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Our Embarrassing 'Civil War'

It was launched a hundred years ago. It lasted about ten months. It ended inconclusively. The Army that launched it won it, but did not know what to do with its victory. All the purposefulness of the nation lay with the Army that was beaten but that refused to acknowledge defeat.

The victorious Army "*mustered and paraded/Until their banners faded*", as was being said about the Volunteer Army of the would-be Irish national aristocracy in 1782 (as Wolfe Tone noted).

The defeated Army dumped arms with a view to digging them up again on another day and, in the meantime, it set about subverting the regime of the victorious Army by means of political agitation, but it was so successful in politics that it never got around to digging them up.

The defeated military force in the state quickly became the superior political force, while the victorious military force failed to make the transition from war to politics. That unique turn of events is the source of our embarrassment about it. It is a turn of events that could not have happened if what was begun by the shelling of the Four Courts on 28th June 1922 had been an authentic Civil War.

The Four Courts were subjected to artillery bombardment by an Irish Government set up on British authority six months earlier. The artillery for the bombardment was borrowed by that Irish Government (called the *Provisional Government*), from the British Army, which was still in Dublin six months after it had withdrawn. And that British Army was under orders by the British Government to return to action against the Republican forces who refused to recognise the authority of British Provisional Government in Ireland if that Provisional Government did not act against those republicans.

If the British Army had itself attacked the anti-Treaty Republicans in the Four Courts, that action would have undermined the credibility of the Provisional Government which Britain had set up in Dublin to act in its place against the Republican Army. The position of Michael Collins, the leader of the Provisional Government, would have been

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EU:

Quo Vadis ?

Like all wars, the War in Ukraine has accelerated developments that were inherent in the situations.

This is the case with the EU. It has shown it does not have a foreign policy — apart from subservience to the US, and a phobia towards Russia. These two factors constitute what might be called the only *Demos* it has.

Internally, national interests are centre-stage, despite the ideology of European unity. Poland and Hungary are the most often quoted examples, but Macron, Draghi and Scholz deal with Putin and Zelensky as they see fit.

There is also a deepening East/West divide that the Ukraine crisis has highlighted, with a conflicting view of the history of Europe itself. This is epitomised by the cause of WWII. In the East it is seen as beginning with the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939, ignoring the Anglo-Polish Military Alliance three months before that, in April 1939. That deal set Poland and Germany on a war trajectory which led to the Pact. Britain had rebuffed Soviet overtures for an alliance.

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Food Production Agendas

On 23 June the *Guardian* published a piece by John Vidal entitled '*Spread of 'free-range' farming may raise risk of animal-borne pandemics – study*'.

The article's sub-heading states '*If we can't dramatically cut meat consumption then intensive 'factory farming' may be comparatively less risky, say authors*'.

The authors are from the universities of Cambridge and Leeds and their thesis is

that the spread of free-range farming destroys natural animal habitats and thereby increases the possibility of 'zoonotic' transmission of viruses from wildlife populations to domesticated animal populations and onwards to humans. No real science is evidenced to support this.

The *Guardian* never carries a story that doesn't have an agenda behind it, and the only elements of the paper's coverage that

can be assumed to be free from bias are the sports results.

While at the end of every online story it asks us to contribute our mites towards its struggle for 'independent journalism', in reality its coverage is determined by large donors towards its 'independence' such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The BMGF is heavily invested in the production of artificial meat products while at the same time is also the largest holder of agricultural land in the US.

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Labour Comment, edited by **Pat Maloney**:

NATO's Way Is Labour's Way ?

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Irish Defence Forces Will Undergo NATO Training In Cork

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Then, in March 1922, a convention of the Republican Army declared that it no longer considered itself subject to the authority of the Dail. It became an Army that was not subject to a civil authority.

The cry of "*military dictatorship*" went up. In fact, the Convention of the Republican Army did no more than acknowledge that the Government to which it had sworn allegiance no longer existed, its power having been transferred to the Provisional Government.

Through no fault of its own, it was an Army without a Government. And its existence was the most definite and tangible thing in the country. It was its military action that had brought the British Government to the negotiating table. It was the only Irish national power structure recognised by the British prior to the setting up of the Provisional Government. But for its activity, voting for independence could have gone on for ever without disturbing the British. The Truce of July 1921 was negotiated between the Army of the British State and the Republican Army, without any mention of the Dail Government.

In those matters the British Government never had any relationship with the Dail Government, and never recognised it. In order to have a Government in Ireland to make an Agreement with, it set up the Provisional Government with a body of TDs drawn from the Dail. And Collins made it clear to the Dail that his Provisional Government was the major power.

The Republican Convention took practical account of the altered status of the Dail. It was no longer the body to which it had declared allegiance, and therefore it no longer recognised its authority.

The Republican Army, through the action of its Government had, as a matter of fact, become an Army without a Government. It was an Army left behind by a Government which had subverted its own authority. And, as an independent Army, it set up its headquarters in the Four Courts.

It was an Army of citizen-soldiers—of citizens who had acted the part of soldiers when that was required in order to defend what they had done as citizens.

As citizens they had elected a Party to meet as a Parliament in Dublin and set up an independent Irish Government. That Party won three-quarters of the Irish constituencies. Its Deputies, elected in December 1918, met in Dublin as a Dail in January 1919 and set up a Government.

unsustainable, as the Provisional Government would be exposed as a façade on continuing British power in Ireland.

Collins had the choice of making war on the Four Courts Republicans with the Army Britain had given him or letting the British Army do the job itself.

The Four Courts Republicans reckoned that, if they were attacked by the British Army, Collins would have come under irresistible pressure to join them in opposing the British assault.

Collins, though obliged by his signature on the 'Treaty' and his position as head of a 26 Co. Government under the Crown, to recognise the legitimacy of the Northern Ireland system, was engaged in military action against Northern Ireland in May/June 1922, and he had enlisted the Four Courts Republicans as allies in this action. In this he acted under the double illusion that the British devolved Government in the Six Counties was a State, and that the British delegates with whom he had negotiated the Treaty had given him informal permission to act against it. But,

when he invaded Northern Ireland, he found that the defending army there was not the Ulster Volunteer Force: it was the British Army.

He was still complicit, in late June, with the Four Courts Republicans in action against Northern Ireland when the British presented him with the choice of making war on the Four Courts, or delaying until the British did it themselves, in which case he would almost certainly have had to join the Four Courts rebels against his Provisional Government.

The Republican Army had never recognised the Provisional Government set up under the 'Treaty' as its Government. Its allegiance was pledged to the Dail Government set up in January 1919. The authority of the Dail Government was subverted in January 1922 when its pro-Treaty members met as the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the British 1920 Act, which the Dail had rejected, and appointed a Provisional Government, which Britain supplied with a regular Army, called the *National Army*.

The Dail had not sought permission from Britain to do this. Britain had been deluging the world for four years with propaganda about the principle of national self-determination for which it was fighting its Great War. The Irish electorate took it at its word and mandated the setting up of an independent Irish Government.

