach NKAO from Azerbaijan and join it to Armenia, that set off the chain of events that led to the killing and intimidation of Azerbaijanis in Armenia and Armenians in Azerbaijan, which produced great movements of population from their homes of generations.

It appears that the level of peaceful co-existence in Soviet times will never be achieved again and it looks today, after 30 years of bitter conflict, an amazing accomplishment. But, of course, a man like Stalin and a system like the Soviet Union could never be credited with such a thing by right-thinking people, could they?

But it is clear that the era of nationalisms, brought in by the collapse of the Soviet State, does not permit those kind of community relations.

That is why the criticism of the Western media that has been levelled against Azerbaijan in recent days has been so bizarre. Phrases like "ethnic cleansing" have been bandied about with abandon, without care for the truth or historical context.

A United Nations Commission of Inquiry in the 1990s, in a preliminary report (S25274), defined "ethnic cleans-

ing" as "rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons or groups from the area" and in its final report, S1994/674, "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from geographic areas."

What happened in 1991-4 was obviously "ethnic cleansing". The motive of the Armenians was the forced and permanent migration of Azerbaijanis to clear the ground for "Artsakh". It was encouraged by "terror-inspiring" events like the Khojaly massacre, where armed Armenians went into an unarmed village, early in the war, and killed over 600 civilians, and where people were driven over high mountains at gunpoint and froze to death in their thousands in the dead of Winter.

What has happened in the last few days, by contrast, is the voluntary migration of Armenians, against the wishes of the Azerbaijan Government, who made it very clear they were welcome to stay. It has supplied the Armenians swiftly with electricity, fuel and medical supplies and offered full equality and a more prosperous future. There were no "terror-inspiring" events against the Armenian civilian population and only a targeted operation against purely military targets, with little loss of civilian life.

It has always been said by the leaders of Karabakh Armenians that their people would never be prepared to live under Baku's authority. They would leave rather than submit to the rule of inferior Azerbaijanis. Can this section of Armenians be said to have been ethnically cleansed when their aim was to either rule a territory they have cleared of untermenschen or leave it if they couldn't? Armenia's Ambassador to Ireland commented to RTE that the "forced depopulation" of the indigenous Armenian people from Nagorno-Karabakh was "a tragic loss for the Armenian people and for civilisation". It seems that the Armenian Ambassador still lives in the world of the "civilising mission".

Perhaps the ethnic Germans of East Prussia and Eastern Europe are the closest analogy there is to the Karabakh Armenians. But I have never seen the sympathy for these people in Europe that the fleeing Armenians now receive! One need not wonder why that is—but Europe dare not say it frankly.

Some of the Armenians who now depart are obviously fearful of remaining, despite assurances of equal citizenship and amnesty by Baku. Some might be right to be fearful, if their past actions constituted war crimes, and they might be brought to justice. Others may have been convinced by their leaders or neighbours that terrible things would happen to them. After all, they have been told for generations that the Turk (and Azerbaijani Turk) is a barbarian, born to kill and massacre Christian Armenians, as part of their genetics. Wasn't this something said once by eminent civilised people in the West? Is it any wonder that people who have absorbed such propaganda for generations would choose to leave?

It is said by the Armenian diaspora that "Artsakh or Nagorno-Karabakh has been a land for Armenians for hundreds of years". But that is not the point. The relevant fact is that it is only in the last 30 years that Karabakh was controlled by, and was the exclusive preserve of, Armenians. Previous to that it was administered by the Soviets, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the British Empire, the Russian Empire and independent Azerbaijani Khanates, going back to the 18th Century. Before that, it was fought over by the Safavid (Turkic) Persians and Ottoman Turks.

The Azerbaijan Government cannot keep its Armenian population by force, if it chooses to leave. The prophecy by David Babayan, aired on the BBC, that there would be a "Biblical Exodus" of Armenians, like God's Chosen People going into exile, has indeed come to pass. The numbers are disputed. The Armenians have claimed that there were 120,000 in "Artsakh" but the President of Russia tells us there were only 57,000. It is in interest of Armenia to double count to maintain the narrative of persecution and they had counted 100,000 departures by Saturday 30 September! And the West has reported that figure without troubling their newly employed "fact checkers" who seem to exist for only one purpose. But one thing is certain, very few Armenians remain in Azerbaijan.

