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“Every nation, if it is to survive as a nation, must study its own history and have a foreign policy”
—C.J. O’Donnell, *The Lordship of the World*, 1924, p.145

Contents

Red Lines bring High Noon to Ukraine *Pat Walsh* p. 2

Gorbachev’s Administrative Massacre: Baku, Black January 1990
Pat Walsh p. 7

What about all the Western military operations near us? *Edward Horgan* p. 11

On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians
July 12, 2021 Vladimir Putin p. 12

De Valera, DIAS, the Polygamist, and the Red *Pat Muldowney* p. 18

EAMON de VALERA
By J. L. Synge, F.R.S. p.20

Red Lines bring High Noon to Ukraine

“I don’t accept anybody’s red lines!” U.S. President Joe Biden, December 4, 2021, Washington.

“As a citizen of Russia and the head of the Russian state I have to ask myself: Why would we want a world without Russia?” Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The foreign policy of the United States has lately consisted of the assertion of red lines – US red lines – across the world. These red lines are boundaries which the current US President has decided other states should not cross – or else! In asserting these red lines it was naturally assumed in the White House that other powers did not have red lines and that such things only applied to states other than the United States. It came as something of a surprise, therefore, when Russia suddenly declared that it too had red lines, that the US and associated states should also not cross. And that is how the High Noon situation in Ukraine has come about.

Biden’s Red Lines

The US has blundered into the current situation. The blundering is a result of America having lost its bearings in the world after it became the sole superpower around 1991. During the Cold War the US acted, on the whole, realistically and effectively. It was presented with victory when, quite unexpectedly, “the General Secretary of the Communist Party did what the CIA had dreamed about but could never accomplish: he destroyed that system” (Stephen Kotkin, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2019, p.68.) Gorbachev capitulated to the West and dismantled the enemy state, facilitating the unipolar world presided over by the US. But the unexpected victory and sudden collapse of the enemy left the US unprepared for the position it suddenly assumed through Gorbachev’s inexplicable policy. The Soviet demise left no enemy for the US to orientate against and it began to lose its way in the world, recklessly destroying states, mostly in the Muslim world, for no particular reason other than to show what power it had.

The post-Cold War didn’t work out as it was hoped by the United States. Since President Biden came to power the US has been conducting a more minimalist expansionary strategy in the world than it did in the 1992-2016 period. In many ways this is the same policy as was practiced by his predecessor, President Trump, but that, of course, cannot be said. Trump cannot, under any circumstance, be credited with anything good whatsoever. It should not be said, for example, that he was pretty unique among recent presidents in that he started no new wars, and even ended a few, started by his predecessors.

After the US had rid itself of its rogue President, an “America Returns” foreign policy was being demanded in the pages of *Foreign Affairs* by the vast army of political analysts in America looking for renewed US action in the world following the Trump interregnum of inactivity. Many of these were “Russian Studies” academics who help define US Russian policy, but have reduced Russia to a mere caricature for their Western audience.

The titles of articles in the *Foreign Affairs* periodical describe the revival agenda of the US after it had seen the back of Trump with a huge appetite for a reassertion of American power in

the world. Here is just a sample of article titles from *Foreign Affairs* as Biden came to power: ‘How Trump Unmade American Foreign Policy’; ‘The Democratic Renewal’; ‘Why American Can’t Withdraw from the World’; ‘The Price of Primacy’; ‘Why America Must Lead Again’; ‘Saving America’s Alliances’; ‘Democracy Demotion’; ‘The Last War and the Next’; ‘A Superpower: Like it or Not!’; ‘Turning Back the Authoritarian Tide’ etc. etc.

The US had been chastened by the disasters of the Neo-cons in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the disasters of the liberal imperialists in Syria and Libya. In these adventures the US had squandered much of the goodwill it had accumulated in defending the democratic world against Communism during the Cold War. It attempted to reorder the world and failed and its public had its fill of “forever wars” – wars that had to be fought on the ground with US forces, which involved bodybags coming home. But the US was still “the indispensable nation” with a mission in the world, which had a duty to project US democratic values across the globe, whether they were wanted or not.

So what was to be done?

President Biden’s policy involved a reassertion of the democratic mission of the US, tarnished by the Trump Presidency. It was based on the notion of red lines around a kind of US organised retreat from attempting to remake the world by military power. The historian Stephen Kotkin (biographer of Stalin) outlined what a more modest and functional US foreign policy would be after the forever wars the US had brought on. The idea was to declare to the world that America was back as the champion of expansionary democracy and make it clear to geopolitical opponents (Russia, China, Iran) what the US demanded of them through red lines they should not cross. This amounted to a US policy of “encirclement” and “containment” toward Russia.

During the high point of the “American Century” (1991-2016) the US exerted military force as the first option of foreign policy and asserted that the basic determinant of the relationship between states rested on military power and the willingness to use it. But whilst the US may have scaled back its military ambitions after the chastening experiences of Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya, it has not retreated from its political ambition to maintain the predominance of its sphere of influence in the world. That sphere of influence is all-embracing in relation to the globe and universal in relation to humanity. International issues are still seen in black-and-white terms, in absolute moral categories. America alone is seen as holding the moral authority of the world and any reluctance within the US to exert that is viewed as defeatism. There remains a belief derived from fundamentalist Protestantism that the human condition is defined as a choice between good and evil and that there should be no shirking in the willingness of the good (US and the forces of democracy) to confront the evil (all others and alternative systems).

Henry Kissinger once said: “Moral purpose was the key element of motivation behind every American policy and every war in the twentieth century.” That is why it was inconceivable

that someone openly without moral compass should be commander-in-chief in the White House, disabling the moral impulse that motivates a war-fighting expansionary state.

After the Afghanistan debacle, when good beat a retreat from evil, having failed to impose itself on evil, Biden sent out several emissaries to Moscow, including the pragmatic CIA Director, William Burns. These emissaries seem to have spent time pleading with the Kremlin to behave, be a good boy, and accept the US red lines. In public President Biden was laying down the law to show who was still boss of the world, of course. It was communicated to the Kremlin that if the Russians did not invade Ukraine there would be no conflict with the US. This was the US red line Russia was requested to not cross while it was expected to accept that NATO and its military forces could continue the advance to its borders, up to the red line, with colour revolutions promoted to produce regimes hostile to Moscow.

After the US had declared “the end of history” and stated that the 21st Century would be “the American Century” this request was, not unreasonably, seen by the Kremlin as a sign of weakness, and an opportunity was understood to be appearing to roll back the advance of US power and challenge the unipolar world.

Putin’s Red Lines

Shortly after President Biden showed his hand, and stated that only the US had red lines, Putin called his bluff and dramatically raised the stakes.

On December 17, the Russian Foreign Ministry put its cards on the table in the shape of two draft texts — a “Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on Security Guarantees” and an “Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of the Russian Federation and the Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]”. Moscow stated its intention of obtaining “legal security guarantees from

the United States and NATO” and requested the United States and its NATO allies to meet its demands without delay.

Vladimir Putin, completely breaking with Russian diplomatic practice, issued what was a public ultimatum to Washington. And the Russian leader did this presumably knowing full well that his ultimatum would be completely unacceptable to the US, “the indispensable nation” of the world.

In essence, Putin was inviting the United States to reduce itself to the status of just another element of humanity – still a superpower, of course, but just one superpower among others, rather than the predominant power which dictates to the world. After only two and a half decades the curtain would fall on the “American Century”.

The Russian ultimatum demanded that “the following be legally established: the renunciation of any enlargement of NATO, the cessation of military cooperation with post-Soviet countries, the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from Europe and the withdrawal of NATO armed forces to the borders of 1997”.

It was also suggested that Russia and the United States commit to not deploy nuclear weapons abroad and to withdraw those already deployed, as well as to eliminate nuclear weapons deployment infrastructure outside their respective territories. Article 4 of the Russian communique stated that “the Russian Federation and all participants which were, as of 27 May 1997, member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, shall not deploy their armed forces and armaments on the territory of any other European state in addition to the forces stationed on that territory as of 27 May 1997.” And Article 7 specified that “the participants, which are Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, shall refrain from conducting any military activities on the territory of Ukraine, as well as of the other States of Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia and Central Asia.”

The area stipulated by Moscow includes the fourteen Eastern European and Balkan states that have become members of NATO during the last two decades, including those where additional forces of the North Atlantic Alliance have been deployed since the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016. The US is also invited to leave the Russian Seas – the Black Sea, the Baltic, Barents etc., and to stop the flights of American bombers over the whole of Europe and most of Asia.

The Russian ultimatum also proposed that “the parties exclude the deployment of nuclear weapons outside the national territory and return to the national territory the weapons already deployed outside the national territory at the time of the entry into force of this Treaty.”

President Putin had described the collapse of the Soviet Union as “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.” He was now signaling that Russia had arisen from the ashes and was acting as the heir to the USSR, a superpower that had made a comeback and which was now entitled to negotiate with the West on an equal footing. That was a severe shock to Washington: What presumption! What impudence!

The Russian think tank Russtrat reflected the new air of confidence that was pervading Putin’s Russia, which was now “putting it up” to the West in a new multipolar world:

“In the next year and a half, Russia will considerably change the balance of global power... Russia’s current historical situation is unique. The state has prepared itself for the major

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challenges that may arise under critical pressure. Huge reserves have been accumulated, including gold. National financial and information infrastructure plans have been created and launched. Digitization has begun to encompass the entire economy, bringing it to a new level of competitiveness. The expansion of our own industrial base, including in highly sensitive high-tech areas, is proceeding in leaps and bounds, the 'technology gap' is closing. We have overcome critical dependence in the area of food security... For the past five years, the army has been the world's leader. In this area, the 'technological gap' is in our favor and is only widening... Moreover, the explosion of planetary inflation is causing an energy crisis, which makes the Europeans, for the most part, much more accommodating and rules out a blockade of our energy supplies, whatever we do... Working with China everything will become much easier for us. And for China too, from which we will divert attention, which will free our hands even more... Russia has restored its weight in the international arena to the point that it is able to dictate its own terms in the shaping of international security.... The decrepit empire of the Stars and Stripes, weakened by LGBT, BLM, etc.... will not survive a two-front war."

This was not idle boasting. Adam Tooze, British economic historian and columnist with the Financial Times, noted that Russia had been preparing its economic defences for a number of years for the moment when bit came to bit against the West. He explained that if the West thought it could easily disable Russia through sanctions it was mistaken:

"Russia is too big a part of global energy markets to permit Iran-style sanctions against Russian energy sales. Russia accounts for about 40 percent of Europe's gas imports. Comprehensive sanctions would be too destabilizing to global energy markets and that would blow back on the United States in a significant way. China could not stand by and allow it to happen. Furthermore, Moscow, unlike some major oil and gas exporters, has proven capable of accumulating a substantial share of the fossil fuel proceeds. Since the struggles of the early 2000s, the Kremlin has asserted its control. In the alliance with the oligarchs it calls the shots and has brokered a deal that provides strategic resources for the state and stability and an acceptable standard of living for the bulk of the population... Putin's regime has managed this whilst operating a conservative fiscal and monetary policy. Currently, the Russian budget is set to balance at an oil price of only \$44. That enables the accumulation of considerable reserves.

If you want a single variable that sums up Russia's position as a strategic petrostate, it is Russia's foreign exchange reserve. Hovering between \$400 and \$600 billion they are amongst the largest in the world, after those of China, Japan and Switzerland. This is what gives Putin his freedom of strategic manoeuvre. Crucially, foreign exchange reserves give the regime the capacity to withstand sanctions on the rest of the economy. They can be used to slow a run on the rouble. They can also be used to offset any currency mismatch on private sector balance sheets. As large as a government's foreign exchange reserves may be, it will be of little help if private debts are in foreign currency. Russia's private dollar liabilities were painfully exposed in 2008 and 2014, but have since been restructured and restrained... This strong financial balance means that Putin's Russia will never experience the kind of comprehensive financial and political crisis that shook the state in 1998. Nor was it by accident that it was as those foreign exchange reserves approached their first peak in 2008 that Putin began to articulate his determination to end the period of Russia's geopolitical retreat."

The West had attempted to subdue Putin's Russia through sanctions and to isolate Russia internationally. It failed. Domestically, Putin is strong, if not stronger than ever. The economic crisis caused by collapsing oil prices that beset Russia a few years ago has passed and now it holds all the energy cards against Europe, which has foolishly surrendered its energy security at the behest of Green hysteria. Putin has successfully constructed new relationships with China, Turkey and a number of other states, including governments within the EU itself, who have fallen foul of the European liberal assault on the traditional structures of life that hold these societies together.

The Russian collapse, began by the political idiot, Gorbachev, and continued by the personally ambitious drunkard, Yeltsin, was arrested by Vladimir Putin. The West, however, refuses to accommodate a stable Russia within its world, under the man who saved it. The West will only accommodate a weak "democratic" Russia which can be plundered of its substantial resources by international capital and local opportunists.

However, it should not be forgotten that Russia, despite the best efforts of Vladimir Putin, is a shadow of its former Soviet self. The Russian sphere of influence in Europe has been reduced to Transnistria, two Russian pieces of the former Ukraine SSR, two slivers of the former Georgian SSR, the failed state that replaced the Armenian SSR, and a small military presence in the rump of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of the Azerbaijan SSR. The Russian economy is today only 1/15th of the size of the US economy, when the USSR was 1/3rd of the size of its Cold War adversary. The Eurasian Economic Union is inconsequential aside from Russia and Kazakhstan. Use of Russian language is in decline in all the ex-Soviet space, aside from Belarus. Half the Russian middle class (the high earning part) live abroad where it acts as an asset to the West, with London particularly facilitating the plunder of Russia by its émigré oligarchs, to the increasing distaste of Washington.

These developments have, on the other hand, had the consequence of making the present slimmed down Russia a leaner and meaner fighting machine. It is a premier land power with enormous energy resources, situated in the geopolitical heartland of the world. Its military is fit for purpose and its military technology is more advanced than that of the US in many important areas. The expertise acquired in this sphere during Soviet times cannot be liquidated like the system that produced it. While US military technology is primarily a commodity to be sold to customers abroad its Russian equivalent is designed and focused on one aspect – defensive war-fighting. Russia has an immense and proven ability to sustain casualties in war and hardship without breaking under intense pressure. It can always destroy the world with a push of a button if the world threatens the existence of Russia and no doubt the button pushers in Moscow are much less likely to blink than their counterparts in Washington on the day of Armageddon.

The US bombs Muslim states because it can without fear of response (aside from a few enraged Muslims who make their own small bombs). The US puts sanctions on Russia because it cannot bomb it, without a fearsome response. Russian economic power is not substantial enough to harm the US in reply, although it can harm Europe if it chooses to by reducing energy supply. The US neither bombs nor sanctions China. It cannot afford to. That, hopefully puts US foreign policy and the geopolitical balance of power in the world in context.

Good generals choose battles at the place of their own choosing and at the most opportune moment. Heads of states, as commanders in chief of their nations' armed forces, bear this ultimate responsibility. Whatever one thinks of Vladimir Putin it should be clear by now that he is an exceptional statesman. Joe Biden, on the other hand, is a mediocre and transient product of liberal democracy.

Where Red Lines Meet – Battlefield Ukraine

As Pepe Escobar has noted of Ukraine: "Maidan 2014 was an operation supervised by Obama/Biden". It is not clear, therefore, whether Biden has learnt his lesson from the 2014 debacle or whether he views Ukraine as unfinished business for the US.

The Russophobe Zbigniew Brzezinski (of chessboard fame) once stated that Russia's revival was dependent upon reintegrating independent Ukraine into Russia. He conceptualized Maidan 2014 when he was presented with a secret report on the development of Russian advanced missiles. He determined to make Ukraine another Afghanistan for Russia from that moment. That was meant to be a trap for Russia. But becoming another Afghanistan should be a much more frightening prospect for Ukraine.

The desire in the US to unleash a war – any kind of war – in Ukraine seems to be aimed at producing a calamity for Russia in order to bleed her of resources. The British Foreign Secretary, who apparently fancies herself as a second Iron Lady, recently warned Russia that it faced a quagmire like Afghanistan if it invaded Ukraine. One suspects that it is the US/UK who would most like a Russian invasion of Ukraine and that Biden's mysterious comment about a Russian incursion being acceptable was meant to lure Russian forces into Ukrainian territory as the Germans were lured into Belgium in 1914 in the belief that Britain would not make war on it. A similar trick was played on Saddam Hussein in 1990 when the US Ambassador assured him that America had no position on his dispute with Kuwait, encouraging his army into the turkey shoot on the Basra Highway.