The British response, as expressed by its chief propagandist in Ireland, Major Street, was that the Irish had taken leave of their senses due to the excitement of the time and were in need of being disciplined back into right thinking by the use of firm measures.

In response to those firm measures, the citizens who had voted to set up an independent Irish Government became soldiers in defence of it. As citizens they did enough to persuade the British to negotiate.

The outcome of the negotiations was that the Irish negotiating team were persuaded to act against the instructions of their Government, and on their own authority signed a deal (the 'Treaty') under which they were obliged to set up a British-sponsored Provisional Government—in place of the Dail Government which had appointed them.

The signers of the 'Treaty' got a bare majority in the Dail for their action. That bare majority then left the Dail and met elsewhere as the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the British Act of 1920 and appointed a Provisional Government to take the place of the Dail Government.

The Treatyites then returned to the Dail, where they joined the opponents of the Treaty, and did their best to pretend that everything was as it had been in before. But in fact everything had changed in substance, the change having been enacted by what might be called the *three-card-trick* method.

Both the Dail Government and the Volunteer Army that defended it had been established under British military occupation and harassment.

The Second Dail met openly under the Truce conditions won by the Army, and it set about regularising both the Government and the Army. The Volunteers were systematically commissioned as *soldiers of the Republic*. De Valera was re-elected

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Russia And Ukraine

Dear Sir/Madam,

I read with interest the article 'The Proxy War against Russia' in the June issue of your Irish Political Review and frankly it's baloney. As an anti-war campaigner I am no fan of NATO or the military Industrial complex but this article is from the same people who believe Joe Stalin, who killed 10 million of his own people, was a benign father figure. It is apparent that the author of this piece thinks Communism is fantastic and has created some kind of Utopia. The Uigurs of Xinjiang Province in China might not agree; they die in concentration camps as I write.

All observers with a modicum of intelligence and grasp of modern history know the UK & US militaries are totally discredited for their worldwide interventions, often with profit in mind. Similarly the crimes of the American administration under Ronald Reagan in Central America in the 1980s are surely akin to what Putin is now doing in Ukraine. However, now is not the time for moral relativism or hierarchical victimhood. Russia is presently the most dangerous nation in the World, thanks to the Putin regime. It has become an imperialist, expansionist empire which also presides over a bloodthirsty military machine and therefore I support Ukraine as much as I do the Palestinians against the tyranny of a massive military force. And frankly I don't care who gives Ukraine or Palestine support as long as they get support.

Finally I don't recall the Americans or British threatening to detonate a massive nuclear bomb off the coast of Donegal to create a 200 metre high tsunami wave to destroy both Ireland and Britain. The Russians broadcast that possible military action a number of weeks ago on Russian State TV. They threatened to obliterate Ireland as collateral damage in the destruction of the old Cold War enemy Britain. Therefore the feeble attempt in 'The Proxy War against Russia' to attempt to portray Mother Russia as a victim is laughable. What may not be laughable is the day when a 200 metre high wall of water obliterates this Putin apologist's home and destroys his cosy smoked salmon socialist view of the world.

Best regards, **Roger White**

A reply to this letter appears on page 19

Power Politics ?

Watched a discussion put out by Aljazeera consisting of a Chinese politician, a Japanese and an American one.

The American was as usual belligerent and full of entitlement, the Japanese was being towed behind him and the Chinese turned out to have the most independent mind of all. It was communism at its best with some harsh truisms for the other two. The American was ranting on about democracy and the Chinese reminded him of US Imperialism over the years and about having so many military bases in so many countries. The Japanese, in kow-towing towards America, was made to look like a browbeaten teenager as he tried to justify the US bases in his country, arguing that this was approved of by the Japanese people.

The Chinese reminded him that the US invaded Japan during WW2 and never left, also that the Japanese masses didn't approve of US bases in their country and that the US push for Japan to acquire nuclear weapons by a country that dropped them on Japan was yet another disaster for the Japanese people. They were also reminded that the Chinese economy was once on the level of Japan's: now it 350 times that of Japan. China was also a free independent country, unlike Japan.

He put out facts that the American tried to dispute but could only fall back into aggressive insults and fantasy.

The Chinese spoke very good clear English and kept his facts simple: making the American a liar and the Japanese a frightened client of the US.

Wilson John Haire, 22.5.22

as President of the Dail, with the clarification that he would be head of the Government with the freedom of action usually accorded to a head of Government.

The 'Treaty' document signed by Arthur Griffith and his negotiating team, and supported by a bare majority in the Dail, broke up the arrangements made by the Second Dail.

De Valera, in January 1922, resigned the position to which he had been elected in August, because that position had been revoked by the vote in support of the 'Treaty'. Griffith was elected in his place as President of the Dail, but not as head of the Government.

The Government now became the Provisional Government of the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the British 1920 *Government of Ireland Act*, which had been rejected comprehensively by the Dail.

The actual head of Government after the Dail submitted to Griffith's 'Treaty' manoeuvre was the Chairman of the Provisional Government, who was Michael Collins.

But the Volunteer Army of the Republic had not sworn allegiance to the Provisional Government under the Crown.

The *Parliament of Southern Ireland* met only once. At that one meeting—consisting of the pro-Treaty members of the Dail and the Unionists representing Trinity College—it appointed the Provisional Government, which then had powers transferred to it by the British Government.

Having met as the *Parliament of Southern Ireland* and set up the *Provisional Government*, the pro-Treaty members of the Dail returned to the Dail and joined the anti-Treaty TDs, and a semblance of Dail government was maintained.

But the Dail did not have the same powers after the setting up of the Provisional Government as it had before it.

And, while members of the Provisional Government attended the Dail and gave an appearance of transacting Government business in it, they sometimes had occasion to tell it that they commanded powers and resources which were not available to the Dail.

Also, the Trinity College Unionist elected representatives who had attended the Parliament of Southern Ireland did not thereafter attend the Dail.

Even though the Dail voted in support

of the Treaty, and its Treatyite majority had met, along with the Trinity Unionists, as the Parliament of Southern Ireland, for the purpose of ratifying the 'Treaty' and receiving the powers it was conferring, and had then returned to the Dail, the Dail was still not the Irish party to the Treaty. It was only a supporter of the Treaty.

The Provisional Government, having a majority in the Dail, made use of it in governing, while knowing very well that it was not the source of its power.

Whitehall allowed this as an expedient but made sure that the Provisional Government never imagined that it was the Dail Government, but was a Government under orders.

And so it happened that the Irish Army was deprived of its Government, and that an attempt was made to subject it to Crown authority, and that it responded by asserting its independence.

It seems probable that, when Collins decided to set aside the Dail Government by signing the 'Treaty' in breach of its instructions, he assumed that he would take the bulk of the Volunteer Army with him, and that politicians on the whole were loudmouths and could be handled.

If that had happened, formal difficulties relating to the status of the Dail Government would have been of little account. But that did not happen.