There is little doubt that the swift collapse of Nagorno Karabakh was essentially due to geopolitics, and Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan's "pivot to the West".

In 2020, when Azerbaijan won the Second Karabakh War and reduced "Artsakh" to a rump of the old Oblast, an

agreement to end the War, brokered by President Putin, left 2,000 Russian Peacekeepers in place in the remaining Armenian controlled area. They were to remain there until 2025 and it was thought that the Kremlin might keep them there longer, if it could find a way. It was generally believed that the repopulation of the 7 surrounding areas and their redevelopment for suitable living would be such an arduous task that Baku might even agree to an extension of their presence, until 2030.

The general belief in the South Caucasus was that Moscow would play the Armenians and Azerbaijanis off against each other, so that they could remain as long as possible, manipulating political forces in the region in the Kremlin's own strategic interest, as had happened in Georgia with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. And indeed, only recently did spokesman Peskov warn Yerevan that Russia had a historic place in the Caucasus.

However, then came the Ukraine War and the Kremlin, remarkably, was outmanoeuvred by both Yerevan and Baku. Russia's difficulty was the South Caucasus' opportunity!

The Ilham Aliyev Government played a skilful game in relation to Moscow. It had developed the Azerbaijan State into a substantial economic force with a professional and well-equipped army, and with an officer corps trained in Turkiye. Azerbaijan under the Aliyevs was a good neighbour to Russia, but refused to be intimidated by it. Putin made threatening noises and took some actions in 2020, aimed at deterring Azerbaijan from moving against "Artsakh" — but Aliyev called his bluff.

Putin had to deal with the growing substance of Azerbaijan that had to be taken account of. Forget the Western propaganda, the Russian President is a pragmatist at heart, who respects strength where he finds it. Threat is, of course, a wholly different matter for Putin, as Georgia and Ukraine, earmarked for NATO, found out. Azerbaijan has never represented a threat to Russia and that was a deliberate act of State, since the Elchibey catastrophe.

Russia adopted a more even balance in the region as a consequence, moving from its traditional pro-Armenian position. And this put the Armenian nose out of joint because the Armenians felt entitled in relation to Russia, due to history and the dependent relationship it had acquired that had been enhanced with the expansion into Karabakh.

Crimes Of The Intelligence Services: Letter to Leo Varadkar

Fri 25/08/2023 02:57

Dear Taoiseach Varadkar:

President Higgins' words of official sympathy for the Omagh bombing victims were reported by the MSM. How tragic that his words were not followed by an announcement of a serious investigation of that atrocity. Will the Irish gov't finally act regarding Omagh?

A team of FBI and MI5 agents operated in Ireland from about 1994 until Mission Accomplished the evening of 15 Aug 1998. The lead FBI operative was Special Agent Patrick Buckley. They infiltrated the RIRA car-bomb group who had bloodlessly bombed five towns, and participated in rehearsing the sixth (Omagh).

Michael McKeivitt's (juryless) trial was in Dublin's Special Criminal Court in Summer 2003. The trial's transcript will include the testimony of David Rupert. While testifying, Rupert, apropos nothing, complained of being "left all alone in Ireland once when my boss (gesturing toward nearby Agent Patrick Buckley) went to the (1996) Atlanta Olympics." Many in the large group of attending MI5 and FBI agents (including FBI Agent Krupkowski) sprang to their feet in apparent alarm.

The pattern of MI5/FBI activity in Ireland had been established earlier in Chicago.

Their Chicago crimes are officially documented. The documents are in my possession. One series of FBI Agent Buckley's Chicago crimes include 1) Obstruction of Justice, 2) misattribution of a triple murder, 3) Federal usurpation of the investigatory authority of what was under Illinois jurisdiction, 4) getting the news media to falsely report an IRA connection to the murders, 5) official protection of the murderer, and, 6) the framing of an innocent for that atrocity.