It has become a mantra within the US elite that Russia wishes to reabsorb Ukraine. But the reality is precisely the opposite. Ukraine is presently a failed state, a basket case politically and economically. Even the Donbass, the supposed object of Russian annexation is largely a rust belt. Russia's only interest in it is to do with the welfare of its substantial Russian population who were endangered by those who were taking power in Kiev in the coup in 2014. In 2014 Russia could have intervened militarily to support the legitimate, elected government in Kiev and protect it from the coup. The Kremlin chose not to do so, probably mindful of the burden that would have been placed on both Russia's military and economic resources. Instead it moved swiftly to guard its key strategic interests in Crimea and support the defence of the predominantly Russian population in eastern Ukraine through various forms of assistance.

Ukraine, until it was fashioned into a state by the Soviet Union, was a patchwork of territories belonging to different empires and populated by a range of peoples, many of whom were Russian. Both Donbass and Crimea were part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine but were not Ukrainian. They were gifted to the Communist Party of Ukraine by the Russian Communists under Khrushchev. Khrushchev seems to have wished to alter the demographic composition of Ukraine

in favour of the Russian element through this act of kindness. When Yeltsin issued his invite to self-determination in August 1991, as part of his political maneuvering against his General Secretary, he insisted that Ukraine should return the Russian lands, if it was leaving the Union. He was backed vociferously by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. But Yeltsin and Gorbachev, with the USSR in meltdown and US assistance a priority, did not push the issue after Ukraine voted to leave the Union. The US looked on, encouraging both Gorbachev and Yeltsin to self-inflicted destruction.

This did not mean that the problem of the predominantly Russian areas of the former Russian territories of Ukraine went away. They became a national problem for the newly independent Ukraine to handle wisely not only for the sake of internal coherence of their state, but for future good relations with their Russian neighbour.

According to the rules of NATO membership a member country cannot have foreign, non-NATO military forces present on its territory. So Ukraine, presumably, would need to redraw its boundaries, without Crimea and the DOR and LPR to gain admittance. Such a partition of Ukraine would clearly be detrimental to Moscow's strategic interests since it would make Ukraine a more likely member of NATO. Donbass, as an autonomous part of Ukraine, with protection for its substantial Russian element, would undoubtedly be the best result for Putin.

Russia has therefore no intention or need to invade Ukraine. It certainly would not be in its interest to do so. It would probably take such a step through extreme provocation. It is only the West which can embolden the Ukrainians into such a provocation.

Where Russia is threatened by Ukraine is through the presence of Western military forces being stationed there through joining NATO. The threat to Russian national security would be severe in such an eventuality. NATO military aircraft deployed in Ukraine would be capable of reaching Moscow in 20 minutes; US warships sailing out of Odessa would menace the Russian navy in the Black Sea; soldiers and equipment stationed on Ukrainian soil would be a direct threat to Russia, as similar forces are in Poland and the Baltic, stretching the Russian defensive line.

It has been suggested lately that Russia is not really worried about NATO military expansion to its border. It is, in fact, afraid of democracy. This is the line peddled by Anne Applebaum who the BBC recently employed to ward off the notion that Russia was understandably concerned at been ringed by hostile and advancing military forces – a fact which had been gaining traction among the Western public. Applebaum (whose ethnic origins and connections make her an archetypal US Russophobe) put forward the line that a successful and democratic Ukraine on Russia's borders would be fatal to Putin's Russia.

Geoffrey Roberts, the British historian, in a review of Prof. Sakwa's *Frontline Ukraine* for the Irish Times on 25 April 2015, noted the following about the character of the Ukrainian regime that makes it a force for instability and a very unlikely cause of "democratic" concern for Russia:

"The ultranationalist tendencies of the Kiev regime sit ill with the liberal democratic values of the EU, and they are likely to become increasingly uncomfortable bedfellows. Kiev may succeed in realigning Ukraine with the West, but, as its defeat on the battlefield shows, it does not have the power to impose its will on the Russian-backed separatists. Within Ukraine are

millions of Russian-speaking citizens who share neither Kiev's mono-nationalism nor its Russophobia.

Ukraine is one of the most corrupt and inefficient states in the world, much worse than even Russia. During the civil war its oligarchs have gained even more power and riches, protected now by private armed militias. In practice the alternative to the federalised Ukrainian state proposed by Russia is not some idealised western liberal democracy but a feudal Ukraine based on an opportunistic alliance of oligarchs and ultranationalists.

Before the (2014) crisis Russia was Ukraine's biggest and most important trading partner. Ukraine depends on Russian energy supplies. Millions of Ukrainian citizens live and work in Russia and send vital resources back home. Without Russian participation there is no viable solution or alternative to the economic collapse suffered by disintegrating Ukraine.

... The nationalist genie is out of the bottle in Russia as well as Ukraine, and the EU has been exposed as incapable of transcending hackneyed cold-war perspectives. Cold warriors on both sides are having a field day while those Ukrainian citizens who see their country as a bridge between Russia and the EU have been marginalised by a civil war in which thousands have died. The disintegration of Ukraine will likely continue and may lead to further violent uprisings.

The one hope is that it is in Russia's vital interest to stabilise Ukraine. For that to happen, Sakwa writes, "Moscow needs to show the courage of compassion towards Ukraine. It is a country that in many respects is another part of Russia itself, while Russia is inevitably part of Ukrainian identity. The crisis will only be resolved when 'normal' relations are established between the two countries."

In the bygone era of objective meaning "democracy" used to be understood merely as a particular way of forming a government – government for the people by the people. But what is meant these days in the West by "democracy" is entirely different. What is required today of a "democratic state" by the US/UK/EU is uniformity with the current policies of the West. The outcome is now what constitutes "democracy" not the process. There is no democratic right to be wrong, as Poland, Hungary and Turkey, among others are finding out.

Unfortunately the EU and US/UK have been determined to frustrate any efforts at stabilising the Ukrainian state due to their determination to weaponise it against Russia in the cause of "democracy".

Prof. Richard Sakwa argues that the European Union has become an auxiliary of US/NATO's expansion into central and eastern Europe. It has ruled out what it supposedly stands for in the world – the seeking of accommodation, compromise and engagement – when it comes to Russia, and the EU leadership in Brussels has turned the issue of Ukraine's "free democratic choice" into an instrument to isolate and destabilise Putin's Russia. Russophobes in Poland, the Baltic States and other countries have brought into the EU their historic antagonisms with Russia and this anti-Putin camp in Europe has combined with the virulent Russophobes in the US (many, like Anne Applebaum, with ethnic origins and family connections in Eastern Europe) to demonise the Russian President and deny his country's legitimate security interests and concerns.

The contention that NATO and EU enlargement is no threat to Russia is belied by NATO's increasing military exercises on Russia's borders and its belligerent calls to arm Ukraine and increase its military forces.

Russia needs to do business with the states around it but cannot in relation to Ukraine, at present. Ukraine has been

pulled in different directions by the EU, US/UK and its economic ties to Russia. Its elected leader was deposed in a Western organised coup in 2014 and it began to tear itself apart. Ukrainian sovereignty and cohesiveness is all about maintaining a delicate balancing act between Russia and Europe in which Russia is not threatened by foreign military forces. That position, which was maintained between 1991 and 2014, was disrupted by Western ambition to detach Ukraine completely from the Russian sphere. It was Brussels that decided to force the Ukrainians to choose between Europe and Russia but in doing so it bungled the operation, much to the chagrin of the US (in the immortal words of Victoria Nuland: "Fuck the EU!").

If Russia or China attempted to overturn the Monroe Doctrine and detach Mexico or Canada from the US sphere it is pretty clear that there would be stubborn resistance from Washington. That, after all, was what the Cuban missile crisis was all about. And yet the West assumes that Russia should tolerate such a thing on its borders.

Ukraine has the potential to be a glacis, which is the medieval term for the area beyond a castle where fighting and killing takes place. The British described Afghanistan as the glacis of India in the past.

There are people in the US and the EU who are only too willing to fight Russia on Ukrainian territory to the last Ukrainian. But there is no general will to fight for Ukraine in the US and even less will to fight for it in the EU. Some of the US's European allies are already in retreat as talking gets tougher from Washington and thoughts turn to the energy and cost of living crisis that already confronts Europe, even without a war with Russia.

The EU is currently being pressurised by Washington to commit to further sanctions to enhance the economic encirclement of Russia. President Biden's National Security advisor, Jake Sullivan, made what the US expects from Europe very clear in November, 2021, when he said: "We want the terms of the system to be favourable to American interests and values... a favourable disposition in which the US and its allies can shape the international rules of the road on the sorts of issues that are fundamentally going to matter to the people of America". The new German administration is being warned to expect the scrapping of Nord Stream II and its consequent loss to Europe's energy supply. This eventuality, hastened by a conflict in Ukraine, would certainly make Europe's economy more dependent on the United States. It would become a much more pliable instrument of US policy, in particular in relation to a future isolation of China.

There is some will to supply Ukraine with the military equipment that might encourage an incursion into the separatist area that could draw in Russian forces e.g. an attack on the city of Donetsk. The size of the Russian force suggests that this is the limit of Moscow's contingency planning at present. In such an eventuality Russian air power will make short work of Ukrainian forces. The Ukrainians are very likely to abandon their new weaponry and run for it, as the US armed and trained Georgians did in 2008, leaving territory behind for the Russian forces to simply walk into. But perhaps that is Washington's plan!

This thought may have been responsible for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky publicly disagreeing with Washington about the imminence of a Russian invasion. It has suddenly dawned on him that if war is coming it is Washington that is pushing for it, with the Russians willing to fight it if

necessary. That has placed Zelensky in an awkward position in which he is likely to be requested to do his duty by Washington or be hung out to dry.

Even if there is an escalation that provokes a swift Russian military strike on Kiev there will be not a bullet fired in defence of Ukraine by the West. Ukraine will play the role Poland played in 1939. It will be merely be a battlefield with Ukrainians providing the casualties for Western moral propaganda.

It appears that Russia holds all the cards in the current situation. It is well prepared to defend itself and has determined to stand and fight on the Ukraine line. Its red line is a real line – the last ditch, if you like. President Biden’s red line, on the other hand, is an arbitrary assertion from which retreat is both possible and, indeed, highly advisable.

If Russia is not provoked into a military intervention in Ukraine this will, of course, be presented as Western resolution in the face of Russian aggression which deterred Putin. Nothing could be further from the truth, however. But the Western objective is always to control the narrative, despite the truth of the matter. That is what “soft power” is all about.

However, if the Ukrainian nationalist elite persists with its attempts to join NATO, against the desire of a substantial part of the Ukrainian people, there is a real danger that Ukraine will cease to exist in the form that it has previously existed.

At the time of writing the U.S. has responded to the security demands Russia laid out in its two draft treaties by rejecting all the major proposals and says it is only willing to negotiate on secondary issues. Russia will surely respond to that within a few weeks and Putin is usually a man with a surprise up his sleeve.

Pat Walsh

Gorbachev’s Administrative Massacre: Baku, Black January 1990

It is the 30th anniversary of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is a pertinent time, therefore, to ask the question: Was there ever a more pointless and extravagant waste of life than General Secretary Gorbachev’s administrative massacre of over 130 civilians in Baku on the night of 19/20 January 1990?

Vladimir Zubok’s recent book ‘Collapse: The Fall of the Soviet Union’ says the following about Gorbachev’s motivation in sending in the paratroopers:

“The (Communist) Party there (in Azerbaijan) had disintegrated, and nationalists of “the people’s front,” many of them from the ‘national’ intelligentsia, had taken over. The Soviet border with Iran, where ethnic Azeris had lived for centuries, was breached by a jubilant mob, echoing the opening of the Berlin Wall the previous year. This time, however, Soviet motorized and airborne divisions crushed the Azeris’ desire for ‘sovereignty’ and restored the state border of the USSR. In Baku over a hundred locals and up to twenty military personnel were killed. The crackdown in Azerbaijan, of course, was not a solution, it was just a means to buy time (soiuzmozhnobylosokhranit). Raisa (Gorbachev) recalled that she barely recognized her husband the day after the military operation in Baku. His face was gray, he had aged visibly, as if he suffered “a split in his soul.” This was yet another instance of Gorbachev’s visceral aversion to the use of force. An admirable moral quality in an individual, this was a huge political flaw in the leader of a country with a tragic history and facing a rising wave of toxic nationalism. In January 1990, the Kremlin leader faced a dilemma: to use force and keep the existing state intact or continue on his course of devolving power to the republics. Ultimately Gorbachev chose the second path.” (pp.104-5)

Remarkably, less than a fortnight after his forces had massacred over a hundred people in Baku, General Secretary Gorbachev informed the Politburo that he had come to the conclusion that the Communist Party could only reform itself after rescinding its monopoly on political power across the USSR. He now wanted the “popular fronts” that his own policies had brought into existence across the USSR, and onto the streets of Baku, to provide the opposition necessary to democratise the Leninist system he wished to invigorate.

At the time of the 70th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1987 Gorbachev had immersed himself in the unreleased Stalin-criticism literature of the Khrushchev era. The gist of this was that the USSR of Stalin had been a murderous

deviation from Leninist socialist democracy. Gorbachev, a devout Leninist, was of the opinion that democratising the USSR would make it more socialist and he determined to dismantle the system of government Stalin had built. Unlike Andropov, who saw the main Soviet problem as being economic, Gorbachev, who did not understand economics, decided to concentrate his reforms on Constitutional and Legal aspects of the system, where he felt more comfortable. His radical ambition was to take the Soviet Union back to year zero and reroute the revolution in the direction of democracy by unleashing long-repressed popular energy. At the special Party Conference he called for June 1988 the resolution “On the democratisation of Soviet society and the reform of the political system” was adopted and it was indicated to the people across the USSR through live TV that fundamental changes were to be made to the Constitution and a new political system implemented by the fall of 1989.

Gorbachev decided to annul Article 6 of the 1977 Brezhnev Constitution which established the Communist Party of the USSR as the sole legitimate political party of the State:

“The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The C.P.S.U. exists for the people and serves the people. The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of the domestic and foreign policy of the U.S.S.R., directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people, and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism.”

Of course, Brezhnev’s Constitution only stated the obvious about the Leninist system which Gorbachev now sought to reform in order to prolong and enhance in the general interests of mankind, as he saw it.

Gorbachev proposed several specific constitutional amendments to the Politburo: on the exit of republics from the Soviet Union; on the sovereignty of autonomous territories; on the creation of a Presidential Council and on the right of a President to issue decrees. These changes, approved by the Politburo, would be adopted at an extraordinary Congress of People’s Deputies in March, without referendum. A new

Union Treaty, which laid out a proposed compact between the centre and the republics would be launched. In February 1990 Gorbachev packed the Party Plenum with 500 guests to drive through his programme.

In a secret vote, on 13 March, 1990, the Congress of Peoples' Deputies made Gorbachev President of the USSR. The First Secretary now presided over the Politburo, the Presidential Council and Council of Federation. He used his extraordinary new gained authority to dismantle the Party Secretariat, beginning the liquidation of the thing which held the USSR together – the Communist Party.

Gorbachev was a true believing Marxist-Leninist who, seeking to improve the Leninist state, inadvertently liquidated the Soviet system through his misguided attempt to democratise what could not be democratised. In seeking to democratise the Communist Party of the Union, and prevent an expected roll-back of his reforms by the Party, Gorbachev instead disorganised the State and threw it into anarchy.

It appears that the administrative massacre in Baku was all about buying General Secretary Gorbachev a few weeks to manoeuvre in order to end the power of the Communist Party of the USSR and to go on to dissolve the State itself. Gorbachev achieved in the end the same objective held by those his forces went about killing in Baku. Around 130 people were therefore massacred for absolutely nothing.

The disintegration of authority in the USSR ushered in a period of flux in which nationalist forces, long since curtailed in the Soviet State, were let loose. Andropov and the KGB had suspected that national Party cadres and the national intelligentsias developed by the USSR could someday become the nucleus of national movements in the republics. He ordered schemes to be presented by his advisors that broke up the national units and which could head off such a development. Upon examining them all Andropov shelved all alternatives as unworkable. Gorbachev set out to rescue the USSR from Stalin's nationalities policy by engaging the national intelligentsias in his perestroika program.

The Armenian nationalist move to capture Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory that was part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, emerged through the taking advantage of the reform program of the new Soviet leader.

The Soviet system had successfully kept in check the irredentism of Armenian nationalism and diverted its energies into internal effort within its allocated territory, which was clearly defined by the Constitution of the USSR. Under Stalin Armenian nationalism was almost entirely subdued, but when Khrushchev came to power it was clear that much of the fundamental impulses of Armenian nationalism remained and were prepared to assert themselves again, although they did so in a devious fashion because the Soviet structures still held firm.

But it was Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost which encouraged the full release of a new nationalist movement, which the debilitated Union structures struggled to control.