He won the Dail—which, as Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, he had never acknowledged as the sovereign authority—and he lost the Army. This was because the Army consisted of citizen soldiers acting in support of what they took to be the Constitution. (The Constitution was unwritten: it was composed of the set of power relationships that had been established by the fight for freedom and by the institutions implicated in that struggle, and confirmed by electoral mandate.)

Griffith tried to instigate a cult of Collins as "*the man who had won the war*". But, by then, Collins saw that the Army was slipping away from him and he couldn't understand how sensible men of action were aligning themselves with De Valera, the posturing pedant. And, by then, the argument being made for the 'Treaty' was that the War had not been won at all, and that nothing bigger than a moderate-sized police barracks had been taken.

He was greatly puzzled by the conduct

of his close personal friend and senior Irish Republican Brotherhood colleague, Harry Boland, a man of action who knew how to get things done. He warned Boland that if he did not break free of the spell cast on him by De Valera he would be obliged to destroy him.

The Army men that he admired most were against him. If he was to carry through his project, he must destroy them. He was being urged by Griffith and put under pressure by Whitehall to get on with the job of destroying them, but he delayed and delayed until delay was no longer possible and he had to jump one way or the other.

The substance of the Volunteer Army was not the GHQ in the Four Courts but the companies formed by local initiative around the country. Although these companies had been combined formally into a Divisional structure, they remained autonomous. This may have led Collins to think that he could appease Whitehall by attacking the Four Courts and yet maintain peaceful relations with the Army in the country. It was a very great mistake.

His contribution to the War of Independence had been in Supply and Intelligence. He applied physical force only in the form of assassination. He commanded an Assassination Squad which killed British agents individually. Assassination is of course a necessary Counter-Intelligence part of war, but it is ancillary to military conflict. It does not of itself win war.

The British had been surprised by the effectiveness of Collins' counter to their Intelligence operations, but Intelligence in all its manifestations has been a specialist British activity since the time of Elizabeth. The loss of agents to Collins' activities would not have brought them to the negotiating table, and they would almost certainly have developed an Intelligence counter to Collins' operations.

And The Squad was not a socially representative body in the way that the Volunteer companies around the country were.

Collins carried The Squad with him. That went without saying. He did not carry Moylan, or Deasy, or Lynch. And, in the working out of the 'Civil War', the Squad outdid in the way of atrocity anything that the Auxiliaries had done.

It can be said that, when Collins launched the 'Civil War', he did not realise that that was what he was doing. He thought he was just appeasing the British to get them off his back. But Lynch, Deasy and Moylan took the assault on

the Four Courts to be an assault on the Republican system which they were sworn to defend.

And Collins' purpose was to somehow fudge through a Free State which would re-establish the Republic which the British had made it necessary to dis-establish for the moment. He intended it to be an act of appeasement in the proper sense, not an act of collaboration such as the British engaged in with Nazi Germany a dozen years later and called *Appeasement*.

The British purpose was to divide and disable nationalist Ireland in the process of making a settlement with it. Arthur Griffith, at a meeting of the Irish Government three days before he signed the Treaty, said he was in favour of accepting the British terms as they stood. He agreed that acceptance of those terms would divide the country and agreed not to sign up for them without coming back to the Government for authority.

But he signed up. And he then seemed eager to get on with splitting the country, but was thwarted by Collins who insisted on delay.

De Valera had drawn up an alternative to the British document. Griffith expressed no enthusiasm for it. In the Dail 'Treaty' debate both Griffith and Collins made much of the act that De Valera's *Document No. 2* differed little from the 'Treaty' they signed.

The 'little' difference was that it recognised the Crown as the head of an *association of states* on which the Irish state would be one—the Commonwealth—but not as head of the Irish state.

The great difference was that De Valera had got the support of the strong republicans, Cathal Brugha and Austin Stack, for this formulation, giving it purchase with the Army.

The 'Treaty' precipitated a split. Document No. 2, having the support of representative Army personnel, would have averted, or minimised, a split.

De Valera's purpose was to negotiate the difference with Britain down to the distinction between these two ways of recognising the Crown, making it difficult for the British to contemplate a declaration of war. And, in any eventuality, his object was to maintain a united Irish leadership in the face of whatever Britain threatened.

Griffith and Collins, whether deliberately or as a result of loss of control or through being hustled by the supreme

World Power, signed, without warning, the document which Griffith had agreed would split the country. They split the country. And Collins found that assurances which he thought he had been given by his friend, Lord Birkenhead, could not be relied upon.

He invaded the North, and was stopped. He drew up a Republican-oriented Constitution for the Free State, and Whitehall tore it up. Then Britain insisted that an Election to give popular effect to the 'Treaty' must be held.

Collins then made a final attempt to stop the rot. He made an Election Pact with the Anti-Treaty Party, led by De Valera, under which the two parties would not contest the election against each other but would agree a division of seats (as the major British Parties had done in the 1918 Election in Britain itself), with the object of forming a Coalition Government in the new Parliament or Dail. The aim of the Pact was to reproduce the balance of the existing Dail and form a Coalition on a 6 to 4 basis, with the crucial Ministry of Defence being filled by consensus.

This Election Pact brought about a rift between Griffith and Collins. Griffith had already called an Election on the subject of the Treaty—effectively a plebiscite—and made a long speech in support of it. But Collins obliged him to revoke it, and instead to call an election to form a Government of national unity.

The Election Pact was approved by the Dail—which had become the Dail again with the approval of the Provisional Government!?

No attempt was made to confine the Election to the pro- and anti-Treaty Parties. Others were free to contest it—as in the British election of 1918. Nevertheless the Pact was condemned as undemocratic by Whitehall. It was also condemned as being illegal under the terms of the 'Treaty'—and as being undemocratic because it was in conflict with the 'Treaty'?!?

Collins and Griffith were called to London to be chastised.

Collins' Constitution for the Free State, intended to conciliate Republicans, was torn up. He returned to Ireland the day before the Election and made an equivocal speech in Cork City which some see as renouncing the Pact.

The Deputies returned in that election never assembled as a Parliament—whether as the 3rd Dail, or the 2nd Parliament of Southern Ireland, or the 1st Free State Dail.

Whitehall had its way before that could happen. It was arranged for the Provisional Government to launch a pre-emptive war against the Anti-Treaty headquarters (in the Four Courts)—a way which under British pressure pre-empted direct British action and so made the ensuing conflict an Irish war!

*

Two Professors wrote Centenary articles on the 1922 Election. Both of them suggested that the Election Pact was undemocratic and that Democracy survived in spite of it because of the action of the Labour Party and the Farmers' Party (who were not part of the arrangement).

It is a strange mode of reasoning. It leaves aside the action of cause and effect in that actual sequence of events in order to assert a moral sentiment which is thought to be expedient in the present situation.

Professor Eunan O'Hallpin of Trinity College supplied the *Independent* with *The 1922 Election: a milestone for Irish democracy, no thanks to Collins and De Valera*.