Another series of Buckley's Chicago crimes are (in US Case 91CR911): A) massive evidence fabrication, B) multiple perjuries, C) wrongful incarcerations, etc.

FBI crimes that failed in Chicago were successful in Ireland.

The world will know if the Irish Government ever gets serious about the Omagh atrocity. It will start by acquiring our "case-closed" evidence of the FBI's pattern of previous crimes.

In the years since, we have also learned the purpose of these MI5/FBI crimes here and in Ireland. We possess multiple layers of compelling circumstantial evidence of their ultimate purpose.

Will respond promptly to a request for documentation from you or from Ireland's law enforcement.

Sincerely;

Christopher Fogarty

900 No. DuSable Lake Shore Dr. Apt. 1507, Chicago, IL 60611

Christopher Fogarty: fogartyc@att.net

Pashinyan, however, has been turned by the West. Annoyed at not being rescued by Moscow during the Second Karabakh War (a war of his own making), and presumably having received an offer he could not refuse from Washington, Pashinyan decided to jettison "Artsakh" in the interest of remaining in power and Westernising Armenia, to break its dependence on Rus-

sia. He calculated that Russia had been disabled by being lured into the Ukraine quagmire and it was the opportunity and time to strike out for freedom. He would blame the Russians for all Armenia's and "Artsakh's" misfortunes and opt for Western protection of his Government

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Does
It
Up

Stack
?

Civil Service Pay Rise

It certainly does not stack up that recently the Cabinet approved pay rises for senior civil servants whose Departments are seriously defective in the performance of their functions. A rise of 15,000 euros for Secretary General of the Department of Housing, bringing his basic annual salary to 250,000 euros, is inappropriate at this time when there are serious housing problems being neglected. And a rise of 13,000 euros a year for the Head of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, when there are really serious issues in all of these areas—not least of which is CAMHS [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services]—and these issues not being effectively dealt with.

Considering that the Old Age Pension, for those of us who have worked and contributed to the economy all our lives, is less than these increases is a slap in the face for ordinary people, who are still paying VAT at a rate of mostly 23% on every euro they spend out of their meagre pension.

There is an Agenda behind the Cabinet decisions, of course, and it is that the remuneration of Ministers, TDs and Senators is linked to that of senior civil servants. So, when senior civil servants are given a rise by the Cabinet, it will shortly be followed by a rise for Ministers, TDs and Senators.

No mercy is shown for the taxpayers. Even the taxpayers themselves are hoodwinked into thinking that there is a money-tree growing on Leinster Lawn, which is tended to and fed by Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) companies. That is, not by us!

A concept which is completely false—Make no mistake about it—Value Added Tax (VAT) is the major contributor to State expenditure, and VAT is paid by all of us when we spend in the shops. Whatever we spend: about one fifth of it goes in tax, and a chunk of that goes to already excessively paid Civil Servants, Ministers, TDs and Senators.

Concrete Cancer

Collapsing concrete structures have

become a frequent occurrence over the past decade. Bridges in the USA, Dams in Italy, and now schools in Ireland. It has been reported that the earliest known use of concrete as a building material was 8,000 years ago in Roumania.

Concrete, used correctly, is an excellent building material. The Romans, 2000 years ago, had a special formula for use in building quays near salt water at Rome's seaport at Ostia; and a special formula of concrete was used to build the Basilica on the island in Lough Derg, Co. Donegal, where there is a particular problem with the acidity of the lake water.

Concrete is very good in buildings where load-bearing compressive strength is required, but it is very weak where tensile strength is needed. So, to provide tensile strength, steel-reinforced concrete was invented. It seemed like a good idea. Steel had high tensile strength. But concrete is not completely waterproof and water will soak in and will inevitably cause the steel to oxidise – i.e. to rust, and to lose its strength. Which is what causes bridges to fail eventually.

Dams may last longer than bridges because the very weight of the dam is pressing downwards and tending to anchor the dam, but eventually the tensile forces across the face of the dam will be too much for the concrete in which the steel has rusted and the dam will be burst open by the pressure of the water behind it.