The USSR was a kind of empire of nation states with the hierarchy and structures of the Communist Party being vital to its integrity. Since it was the Party which actually held the Union together, loosening this cement led on to the disintegration of the USSR. So, by sabotaging the Party Secretariat, Gorbachev began to inadvertently dismantle the Communist Party structures that were the most important foundation and superstructure of the USSR. It was the Communist Party structures which negated the local tendencies that made up the Union (making it a centralised union under party control). In eliminating the cohesiveness of the Party, Gorbachev undermined the Union

by making it into a federation, in which the right to secede was encouraged and inevitably followed.

In the dispersal of power within the Union, the Supreme Soviets of the Republics began to act in accordance with the logic of Gorbachev's reforms. And the Armenians were the first people to notice this and to test its application in practice in relation to Karabakh.

For good or ill the Soviet authority in the South Caucasus established in 1920 and the settlement/delineation of territory led to the suppressing of national conflicts in the area. A passage from a 1930s Soviet publication cannot be doubted on this:

"The entire population of whole towns used to be slaughtered; and hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Azerbaijanians perished in mutual hostilities... As a result of the internecine slaughter of that period, from 70-90% of the population perished in some districts of the Transcaucasus. The ruins of ancient Shusha, one of the most highly cultured cities of the Transcaucasian Middle Ages, which was destroyed in 1920, are still to be seen.

The national problem of the Transcaucasus was solved forever by the Soviet power. The principles of Soviet autonomy have been put into practice and have done away with all controversial questions. Those who profited by dissensions between the peoples are no more. The Soviet Transcaucasus has forgotten about national antagonism: this most difficult problem has been solved by the Socialist Revolution, on the basis of the teachings of Lenin and Stalin on the national question.

National peace, which followed upon century-long hostility, meant the development of the cultures of each of the peoples of the Transcaucasus..." (Nicholas Mikhailov, *Land of the Soviets: A Handbook of the U.S.S.R.*, p.240-1)

What was settled in the 1920s was seen as permanent. It represented a resolution of the ethnic and national conflicts that had plagued the region since the rise of nationalism – particularly its Armenian variety – a generation before. The settlement was enforced through Soviet power in which compromises were hammered out. Significantly, it is this settlement and delineation of national territories which now forms the basis of the new geopolitical reality of 2020. However, Gorbachev unravelled this carefully imposed settlement and power structures that kept the peace in the Southern Caucasus for 70 years.

Gorbachev encouraged a belief in Armenia that in the new openness, sacred aspects of the Union could be challenged and potentially over-turned. Therefore, the primary direction that his Perestroika took in Armenia was the creation of a great nationalist movement with an irredentist cause. Within this new nationalist movement developed a leadership which became known as the 'Karabagh Committee' who decided on strategy and tactics, and organised a program for action.

The nationalist deviation within the Armenian Communist Party which sought to put the status of Karabakh back on the table were soon complemented by a populist mass movement. Large demonstrations in the latter part of 1987, starting in thousands and reaching a million, began to appear in Yerevan, demanding the secession of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from Azerbaijan and its unification with Armenia. These were the biggest demonstrations ever seen in the history of the Soviet Union. Many of the demonstrators carried Gorbachev portraits. The Soviet leader had encouraged the belief that he would right so-called "historic wrongs." The biggest rightable wrong for the Armenians was the inclusion of Karabakh in Azerbaijan. A big petition drive was initiated within NKAO itself during the fall of 1987, with the petitions being sent to Moscow in January 1988. Gorbachev appealed for moderation from the Armenian leaders and pleaded with them not to raise the territorial issue, since this was not what he meant by perestroika.

But the Armenians persisted and large scale ethnic cleansing took place during 1988, leading to refugees taking flight from both Armenia and Azerbaijan. In January 1989 Gorbachev had to declare martial law in Karabakh to suppress Armenian paramilitaries, gun-running and the intimidation of Azerbaijanis.

Gorbachev admitted the destabilising effect of his policies in his memoirs, when talking about the 1985-7 period: "In three years, the Central Committee received 500 letters about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Perestroika set in motion large internal forces and opened chronic abscesses. National feelings and national extremism revived alongside."

One Armenian eyewitness to the great million-strong demonstrations in Yerevan, noted: "The worldview that gradually coalesced among Soviet Armenians was demolished. The relative security that characterised seven decades of Soviet rule melted away, as did the constraints of the Soviet political system..." (Joseph Masih and Robert Krikorian, *Armenia at the Crossroads*, p.6.)

This is a very important point to understand in the tragic events which then unfolded involving the deaths of tens of thousands and the ethnic cleansing of over a million from their homes. What started as an attempt to provoke popular enthusiasm for "reform" and outflank opposition to it, instead stimulated movements for the dismantling of the Soviet State itself, when Gorbachev proved incapable of satisfying the demands he encouraged. This had a doubly destructive effect because inciting the masses in Armenia and Karabakh against the national settlement upon which the Union was constructed inevitably had greatly destabilising effects on neighbouring states. It was sheer and unadulterated madness on Gorbachev's part which shattered the internationalism of the USSR.

The heading 'Karabakh and the beginning of the end of the USSR' in Thomas De Waal's *Black Garden* book about the Karabakh conflict is not overstated. The Karabakh movement unleashed by Gorbachev turned into an anti-USSR force after Gorbachev failed to satisfy the irredentist demands of the Armenians. These events triggered large counter-demonstrations in Baku. A new form of street politics had been introduced into the Soviet Union by the activities of the Karabakh activists in Yerevan.

Azerbaijan was taken by surprise by these developments, and particularly by the sudden appearance of a mass nationalist movement within the Soviet Union, demanding a part of its territory. History has shown the Azerbaijanis to be a people who are generally loyal to stable, lawful authority, from whatever source it comes. Lives were lived within Tsarist Russia without incidents of any note (aside from those of 1905-06 provoked by Armenian revolutionary groups), the British occupation of 1918-19 was embraced for its stability, and the Bolshevik era was entirely peaceful after some initial resistance.

In 1987-8 the Azerbaijanis really had one requirement of the Soviet Union – that it defend the settlement it had imposed in the 1920s, and put down the separatist movement in the accepted fashion. That was a very reasonable request to make of the Soviet leadership, who had shown every willingness to engage in such vigorous defence of state structures in the past. Azerbaijan was part of the USSR and had no army to defend its territories against the Armenian separatists, itself. It relied totally on the Union of which it and Armenia formed part, and trusted it to defend its territory and citizens in Karabakh.

While the Armenians were pretty certain of what they wanted during the 1988-90 period, the Azerbaijanis, on the other hand, displayed great uncertainty within the general confusion brought about by Gorbachev. Their problem stemmed from the fact that the Soviet Union had a more profound effect on them. It had contributed greatly to the national development of Azerbaijan and when it began to fracture, they were greatly divided about

what to do about it. The Azerbaijani Communist Party was one of the most loyal and dependable of the Union's components and there was still considerable support in the society for the existing system. As the Soviet Union began to become incoherent under Gorbachev's leadership the Azerbaijanis continued to base their arguments on Soviet principles of nationality and cited Article 78 of the Brezhnev Constitution, which barred territorial changes without the consent of Republics concerned, in defence of territorial integrity. The Armenians simply asserted their claim over Karabakh.

Azerbaijan stuck to the letter of the 1936 Constitution of the USSR and expected the First Secretary of the USSR to defend it:

"ARTICLE 18. The territory of a Union Republic may not be altered without its consent.

ARTICLE 19. The laws of the U.S.S.R. have the same force within the territory of every Union Republic.

ARTICLE 20. In the event of a discrepancy between a law of a Union Republic and an all-Union law, the all-Union law prevails.

ARTICLE 24. The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic includes the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region."

The demonstrations in Lenin Square in Baku that began in 1988 were motivated primarily by the secessionist movement in Karabakh, what was happening to Azerbaijanis in Armenia and Karabakh, the Soviet authorities failure to stop it and what was thought to be the one-sided approach of Moscow to events. It was felt that Azerbaijanis were being judged against strict Soviet standards while the Armenians were pursuing nationalist aggression with seeming impunity. Before the massacre in Baku the following political events in Armenia and Karabakh greatly alarmed people in Azerbaijan and put them on the streets to demonstrate against the seeming impotence of the Azerbaijan Communist Party to act:

On 13 February, 1988, first demonstration in Khankendi/Stepanakert. Traditionally considered the start of the separatist movement.

On February 20, 1988, the NKAO Supreme Council issued a request to transfer the region to Soviet Armenia.

On 15 June, 1988, the Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet [highest legislative organ of the Republic] passed an (illegal) resolution granting the (illegal) request of the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) to unite the NKAO with Armenia.

On December 1, 1989, Parliament of Armenian SSR issued decree on unification of NKAO as well as Shaumyan (currently Goranboy) and Khanlar districts (not part of NKAO) to Armenia, thus infringing Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity once more.

On January 9, 1990, the Armenian SSR Parliament adopted a budget for both Armenia and Karabakh (NKAO) in the financial plan.

It was this last provocative act of the Yerevan government which prompted the Popular Front in Azerbaijan to set up committees for "the defence of the nation".

Azerbaijani Communist officials were unable to gain control of the deteriorating situation, and directed the 12,000 troops of the Interior Ministry to stay in their barracks in case their appearance sparked further violence. That led to a breakdown in public order and attacks on Armenians in Baku by mobs of angry people frustrated at the lack of action against the separatists who were driving Azerbaijanis out of Armenia and Karabakh.

The Azerbaijan Popular Front took control in many regions and on January 18, it called on residents of Baku to block the main access routes into the Azerbaijani capital in order to block any Soviet forces that might be sent against them and its activists. That led Soviet officials in Baku to pull back forces to the outskirts of the city where they established a new command post to direct their response. That response was not long in coming. On January 19, Gorbachev signed a decree calling for the introduction of forces to restore order and counter the actions of the Popular Front. USSR Defence Minister, Dimitri Yazov, stated that the use of force in Baku was intended to prevent the de facto takeover of the Azerbaijani government by the non-Communist opposition.

On January 19, 1990, energy supplies in Baku and communications were blown up by units of Soviet intelligence. In the evening hours, the Soviet army of 26,000 troops with armoured vehicles entered Baku from five directions. The assault was led by the elite Tula paratroop division commanded by General Alexandr Lebed, regarded as one of the USSR's toughest military and most ruthless commanders. The Soviet army entered the city shooting indiscriminately at unarmed civilians who opposed them or who just happened to be there. Tanks and heavy armoured vehicles were driven over people, while paratroopers fired at ambulances and buses. That night, 130 civilians lost their lives in Baku. Others probably died too, because relatives buried bodies privately in many cases in fear of retribution from the authorities. More than 744 others were wounded. 841 civilians were arrested in Baku and other cities and regions of the republic, 112 of whom were sent to prisons in different cities of the USSR.

There was, therefore, great shock on January 20 1990, after the massacre on the excuse of restoring order in the city. This was particularly the case because any disorder that was occurring in Baku was entirely the product of Gorbachev's own policies and the separatist campaign that it had unleashed against a powerless Azerbaijan government.

The former Politburo member, Heydar Aliyev, was in retirement in Moscow when the news of the tragic events of Black January reached him. He had been sidelined by Gorbachev a few years earlier, as an obstacle to perestroika, along with some senior Armenian Communists who he might have been able to work with to resolve the dispute over Karabakh. Aliyev was prevented from going to Baku to convey his condolences to the Azerbaijani people, but told representatives in Moscow that he considered the Soviet actions "illegal, hostile to democracy and totally contradictory to the principles of human rights and a legitimate nation [USSR]." Aliyev blamed the tragedy on the Communist Party's failure to deal with the Karabakh issue when it arose and letting it drift, through weak leadership. The Party had become disconnected from the people with the result that its army dealt with them through a massacre:

"Two years should have been sufficient time... to settle this problem and to put an end to internal and national conflicts, and to create conditions for independent life in the USSR for every citizen regardless of their nationality. If, in the early stages of the Karabakh problem, party leaders... had taken appropriate steps, the tension would not have escalated. . . and the parties would not have suffered so many casualties. What is more important is that there would not have been this massacre of January 19-20, 1990..."

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan government leaders as well as the Supreme Political leaders did not use such opportunities. It would have been possible to stop the encroachment of our borders had it been done in time. Three months ago, the people put forward their demands regarding the borders. But nobody wanted to meet with them, to take their problem seriously... Let me repeat. It would have been possible to calm the people

down. If the question of strengthening the party leaders of Azerbaijan had been considered, the situation would not have become tense, and it would not have been necessary for the army to enter. I think that there were many chances to control the situation from a political point of view. But these chances were not taken, and the Soviet Army and a large contingent of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR invaded Baku.

The result is obvious. We are all aware of the tragedies that have resulted. I consider this a political error. Yes, a political blunder has been committed. Authorities simply could not evaluate the real political situation in the Republic. Nor did they know the psychology of the Azerbaijani people, as there were weak relations with various strata of the population. It seems that they did not realize that this would result in tragedy... The army invaded the city and innocent people died. . . . All those who were involved in wreaking this havoc on our country must be brought to justice." (Gatiyyatin Tantanasi, *Triumph of Determination*, pp. 31-4. *Azerbaijan International* (7.4) Winter 1999, p.18.)

Speaking out in Moscow was a brave move and it distinguished Aliyev from the Azerbaijani Communists who subserviently acquiesced to the massacre. Independent Azerbaijan gained the leader it needed to construct an independent state out of the ruins of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. Unfortunately for Azerbaijan it had to pass through more than 3 years of turmoil before Heydar Aliyev was able to assume control of the state in late 1993. By then the Karabakh war and large amounts of national territory was, to all intents and purposes, already lost.

Moscow justified its actions on the basis that there was inter-communal violence taking place in Baku with most of the victims being Armenian. This had been sparked off by the decision of Yerevan on January 10th to include NKAO in its budget and grant its citizens the right to vote in Armenian elections – a clear attempt at annexation. There were then reports of Azerbaijani villages in Shaumyan and Khanlar regions, which Yerevan were demanding to be incorporated into NKAO, being attacked by Armenian paramilitaries. Inter-ethnic conflict is inevitable when political structures collapse and authority is absent in restoring stability.

However, there was little connection between this inter-communal violence, which occurred weeks earlier and had led to the evacuation of most Armenians from Baku, and the massive response from the Soviet forces. What occurred was what the British used to call an "administrative massacre" when it was practised in India in places like Amritsar. An "administrative massacre" is where the state employs massive violence in a single event to intimidate a population into passivity. That is what Black January was.

In its report "Black January in Azerbaijan," Human Rights Watch stated: "...the violence used by the Soviet Army on the night of January 19-20 was so out of proportion to the resistance offered by Azerbaijanis as to constitute an exercise in collective punishment. . . .the punishment inflicted on Baku by Soviet soldiers may have been intended as a warning to nationalists, not only in Azerbaijan but in the other republics of the Soviet Union." The killing was conducted right across the city and indiscriminately.

The effect of this "administrative massacre" by Gorbachev's forces, aimed at subduing the Azerbaijani masses, had precisely the opposite effect. It led to mass resistance to the Soviet curfew by around 750,000 of Azerbaijanis at the funerals of the victims and an irresistible movement toward independence. By stirring up Armenian nationalism and reopening the Karabakh issue, Gorbachev produced a reaction in Azerbaijan that resulted in Soviet authority crumbling across the region.

A photo-journalist later recalled the atmosphere he found in Baku after the massacre:

“I’ll never forget how sad everybody was. I’ve visited more than 85 countries in my lifetime, but I would have to admit that during those days, Baku was the saddest city I had ever seen in all my life. The people were in a daze, totally shocked and disoriented. It was incomprehensible to them that the Russians had orchestrated an attack on them and killed innocent people. After all, they had been taught for 70 years about the great brotherhood of the Soviet Union.

But in the midst of all this sadness, I detected another phenomenon. It seemed people realised that the Soviet Union was collapsing. An analogy could be made to living with a mate and finally reaching the decision that it was time to divorce. And this feeling of separation and desire for independence somehow seemed to give the nation dignity in the midst of its despair over the loss of so many friends and family members. It was like Azerbaijanis had made up their mind to move on. That they knew what to do. That the decision had been made.

During the early demonstrations, Azerbaijanis had sought better relations with the Soviets because they believed in the relationship. After Black January, they knew the relationship was over.”

A brutal and needless massacre like Black January was not likely to intimidate people in the way repression worked in the former days of the USSR. It worked in the opposite way and was senseless in all senses of the word.

Black January in Baku briefly became headline news in the West and a propaganda weapon against Soviet repression. But the important thing for the U.S. was to keep Gorbachev in power while he proceeded to wreck the USSR. William Taubman, an academic from Amherst College, Massachusetts, went on to write a glorifying biography of the last Soviet leader, for which he won many academic accolades. Using Gorbachev’s personal archives he described the Baku massacre as a rescue mission conducted by Soviet forces to save Armenians who were being thrown out of apartments. It was all part of the propagandist disinformation produced in the West to whitewash the truth, in service of Gorbachev’s reputation. The man responsible for the massacre of 130 or more in Baku went on to win a Nobel Peace Prize in the same year as Black January and the tragic events of 1990 were quickly forgotten in the West.