As O'Hallpin sees it, Whitehall was concerned about violence in Belfast and a drift towards civil war in the rest of the country and it insisted on the election about the 'Treaty', which was required by the 'Treaty, being held. The IRA had split, and had held a Convention "*in defiance of the Provisional Government, and repudiated the 'Treaty'...*"

Nevertheless—"*Although bitterly split... Michael Collins and De Valera ought to avoid a definitive break that might quickly lead to armed conflict*".

They made a Pact under which they undertook not to contest seats against each other, but leaving others free to enter the contest:

"The 1922 election was an important milestone... Credit belongs not to Collins or de Valera, who cynically set aside their differences to manufacture an agreed result, but this the Labour and Farmers and sundry spirited independents who ignored government disapproval and IRA intimidation and offered themselves to the electorate"

—and saved democracy?

But the Pact was not broken by Labour, nor the Farmers. They had nothing to do with it.

The Pact was an arrangement made by the two major Parties, leaving the marginal parties free to do as they pleased. And the

purpose of the Pact was to ward off the war towards which Whitehall was driving the country.

De Valera and Collins “cynically” sought a way of getting over their difference and averting war. But Collins was summoned to Whitehall and humiliated. He came back a broken spirit. But the Pact was not revoked, though an element of uncertainty was injected into it at the eleventh hour.

The Election was held. The makings of the Coalition Government survived the disruptive interference of Whitehall. But the Parliament elected by the Election never met.

A Parliamentary election is not an Opinion Poll. Its purpose is to establish a representative decision-making body in the state. If the elected Parliament had met and the formation of the Coalition Government had begun, who can tell what the subsequent course of events would have been?

But, instead of an assembly of the elected Parliament, there was the ‘Civil War’ into which the Provisional Government was hustled by Whitehall.

National University Professor Diarmaid Ferriter’s article (*Irish Times*, June 17) has the perverse title: “*The Primacy Of The Ballot-box Was Affirmed In The 1922 Election*”—by the election of a Parliament that never met!

Ferriter says that the Pact—

“infuriated many who regarded it as an assault on democracy. As historian Michael Laffan put it, critics of the pact saw it as ‘an undemocratic conspiracy against the electorate’, they believed that in the circumstances of 1922 the Treaty was the dominant question on which the people should pronounce.

“The logic, as outlined in the formal agreement, drenched in arrogance, was that ‘the national position’ required the state to be governed by ‘those who have been the strength of the national situation during the last few years’. Its proponents argued that without it, violence would derail the election. But crucially, the pact allowed ‘third parties’ to contest seats, and the Labour Party, Independents and the Farmers’ Party duly did, forcing a contest in 21 of the 28 constituencies....”

But if “*the primacy of the ballot-box*” was upheld by the election, then it was clearly the Election Pact—“*drenched in arrogance*” though it was—that upheld it!

The purpose of the Pact was to hold the conflict, which the ‘Treaty’ had generated, within the parameters of the Dail system, frayed though that system had become.

But the Election, because it was not allowed by the Griffith/Collins group to result in a meeting of the elected Parliament, did not in fact maintain the primacy of the ballot-box.

The voting passed off peacefully, but the thing voted for was swept away when Whitehall presented Collins with the choice of making war on his partner in the Pact, or else seeing the British Army take over from him.

Ferriter acknowledges that “*The Sinn Fein coalition never came into being, as within two weeks the Civil War had started*”. And he says that “*It is a tricky election to analyse given the pact*”. Nevertheless, he thinks it was “*a reasonably reliable test of the electorate’s feelings*”.

That would have been all very well if it had been a plebiscite on the ‘Treaty’, as Griffith wanted. It was not a plebiscite but the election of representatives with a mandate to form a Coalition Government.

The expression of opinion on a single point is different in kind from the election of representatives to deal with a very complicated situation. And what “*reasonably reliable*” knowledge can we have about a Parliamentary election whose elected Parliament never met?

The Provisional Government ruled by military force, unassisted by any Parliament, during July and August 1922 and, when a Dail finally assembled in September, the Speaker was unable to say exactly what it was.

*

Professor O’Halpin, in the interest of ‘balance’, adds a comment about Northern Ireland:

“The Northern premier, Sir James Craig, speaking as though he presided over a model new democracy rather than a majoritarian, sectarian bearpit, interpreted the election result as a vote for peace, with benefits for Northern Ireland. The British government welcomed what it saw as a vindication of the treaty that should strengthen the Provisional Government in dealing with IRA violence.

“London’s patience finally snapped on June 22 with the assassination on his own doorstep by two London-born IRA men of Sir Henry Wilson... The

British, perhaps wrongly, blamed the anti-treaty IRA. As Ronan McGreevy’s new study, *Great Hatred*, reminds us, it is at least plausible that the pointless, counterproductive killing was ordered by Collins himself, whether before or after the truce...”

In fact, James Craig made no pretence that Northern Ireland was a “*model democracy*”. The Northern Ireland entity was not set up in response to Ulster Unionist demands. When the Bill setting it up was published the Ulster Unionist leader, Carson, wrote against it. When it was introduced in Parliament, he spoke against it. The UUP wanted the Six Counties to be excluded from Irish legislation and to be governed simply within the British political system by the Westminster Government. Carson saw a system under which the Protestant community would have to govern the Catholic community in a devolved system as a very bad thing. But Whitehall had a use for Northern Ireland in its handling of Sinn Fein, and it gave the Ulster Unionists to understand that, if they did not agree to operate a Northern Ireland Government, they would come under the Dublin Government.

The evidence about Collins’s responsibility for the assassination of General Henry Wilson must have become overwhelming if West-Brit apologist Ronan McGreevy now exonerates the Four Courts! General Macready, Commander of the British Army in Dublin at the time, was well-informed about what was going on and he did not believe it was the Four Courts that ordered it. But it was politically expedient that it should have been the Four Courts, and in that sense it was true that the Four Courts did it.

Whitehall needed Collins in order to bring about an Irish war against the IRA, and therefore it allowed him great latitude while it bided its time and waited for the decisive moment. It would not have done to brand him as an instigator of murder—not since he signed the ‘Treaty’. (And it should be noted that General Wilson was shot by two ex-servicemen who had served in the British Army in the Great War.)

Whitehall was the most active and purposeful force in Irish affairs, North and South, in 1922. But that is something that our historians are obliged not to notice. They show how broadminded they are, and how freely they soar above insularity, by not noticing it.

Brendan Clifford

Requiescat in Pace

Most Rev. Dr. Brian P. Murphy osb

In our household, one of the lovelier things that happened was that every Monday night, before the Glenstal community meeting at 8 pm, Father Brian rang and we had a chat that ranged widely over all that was happening in our lives, and in our world. The first thing that anyone has said about Brian on meeting and talking with him was how Christian he was in his attitude towards everyone – even those who wronged him. Anyone who knows me will know that is a tough ask – and Brian would listen to my heated arguments and then would lightly and sometimes laughingly remind me of my own Christian charity. That didn't necessarily deter me—I own that I have strong opinions—but hope I am always fair! That said, if anyone hurts those that I love: believe me it takes time to find a healing forgiveness.