Schools in Ireland have been built of concrete for almost one hundred years and the structures of the schools are beginning to fail. Cracks appear and water streams in. Dampness causes the growth of very dangerous unhealthy moulds. This past August one hundred and four schools were told to shut their buildings due to collapsing concrete.

In Social Housing also, cracks have appeared in houses built sixty or seventy years ago. There was over-reliance on steel-reinforced concrete to create wide windows, and formation of balconies in multi-story apartment blocks. Lintels and balconies are cracking and so admitting rainwater which further accelerates the damage.

Bridges built of stone masonry have lasted for hundreds of years. They are built in the form of arches which utilise the weight of the structure to compress itself and thus avoid destruction, and at the same time arched stone bridges can carry a great weight of traffic.

Engineers thought that flat bridges could be made from steel-reinforced concrete, but they did not allow for the ability of the concrete to absorb water. The absorbed water eventually rusts the steel, which begins to shed flakes of concrete: and the strength of the bridge goes and leads to sudden collapse.

Concrete cancer I call it. Flat concrete bridges do not stack up in the long run. Nor do flat roofs on schools.

Michael Stack ©

Nagorno Karabakh

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and State. He would be rewarded with protection by Washington.

It was this opportunism that did for what the West calls Nagorno Karabakh and began the rapid collapse of the "Artsakh" pseudo-state. The US was never going to defend the unrecognised state in Karabakh, which it has always viewed as a Russian construction, existing in Moscow's interest. In many ways there has been a confluence of interest between West and Russia, as well as Baku and Yerevan, in dissolving it.

Prime Minister Pashinyan really has been a gift from God for Azerbaijan. Any previous concern at what would happen in 2025, when the Russians could be asked to leave under the Trilateral Treaty, faded into history. Putin and his peacekeepers, caught off balance by Pashinyan's sudden about turn to the West, was forced to collaborate with Baku in the destruction of the pseudo-state, which it had intended to uphold for as long as it could. Now, having sowed the seed, Pashinyan may reap the whirlwind—tens of thousands of angry Armenians from "Artsakh" will converge on Yerevan.

Nothing can be predicted in politics, but some intriguing possibilities now appear in the South Caucasus. Both Baku and Moscow desire the opening of the Zangezur Corridor, connecting the South Caucasus with Turkiye, and which Russian forces will administer. Turkiye has opened its energy pipelines into Nakhchivan in anticipation of this. The Azerbaijan Foreign Minister, Hikmet Hajiyev, has stated that Azerbaijan's only interest in the corridor

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is as a communications/infrastructure route. This is obviously to assure Iran that it will still have access into Armenia. And, if Armenia goes West, this will alter how Tehran looks at both Yerevan and the corridor. Eurasian development full steam ahead?

On the other side Armenia is becoming a battleground for geopolitics, with the first question being: will Washington defend Pashinyan? As Eric Hacobyian said: "Samantha Power has come to plant the US flag in Syunik"—meaning that the US has come to Armenia under the guise of humanitarians to deter Azerbaijan from an advance into the Armenian State. That Azerbaijan has no intention of doing such a thing is of no consequence. It is the US bridgehead, to get a toehold in Armenia.

In the 2019 Rand Report "Extending Russia: Competing from Advantageous Ground", after dismissing prospects for the West in Azerbaijan and Georgia, the illustrious US think tank noted the preferable option for the US is to:

"induce Armenia to break with Russia... The United States might try to encourage Armenia to move fully into the NATO orbit. If the United States were to succeed in this policy then Russia might be forced to withdraw from its army base at Gyumri and an army and air base near Yerevan (currently leased until 2044) and divert even more resources to its Southern Military District" (p.117).

The Rand Corporation has mapped out practically everything that the US has done in the World lately, including the movement to back Ukraine and contest the Black Sea. Can it be doubted that it may be right on US intentions toward Armenia?

What a very good year the centenary of Heydar Aliyev's birth has proved to be for the State he saved!

Pat Walsh

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ORGANISED LABOUR

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with more than 8 years of service would be over €21,500 and the station officers will have secure minimum earnings between €27,400 to €31,720.