Pat Walsh

What about all the Western military operations near us? A letter

Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney is to raise concerns and express the Government’s unhappiness with the Russian ambassador over planned Russian naval exercises 240km off the south-west coast of Ireland.

This Russian military exercise is fully in accordance with international laws.

No such concerns were raised when Britain and its Nato allies staged several naval exercises off the north coast of Ireland in recent years, coming as close as 32km from Malin Head on April 29, 2021.

Damien McCallig, chief engineer on the RV Celtic Explorer, took photos of a possibly nuclear-armed submarine and told the Irish Examiner: “The sub passed us this morning at 6am 20 miles northwest of Malin Head.”

In October 2020, a total of 11 Nato nations took part in exercise Joint Warrior, bringing 28 warships, two submarines, 81 aircraft off the coasts of Scotland, some of which came within 80km of the Inishowen Peninsula.

The departments of Foreign Affairs and Transport have approved the refuelling of an estimated 15,000 US military-associated aircraft at Shannon Airport over the past 20 years, transporting over three million armed US soldiers and an unknown quantity of munitions to and from illegal wars in the Middle East that have cost the lives of millions of people.

Is this the behaviour of a genuine neutral country towards promoting international peace and justice in accordance with Article 29 of Bunreacht na hÉireann?

Edward Horgan
Castletroy, Co Limerick
Irish Independent 25/1/22

Some books by Pat Walsh published by Athol Books and available at <https://www.atholbooks-sales.org>

- Britain’s Great War, Pope Benedict’s Lost Peace How Britain Blocked The Pope’s Peace Efforts Between 1915 and 1918
- Centenary Of The Balfour Declaration, 1917
- Why did they do it? Ireland’s Great War On Turkey, 1914 - 24
- Lord Hankey: How We Planned The Great War
- Remembering Gallipoli President McAleese’s Great War Crusade
- Roger Casement on the Great War: A commentary on ‘Sir Roger Casement on Sir Edward Grey’ and on ‘A Pacific Blockade’
- The Great Fraud Of 1914-18
- The Armenian Insurrection And The Great War Including two pamphlets by “Armen Garo”

On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians

July 12, 2021 Vladimir Putin

During the recent Direct Line, when I was asked about Russian-Ukrainian relations, I said that Russians and Ukrainians were one people – a single whole. These words were not driven by some short-term considerations or prompted by the current political context. It is what I have said on numerous occasions and what I firmly believe. I therefore feel it necessary to explain my position in detail and share my assessments of today's situation.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that the wall that has emerged in recent years between Russia and Ukraine, between the parts of what is essentially the same historical and spiritual space, to my mind is our great common misfortune and tragedy. These are, first and foremost, the consequences of our own mistakes made at different periods of time. But these are also the result of deliberate efforts by those forces that have always sought to undermine our unity. The formula they apply has been known from time immemorial – divide and rule. There is nothing new here. Hence the attempts to play on the “national question” and sow discord among people, the overarching goal being to divide and then to pit the parts of a single people against one another.

To have a better understanding of the present and look into the future, we need to turn to history. Certainly, it is impossible to cover in this article all the developments that have taken place over more than a thousand years. But I will focus on the key, pivotal moments that are important for us to remember, both in Russia and Ukraine.

Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians are all descendants of Ancient Rus, which was the largest state in Europe. Slavic and other tribes across the vast territory – from Ladoga, Novgorod, and Pskov to Kiev and Chernigov – were bound together by one language (which we now refer to as Old Russian), economic ties, the rule of the princes of the Rurik dynasty, and – after the baptism of Rus – the Orthodox faith. The spiritual choice made by St. Vladimir, who was both Prince of Novgorod and Grand Prince of Kiev, still largely determines our affinity today.

The throne of Kiev held a dominant position in Ancient Rus. This had been the custom since the late 9th century. The Tale of Bygone Years captured for posterity the words of Oleg the Prophet about Kiev, “Let it be the mother of all Russian cities.”

Later, like other European states of that time, Ancient Rus faced a decline of central rule and fragmentation. At the same time, both the nobility and the common people perceived Rus as a common territory, as their homeland.

The fragmentation intensified after Batu Khan's devastating invasion, which ravaged many cities, including Kiev. The northeastern part of Rus fell under the control of the Golden Horde but retained limited sovereignty. The southern and western Russian lands largely became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which – most significantly – was referred to in historical records as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Russia.

Members of the princely and “boyar” clans would change service from one prince to another, feuding with each other but also making friendships and alliances. Voivode Bobrok of Volyn and the sons of Grand Duke of Lithuania Algirdas – Andrey of Polotsk and Dmitry of Bryansk – fought next to Grand Duke Dmitry Ivanovich of Moscow on the Kulikovo

field. At the same time, Grand Duke of Lithuania Jogaila – son of the Princess of Tver – led his troops to join with Mamai. These are all pages of our shared history, reflecting its complex and multi-dimensional nature.

Most importantly, people both in the western and eastern Russian lands spoke the same language. Their faith was Orthodox. Up to the middle of the 15th century, the unified church government remained in place.

At a new stage of historical development, both Lithuanian Rus and Moscow Rus could have become the points of attraction and consolidation of the territories of Ancient Rus. It so happened that Moscow became the center of reunification, continuing the tradition of ancient Russian statehood. Moscow princes – the descendants of Prince Alexander Nevsky – cast off the foreign yoke and began gathering the Russian lands.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, other processes were unfolding. In the 14th century, Lithuania's ruling elite converted to Catholicism. In the 16th century, it signed the Union of Lublin with the Kingdom of Poland to form the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Polish Catholic nobility received considerable land holdings and privileges in the territory of Rus. In accordance with the 1596 Union of Brest, part of the western Russian Orthodox clergy submitted to the authority of the Pope. The process of Polonization and Latinization began, ousting Orthodoxy.

As a consequence, in the 16–17th centuries, the liberation movement of the Orthodox population was gaining strength in the Dnieper region. The events during the times of Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky became a turning point. His supporters struggled for autonomy from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In its 1649 appeal to the king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Zaporizhian Host demanded that the rights of the Russian Orthodox population be respected, that the voivode of Kiev be Russian and of Greek faith, and that the persecution of the churches of God be stopped. But the Cossacks were not heard.

Bohdan Khmelnytsky then made appeals to Moscow, which were considered by the Zemsky Sobor. On 1 October 1653, members of the supreme representative body of the Russian state decided to support their brothers in faith and take them under patronage. In January 1654, the Pereyaslav Council confirmed that decision. Subsequently, the ambassadors of Bohdan Khmelnytsky and Moscow visited dozens of cities, including Kiev, whose populations swore allegiance to the Russian tsar. Incidentally, nothing of the kind happened at the conclusion of the Union of Lublin.

In a letter to Moscow in 1654, Bohdan Khmelnytsky thanked Tsar Aleksey Mikhaylovich for taking “the whole Zaporizhian Host and the whole Russian Orthodox world under the strong and high hand of the Tsar”. It means that, in their appeals to both the Polish king and the Russian tsar, the Cossacks referred to and defined themselves as Russian Orthodox people.

Over the course of the protracted war between the Russian state and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, some of the hetmans, successors of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, would “detach themselves” from Moscow or seek support from Sweden, Poland, or Turkey. But, again, for the people, that was a war of liberation. It ended with the Truce of Andrusovo in 1667. The final outcome was sealed by the Treaty of Perpetual Peace in 1686. The Russian state incorporated the city of Kiev and the lands on the left

bank of the Dnieper River, including Poltava region, Chernigov region, and Zaporozhye. Their inhabitants were reunited with the main part of the Russian Orthodox people. These territories were referred to as “Malorossia” (Little Russia).

The name “Ukraine” was used more often in the meaning of the Old Russian word ”okraina“ (periphery), which is found in written sources from the 12th century, referring to various border territories. And the word “Ukrainian“, judging by archival documents, originally referred to frontier guards who protected the external borders.

On the right bank, which remained under the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the old orders were restored, and social and religious oppression intensified. On the contrary, the lands on the left bank, taken under the protection of the unified state, saw rapid development. People from the other bank of the Dnieper moved here en masse. They sought support from people who spoke the same language and had the same faith.

During the Great Northern War with Sweden, the people in Malorossia were not faced with a choice of whom to side with. Only a small portion of the Cossacks supported Mazepa’s rebellion. People of all orders and degrees considered themselves Russian and Orthodox.

Cossack senior officers belonging to the nobility would reach the heights of political, diplomatic, and military careers in Russia. Graduates of Kiev-Mohyla Academy played a leading role in church life. This was also the case during the Hetmanate – an essentially autonomous state formation with a special internal structure – and later in the Russian Empire. Malorussians in many ways helped build a big common country – its statehood, culture, and science. They participated in the exploration and development of the Urals, Siberia, the Caucasus, and the Far East. Incidentally, during the Soviet period, natives of Ukraine held major, including the highest, posts in the leadership of the unified state. Suffice it to say that Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev, whose party biography was most closely associated with Ukraine, led the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) for almost 30 years.

In the second half of the 18th century, following the wars with the Ottoman Empire, Russia incorporated Crimea and the lands of the Black Sea region, which became known as Novorossiya. They were populated by people from all of the Russian provinces. After the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire regained the western Old Russian lands, with the exception of Galicia and Transcarpathia, which became part of the Austrian – and later Austro-Hungarian – Empire.

The incorporation of the western Russian lands into the single state was not merely the result of political and diplomatic decisions. It was underlain by the common faith, shared cultural traditions, and – I would like to emphasize it once again – language similarity. Thus, as early as the beginning of the 17th century, one of the hierarchs of the Uniate Church, Joseph Rutsky, communicated to Rome that people in Moscovia called Russians from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth their brothers, that their written language was absolutely identical, and differences in the vernacular were insignificant. He drew an analogy with the residents of Rome and Bergamo. These are, as we know, the center and the north of modern Italy.

Many centuries of fragmentation and living within different states naturally brought about regional language peculiarities, resulting in the emergence of dialects. The vernacular enriched the literary language. Ivan Kotlyarevsky, Grigory Skovoroda, and Taras Shevchenko played a huge role here. Their works are our common literary and cultural heritage. Taras Shevchenko wrote poetry in the Ukrainian language, and prose mainly in Russian. The books of Nikolay Gogol, a Russian patriot

and native of Poltavshchyna, are written in Russian, bristling with Malorussian folk sayings and motifs. How can this heritage be divided between Russia and Ukraine? And why do it?

The south-western lands of the Russian Empire, Malorussia and Novorossiya, and the Crimea developed as ethnically and religiously diverse entities. Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Karaites, Krymchaks, Bulgarians, Poles, Serbs, Germans, and other peoples lived here. They all preserved their faith, traditions, and customs.

I am not going to idealise anything. We do know there were the Valuev Circular of 1863 and then the Ems Ukaz of 1876, which restricted the publication and importation of religious and socio-political literature in the Ukrainian language. But it is important to be mindful of the historical context. These decisions were taken against the backdrop of dramatic events in Poland and the desire of the leaders of the Polish national movement to exploit the “Ukrainian issue“ to their own advantage. I should add that works of fiction, books of Ukrainian poetry and folk songs continued to be published. There is objective evidence that the Russian Empire was witnessing an active process of development of the Malorussian cultural identity within the greater Russian nation, which united the Velikorussians, the Malorussians and the Belorussians.

At the same time, the idea of Ukrainian people as a nation separate from the Russians started to form and gain ground among the Polish elite and a part of the Malorussian intelligentsia. Since there was no historical basis – and could not have been any, conclusions were substantiated by all sorts of concoctions, which went as far as to claim that the Ukrainians are the true Slavs and the Russians, the Muscovites, are not. Such “hypotheses“ became increasingly used for political purposes as a tool of rivalry between European states.

Since the late 19th century, the Austro-Hungarian authorities had latched onto this narrative, using it as a counterbalance to the Polish national movement and pro-Muscovite sentiments in Galicia. During World War I, Vienna played a role in the formation of the so-called Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen. Galicians suspected of sympathies with Orthodox Christianity and Russia were subjected to brutal repression and thrown into the concentration camps of Thalerhof and Terezin.

Further developments had to do with the collapse of European empires, the fierce civil war that broke out across the vast territory of the former Russian Empire, and foreign intervention.

After the February Revolution, in March 1917, the Central Rada was established in Kiev, intended to become the organ of supreme power. In November 1917, in its Third Universal, it declared the creation of the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UPR) as part of Russia.

In December 1917, UPR representatives arrived in Brest-Litovsk, where Soviet Russia was negotiating with Germany and its allies. At a meeting on 10 January 1918, the head of the Ukrainian delegation read out a note proclaiming the independence of Ukraine. Subsequently, the Central Rada proclaimed Ukraine independent in its Fourth Universal.

The declared sovereignty did not last long. Just a few weeks later, Rada delegates signed a separate treaty with the German bloc countries. Germany and Austria-Hungary were at the time in a dire situation and needed Ukrainian bread and raw materials. In order to secure large-scale supplies, they obtained consent for sending their troops and technical staff to the UPR. In fact, this was used as a pretext for occupation.

For those who have today given up the full control of Ukraine to external forces, it would be instructive to remember that, back in 1918, such a decision proved fatal for the ruling

regime in Kiev. With the direct involvement of the occupying forces, the Central Rada was overthrown and Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi was brought to power, proclaiming instead of the UPR the Ukrainian State, which was essentially under German protectorate.

In November 1918 – following the revolutionary events in Germany and Austria-Hungary – Pavlo Skoropadskyi, who had lost the support of German bayonets, took a different course, declaring that “Ukraine is to take the lead in the formation of an All-Russian Federation“. However, the regime was soon changed again. It was now the time of the so-called Directorate.

In autumn 1918, Ukrainian nationalists proclaimed the West Ukrainian People’s Republic (WUPR) and, in January 1919, announced its unification with the Ukrainian People’s Republic. In July 1919, Ukrainian forces were crushed by Polish troops, and the territory of the former WUPR came under the Polish rule.

In April 1920, Symon Petliura (portrayed as one of the “heroes“ in today’s Ukraine) concluded secret conventions on behalf of the UPR Directorate, giving up – in exchange for military support – Galicia and Western Volhynia lands to Poland. In May 1920, Petliurites entered Kiev in a convoy of Polish military units. But not for long. As early as November 1920, following a truce between Poland and Soviet Russia, the remnants of Petliura’s forces surrendered to those same Poles.

The example of the UPR shows that different kinds of quasi-state formations that emerged across the former Russian Empire at the time of the Civil War and turbulence were inherently unstable. Nationalists sought to create their own independent states, while leaders of the White movement advocated indivisible Russia. Many of the republics established by the Bolsheviks’ supporters did not see themselves outside Russia either. Nevertheless, Bolshevik Party leaders sometimes basically drove them out of Soviet Russia for various reasons.

Thus, in early 1918, the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic was proclaimed and asked Moscow to incorporate it into Soviet Russia. This was met with a refusal. During a meeting with the republic’s leaders, Vladimir Lenin insisted that they act as part of Soviet Ukraine. On 15 March 1918, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) directly ordered that delegates be sent to the Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, including from the Donetsk Basin, and that “one government for all of Ukraine“ be created at the congress. The territories of the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic later formed most of the regions of south-eastern Ukraine.

Under the 1921 Treaty of Riga, concluded between the Russian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR and Poland, the western lands of the former Russian Empire were ceded to Poland. In the interwar period, the Polish government pursued an active resettlement policy, seeking to change the ethnic composition of the Eastern Borderlands – the Polish name for what is now Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and parts of Lithuania. The areas were subjected to harsh Polonisation, local culture and traditions suppressed. Later, during World War II, radical groups of Ukrainian nationalists used this as a pretext for terror not only against Polish, but also against Jewish and Russian populations.

In 1922, when the USSR was created, with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic becoming one of its founders, a rather fierce debate among the Bolshevik leaders resulted in the implementation of Lenin’s plan to form a union state as a federation of equal republics. The right for the republics to freely secede from the Union was included in the text of the Declaration on the Creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, subsequently, in the 1924 USSR Constitution. By doing so, the authors planted in the foundation

of our statehood the most dangerous time bomb, which exploded the moment the safety mechanism provided by the leading role of the CPSU was gone, the party itself collapsing from within. A “parade of sovereignties“ followed. On 8 December 1991, the so-called Belovezh Agreement on the Creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States was signed, stating that “the USSR as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality no longer existed.“ By the way, Ukraine never signed or ratified the CIS Charter adopted back in 1993.