To give an example—someone recently died who totally eschewed God and faith. Well, I thought—fair enough—I don't have to pray for his soul's journey, so didn't add him to my list of dead people. In passing, I mentioned this to Brian—who chided me and in a lovely reminder of all our faults asked me to do the right thing—himself had said the same thing.

So I prayed for this soul: but the story doesn't end there as, the next time I went to confession to our own community of Capuchins monks at Holy Trinity Church, I told my tale to my well-known priest, Father Mike—who was seated beside me with a plastic hang-down separating us (Covid rules!). I had the awful misfortune of ending my tale by saying (in a fit of madness!) that I was doing this with a “bad grace”. Even as I recount this—I am sweating with shame and helplessness.

Well—poor Father Mike nearly jumped out of his pew and turned to me and was so obviously appalled that he said “My child—no no no! . . .” Suffice to say I am still not in the better of it and for an act of contrition I got a decade of the Rosary with a firm pledge to pray for the dead soul in question.

When I relayed this to a chuckling Brian the following week, he had the great graciousness of not making anything more out of it. He knew I had learned my lesson and didn't need further instruction. But here is the thing—some people have said he was “non-judgemental” but, to be true to his priestly role, and he was—he had to make these serious calls and he did but in a way that didn't make one feel a right heel altogether. So Brian's priestly role—in my opinion—needs to be given the rightful space it so richly deserves.

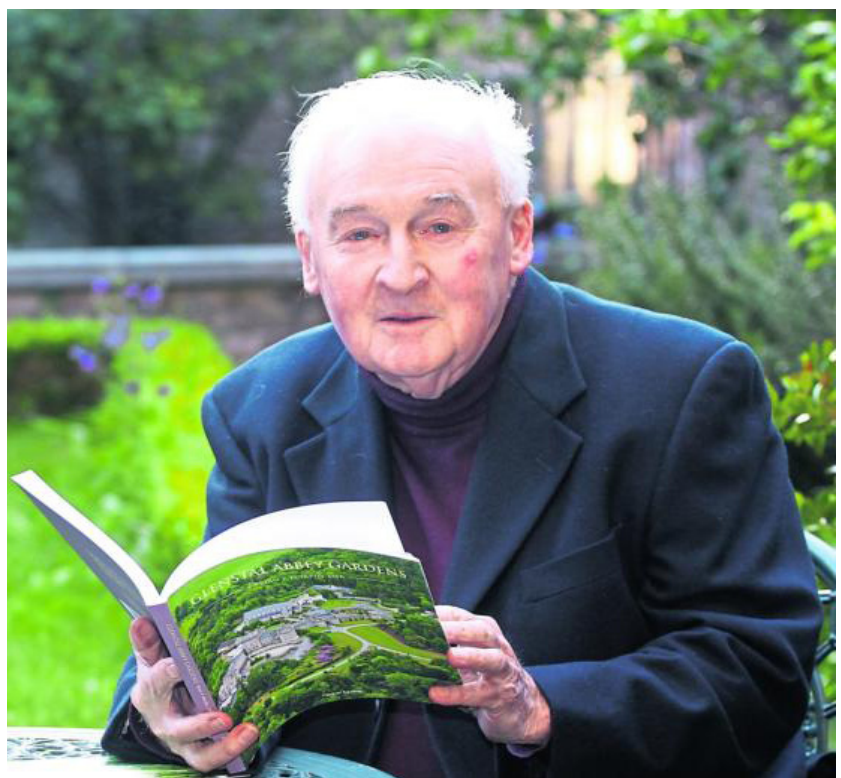
Father Brian lived in a community and things were not always harmonious, as is to be expected in a *human* way, and sometimes power at a higher level could and was delivered with a shocking callousness. But Brian retreated to his gardens and offered his work as prayer—but his bruised heart needed a loving response and that is where I believe I came in. He knew that I loved him *within* a deep personal friendship. Sometimes, when I suggested *outrageous schemes* where the higher ups got their just deserts—the *sheer fantasy* of it—would bring Brian out in a fit of giggles and he was all the better for that!

When Brian died on Monday, the 16th May 2022, it was very sudden and shocking. He was so healthy and had so much ongoing research in his many projects. That was also the day he was to see his eye specialist to treat his second eye after the first one was very successfully done. Yes—he had macular degeneration for which he was taking medication—at that age nearly all of us will have some but it is especially prevalent in those who work outside in the sun—especially gardeners.

His ‘*Lady of Limerick*’ work was complete and we were talking about where/when it was to be published. Also his biography of Kate O’Callaghan (1888-1961) was complete, with just endnotes to be done. She became Mayor of Limerick and a TD, taking up these Offices after her husband, Michael O’Callaghan (born 1879) had been shot by Crown Forces in front of her, in their home at Strand Road, Limerick, on 7th March 1921.

My husband and I both hope that these books will be published, and that Abbot Brendan Coffee osb will oversee the necessary details. We also hope that Father Brian's considerable archives will be preserved carefully because we know that they contain material—such as primary sources linked to the foundation of our State—that necessitate careful handling.

During the Abbot's homily, he stated that Father Brian's work was completed and I wept quietly when I heard this: nothing could be further from the truth. He had so many other things to do and as



he often said himself—his friend Father Philip Tierney is 94 and flying—literally around the world; and his dearest friend of all, Father Placid Murray is 104. So we were projecting another twenty years of fruitful work—but God had the final say: this was not to be.

Father Placid, who now resides in a nursing home nearby had recently celebrated 80 years as a priest, and Father Brian wanted this to be given public prominence. Our final conversation concerned how we could do this—obviously getting the Vatican involved was necessary. Unfortunately, Abbot Coffee was unable to get involved with this 'good news story' for his Abbey, and indeed for the Irish Catholic Church, due to volume of work, but surely now he will delegate to another community member the small amount of work needed to get this great achievement publicised!

Father Brian believed the occasion to be a first in the world so surely it will now be properly acknowledged! I understand that the Abbot has some concerns that it would all be too much for Father Placid but, in the scheme of things, the latter has expressed no such concern: so really it is a non-starter as an argument.

Due to Covid, the almost two and a half years lock-down had tough consequences for us all. Father Brian was not able to visit us, nor indeed the Milk Market; but almost every week he did go to Limerick and got to know all its nooks and crannies.

He spoke eloquently of St. John's Castle and its environs and the majestic might of the Shannon as it flowed towards the city. This greatest of our modern historians had the soul of a priest and the heart of a poet!