The requirement of availability would be reduced from 48 weeks to 24 weeks, but the option to be available more frequently on a voluntary basis would be offered as well.

The proposals have gained support after an intensive consultation and a secret ballot, but it was not an overwhelming 'yes', 37% of fire fighters don't agree with the decision.

SIPTU Sector Organiser for the Local Authority Sector, Brendan O'Brien, said: "While the WRC document does not deliver a cure for all that ails the Retained Fire Service, it has created a path forward to commence the transformation that the service needs."

"ESB Networks has succeeded in persuading the Government to alter a works permit scheme to enable it to hire up to 100 contract line-workers from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) as it invests €10bn in the power grid. (Irish Independent-12.9.2023)

Line-workers, who undertake work on overhead power lines, for example, were previously on the Government's list of ineligible occupations for special permits that would allow such technicians from outside the EEA to work in Ireland. The EEA includes the EU, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

ESB Networks said it sought the change to the works permit legislation to enable it and its partners to meet varying demand for expertise as an upgrade of the electricity network continues.

The historic United Auto Workers U.S. trade union is demanding a 36% pay rise over four years, a 32-hour week and a return to guaranteed pensions from the management of General Motors, Ford and Stellantis. (Le Monde, Paris-15.9.2023)

U.S. President, Biden has expressed clear support of the auto workers who began targeted strikes on Friday, Septem-

ber 15th against the country's three historic automakers, General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis (formerly Chrysler):

"Let's be clear, no one wants a strike. I'll say it again. No one wants a strike. But I respect workers' right to use their options under the collective bargaining system. And I understand the workers' frustration",

the Democratic President said in an *Address* at the White House.

Although the automakers have "*made some significant offers*", Biden believes that they "*should go further to ensure that record corporate profits translate into record contracts*" [for the UAW, the United Auto Workers, the industry's historic Union].

The combined world-wide operating profit of the three Detroit (Michigan) based automakers soared from 4.8 billion dollars (4.5 billion euros) in 2020 to 29.4 billion in 2021 and 37.2 billion in 2022.

The strikers are demanding a 36% pay rise over four years, a 32-hour week and a return to guaranteed pensions. The three companies have proposed pay rises of around 20%. GM boss Mary Barra, who is close to President Biden, has expressed her disappointment. "*I'm extremely frustrated and disappointed*", she told CNBC on Friday, "*this is a strike that didn't need to happen. We have a historic offer on the table*" (Le Monde, Paris, 15.9.2023)

The President's support of the Auto Workers is in sharp contrast to his decision in December last, 2022, when he called on Congress to intervene and block a strike by the Railroad Workers United, a group representing workers from a variety of rail unions and carriers that he claimed could cost the U.S. economy about \$2bn a day by some estimates.

"He had the opportunity to prove his labour-friendly pedigree to millions of workers by simply asking Congress for legislation to end the threat of a national strike on terms more favorable to workers. Sadly, he could not bring himself to advocate for a lousy handful of sick days",

said a statement from the Rail Workers' Trade Union group.

DESMOND continued

to 10,000 in 1915 and 5,000 in 1916. There was a resurgence of membership in 1917 to 14,920 following the Rising and a dramatic expansion into provincial and rural Ireland in 1918 to an impressive level of 67,827. (p.28)

“It seems clear from the ITGWU records that Connolly, as Acting General Secretary, did not have it all his own way in his Liberty Hall preparations for the Rising. The Dublin No. 1 Branch committee of the union were, in effect, the executive, and in charge of Liberty Hall. They knew that Connolly was arming the ICA. Francis Devine has written:

‘When Partridge suggested to Connolly ‘hoisting the green flag’ over the Hall there was open dissent.’