In the 1920’s-1930’s, the Bolsheviks actively promoted the “localization policy“, which took the form of Ukrainization in the Ukrainian SSR. Symbolically, as part of this policy and with consent of the Soviet authorities, Mikhail Grushevskiy, former chairman of Central Rada, one of the ideologists of Ukrainian nationalism, who at a certain period of time had been supported by Austria-Hungary, was returned to the USSR and was elected member of the Academy of Sciences.

The localization policy undoubtedly played a major role in the development and consolidation of the Ukrainian culture, language and identity. At the same time, under the guise of combating the so-called Russian great-power chauvinism, Ukrainization was often imposed on those who did not see themselves as Ukrainians. This Soviet national policy secured at the state level the provision on three separate Slavic peoples: Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian, instead of the large Russian nation, a triune people comprising Velikorussians, Malorussians and Belorussians.

In 1939, the USSR regained the lands earlier seized by Poland. A major portion of these became part of the Soviet Ukraine. In 1940, the Ukrainian SSR incorporated part of Bessarabia, which had been occupied by Romania since 1918, as well as Northern Bukovina. In 1948, Zmeyiniy Island (Snake Island) in the Black Sea became part of Ukraine. In 1954, the Crimean Region of the RSFSR was given to the Ukrainian SSR, in gross violation of legal norms that were in force at the time.

I would like to dwell on the destiny of Carpathian Ruthenia, which became part of Czechoslovakia following the breakup of Austria-Hungary. Rusins made up a considerable share of local population. While this is hardly mentioned any longer, after the liberation of Transcarpathia by Soviet troops the congress of the Orthodox population of the region voted for the inclusion of Carpathian Ruthenia in the RSFSR or, as a separate Carpathian republic, in the USSR proper. Yet the choice of people was ignored. In summer 1945, the historical act of the reunification of Carpathian Ukraine “with its ancient motherland, Ukraine“ – as The Pravda newspaper put it – was announced.

Therefore, modern Ukraine is entirely the product of the Soviet era. We know and remember well that it was shaped – for a significant part – on the lands of historical Russia. To make sure of that, it is enough to look at the boundaries of the lands reunited with the Russian state in the 17th century and the territory of the Ukrainian SSR when it left the Soviet Union.

The Bolsheviks treated the Russian people as inexhaustible material for their social experiments. They dreamt of a world revolution that would wipe out national states. That is why they were so generous in drawing borders and bestowing territorial gifts. It is no longer important what exactly the idea of the Bolshevik leaders who were chopping the country into pieces was. We can disagree about minor details, background and logics behind certain decisions. One fact is crystal clear: Russia was robbed, indeed.

When working on this article, I relied on open-source documents that contain well-known facts rather than on some secret records. The leaders of modern Ukraine and their

external “patrons” prefer to overlook these facts. They do not miss a chance, however, both inside the country and abroad, to condemn “the crimes of the Soviet regime,” listing among them events with which neither the CPSU, nor the USSR, let alone modern Russia, have anything to do. At the same time, the Bolsheviks’ efforts to detach from Russia its historical territories are not considered a crime. And we know why: if they brought about the weakening of Russia, our ill-wishers are happy with that.

Of course, inside the USSR, borders between republics were never seen as state borders; they were nominal within a single country, which, while featuring all the attributes of a federation, was highly centralized – this, again, was secured by the CPSU’s leading role. But in 1991, all those territories, and, which is more important, people, found themselves abroad overnight, taken away, this time indeed, from their historical motherland.

What can be said to this? Things change: countries and communities are no exception. Of course, some part of a people in the process of its development, influenced by a number of reasons and historical circumstances, can become aware of itself as a separate nation at a certain moment. How should we treat that? There is only one answer: with respect!

You want to establish a state of your own: you are welcome! But what are the terms? I will recall the assessment given by one of the most prominent political figures of new Russia, first mayor of Saint Petersburg Anatoly Sobchak. As a legal expert who believed that every decision must be legitimate, in 1992, he shared the following opinion: the republics that were founders of the Union, having denounced the 1922 Union Treaty, must return to the boundaries they had had before joining the Soviet Union. All other territorial acquisitions are subject to discussion, negotiations, given that the ground has been revoked.

In other words, when you leave, take what you brought with you. This logic is hard to refute. I will just say that the Bolsheviks had embarked on reshaping boundaries even before the Soviet Union, manipulating with territories to their liking, in disregard of people’s views.

The Russian Federation recognized the new geopolitical realities: and not only recognized, but, indeed, did a lot for Ukraine to establish itself as an independent country. Throughout the difficult 1990’s and in the new millennium, we have provided considerable support to Ukraine. Whatever “political arithmetic” of its own Kiev may wish to apply, in 1991–2013, Ukraine’s budget savings amounted to more than USD 82 billion, while today, it holds on to the mere USD 1.5 billion of Russian payments for gas transit to Europe. If economic ties between our countries had been retained, Ukraine would enjoy the benefit of tens of billions of dollars.

Ukraine and Russia have developed as a single economic system over decades and centuries. The profound cooperation we had 30 years ago is an example for the European Union to look up to. We are natural complementary economic partners. Such a close relationship can strengthen competitive advantages, increasing the potential of both countries.

Ukraine used to possess great potential, which included powerful infrastructure, gas transportation system, advanced shipbuilding, aviation, rocket and instrument engineering industries, as well as world-class scientific, design and engineering schools. Taking over this legacy and declaring independence, Ukrainian leaders promised that the Ukrainian economy would be one of the leading ones and the standard of living would be among the best in Europe.

Today, high-tech industrial giants that were once the pride of Ukraine and the entire Union, are sinking. Engineering

output has dropped by 42 per cent over ten years. The scale of deindustrialization and overall economic degradation is visible in Ukraine’s electricity production, which has seen a nearly two-time decrease in 30 years. Finally, according to IMF reports, in 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic broke out, Ukraine’s GDP per capita had been below USD 4 thousand. This is less than in the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Moldova, or unrecognized Kosovo. Nowadays, Ukraine is Europe’s poorest country.

Who is to blame for this? Is it the people of Ukraine’s fault? Certainly not. It was the Ukrainian authorities who wasted and frittered away the achievements of many generations. We know how hardworking and talented the people of Ukraine are. They can achieve success and outstanding results with perseverance and determination. And these qualities, as well as their openness, innate optimism and hospitality have not gone. The feelings of millions of people who treat Russia not just well but with great affection, just as we feel about Ukraine, remain the same.

Until 2014, hundreds of agreements and joint projects were aimed at developing our economies, business and cultural ties, strengthening security, and solving common social and environmental problems. They brought tangible benefits to people – both in Russia and Ukraine. This is what we believed to be most important. And that is why we had a fruitful interaction with all, I emphasize, with all the leaders of Ukraine.

Even after the events in Kiev of 2014, I charged the Russian government to elaborate options for preserving and maintaining our economic ties within relevant ministries and agencies. However, there was and is still no mutual will to do the same. Nevertheless, Russia is still one of Ukraine’s top three trading partners, and hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are coming to us to work, and they find a welcome reception and support. So that what the “aggressor state” is.

When the USSR collapsed, many people in Russia and Ukraine sincerely believed and assumed that our close cultural, spiritual and economic ties would certainly last, as would the commonality of our people, who had always had a sense of unity at their core. However, events – at first gradually, and then more rapidly – started to move in a different direction.

In essence, Ukraine’s ruling circles decided to justify their country’s independence through the denial of its past, however, except for border issues. They began to mythologize and rewrite history, edit out everything that united us, and refer to the period when Ukraine was part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union as an occupation. The common tragedy of collectivization and famine of the early 1930s was portrayed as the genocide of the Ukrainian people.

Radicals and neo-Nazis were open and more and more insolent about their ambitions. They were indulged by both the official authorities and local oligarchs, who robbed the people of Ukraine and kept their stolen money in Western banks, ready to sell their motherland for the sake of preserving their capital. To this should be added the persistent weakness of state institutions and the position of a willing hostage to someone else’s geopolitical will.

I recall that long ago, well before 2014, the U.S. and EU countries systematically and consistently pushed Ukraine to curtail and limit economic cooperation with Russia. We, as the largest trade and economic partner of Ukraine, suggested discussing the emerging problems in the Ukraine-Russia-EU format. But every time we were told that Russia had nothing to do with it and that the issue concerned only the EU and Ukraine. De facto Western countries rejected Russia’s repeated calls for dialogue.

Step by step, Ukraine was dragged into a dangerous geopolitical game aimed at turning Ukraine into a barrier between Europe and Russia, a springboard against Russia. Inevitably, there came a time when the concept of “Ukraine is not Russia“ was no longer an option. There was a need for the “anti-Russia“ concept which we will never accept.

The owners of this project took as a basis the old groundwork of the Polish-Austrian ideologists to create an “anti-Moscow Russia“. And there is no need to deceive anyone that this is being done in the interests of the people of Ukraine. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth never needed Ukrainian culture, much less Cossack autonomy. In Austria-Hungary, historical Russian lands were mercilessly exploited and remained the poorest. The Nazis, abetted by collaborators from the OUN-UPA, did not need Ukraine, but a living space and slaves for Aryan overlords.

Nor were the interests of the Ukrainian people thought of in February 2014. The legitimate public discontent, caused by acute socio-economic problems, mistakes, and inconsistent actions of the authorities of the time, was simply cynically exploited. Western countries directly interfered in Ukraine’s internal affairs and supported the coup. Radical nationalist groups served as its battering ram. Their slogans, ideology, and blatant aggressive Russophobia have to a large extent become defining elements of state policy in Ukraine.

All the things that united us and bring us together so far came under attack. First and foremost, the Russian language. Let me remind you that the new “Maidan“ authorities first tried to repeal the law on state language policy. Then there was the law on the “purification of power“, the law on education that virtually cut the Russian language out of the educational process.

Lastly, as early as May of this year, the current president introduced a bill on “indigenous peoples“ to the Rada. Only those who constitute an ethnic minority and do not have their own state entity outside Ukraine are recognized as indigenous. The law has been passed. New seeds of discord have been sown. And this is happening in a country, as I have already noted, that is very complex in terms of its territorial, national and linguistic composition, and its history of formation.

There may be an argument: if you are talking about a single large nation, a triune nation, then what difference does it make who people consider themselves to be – Russians, Ukrainians, or Belarusians. I completely agree with this. Especially since the determination of nationality, particularly in mixed families, is the right of every individual, free to make his or her own choice.

But the fact is that the situation in Ukraine today is completely different because it involves a forced change of identity. And the most despicable thing is that the Russians in Ukraine are being forced not only to deny their roots, generations of their ancestors but also to believe that Russia is their enemy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the path of forced assimilation, the formation of an ethnically pure Ukrainian state, aggressive towards Russia, is comparable in its consequences to the use of weapons of mass destruction against us. As a result of such a harsh and artificial division of Russians and Ukrainians, the Russian people in all may decrease by hundreds of thousands or even millions.

Our spiritual unity has also been attacked. As in the days of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a new ecclesiastical has been initiated. The secular authorities, making no secret of their political aims, have blatantly interfered in church life and brought things to a split, to the seizure of churches, the beating of priests and monks. Even extensive autonomy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church while maintaining spiritual unity with the Moscow Patriarchate strongly displeases them.

They have to destroy this prominent and centuries-old symbol of our kinship at all costs.

I think it is also natural that the representatives of Ukraine over and over again vote against the UN General Assembly resolution condemning the glorification of Nazism. Marches and torchlit processions in honor of remaining war criminals from the SS units take place under the protection of the official authorities. Mazepa, who betrayed everyone, Petliura, who paid for Polish patronage with Ukrainian lands, and Bandera, who collaborated with the Nazis, are ranked as national heroes. Everything is being done to erase from the memory of young generations the names of genuine patriots and victors, who have always been the pride of Ukraine.

For the Ukrainians who fought in the Red Army, in partisan units, the Great Patriotic War was indeed a patriotic war because they were defending their home, their great common Motherland. Over two thousand soldiers became Heroes of the Soviet Union. Among them are legendary pilot Ivan Kozhedub, fearless sniper, defender of Odessa and Sevastopol Lyudmila Pavlichenko, valiant guerrilla commander Sidor Kovpak. This indomitable generation fought, those people gave their lives for our future, for us. To forget their feat is to betray our grandfathers, mothers and fathers.

The anti-Russia project has been rejected by millions of Ukrainians. The people of Crimea and residents of Sevastopol made their historic choice. And people in the southeast peacefully tried to defend their stance. Yet, all of them, including children, were labeled as separatists and terrorists. They were threatened with ethnic cleansing and the use of military force. And the residents of Donetsk and Lugansk took up arms to defend their home, their language and their lives. Were they left any other choice after the riots that swept through the cities of Ukraine, after the horror and tragedy of 2 May 2014 in Odessa where Ukrainian neo-Nazis burned people alive making a new Khatyn out of it? The same massacre was ready to be carried out by the followers of Bandera in Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk and Lugansk. Even now they do not abandon such plans. They are biding their time. But their time will not come.

The coup d’état and the subsequent actions of the Kiev authorities inevitably provoked confrontation and civil war. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that the total number of victims in the conflict in Donbas has exceeded 13,000. Among them are the elderly and children. These are terrible, irreparable losses.

Russia has done everything to stop fratricide. The Minsk agreements aimed at a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbas have been concluded. I am convinced that they still have no alternative. In any case, no one has withdrawn their signatures from the Minsk Package of Measures or from the relevant statements by the leaders of the Normandy format countries. No one has initiated a review of the United Nations Security Council resolution of 17 February 2015.

During official negotiations, especially after being reined in by Western partners, Ukraine’s representatives regularly declare their “full adherence“ to the Minsk agreements, but are in fact guided by a position of “unacceptability“. They do not intend seriously to discuss either the special status of Donbas or safeguards for the people living there. They prefer to exploit the image of the “victim of external aggression“ and peddle Russophobia. They arrange bloody provocations in Donbas. In short, they attract the attention of external patrons and masters by all means.

Apparently, and I am becoming more and more convinced of this: Kiev simply does not need Donbas. Why? Because, firstly, the inhabitants of these regions will never accept the order that they have tried and are trying to impose by force, blockade and threats. And secondly, the outcome of both Minsk I

and Minsk2 which give a real chance to peacefully restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine by coming to an agreement directly with the DPR and LPR with Russia, Germany and France as mediators, contradicts the entire logic of the anti-Russia project. And it can only be sustained by the constant cultivation of the image of an internal and external enemy. And I would add – under the protection and control of the Western powers.

This is what is actually happening. First of all, we are facing the creation of a climate of fear in Ukrainian society, aggressive rhetoric, indulging neo-Nazis and militarising the country. Along with that we are witnessing not just complete dependence but direct external control, including the supervision of the Ukrainian authorities, security services and armed forces by foreign advisers, military “development” of the territory of Ukraine and deployment of NATO infrastructure. It is no coincidence that the aforementioned flagrant law on “indigenous peoples” was adopted under the cover of large-scale NATO exercises in Ukraine.

This is also a disguise for the takeover of the rest of the Ukrainian economy and the exploitation of its natural resources. The sale of agricultural land is not far off, and it is obvious who will buy it up. From time to time, Ukraine is indeed given financial resources and loans, but under their own conditions and pursuing their own interests, with preferences and benefits for Western companies. By the way, who will pay these debts back? Apparently, it is assumed that this will have to be done not only by today’s generation of Ukrainians but also by their children, grandchildren and probably great-grandchildren.

The Western authors of the anti-Russia project set up the Ukrainian political system in such a way that presidents, members of parliament and ministers would change but the attitude of separation from and enmity with Russia would remain. Reaching peace was the main election slogan of the incumbent president. He came to power with this. The promises turned out to be lies. Nothing has changed. And in some ways the situation in Ukraine and around Donbas has even degenerated.

In the anti-Russia project, there is no place either for a sovereign Ukraine or for the political forces that are trying to defend its real independence. Those who talk about reconciliation in Ukrainian society, about dialogue, about finding a way out of the current impasse are labelled as “pro-Russian” agents.

Again, for many people in Ukraine, the anti-Russia project is simply unacceptable. And there are millions of such people. But they are not allowed to raise their heads. They have had their legal opportunity to defend their point of view in fact taken away from them. They are intimidated, driven underground. Not only are they persecuted for their convictions, for the spoken word, for the open expression of their position, but they are also killed. Murderers, as a rule, go unpunished.

Today, the “right” patriot of Ukraine is only the one who hates Russia. Moreover, the entire Ukrainian statehood, as we understand it, is proposed to be further built exclusively on this idea. Hate and anger, as world history has repeatedly proved this, are a very shaky foundation for sovereignty, fraught with many serious risks and dire consequences.

All the subterfuges associated with the anti-Russia project are clear to us. And we will never allow our historical territories and people close to us living there to be used against Russia. And to those who will undertake such an attempt, I would like to say that this way they will destroy their own country.