When the editor of the *Irish Political Review* asked us all what the magazine should publish of Brian's work, it gave me great pause. Because I recently asked Brian himself which of his work he valued and, after some reflection, he said either his article, *The Canon of Irish Cultural History: Some questions concerning Roy Foster's 'Modern Ireland'* (pp 222-233)—published in *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism 1938-1994*, Ed. by Ciaran Brady (Irish Academic Press. Dublin. 1994), or the last 3-4 chapters of his biography *'John Chartres: Mystery Man of the Treaty'* (Irish Academic Press. Dublin. 1995).

But, in the last month or so, I have been reading Father Brian's books—dipping in here and there till I have more measure

of myself because of his death. In his biography, *'The Life and Tragic Death of Winnie Barrington: The Story of the Barrington family of Glenstal Castle, County Limerick c.1800-1925'* (Papaver Editions, Limerick, 2018), appears his important and prescient repudiation, given Eve Morrison's latest book, *'Kilmichael...'*, of Peter Hart's thesis. Fr. Brian rejected the idea that: *"Irish republicans engaged in sectarian warfare in the years 1919-1921. The issue is covered in some detail in the text of this book..."*. He added:

"The thesis of Peter Hart, now sadly dead at a young age, which is still defended by some Trinity scholars, simply cannot be sustained. Life for the Barrington family, and others with Unionist sympathies, did, however, become more difficult during the Civil War owing to their support for the Free State and these events are covered in this book."

This is the kind of history that Father Brian Murphy left us and we are so much richer for his work and ethics.

Hopefully the sixteen trees he planted for the men of 1916 will remain in place in Glenstal Abbey with their stone plaques—and his seventeenth tree was dedicated to Winnie Barrington.

Ní fheicimid a leithéad arís. Ar Dheis Dé go raibh a hAnam dílis.

Eileen Lantry ©.

EU:

Quo Vadis ? continued

These factors make the EU unsustainable as presently structured. They constitute a recipe for its decline in all spheres, despite its economic success over the years. The structure, and its ideology, no longer reflect the reality it is dealing with. To use a *cliché*—it is not *fit for purpose*. It is a Union in name only.

Two leaders have recognised this and have proposed alternatives, Macron and Draghi.

Macron after summing up the conclusions of the *'Conference on Europe'* said:

"In 1989, President François Mitterrand opened up this reflection when the Soviet Union collapsed, proposing the creation of a European confederation. His proposal did not bear fruit. It was most certainly ahead of its time. It included Russia in this confederation, which, of course, was swiftly deemed unacceptable for the States that had just freed

themselves from the yoke of the Soviet Union. But it raised the right question and this question remains: how can we organize Europe from a political perspective and with a broader scope than that of the European Union? It is our historic obligation to respond to that question today and create what I would describe here before you as "a European political community".

This new European organization would allow democratic European nations that subscribe to our shared core values to find a new space for political and security cooperation, cooperation in the energy sector, in transport, investments, infrastructures, the free movement of persons and in particular of our youth. Joining it would not prejudge future accession to the European Union necessarily, and it would not be closed to those who have left the EU.

It would bring our Europe together, respecting its true geography, on the basis of its democratic values, with the desire to preserve the unity of our continent and by preserving the strength and ambition of our integration..." (9/5/22, EP).

Draghi, rightly considered the most effective of EU leaders:

"...urged the EU to embrace a "pragmatic federalism" that would include ditching national vetoes and could involve treaty change.

"We need a pragmatic federalism that encompasses all areas affected by ongoing transformations — from the economy to energy to security," Draghi told the European Parliament in his first speech to MEPs as Italian prime minister. "If this requires the start of a path that will lead to the revision of the Treaties, we should embrace it with courage and confidence"..."

In the light of Russia's war on Ukraine, Draghi called on capitals to give Brussels more power on defence and to abandon unanimity, which is required for EU decisions on foreign policy and other areas. He said:

"We must go beyond the principle of unanimity, which gives rise to an intergovernmental logic of clashing vetoes, and move towards decisions taken by qualified majority..." (3/5/22).

These remarks prompted applause from MEPs.

Both leaders accept that the present current structure is failing to cope and needs to be replaced. But neither has put forward an explanation for this situation. It is not very satisfactory to put forward solutions without some attempt at diagnosing what has gone wrong and why.

We should remind ourselves that the original aim in forming a European union

was to integrate the nations of Europe; and that it now claims to be a Union of the states.

Macron's ideas are a copout. Essentially they would abolish what exists and create a new entity that would include countries which are not currently members, including, *inter alia*, the UK!

Such a body is self-evidently not a Union: it would be an inter-Governmental arrangement instead. That would be back to the future for Europe and the making of such a proposal shows that France has learned nothing from the history of Europe and does not understand the UK.

Macron sees Britain as Europe's natural leader, despite the fact that the original project set up in 1957 was very specifically created to exclude the UK from European affairs because that European generation had enough of the British strategy of balance of power—pitting the strongest European nations against each other—a strategy which led to two World Wars and the ruination of Europe.

Draghi's idea is a more thoughtful proposal but, in proposing a Federation, he is also essentially rejecting the current structure and the idea of a Union. What his proposal entails is not clear, but it would also mean a type of inter-Governmental arrangement.

This was the very concept that the originators of the European project sought to avoid! Their aim was to set up a structure that would be more than the sum of its parts. This was something that had not been done before between a number of sovereign states.

Instead, in many ways, the EU is only returning to what the original American scheme for a European project was intended be: an arm of the US determination to be the unipolar Power in the world after WWII.

It was the US that knocked European heads together to work together in the face of the new kid on the block, the Soviet Union as empowered by defeating Nazi Germany, and it was the US that provided the 'seed capital' for the project in the Marshall Plan. Europe's contribution was a *tsunami* of wishful thinking about being the harbinger of peace and unity in Europe, providing a model for the world to follow!

But the peace was maintained by the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) policy of the Cold War parties and not by any positive action by European Powers. There was peace and coherence in Europe

by the grace of others, the USSR and the US. The Europeans had peace thrust upon them and lived in a cocoon.

When this framework collapsed in 1991, Europe was 'set free': and war followed shortly in the Balkans after the Europeans encouraged the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation. In this they were inspired by Margaret Thatcher.

The Soviet Union dissolved itself peacefully but the West dissolved Yugoslavia with a horrendous war. That was followed by European support for the US/NATO wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya etc. It also went along with the expansion of NATO and with the broken promises which led to the current war in Ukraine.

A constant theme for improving the EU, as advocated by Draghi, is the replacing of the unanimity rule for the most important issues and replacing it by majority voting. This would allegedly make it make it more efficient, more democratic etc. etc. Micheál Martin is in favour, despite the fact that it would mean Treaty change and a Referendum in Ireland. On the face of it, it all seems very admirable. Surely majority decision-making is the essence of democracy? Is it not as obvious as $2+2=4$?

But there is a problem. Democracy only works at a national level where there is a united national *Demos* that is greater than the subsidiary issues within the nation. In that situation the minority interest will accept the majority decisions.