‘Several members of the Branch voiced their reluctance but Connolly prevailed and the flag was hoisted.’ (p.29)

“At the Rising there were at least twelve union members employed at Liberty Hall; five were in the Insurance Section; five officials (John O’Neill, Laurence Redmond, John Nolan, Joseph Metcalfe and James Connolly) and a few typists and clerical assistants. They were undoubtedly shocked at the unilateral involvement in the Rising of their acting general secretary who had been appointed some nineteen months before by James Larkin. They had lost their jobs, their records and their place of employment. They must have been very angry towards Connolly in the immediate aftermath. (p.29)

“In November, 2004, I participated at a conference organised by the Irish Labour History Society. One of the sessions was devoted to the Irish Citizen Army. During the discussion it was alleged that Patrick Clancy, a former ITGWU Executive Council Member, who, in 1978, was employed as a consultant in the education and training services of the union, had been shown by Michael Mullen, the then General Secretary of the union, ‘the No. 1 Branch Committee minutes’, which contained the expulsion of Connolly. I knew the late Paddy Clancy well during his early career in the union. He was not prone to exaggeration. The conspiratorial Michael Mullen relished such union secrets and had access to all the residual union archives. (p.29)

“However, it must be noted that in January, 1982, Desmond Greaves wrote that ‘national decisions were recorded in

the minutes of the Dublin No. 1 Branch from 1914 to 1918 and these minutes are extremely full’. In the immediate aftermath of the Rising the military seized all the records of the No. 1 Branch meetings held in Abbey Street before the execution of Connolly were maintained or viewed by Michael Mullen and others in later years. (p.28/29)

Cathal O’Shannon

“Another prominent member of the ITGWU who was arrested in 1916 was Cathal O’Shannon... During these early years O’Shannon was a prolific propagandist on behalf of the union, the ITUC and the Labour Party.... Following his election as a Labour deputy of Meath/Louth constituency in the 1922 ‘Pact’ election (he received more than two quotas!) and his defeat a year later he began a full time political and trade union career under the wing of [William] O’Brien for the next thirty years. O’Shannon had minor interest in the tedium of union organisation and employer negotiations. O’Brien used him as a gifted editor, journalist and propagandist to spread the OBU gospel. He was also O’Brien’s eyes and ears about Dublin town. He now had full time employment and by 1925 he was no longer his own man.” (p.27)

“During Easter 1916 Tom Johnson was in Cardiff. Connolly knew that Johnson was an avowed pacifist and he did not involve him at any stage in the preparation for the Rising. (p.29)

Connolly-The Forgotten?

“In 1916 and 1917 Connolly was no

revolutionary hero in the eyes of most of the trade union establishment. Suffice is to reiterate that in August 1917, at the annual meeting of the ITUC and Labour Party at the Guildhall, Derry, the President, Thomas MacPartlin, a delegate from the Dublin Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, in his lengthy address, did not refer at all to Connolly. The Executive recorded the death of William P. Partridge in July, 1917, and noted that ‘Councillor Partridge is the second member of the Dublin Labour Party whose death has been brought about through the Dublin Insurrection of 1916’. William O’Brien also joined in this tribute, “He died a martyr to the principles he held and believed in, just as assuredly as those who died with their backs to the wall’ . . . [however] By 1918 Connolly had become a national and union icon.” (p.31)

Connolly’s Politics!

“Connolly was an extraordinary amalgam of Marxism; syndicalism; departure from Catholicism and an eve of execution embrace; a bellicose antipathy to the Empire; an intense adoption of Irish nationalism and a rush to joint armed revolution with the IRB. His emphatic involvement in all of these roles cast him as an extraordinary figure in modern Irish history. He proved to be the most determined revolutionary within the Rising which F. X. Martin’s aptly described as ‘a conspiracy within a conspiracy in the conspiracy of a minority’. (p.33)

(Barry Desmond-No Workers’ Republic!-Reflections on Labour and Ireland 1913-1967-Watchword, 146 Sundrive Road, Dublin-2009)

ORGANISED LABOUR

Profits at major childcare providers trebled during the pandemic, according to a new Siptu report.

The report, based on returns made to the Companies Registration Office, found combined profits stood at €3.2m in 2019 and jumped to €9.8m in 2021.

Siptu’s report was released as it is set to attend the Labour Court on 4.9.2023 following the breakdown of pay talks with providers. Its negotiators rejected an employer offer of a €13.65 an hour minimum rate for early years educators, saying it would leave thousands of workers

on “poverty“ rates of pay.