The incumbent authorities in Ukraine like to refer to Western experience, seeing it as a model to follow. Just have a look at how Austria and Germany, the USA and Canada live next

to each other. Close in ethnic composition, culture, in fact sharing one language, they remain sovereign states with their own interests, with their own foreign policy. But this does not prevent them from the closest integration or allied relations. They have very conditional, transparent borders. And when crossing them the citizens feel at home. They create families, study, work, do business. Incidentally, so do millions of those born in Ukraine who now live in Russia. We see them as our own close people.

Russia is open to dialogue with Ukraine and ready to discuss the most complex issues. But it is important for us to understand that our partner is defending its national interests but not serving someone else’s and is not a tool in someone else’s hands to fight against us.

We respect the Ukrainian language and traditions. We respect Ukrainians’ desire to see their country free, safe and prosperous.

I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia. Our spiritual, human and civilizational ties formed for centuries and have their origins in the same sources, they have been hardened by common trials, achievements and victories. Our kinship has been transmitted from generation to generation. It is in the hearts and the memory of people living in modern Russia and Ukraine, in the blood ties that unite millions of our families. Together we have always been and will be many times stronger and more successful. For we are one people.

Today, these words may be perceived by some people with hostility. They can be interpreted in many possible ways. Yet, many people will hear me. And I will say one thing – Russia has never been and will never be “anti-Ukraine”. And what Ukraine will be – it is up to its citizens to decide.

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similar).

De Valera, DIAS, the Polygamist, and the Red

The author of the de Valera appreciation below was John Lighton Synge (1897 - 1995) who had a distinguished career in mathematics in Ireland, Canada, USA, and then back to Ireland in 1948, to the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) founded by de Valera in 1940 as a centre for research in theoretical physics. Other subjects were added later. Unlike universities, DIAS was to have no teaching role; just advanced research.

J.L. Synge was a nephew of the playwright John Millington Synge. (One of J.L.'s USA students was John Nash -- as in "A Beautiful Mind", performed by Russell Crowe). Synge graduated from Trinity College Dublin at a time when, like an Ascendancy Big House down on its luck, it survived hand-to-mouth only by recruiting foreign students after its traditional sources of fees and students and conquest-era rents went into headlong decline.

A final collapse of TCD was averted when de Valera came to power as leader of the Fianna Fáil party and instituted state funding for the college; Dev was friends with Ballymena-born TCD academic Albert Joseph McConnell who published the collected works of 19th century Dublin mathematician William Rowan Hamilton, in whom both of them shared a life-long interest.

J.L. Synge's life was relatively trouble-free. That was not the case for Erwin Schrödinger, one of the world's leading theoretical physicists; an Austrian of mixed Austrian-English descent, whose anti-Nazi views put him in danger from the Hitler movement until de Valera came to his rescue when he appointed him to the newly-founded DIAS in 1941. (He had been dismissed from his post at the University of Graz in August 1938 on grounds of "political unreliability".)

After leaving Berlin in 1933, and while working in Oxford in the spring of 1934, Schrödinger was invited to lecture at Princeton. A permanent position was on the cards there (just like Einstein, in Princeton's own Institute for Advanced Studies) --- until it was discovered that Schrödinger wished to live with two women, Anny and Hilde, both sharing the upbringing of his child.

This was unacceptable to Princeton. The fact that Schrödinger openly had two wives, even if one of them was married to another man, did not go down well in Oxford either, when his daughter was born there on 30 May 1934.

So on his dismissal from Graz neither Princeton nor Oxford came to Schrödinger's aid even when he was on the run in Italy, and even though, like Einstein, he was one of the world's foremost scientists. Instead it was de Valera who arranged suitable employment and accommodation for Schrödinger, with visas for both of his wives.

Schrödinger became a naturalized Irish citizen in 1948, also retaining his Austrian citizenship.

Walter Heitler, a German Jew who had been forced to leave Germany in 1933, was a leading expert in atomic physics. He had been at the University of Bristol for eight years when he was interned on the Isle of Man as an enemy alien. Schrödinger arranged for him to go to Dublin to take up a professorship at de Valera's Institute for Advanced Studies, where he remained until 1949. One of his co-workers there was Peng Huan-Wu who returned to China in 1947 and founded China's nuclear energy programme -- including the bomb which they have never used, but which ended two hundred years of humiliation by the imperialist powers.

Cornelius Lanczos, a co-worker of Einstein, was a Hungarian Jew who evaded reaction in post-WW1 Hungary, and in inter-war Germany; but came a cropper in post-WW2 McCarthyite/Trumanite USA on suspicion of communist sympathies. With de Valera again in government in 1952, Schrödinger secured the position of DIAS Head of Theoretical Physics for Lanczos, who produced most of his scientific output there until his death in 1974.

Imagine that! Holy Catholic Dev saving the hides of the Polygamist and the Red!

The Irish Times' Flann O'Brien was famously condescending about de Valera's fancy new Institute; which preached "no God and two St. Patricks", he declared. (Anyway, what would that plodding God-bothering muck-savage know about a REAL Institute? Preferably one with "Royal" somewhere in its name?)

This juvenile jibe is reminiscent of Conor Cruise O'Brien's sneering mimicry of de Valera's culchie manner of speech, mimicry well-honed to produce a knowing Roy Foster-style audience response. (Dev never troubled himself to acquire the affectations needed for acceptance by Rathmines and Rathgar, or D4 as it is known these days.)

But de Valera was a grown-up while they were merely snooty enfants terribles, life-long Dublin-undergraduate types. Just like their present-day counterparts who despise de Valera and his world without even a minimal understanding of it.

Dev was out of their league by a very long stretch indeed. And it is notable that he was granted fellowship of Britain's Royal Society, but not by its less far-sighted imitator in Ireland, the Royal Irish Academy.

Pat Muldowney

De Valera – an appreciation. J. L. Synge



Eamon de Valera

EAMON de VALERA
14 October 1882 -29 August 1975 Elected F.R.S. 1968
By J. L. Synge, F.R.S.

Eamon de Valera will go down in history as the man who won independence for Eire (Ireland, in the English language) or the Irish Republic, a political unit covering twenty-six counties of the island. His ambition was to make the whole island a single independent nation, but in that he did not succeed. His personal and political lives have been covered by several biographies, and at the end of this memoir I give references to these and to some other articles and documents bearing on him and on the country he did so much to set in its present form. But the main purpose of this memoir is to explore an enigmatic personality who combined with his more obvious gifts an enduring passion for science, and in particular for mathematics, a passion which led him, at the height of his political power, to act as a patron of learning in general, with the establishment of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies as his most significant achievement. This memoir consists of five parts: (1) chronology of a long and active public life, (2) brief sketch of his personal history—birth, marriage, family, (3) exploration of him as scientist and mathematician, (4) establishment of the Institute, (5) reminiscences of three men well qualified to write about him.

Chronology

1882 Born in New York.
1885 Brought to Ireland.
1898 Went to Blackrock Intermediate College as student.
1901 Matriculated in the Royal University of Ireland with second-class honours in mathematics.
1904 Graduated B.A. (pass) in R.U.I.
1906 Appointed Professor of Mathematics at Carysfort Training College, Blackrock.
1908 Joined Gaelic League.
1910 Married Sinead Flanagan. Received Higher Diploma in Education.
1913 Joined Irish Volunteers.
1914 Received B.Sc. degree automatically after foundation of the National University of Ireland.
1916 Fought as Commandant in Easter Rising. Sentence to death commuted to penal servitude for life. Imprisoned in Dartmoor and later in Lewes Jail.
1917 Released in general amnesty. Elected M.P. for East Clare, demanding an Irish Republic. Elected President of Sinn Fein and of the Irish Volunteers.
1918 Arrested and imprisoned in Lincoln Jail.
1919 Elected President of Irish Republic by Dail Eireann. Escaped from Lincoln Jail.
Smuggled to U.S.A., seeking recognition of Irish Republic and loan for Dail administration.
1920 Returned to Ireland secretly. Warfare between Irish Volunteers and British Forces.
1921 Elected Chancellor of the National University of Ireland. Truce proclaimed.
Negotiations with Lloyd George. Anglo-Irish Treaty signed, but rejected by de Valera.
1922 Irish Free State established. Civil war.
1923 Civil war ended. De Valera imprisoned by Free State Government in Kilmainham Jail.
1924 Released.
1926 Founded Fianna Fail party, a new Republican organization, but refused to enter Dail Eireann on account of

oath of allegiance.
1927 Entered Dail Eireann with his party, regarding oath as an empty political formula.
Leader of opposition.
1932 Fianna Fail came to power, with de Valera as President of Executive Council and Minister for External Affairs. President of Council of League of Nations.
1933 Abolished oath of allegiance. Reduced status of Governor-General.
1937 Introduced new constitution, with some change in titles: the Irish Free State became Ireland, the Governor-General was replaced by the President of Ireland, and his own office became Taoiseach (Prime Minister).
1938 Secured return of Irish ports by Great Britain. President of Assembly of League of Nations.
1939-45 Maintained neutrality in World War II.
1940 Established Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies with Schools of Celtic Studies and Theoretical Physics.
1947 Established School of Cosmic Physics in the Institute.
1948-51 and 1954-57 Leader of opposition.
1951-54 and 1957-59 Taoiseach.
1959-73 President of Ireland.
1975 Died after a brief illness.

He received the following decorations and honours:
Grand Cross of Order of Pius IX—1933.
Grand Cross of the Order of Charles—1961.
Supreme Order of Christ—1962.
Fellow of the Royal Society—1968.
Honoris causa—LL.D., Ph.D. (N.U.I.), Sc.D. (Dublin), Dr. (Louvain).
Honorary Bencher of the Honourable Society of King's Inns.
Hon. F.R.C.S.I., Hon. F.R.C.P.I.
He was a member of the Royal Irish Academy and Patron of the Irish Mathematics Teachers Association.

Birth, marriage and family

Patrick Coll, a farm labourer, living near Bruree, Co. Limerick, married Elizabeth Carroll. They had four children, of whom the eldest, Catherine or Kate Coll, was born in 1856. After her father's death in 1874, she worked for neighbouring farmers for five years. In 1879 she emigrated to New York and went into domestic service there. A photograph shows Kate Coll as a handsome and resolute young woman. She was the mother of Eamon de Valera. Of his father little is known with certainty. In books of reference Eamon de Valera gave his father's name as Vivion de Valera, born in Spain. But both birth and baptismal records of Eamon de Valera give the surname as De Valero, while the latter gives the first name as Vevian, erased at a later date and Vivion substituted. The birth record shows George as the first name of the baby, while the baptismal record gives Edward, erased at a later date and Eamon substituted. (Eamon is the Irish equivalent of Edward; he was known as Edward or Eddie until about 1908 when he joined the Gaelic League.) The birth record gives the age of the father as 28, his occupation artist, born in Spain. Longford and O'Neill (see references) give the father's name as Vivion Juan de Valera, and say he was the son of Juan de Valera, a sugar merchant in Cuba, and Amelia Acosta. They further state that Vivion

Juan de Valera died in Denver, Colorado, in 1884 or 1885. The history of Eamon de Valera becomes clearer from 1885 when he was brought to Ireland by his uncle Edmund Coll to live in a labourer's cottage at Bruree with his grandmother, his uncle Patrick Coll and an aunt. Space does not permit a detailed account of his education. The family was poor and he was able to obtain secondary and university education only by winning prizes and later by teaching. The records show him to have been well above the average, particularly in mathematics, but not outstanding.

In 1910 he married Sinead Flanagan and they had seven children as follows:

(1) Vivion Senior Counsel, T.D.; now chief executive of the Irish Press Ltd (Controlling Director). He has some academic interests, the only one of the sons and daughters who has inherited in some measure their father's passion for mathematics.

(2) Mairin Professor of Botany in University College, Galway.

(3) Eamonn Professor of Gynaecology in University College, Dublin.

(4) Brian Killed in a riding accident in 1936.

(5) Ruaidhri Professor of Celtic Archaeology in University College, Dublin.

(6) Emer Wife of Brian O Cuiv, formerly Professor of Classical Irish Language and Literature in University College, Dublin, and later Director of the School of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. Her daughter, Nora O Cuiv, is a mathematician.

(7) Toirleach Solicitor and Taxing Master of the High Court.

Attempts to explore the Spanish connection have been unsuccessful. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries one finds the writer Diego de Valera, the sailor Carlos de Valera and the Protestant exile Cipriano de Valera. But by the eighteenth century the prefix de seems to have disappeared, and one finds the Capuchin Bernardo Maria Valera; in the nineteenth century the Venezuelan soldier and politician Jose Gregorio Valera and two Spanish diplomat-writers, Juan Valera (1824—1905) and Luis Valera (1870—1926). I am obliged to Professor V. F. Dixon for the above information. As a spot-check of the present, Mr. H. C. Norminton informs me that the Barcelona telephone directory has the following numbers of entries: Valera 63, Valero 360, with no appearance of the prefixes de or De; incidentally the name Coll has 840 entries. I have not been able to trace the name Vivion. Mrs. de Valera was a rather shy and retiring person, a sweet and gentle old lady of over eighty when I first met her. It appears that she did not share in the political activities of her husband, the care of the family devolving on her. She wrote little plays and stories for children in Irish. A long and happy marriage ended with her death on 7 January 1975.

Mathematician

When I returned to Dublin in 1948 after spending eighteen years in Canada and the United States, I knew very little about de Valera except that he was a dominating political figure and founder of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, to which I was at that time appointed as a Senior Professor. I accepted what seemed to be the general view that his role was that of benevolent patron of learning, but not a participant, not one

who involved himself with scientific detail. After he became President of Ireland in 1959, and consequently had more leisure, he attended many scientific meetings and listened with great attention to what was said, but to the best of my recollection he never said anything himself. As he was then almost totally blind, it seemed to me that his attendance represented little more than the kindly patronage of his high office. I met him from time to time, but the conversation never turned to scientific matters. I remember feeling a little alarm when we were told one day that President de Valera was coming that afternoon to one of our weekly seminars in the School of Theoretical Physics, for I feared that this might introduce a note of formality into what was a small and informal gathering. But he desired no formality and appeared punctually with his aide-de-camp Colonel Brennan and his personal secretary, Miss Marie O'Kelly, who sat at the back and made notes. The lecturer was introduced to him and he listened with great attention, leaving at the end with a few polite words. After that he came to a number of our seminars and the same pattern followed. Finally he came to a lecture by a member of the staff who had been at a conference on elementary particles and was reporting on it. At the end de Valera turned to me and said quietly: 'I shall not come again'. I could think of no fitting reply because I too did not understand the lecture. It was not until a month after his death that I came to feel that I was wrong in thinking that de Valera's interest in the mathematical sciences was sentimental and superficial. That was when I first read the letter from Lewes Jail, printed later in this memoir. I regretted that I had never made an attempt to enter into any sort of mathematical dialogue with him to explore a little the working of his mind. I have now to rely on the testimony of others and it was suggested to me that I should consult his personal secretary, Miss O'Kelly, who, though no mathematician, was his assistant in his private mathematical studies. But she felt unable to give me any statement beyond the following, approved by him and given to the New York Journal in 1965 (he was then 82 or 83) 're President de Valera's mathematical reading and studies': 'The President's great regret is that the time he can devote to maths is necessarily very limited. However, he has read to him from time to time articles on modern physics—atomic particles, quantum dynamics, etc., and books such as those by Professors Synge and Lanczos, Dr. McConnell, etc. etc. He works from time to time in Analysis—tensor analysis, biquaternions and octonions, Grassmann's Algebra of Extension and Boolean and other algebras. 'The President uses dark green linoleum (found to be most effective from his eyesight point of view), covering the top of his large desk in his private study here in Arus an Uachtarain, as a blackboard on which with chalk he draws geometrical figures and pursues such algebraical expressions as he might find difficult to visualize otherwise.' That statement is not very informative, and I then asked Dr Vivion de Valera, his eldest son, for a contribution. He wrote me a letter going back to the time when his father was student and teacher of mathematics: 'After matriculating in the old Royal University my father first studied at the Blackrock post-secondary College officially called the "University and Civil Service House" but more often referred to as the "University College" or simply "The Castle". Here students prepared for degree and civil service examinations. Before his final degree he went as a teacher to Rockwell College where he taught mathematics. His activities there were to the detriment of his own studies.'