Mathematical voting norms are limited and are not the determining factors in these situations. There are more important issues and understandings than majorities in a Parliament and that is recognised by all voters within a polity, unconsciously for the most part at a national level, because of the national *Demos*.

Bonar Law famously said during the Home Rule crisis that there were stronger things than majorities in the House of Commons and he was proved right.

Political life cannot be reduced to, and managed like, a mathematical problem. It is an organic process, not a mechanical one. Its fundamentals cannot be organised and managed by calculation and mathematical formulae. Counting of heads is not as significant as what's in the heads being counted! And what's in the heads being counted in Europe is national self-interest.

Majority rule does not apply within a group of sovereign nations unless the

group has created a *Demos* that automatically overrides national interests when the need arises. The EU has plainly not achieved that and, as the divisions are increasing rather than decreasing, it is not in prospect.

Russia had the Communist ideal as its *Demos*, now it's Mother Russia.

The US has the American dream of its *manifest destiny* for domination of the world.

China wants to be more Chinese.

All these *Demos* are alive and well and determining the world's politics. Europe had Christian Democracy but is now embarrassed by that ideology but cannot find another. So what is its distinct purpose in the world?

A *Demos* is not created just by ideas or the promoting of ideologies or values; and certainly not by the accompanying rhetoric. It is created by actions, by joint ventures of a people, by distinct and unique achievements made by, and in, the hearts and minds of a people.

Deciding fundamental issue among sovereign states by majority voting will be like counting apples and pears without distinction as if they were one fruit. It is a recipe for further division as minorities will feel oppressed by the majority as there is no unifying bond.

De Gaulle had the alternative vision of a '*union des patries*', not their integration, across Europe in an association that would act independently of the other blocs and Britain.

That may turn out to have been a more sustainable vision but is off the agenda for now.

Jack Lane

The Father Brian Murphy Archive

A new series,
of unpublished writings

The Father Brian Murphy Archive

will start in the
August

Irish Political Review

The Morrison Report

Roe v. Wade overturned

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center last March, a 61% majority of American adults say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 37% think abortion should be illegal in all or most cases. These views have remained relatively unchanged in the past few years. There is marked difference in opinion between Democrats and Republicans on the issue – in this survey, 80% of Democrats said they were in favour of abortion in all or most cases but only 38% of Republicans.

On 22nd January 1973, in the *Roe v. Wade* case, the US Supreme Court ruled by 7 votes to 2 that women had a constitutional right to choose to have an abortion in most circumstances. In the opinion of the Court at that time, the US Constitution contained such a right.

(It's not obvious that this is so. The Constitution makes no mention of abortion as such. The Court asserted that the right to abortion was part of a right to *privacy*, which isn't mentioned in the Constitution either. Instead, the Court claimed that such a right was implied in various parts of the Constitution.)

Be that as it may, the Court ruled that the Constitution contained a right to abortion and therefore legislation banning abortion was unconstitutional. This ruling struck down the anti-abortion legislation that existed then in many US states, including in Texas, where the *Roe v. Wade* case originated. From then on, state legislatures could regulate/restrict the provision of abortion within the terms set by the Supreme Court but banning abortions altogether was unconstitutional.

On 24th June 2022, the Supreme Court overruled the *Roe v. Wade* decision by 5 votes to 4. In the opinion of the present Court, there is nothing in the US Constitution that provides women with a right

to abortion.

State legislation banning abortion

For nearly half a century, abortion was legal throughout the US, thanks to the *Roe v. Wade* ruling. That has now been overruled and there is no bar to state legislatures banning abortion.

26 Republican-controlled states had requested the Court to overrule *Roe v. Wade* and allow states to prohibit abortions. Some of them had passed abortion-banning "*trigger laws*", designed to come into effect when the constitutional right to abortion was removed. It remains to be seen if some states attempt to prevent women travelling out of state for an abortion. Any attempt to do so is certain to be challenged by the Federal Government and/or in the courts.

Federal legislation legalising abortion?

Although the constitutional right to abortion is no more, it is theoretically possible for the US Congress to pass legislation making abortion legal throughout the US. This would have roughly the same effect as *Roe v. Wade* and would override anti-abortion legislation passed by state legislatures—Article 6 of the Constitution says:

"This Constitution, and the laws of the United States... shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state

shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding."

On several occasions, Democrats in Congress have tried to pass abortion legislation for the country as a whole but without success. In September last year, for example, the House of Representatives, where Democrats currently have a narrow majority, voted by 218 to 211 to approve such legislation. However, in May this year an attempt to do likewise in the Senate failed—a near identical Bill was defeated by 51 votes to 49, leaving the Bill 11 short of the 60 votes normally needed for legislation to proceed. All 50 Republican Senators voted to block the Bill and they were joined by one Democrat, Senator Joe Manchin.

Given the solid opposition of Republicans in the Senate, it is impossible for abortion legislation to be passed while the 60-vote rule is in operation. However, it can be changed so that only a straight majority is necessary to pass legislation (and, ironically, it only takes a straight majority in the Senate to make that change). President Biden has speculated publicly about doing this because of the difficulty he has experienced getting legislation through the Senate. Senator Bernie Sanders has now said this should be done, in order to pass abortion legislation.

In addition, to pass abortion legislation, Democrats would need a reliable voting majority in the Senate: they would need to win extra Senate seats in the November mid-term elections (and to hold on to their majority in the House).

In the light of all this, what are chances of Congress passing nationwide abortion legislation any time soon? Answer: slim to non-existent.

David Morrison
29 June 2022

<http://david-morrison.org.uk>

Palestine Links

Scenes from one part of a funeral, as Shireen Abu Akleh is laid to rest in Jerusalem (David Horowitz, Times of Israel, 13 May 2022)

Police rush procession, beat mourners at funeral for slain Al Jazeera journalist (Aaron Boxerman, Times of Israel, 13 May 2022)

For us, Palestinians, Shireen Abu Akleh was a legend (Hanin Majadli, Haaretz, 12 May 2022)

The suspected offense: throwing a firebomb. The punishment: death (Gideon Levy & Alex Levac, Haaretz, 13 May 2022)

Israel advances over 4,000 West Bank housing units for Jews (Hagar Shezaf, Haaretz, 12 May 2022)

Armed with High Court expulsion order, Israel's

bulldozers arrive in Masafer Yatta (Yuval Abraham and Basil al-Adraa, +972, 12 May 2022)

Another phase of the Palestinian Nakba, with Israeli court approval (Director of B'Tselem Hagai El-Ad, 9 May 2022)

WATCH: Soldiers assault +972 writer Basil al-Adraa (Oren Ziv & Yuval Abraham, +972, 8 May 2022)

A Palestinian family is brutally attacked by settlers, then interrogated by police (Gideon Levy & Alex Levac, Haaretz, 6 May 2022)

Israel has a historic debt to pay to the displaced people from the villages of Iqrit and Kafr Bir'im (Haaretz Editorial, 3 May 2022)