“While the country’s Retained Firefighters have voted to accept proposals from the Workplace Relations Commission to resolve their industrial dispute there are misgivings about the deal.” (Sligo Champion-6.9.2023)

Under the terms proposed by WRC (63% voted in favour) the new recruits would now enter the service with guaranteed minimum earnings of over €18,000. The guaranteed earnings for fire fighters

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LABOUR

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 41 No. 10

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

The Thoughts Of Barry Desmond

EXTRACTS

Barry Desmond: *No Workers' Republic!—Reflections on Labour and Ireland 1913-1967*

"This is my attempt to put some of these events into the perspective of a trade union and labour activist who was born into an ITGWU, OBU family in Cork City in 1935. The One Big Union was our mantra. I have spent some fifty years prowling through family, trade union and labour documents 'seeking the truth'. I learned that [William] O'Brien had laid out his stall well. One of the first books in our home in Cork was his *The Attempt to Smash the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*. It was our bible . . . I had to wait until 1957 when I came to Dublin to slowly glean the other side of the confrontation.)

William O'Brien

"It was clear that [William] O'Brien saw his union in an embryonic syndicalist structure. He saw the Labour Party as an adjunct to the union. Twelve of the seventeen Labour deputies elected in 1922 were members of the ITGWU. In the absence of Larkin in America and following the execution of Connolly, O'Brien was convinced that he could lead the labour movement in the Dail and in Liberty Hall..." (p.13).

"There is hardly an archive file of the period that does not contain his organisational imprint. There is no doubt that were it not for the split in the ITGWU in 1924 O'Brien would have had an even more dominant career in the political turbulence of those decades" (p.13).

"There was intense rivalry between Connolly and Larkin. Connolly felt eclipsed by Larkin and resented his ascendancy

in labour affairs. 'He does not seem to want a democratic labour movement', he complained to O'Brien, 'he seems to want a Larkinite movement . . . He must rule, or will not work'. Little did Connolly realise the dire troubles between these two men which lay ahead. At this stage O'Brien had no involvement in the ITGWU... He did not join the ITGWU until 1917" (p.16).

James Connolly

"There is no great evidence, in the weeks leading up to the execution of Connolly, that the fragile leadership of the ITGWU was impressed by the unilateral participation of the Acting General Secretary in the Rising [1916]. He had a secret relationship, outside the union, with the IRB, and the Volunteers in their plans for the Rising" (p.26).

"There is little doubt that the members of the No. 1 Branch Committee were aghast at the destruction of Liberty Hall. It seemed

to them that the union was demolished. All the wages of the small full time staff were in peril. Connolly, to them, had usurped the union—first Larkin and now Connolly and then the tenants of one of Liberty Hall's rooms, the Irish Citizen Army, had brought about this crisis" (p.28).

"Prior to the Rising there had already been tension between the ICA and the union about the use of the premises. In his account of the events of the period 24 April to 12 May, [1916] during which Connolly was alive, Desmond Greaves did not elaborate on the reaction towards Connolly of the Branch Committee members who met. As a member of the Dublin No. 1 Branch, having joined in 1957, I remain very curious as to whether all of these minutes, closely examined by Greaves have survived" (p.28).

"The effect of these Rising events within the union during these seventeen days before the execution of Connolly provides the backdrop to the speculation that, shortly before his execution, the No. 1 Branch expelled James Connolly from the union for the havoc he had brought on Liberty Hall and the union. (p.28)

"With military rule imposed on the City, many places of employment destroyed, the newspapers denouncing the rebels, and particularly Connolly among them, many union members were angry and impoverished. (p.28)

"This insurrection, on top of the failure of 1913-1914 Lock-out, caused panic among those who were trying to hold the union fort. The membership of the union affiliated to the Congress had declined from 22,935 in 1913 to 15,000 in 1914;

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1 Sutton Villas, Lower Dargle Road
Bray, Co. Wicklow or

33 Athol Street, Belfast BT12 4GX or
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