Dr. Vivion de Valera proceeded with a quotation from the obituary in the current issue of the Blackrock College An, which shows his father as a very successful teacher of mathematics: 'Due to his lack of time and tuition throughout that year De Valera secured only a pass degree in mathematical science. This was a big disappointment to him and was to militate against his

chances of securing a first class post in the teaching profession or in the civil service. . . . Dev spent some eighteen months in residence in the Castle going out to teach at Carysfort Training College and at St. Mary's Rathmines, where his former Dean of Studies Fr. O'Hanlon was the Superior. He also gave grinds to individual students studying for University examinations, among them being his former student Paddy, later Monsignor, Browne, who from De Valera's class in Rockwell got second place in Ireland in mathematics in Senior Grade; and Cornelius Gregg of Blackrock, who beat Paddy for first place! Another of his students at this period was Dick Butler, past-pupil of Blackrock, who is reported to have similarly coached the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII. Gregg, incidentally, who was later to be rated as one of the great minds of the British Civil Service, was highly valued by Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and later, with his mathematical acumen, was invaluable in cipher-breaking during the war. He was later knighted.' Dr Vivion de Valera's letter continued as follows: 'He had strong interests as a teacher and teaching senior students at Rockwell naturally developed techniques and facility in the mathematical subjects then included in the Senior Grade curriculum. Later he became interested in the basics of analysis. I remember him telling me that he found the current English texts he then knew unsatisfactory. It was not until somebody—I regret I cannot remember who—recommended Jordan's "Cours d'Analyse" that he found a book which gave him the entree to the subject that he sought. From then onward he liked the French texts and studied the first edition of De la Vallee Poussin's "Cours d'Analyse Infinitesimale" rather thoroughly. For his students he used Hedrick's translation of "Goursat". In later years he liked, when time allowed, to go back to these books and compare the approach of say Hobson (Real Variable) or Whittaker (Modern Analysis). His teaching of arithmetic at Carysfort induced him to take an interest in the foundations of the subject and with the background above mentioned he was particularly interested in Tannery's "Leçons d'arithmétique théorique et pratique (Paris, 1894). I suspect he may have gone rather more deeply into his subject than the student primary teachers in his class would need! I fear I never took the trouble to find out how he first came in contact with Professor Conway for whom he had a great admiration and who proved to be a good friend to him. He commenced studying under Conway for an M.A. degree but owing to events from 1913 onwards never completed the project.

I have not been able to locate any relevant manuscripts as yet but I think the problem was essentially geometric. The book he most relied on, and enjoyed, was Joly's "Manual of Quaternions". Again his spare time recreation often was to apply quaternions to various problems. He read Hamilton with a disciple's zeal. In prison he used the time to read mathematical subjects when he could. You know already the story of his letter to Conway about Drayson's theory (see later). When he was in Arbour Hill, 1923-24, he tried to master relativity theory. I have two books sent in to him by Dr. Paddy Browne at that time —Weyl's "Space Time Matter" and Eddington's "Mathematical Theory of Relativity". Dr. Browne inscribed the latter book—"Dom chead threoruidhe ar bhoithribh diamhaire na healadhan so" ("To my first guide on the obscure road of this science"). He was always interested in this theory but his failing eyesight became an insuperable difficulty in later years. He often discussed mathematical subjects with me. It depended on the interest of the moment. One incident may be of interest. In 1938, on the night he was leaving for London to negotiate the Agreement with Mr. Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, he noticed I was doing something involving changing variables in multiple integrals. On the way over on the boat he wrote me a note, a photostat of which I enclose.

'Altogether, he maintained a real interest in mathematics and mathematical physics until age and inability to read prevented him from going further. He never really had time for any sustained study but he had a capacity for "keeping in touch" until almost the end. It is unnecessary for me to write anything to you about his interest in the Institute but its progress was very dear to his heart.' When one recalls that in 1938 de Valera was at the height of his power and that the Agreement he was about to negotiate involved no less than the return of the naval bases by Great Britain, the letter to his son reveals his infatuation with mathematics.

A brief quotation must suffice:

'Dear Viv,
When I was in the play-room last evening I noted you were working at Jacobians and the change-of-variable formulae in the calculus On my way here last night in the boat I was unable to go to sleep and to keep my thoughts off the likelihood of my being sick with the rolling of the boat I began to think over the change of variable problem for definite integrals and it flashed on me that the following would be more satisfactory than any line of treatment I know of . . . ' He then gives a lucid treatment of change of variables in a triple integral, proceeding in a direct three-dimensional manner instead of changing the variables one by one, as is favoured by some textbooks. In a letter to me, his biographer, Mr. T. P. O'Neill, deals with the time when de Valera was over eighty: 'I may add that de Valera's interest in mathematics never waned. I can remember well the chalk symbols on the lino covered desk which he used and the way in which he would agree to take a walk, on doctor's instructions, only when his secretary had read to him a mathematics problem which he could ponder over as he walked. Indeed I heard him bargain with her! He would agree to do at once some of the less agreeable chores of answering letters or autographing books etc. if she would read some mathematics to him afterwards.'

The letter from Lewes Jail

The letter printed below was presented to the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies in October 1975 by Mrs. May Conan, Conway's daughter, and is here printed with the permission of Professor Mairin de Valera, her father's executor. It has several points of interest. The bold round handwriting suggests a character full of quiet self-confidence. The style is simple and graceful. The content gives us a cross-section of the mind of this unusual felon, covering some astronomy, quaternions (The formula in the letter occurs on p. 116 of C. J. Joly, Manual of Quaternions) and the discomforts of prison life. The treatment of Drayson's theory is judicial and the verdict agrees with that of modern astronomers. But the matter does not end there. It appears that about 1935 de Valera asked Conway to return the letter to him, and sent it back to Conway having retained a copy. This copy was available some thirty years later when de Valera's biographer, Mr T. P. O'Neill, was interviewing him, and part of it was translated into Irish for the biography. When O'Neill found difficulty in understanding about the precession of the equinoxes, an offprint was produced from de Valera's papers and duly referred to in a footnote in the Irish biography: Feic le Draysonian Heresy, by Sir Harold Spencer Jones (1944). (This is a sentence in Irish from T.P. O'Neill's biography of de Valera. It means: See "The Draysonian Heresy", by Sir Harold Spencer Jones (1944), Editor)

'Being anxious to round off the matter, I consulted Professor P. A. Wayman at Dunsink Observatory and the Librarian of the Royal Society, but, after careful search, neither could locate any such publication by Spencer Jones. Nor has any such offprint or pamphlet been found among

de Valera's papers now in the custody of the Franciscan Order at Dun Mhuire, Killiney, Co. Dublin, nor among those held by Dr Vivion de Valera. Yet Mr. O'Neill is positive that it was seen by him. The Spencer Jones mystery remains. Here is the letter:

21.2.1917

'Dear Dr Conway: A rather curious pamphlet by one Major Gen. Drayson (at one time Prof of Astronomy at Woolwich) has come my way here. In it he criticises what he represents as the present official view held by astronomers as to the nature of the conical motion of the earth's axis—or perhaps better, the motion of the pole of the equator round the pole of the ecliptic—and maintains that the motion is really that of uniform motion in a circle round a point 6° approximately from the pole of the ecliptic, the radius of the circle being $29^\circ 25' 47''$ very nearly. 'As far as the destructive part of the work is concerned it seems to me to be due to a misunderstanding of what the Astronomers' position is. For example he doesn't seem to appreciate that what is called "the circular motion of celestial pole round the pole of the ecliptic" is admittedly only a first approximation—at least my recollection of the explanation of the Precession of the Equinoxes is that this circular motion is only such an approximation. His attacks on several other points fall similarly flat. In fact it is very hard, on reading this part of the pamphlet, not to think that Drayson was a "sorehead and a crank" who had read only Popular Astronomies and who was ignorant of Math. Physics in particular. It was indeed, to my mind, his ignorance of the true position that led him on patiently to the constructive part of his work. 'The observed decrease in the obliquity, from 24° in AD 30 to $23^\circ 27'$ (roughly) of the present day led him to believe that the centre of the circular motion was not E the pole of the ecliptic but D. He did not discard the circ. motion but retained it as rigidly exact with the new centre D and new rad. 'This circle is described in about 31,700 yrs—the accepted cycle is 25868 yrs he says and the figure shows the decreasing obliquity EP as P travels thro positions Px P2 etc to O where the obliquity will be a minimum about the year 2295 AD, its amount being then $23^\circ 25' 47''$.

'He got his centre and circle as far as I can make out after a laborious hunt by trial and failure to find a circle which would fit in with a series of observed obliquities recorded thro, the centuries paying special attention to the more recent determinations. 'His result is very good certainly. Apparently it is easy to calculate from it with a very high degree of accuracy (to within a second of arc in the past century) the obliquity for any date—the calcul. being based on AEDP of which two sides and included angle are given—the decrease of AODP being $40''$.9 yearly. Also the rt. asc. and declination of fixed stars, the precession of the Equinoxes etc. 'At first sight this is rather impressing. It impressed Drayson himself so much as to make him believe that he must be theoretically correct in his description of the motion as a circle round D. But of course when we think of the fact that the observations on which we can test its truth lie on some 2° to 3° of arc and when the idea of circle of curvature occurs to us we see that his circle is simply the circle of curvature of the spherical curve described by P; D being the pole of that circle. The tallying of his calculations with facts are no longer strange. That a disciple of his Admiral De Horsey gave as the error of sidereal time as $41.28''$ in 1892 as deduced from Drayson's Theory, whilst Stone in the same year independently gave the error as $41.51''$, is not astonishing unless the statement be true that "astronomers deny any such time-error". There is a claim that the acceleration of the moon's mean motion as well as the apparent drift of the stars towards Lyra can also be adequately explained by D's hypothesis. I have not examined these claims yet. Were I

sure of the latter I'd be inclined to think that there was more in his theory than merely the circle of curvature, which completely explains the consistency of his results in the cases I have examined. The only practical value of his work if his theory be incorrect would be, by giving this circle, that it enables one to dispense with looking up the Nautical Almanac for the obliquity etc—since they can be easily got from his data by calculation. 'I am sure you are asking yourself why the deuce I am writing to you about this at all since the explanation of the consistency of his results is so apparent. The reason is this. His theory would furnish a delightfully simple astronomical explanation of the Ice Age. The maximum obliquity of $35^\circ 25' 47''$ would more than double the area of the ice cap at each of the poles, and the period of the cycle etc would fit in so beautifully with the most modern views as to the date nature extent etc of the glaciations that were his theory not to run directly counter to the certain deductions from mechanical principles I for one would feel fairly convinced of its truth. I am anxious then to lay my hands on some good work on celestial mechanics.

I have my Appell here and he refers to *Mécanique céleste de Tisserand*. I wonder is it possible to get books from Paris at present? The librarian of the College would know and as the College has £1 library deposit of mine it struck me that you might be able to have the book ordered for me. The deposit would cover the price of one vol., in all probability, and that would do for a start. Unfortunately I have very little time here for Maths. Lights out at 8 pm. I am just about getting warm into a piece of work when the inexorable bell goes—and I have to rush to make my bed—not a hard job by the way—but an icy breeze about my back all night is the consequence of not making it before the light goes out and that is rather too heavy a price to pay for any math. pleasures.

'Before I was allowed any books from home I used to amuse myself trying to prove on my slate all the classical theorems I could think of. In trying to get at Euler's co-ordinates from Quaternions in Mountjoy I noticed a rather curious theorem on rotations which I found very useful at times since. I did some work also on quaternion identities, on the linear quat. function (following the lines of Hamilton's treatment of the vector function) with its application in some detail to Quadrics e.g. rectilinear generators which suggested a neater way of getting Joly's $p = \pm \sqrt{J} - l/m \circ T$.

I got in this connection too some nice quat. identities. ('quat.' is an abbreviation of quaternion, Editor) I was delighted at being able to recover Waring's formula from a standpoint which I think must be that from which you attacked it at one time. I was able to get at Green's theorem also but only by the tetrahedron method. I failed hopelessly several times to get it by a method which I know Joly applied in the appendix to Vol. II of Hamilton's Elements. Since I got Appell my principal amusement has been to turn him into quaternions and if I get Tisser and I will try to do the same with him. I am never at a loss now for something to do.

'Give my sincerest respects to Mrs. Conway. I often think when I have a look at myself in this "rig out" of her comments on the motor cycle overalls. There were a couple of occasions over a year ago when I felt I should have gone to offer you my congratulations—but I had done so little with the "conformal representation" problems (further than the first problem I showed you) that I was ashamed to meet you. On my way to Dartmoor thro. Wales I thought of Prof. Bryan. I suppose you will be soon arranging exam papers with him. Harper I believe was killed at the front. I suppose Alfred Rahilly got his place. I hope Mrs. Conway May Morgan and . . . are all quite well.

'Prof. McNeill is quite well. I suppose the College building is not yet complete.

'I am very sincerely yours

E. de Valera Q.95'

An insertion in the letter reads:

'Besides the pamphlet "Important facts and calculations for the consideration of Astron. and Geologists" 1896, Drayson was the author of

(1) The Earth's Past History (Chapman and Hall)

(2) Motion of the Fixed Stars

(3) Untrodden ground in Astronomy and Geology (Keegan Paul). Disciples (a) De Horsey 'Draysonia' (Longmans)

(b) Major Marriott, Change of climate and its cause (Marlborough and Co.); Changes of Climate, the Glacial Period explained etc. etc.' (Marriott, a geologist, was Governor of Lewes Jail and kindly disposed towards de Valera.)

Editor's note: Joly's equation: $\rho = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\alpha^2 + \beta^2}}$

(Expressed here in LaTeX code, this is from page 116 of Joly's book, "Manual of Quaternions").

The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (Relevant documents are listed at the end of the memoir)

On 6 July 1939 de Valera (then Taoiseach and Minister for Education) introduced a bill in Dail Eireann 'entitled an Act to make provision for the establishment and maintenance in Dublin of an Institute for Advanced Studies, consisting of a school of Celtic studies and a school of theoretical physics, to authorize the addition to such institute of schools in other subjects and to provide for matter incidental or ancillary to the matters aforesaid'. This Bill became law when the Institute for Advanced Studies Act was signed by the President 19 June 1940.

In introducing the Bill, de Valera held that Ireland ought to be a world centre for Celtic Studies, and of the proposed School of Theoretical Physics he said: 'There is however a branch of science in which you want no elaborate equipment, in which all you want is an adequate library, the brains and the men, and just paper. We have already in the world an important place, or had in the past an important place, in mathematics and theoretical physics. The name of Hamilton is known wherever there is a mathematical physicist or theoretical physicist. This is the country of Hamilton, a country of great mathematicians. We have the opportunity now of establishing a school of theoretical physics which could be specialized as the school of Celtic studies can be specialized, and which I think will again enable us to achieve a reputation in that direction comparable to the reputation which Dublin and Ireland had in the middle of the last century.' In conclusion he said that the schools would be 'devoted solely to the advance of learning and the establishment of the reputation of our country as a centre of learning which will bring students of the post graduate type from abroad'.

The Act sets out that the Institute shall be a body corporate, situated in the County Borough of Dublin, with very wide functions:

'to provide facilities for the furtherance of advanced study and the conduct of research in specialized branches of knowledge and for the publication of the results of advanced study and research whether carried on under the auspices of the Institute or otherwise'. The Schools of Celtic Studies and Theoretical Physics are to be established as soon as convenient; other Constituent Schools may be established later, and disestablished if that appears to the Government to be in the public interest. The Act proceeds to describe the functions and duties of the two above-mentioned Schools in some detail. The School of Theoretical Physics is to investigate 'the mathematical principles of natural philosophy and the application of those

principles to the physical and chemical group of sciences and to geophysics and cosmology'. Advanced students are to be trained in methods of original research; provision is to be made for university professors and lecturers on leave of absence; seminars, conferences and lectures are to be organized; recent accessions to knowledge are to be published; competent scholars are to be commissioned to write or edit works dealing with theoretical physics. The Act was followed by Establishment Orders setting out in further detail the functions and duties of the Schools of Celtic Studies and Theoretical Physics. Seven years later, in 1947, came the Establishment Order for the School of Cosmic Physics, its functions and duties including 'the theoretical, observational and experimental investigation of the problems of cosmic physics, including astronomy and astrophysics, cosmic rays, geophysics, meteorology and oceanography'. This School is less homogeneous than the School of Theoretical Physics, being divided into three sections (Astronomy, Cosmic Rays, Geophysics) each in charge of a Senior Professor, but with a Governing Board over all three.

No other Constituent School has been established; there have been suggestions, but none has materialized.

On account of the similarity in title, one is naturally led to compare the Dublin Institute with the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Their aims are similar, their circumstances very different, one supported out of public funds in a small and rather poor country, the other out of private endowment in a large and wealthy country. Each was the brain-child of a man of tenacious purpose—Eamon de Valera in Dublin and Oswald Veblen (1880—1960) in Princeton. De Valera's task was the harder in that he had to impose his will on his Cabinet to ask the taxpayer to support an Institute for research without any apparent economic purpose; I have never heard that any of his political colleagues had personal enthusiasm for the proposed Institute, and I believe that they let him have his way as a tribute to the high respect they had for him as a great leader. Veblen had merely to persuade a wealthy family that the endowment of the Princeton Institute was the best way in which to dispose of their wealth. As I think of the two men—I knew Veblen well, better than I knew de Valera I see in both of them a quiet relentless obstinacy in achieving what they sought. To complete the comparison, de Valera was an astute politician and private mathematician, Veblen a distinguished geometer and politician only on the academic level.

There follow three reminiscences concerning de Valera and the Institute, dealing mostly with the early years when he was most intimately connected with it.

Reminiscences

From Dr A. J. McConnell, Provost of Trinity, Dublin 1952-74

I first met Eamon de Valera in the late 1930s when he was planning the establishment of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, and we saw each other frequently when he came to the Institute to attend lectures or seminars, but it was not until some ten years later that I got to know him well. After the death of A. W. Conway, his former professor and lifelong friend, he turned to me for help and advice in his mathematical reading, and it was only then that I realized that in the evenings when the day's work was done he would turn to a period of mathematical study—a practice which he maintained over the whole of a very busy public life and in spite of the fact that even then his eyesight was rapidly failing him.

When he graduated in 1904 in the Royal University of Ireland, de Valera was dissatisfied with his performance in the degree examination and a few months later he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as an undergraduate with the object

of improving his academic record. He sat for the scholarship examination of 1905 but was unsuccessful and then, finding it impossible to continue his whole time studies because of the necessity to earn a living, he retired from Trinity the following year. However, he was not discouraged by this setback and continued his studies while holding several teaching posts. He was fortunate that there were at this time in Dublin two young inspiring teachers, whose public lectures he was able to attend and who gave him help and encouragement. The first was his old professor at the Royal University, Arthur William Conway, who later became professor of mathematical physics at University College, Dublin, and finally President of that College; the second was Edmund Taylor Whittaker, who was professor of astronomy at Trinity College, Dublin, from 1906 to 1912 when he became professor of mathematics at Edinburgh University. From them he acquired a deep interest in the mathematics of William Rowan Hamilton, who indeed became one of his great heroes. Conway in particular inculcated in him a love for quaternions, which remained with him all his life, and in 1943 when the Royal Irish Academy celebrated the centenary of their discovery, de Valera had the Irish government join in the celebrations; a postage stamp with Hamilton's head was issued to commemorate the occasion. Some years later a plaque was placed on the canal bridge outside Dublin on the spot where Hamilton had his famous inspiration.

Between 1906 and 1912 de Valera held various teaching posts and gave lectures to students preparing for the examinations of the Royal University until it ceased to exist in 1909. In 1912 he was a candidate for the professorship of mathematics at University College, Galway, but retired before an appointment was made, and in October of that year he became temporary head of the mathematics department of St Patrick's College, Maynooth. The following year he applied for the vacant chair of mathematical physics in University College, Cork, but was unsuccessful. As his dream of obtaining a permanent university post gradually faded he became more and more caught up in the activities of the Gaelic League and in republican politics. It has more than once been suggested that the history of Ireland might have been very different had he succeeded in gaining his longed-for professorship. Some of his political opponents were afterwards said to have declared in jest that University College, Cork, had a lot to answer for.

De Valera certainly regarded the foundation of the Institute for Advanced Studies as one of his greatest achievements. He admired the success of the Princeton Institute of similar name and it was on that model that the new institution was established. His primary aim was to have in Dublin a centre of the highest international standards in the two academic disciplines in which he was passionately interested—Celtic studies and theoretical physics. Conway and Whittaker were his chief mathematical advisers on the project and it was indeed the latter who was mainly instrumental in securing Erwin Schrödinger as the first head of its school of theoretical physics.

However, he had also a secondary aim in establishing the Institute. He was very conscious of the divisions that existed in the field of higher education in Ireland and was concerned in particular at the isolation, due to historical and religious reasons, in which Trinity College found itself after the foundation of the new state. He often expressed to me his great admiration for the contribution that Trinity College had made to Irish scholarship and learning and his desire to help bring that isolation to an end. He was careful to make the new Institute independent of the universities, but at the same time to ensure that it would fully cooperate with them in post-graduate studies, thus providing a neutral ground where the staffs and senior students of all the Irish universities (both North and South) could meet and work together on equal terms. In this aim the Institute was singularly

successful. In 1947 the government gave Trinity College its first annual state grant and the present cordial relations that exist between all the university colleges owe much to de Valera's encouragement and support. Higher education in the Republic of Ireland is greatly in his debt.

He was extremely proud of being Chancellor of the National University of Ireland, to which post he was elected in 1921 and which he continued to hold until his death, and of the many honours he received during his life none gave him more pleasure than the Fellowship of the Royal Society.

From Rev. James R. McConnell, Senior Professor in the School of Theoretical Physics, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

In July 1942 a colloquium was held at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies on the combination of relativity and quantum theory. A few months earlier I had succeeded in returning to Ireland from Italy, and in the meantime I had been appointed research scholar in the Institute. International scientific meetings were practically non-existent in those grim days and it was an exciting experience for a young man to attend the colloquium, in which the participants included such notables as Dirac, Eddington, Heitler and Schrödinger.

In the front row sat Eamon de Valera and during the tea-break I was introduced to him by the late Professor F. E. Hackett. I had previously known him only as a controversial political figure; indeed since the civil war of the early 1920s the political divide in Ireland was whether you were for or against 'Dev'. I was now seeing him in a new light. His conversation was devoted entirely to mathematics and physics. He excused himself for taking time off to attend the colloquium by explaining that he had not had a holiday for some years and that the colloquium was really a relaxation for him.

De Valera's deep personal interest in the Institute and its staff later became evident. He would telephone Schrödinger for information on some mathematical point. He was easily available to Schrödinger, then Director of the School of Theoretical Physics, when various difficulties arose. Anxious that no crisis would endanger the life or future of the Institute in its early years he patiently listened to all problems whether they concerned the academic personnel or were routine administrative matters, even those concerning the cleaners of the building. When I had spent one year in the School of Theoretical Physics, I was appointed to teach ecclesiastical history and elementary science at the local diocesan seminary. This would have meant discontinuing research. On hearing of the situation from the Chairman of the Institute Council, de Valera without my knowledge intervened with the late Archbishop McQuaid of Dublin and he, who owed his nomination as archbishop to an earlier intervention of de Valera, thought it better to cancel my appointment.

De Valera was receptive to suggestions for the improvement and expansion of facilities in the Institute. In 1946 I wrote to him saying I had met in Cambridge an astronomer in whom he might be interested as a person who could reopen Dunsink Observatory. By return of post he requested me to ask the astronomer, H. A. Brück, who later became Astronomer Royal for Scotland, to come to Dublin to discuss the matter. After about six months Brück was appointed director of the observatory, and the School of Cosmic Physics was established. During the negotiations it became clear that de Valera had for many years dreamed of re-establishing astronomical studies in Ireland and had sought advice from a previous director of Dunsink, the late Sir Edmund T. Whittaker.

In the year 1959 I asked for an interview with de Valera for the purpose of seeking government aid to establish a new

chemical laboratory at Maynooth, where I was then Dean of the Faculty of Science. I was received in the Prime Minister's office at 9 p.m., where I found him studying Knopp's Theory and applications of infinite series. Having concluded our business satisfactorily we discussed mathematics.

During the Third General Conference of the European Physical Society held at Bucharest in September 1975 a physicist from Israel informed me that the old gentleman, who had founded the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, had recently died. He could not recall his name. That is how I learned of the death of Eamon de Valera.

From Dr W. H. Heitler, F.R.S., Professor of Theoretical Physics in the University of Zürich

In the midst of European tension, at 'the brink of the outbreak of World War II, de Valera, then Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, decided to create an Institute in his country which would serve purely cultural purposes.

In his younger years he was a mathematician. So science was perhaps closer to his heart than, for example, art, excepting Celtic studies. His ambition was high; it was not to have a mean scientific standard. The famous Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, U.S.A., which could boast of Einstein as one of its members, stood before his eyes. It was to be an Institute which would be known for its scientific achievements in the world. I believe de Valera succeeded. Almost thirty years later, he was rewarded by being elected Fellow of the Royal Society for conspicuous service to science—the foundation of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

The Institute had to be cheap. No expensive laboratories could be afforded. So, to start with, two 'schools' were established representing the two subjects for which de Valera cared most: the School of Celtic Studies and the School of Theoretical Physics. That the latter was not Mathematics was on the advice of Professor Schrödinger, the first director of the School of Theoretical Physics.

Both Schools needed no more than books and writing paper. The next problem was how to get the good scientists able to make a start, and that in wartime. In particular for theoretical physics this was not so easy.

De Valera had the good idea to draw on the still large reservoir of continental scientists who had had to leave their home country because of Hitler persecution and who had not yet been integrated by the country of their refuge.

I joined the School of Theoretical Physics as soon as I could complete all the wartime formalities for moving from England to officially neutral Ireland.

That was in the early summer of 1941. I do not remember when the official opening day was, but the practical opening was an international conference on high energy physics in July 1941. Famous scientists came from England, among them Professor Dirac from Cambridge who ranks as one of the most outstanding theoretical physicists. He became a frequent visitor to the Institute in the years to come. De Valera attended nearly all the lectures and discussions of this conference. It was a brilliant start for a new scientific institution.

High energy physics became one of the main subjects of research in the Institute. A seminar was held once a week and very often de Valera was present.

It also belonged to the duties of the professors to give once a year a public lecture on some scientific subject presented in a form which non-specialists could also understand. For de Valera these lectures were always a great joy. I remember once to have chosen Cantor's set theory and I gave it the title 'Counting beyond infinity'. This can be presented in a fairly

simple manner. De Valera was fascinated by the wealth of Cantor's ideas and enjoyed (and understood) it all. Soon gifted young scientists joined the staff as scholars to do research. Most of them became well known scientists and some reached high positions in the academic world. I mention a few names of those who for some years in the initial period worked in the Institute on problems of cosmic rays, meson theory and other high energy topics: the Rev. James McConnell, later a professor in Maynooth and senior professor in the Institute (for a time Director of the School of Theoretical Physics); James Hamilton, now a professor in the Nordic Institute in Copenhagen, founded by Niels Bohr; Sheila Power, now a professor in University College, Dublin. One of the most beloved members of the staff was the Chinese H. W. Peng. He joined the Institute after having finished his studies in Edinburgh. An unflinching cheerfulness combined with unusual gifts made him a most valuable member of the staff. He was promoted assistant professor and elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He returned to China while the civil war was on (hoping for the best) and is now, I believe, professor in Peking. De Valera remained the spiritual patron of his creation through all these years.

Some years later (1947) a third School was added, the School of Cosmic Physics. It consisted of three sections: astronomy, first headed by Professor Brück (now Astronomer Royal for Scotland), geophysics, which is of great practical importance for Ireland, first headed by Professor Poliak who died in Dublin in 1963; and experimental Cosmic Ray research which was at the time comparatively cheap. This section was first headed by Professor Janossy, now head of a physics institute in Budapest. Between the cosmic ray section and the School of Theoretical Physics there existed a close and fruitful scientific collaboration. By this time de Valera's Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies was definitely established as an internationally known research centre.

After having accepted an appointment in Zurich, Switzerland, I paid frequent visits to Dublin, and a visit to the Institute was usually included. From de Valera, as Chancellor of the National University, I received my first honorary degree. Quite often my wife and I paid personal visits to him who meanwhile had become President of the Republic. One visit to his beautiful presidential residence in Phoenix Park will always remain in our minds. Sooner or later, conversation turned towards general problems of science. De Valera was not a narrow materialist who believed that there was nothing in the world but molecules and physics which rules them. I told him of my late philosophical work which led me to the conviction that life cannot be explained by the laws of physics and chemistry alone. In his charming manner he told us of his boyhood and how he developed a passion for collecting frogs' eggs, like so many boys. The reason was that he could not have enough of watching the ever-recurring miracle of the birth of a tadpole and then the transformation into a frog. He added that this confirmed for him, more than many a learned proof, that there must have been a creator at work. He was deeply religious, but we also agreed about the difficulty of understanding the world in general, living nature to start with. I suppose that many scientists who still think that their primary task is the understanding of nature will agree with de Valera when in the end he said with a sigh: 'I wish the Lord had made it a bit easier for us'.

I thank all those who have made contributions to this memoir and in particular Mr. T. P. O'Neill for correspondence. For correspondence about the Spanish connection

I thank Professor V. F. Dixon of Trinity College, Dublin; Mr. H. C. Norminton, Director of the British Institute in Barcelona; Senor Joaquin Juste, Spanish Ambassador to Ireland; and Dr Raul Valera (no relative) of Caracas, Venezuela. For inquiries in

the U.S.A. I thank my daughter, Professor C. S. Morawetz. For translations I thank Miss M. Devoy and Miss P. Walsh, and for much general assistance I thank Miss Eva Wills.

The photograph, supplied by Irish Press Ltd, shows Eamon de Valera in his robes as Chancellor of the National University of Ireland.

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*Bromage, Mary C. 1956 *De Valera and the march of a nation*. London: Hutchinson. Excessive emotional colour and not wholly reliable, stating (pp. 31, 57) that de Valera was seven years older than his wife, whereas in fact he was about four years younger (cf. Longford and O'Neill, p. 15). But there are many photographs and an extensive bibliography of books and articles, including writings by de Valera himself. I have it on good authority that de Valera found so many mistakes in the book that one could not attempt to correct them.

*Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies 1961 *Fifteen Year Report of the School of Theoretical Physics*, 29 October 1940 to 31 March 1955.

*Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies 1962 *Twenty Year Report of the School of Celtic Studies*, October 1940 to March 1960.

*Dwane, David T. 1922 (2nd ed. 1927) *Early life of Eamon de Valera*. Dublin: Talbot Press. Written at a time of great emotional tension and under difficulty on account of raids by British troops. It is stated that de Valera's father was named Vivian, not Vivion, and much is written about him which one must regard as doubtful. On p. 9 we read that de Valera's paternal grandfather 'held high military rank in the Spanish army. He was a typical Spaniard, and on the maternal side descended from one of the noble houses of Spain'. It is implied on p. 12 that this grandfather was Juan de Valera, 'looked upon as one of the ablest and most erudite critics of his time'. It is possible (cf. Bromage, p. 15) that confusion arose on account of the arrival, not long after the birth of Eamon de Valera, of a Spanish Ambassador to the United States: his name was however Juan Valera, not de Valera.

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*Longford, Earl of, and Thomas P. O'Neill 1970 *Eamon de Valera*. London: Hutchinson. (Also slightly revised edition 1974. London: Arrow Books.)

The nearest approach to an autobiography of de Valera in the English language, the authors having had discussions with him and access to his private papers. Based on O'Neill and O'Fiannachta (see below) with reduction in size and change of emphasis.

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O'Neill, Tomas, and Padraig O'Fiannachta 1968 *De Valera*. 2 vols. Ath Cliath: Clo Morainn. Detailed biography entirely in Irish, even letters written by de Valera in English being translated. Good photographs. See Longford and O'Neill above.

*Sheehy Skeffington, Owen 1962 *De Valera: great leader and greater enigma*. *Irish Times*, 13 October, 1962. An assessment on the eve of de Valera's eightieth birthday. Appreciative but in some respects condemnatory.

*Synge, J. L. 1968. *The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies*. *Nature*, Lond. 218, pp.828-840. Brief account of the work of the scientific schools of the Institute.

Addendum, 25 August 1976: Thanks to unremitting inquiries by Miss Eva Wills and the kind cooperation of Major R. C. Bartelot of the Royal Artillery Institution at Woolwich, the mystery mentioned in connection with the letter from Lewes Jail has now been resolved. In the years 1944-45 a number of articles dealing with Drayson's theory appeared in the magazine *The nineteenth century* and after published by Constable. Some of the writers support Drayson, but he (and they) are vigorously attacked by Sir Harold Spencer Jones in an article entitled 'The Draysonian heresy and climatic changes' (1944, vol. 136, pp. 14-19) and in a further note (1945, vol. 137, pp. 142-144). The controversy is bitter, even vitriolic. The articles have been collected under the title *Drayson controversy* in a book in the possession of the Royal Artillery Institution, but not available for loan on account of its rarity.

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See also: Eamon De Valera, 14 October 1882 - 29 August 1975 (aubanehistoricalsociety.org)

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* The Poems of Geoffrey O’Donoghue by John Minahane

* Aislingí/Vision Poems by Eoghan Ruadh O’Súilleabháin translated by Pat Muldowney

* Dánta/Poems by Eoghan Ruadh O’Súilleabháin translated by Pat Muldowney

* An Argument Defending the Right of the Kingdom of Ireland (1645) by Conor O’Mahony. First Publication in English, translated and introduced by John Minahane