The Israeli army is making millions by seizing Palestinian tractors (Basil al-Adraa & Oren Ziv, +972, 1 May 2022)

Harvard student newspaper endorses BDS movement, while rejecting antisemitism, in potent symbol of campus sentiment about Israel (Andrew Lapin, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 29 April 2022)

New Jewish settlement in Hebron gets green light from Israel's top court (Hagar Shezaf, Haaretz, 28 April 2022)

Number of Palestinians in detention without trial in Israel hits 5-year high (Hagar Shezaf, Haaretz, 26 April 2022)

Over 30 Palestinians wounded in Al-Aqsa clashes with Israel Police (Josh Breiner, Jack Khoury & Deiaa Haj Yahia, Haaretz, 22 April 2022)

An Israeli soldier opened fire from a moving jeep, killing a lawyer taking kids to school (Gideon Levy & Alex Levac, 21 April 2022)

Food Production Agendas

continued

One can only speculate as to the reasons behind this seeming contradiction, but there is evidence of a general United Nations/World Economic Forum/ and—dare one say it—Globalist, predisposition against independent agricultural producers in favour of industrial agricultural production. In the past the *Guardian* would have run a mile from the promotion of such production methods due to animal welfare concerns and a general anti-capitalist instinct. It now appears to be throwing its lot in with them, justifying this by suggesting that ‘free-range’ methods cannot feed the human population.

In contrast the EU has a marked bias towards organic non-intensive agriculture production with a target, according to the *Times* (7 Feb 2021), of having 25% of all agricultural land farmed organically by 2030. This seems like a tall order for Ireland—which has the second lowest rate of organic production in Europe, with only 1.6% of agricultural land assigned to it. The EU average stands at 8.5%.

Subsidies have been available in Ireland for conversion from conventional farming methods to organic for some time, but they are not particularly generous and farmers are put off by the lower production volumes under an organic regime. Proponents of organic production methods point out that, although production declines from a given area of land under an organic regime are in the region of 20%, income from organic production is higher by about 20% also, so over time there is no net loss and the environmental gain is potentially huge.

If Ireland is forced by the EU to reduce its agricultural production due to climate concerns, then a feasible way of doing this is through the conversion to organic production which need not necessarily entail a loss of income.

Conversion from typical commercial production to organic production takes two years through to certification. The main issue with organic production is that whatever nutrients you take off the land in the form of crops or animal herds have to be put back again. The three main inputs are nitrogen, phosphate and potassium. Nitrogen is managed (in Ireland anyway) by planting clover for 2 years in a 5-year rotation which fixes it in the soil. Phosphate is allowed in the form of rock phosphate, which is incorporated

into the soil and breaks down slowly, the point being to feed the soil, not the crop. Organic sources of potassium are also available, and include seaweed which was widely used in Ireland in pre-industrial farming days.

Irish cattle farms are not organic, but they are not far from it and are certainly largely ‘free range’ as cattle are fed grass as much as possible, not grain, as it is healthier, cheaper and generally beneficial as cattle after all were designed to eat grass. Grain, used in CAFO’s, or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, causes bloating and various intestinal maladies which have to be controlled by

systematic consumption of antibiotics which have the potential to then enter the human food chain.

Intensive agricultural methods inevitably bring with them systematic health issues for both animals and the humans who consume them. The *Guardian*’s attempt to frighten everyone into acceptance of such methods by invoking the ‘zoonotic’ disease transmission model which allegedly produced Covid, is sleight of hand.

It is bizarre to see the *Guardian* condoning industrial food production methods given their known sources of ‘zoonotic’ disease transmission and its past record on animal welfare issues. This perhaps reflects that journal’s final transition from irritating liberal left virtue-signalling to straight-forward globalist propagandising.

Sean Owens

Northern Ireland Election (5th May)

Triumph of Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin’s winning of more seats than any other political party in the NI Assembly elections has produced some sniping from begrudgers who cannot bring themselves to acknowledge the achievement. The objective has been to denigrate the triumph of Sinn Féin by claiming that the party’s performance has been less impressive than it has been presented, and signals something different than a Republican victory. That view will cut little ice in the North itself.

Fintan O’Toole has written ‘*Old North is Dead but Cannot be Reborn*’ for the *Irish Times* (9.5.22):

“there is... a large and growing non-binary identity. The “two-traditions” model was never adequate to the complexities of Northern Ireland but it, too, is now surely dead. The rise of Alliance has made it definitively defunct. This means, for a start, that the internal political architecture created by the Belfast Agreement is obsolete. It disempowers those voters who do not wish to place themselves within the old binary categories. But it also means that whatever “the new” is, it can’t be a simple move from one monolith (a unionist-dominated Northern Ireland) to another (a 32-county republic that is merely an extension of the existing 26-county state). It has to be new in a much larger sense—innovative, nonbinary, rooted in fresh thought about how political identities and democratic states need to function in the 21st century.”

Now that Sinn Féin has won the game, O’Toole seems to want to have it that the game was already over and the winning of the game is of no consequence.

It is apparent to anyone who lives in the political entity of ‘Northern Ireland’ that it is certainly not a normal democracy, as O’Toole asserts. It was created with the intention of having a permanent majority governing a permanent minority and that is how it functioned for 50 years, until its collapse. In 1998 it was reconstituted formally on communal lines but still on the understanding that there would be a permanent Protestant majority, with a Catholic minority protected from it through institutional safeguards. Its structures were designed to promote a moderate centre, constituted by the UUP and SDLP, and a marginalisation of its extremes. But the DUP and SF came to power and spoiled the plan. And, for a brief spell, from 2007-2011, it worked well, to the amazement of all.

Then it was discovered that what was put in place in 1998 did not work.

Some, in recent years, have thought it could be made into a normal democracy by manufacturing an Opposition. That Opposition was ineffectual and has been decimated.

Now it seems O'Toole wants to make 'Northern Ireland' into California—with its non-binary, identity politics overriding the constitutional question and historic political categories! What the British, Irish and US Governments took years to put together is to be broken up because the Alliance Party got some extra seats.

It should be plain for all to see that 'Northern Ireland' is the last place in the world in which an individual can reinvent him- or her-self into a different category on a whim. Social intercourse is entirely built around discovering what an individual really is—and that can only be Prod or Taig. Everything else in life is a luxury.

But it seems that history and historical experience is of no consequence when Ireland (having "*matured as a nation*") can be metamorphosed into whatever Progress is in the air. But it can comfortably be predicted that the North, where people live in touch with the more fundamental elements of social existence, will likely prove more impervious to transformation and re-identification!

O'Toole will find that, far from a political transformation having taken place in the North, there has been an absorption and harnessing of the current progress fashions, indulged in by the superficial layer of humanity, to the communal war of attrition.

The Northern Catholic community has developed into a highly sophisticated and tactically-flexible voting mass. It is clear that it voted overwhelmingly for Sinn Fein where there was the opportunity of electing the maximum amount of republicans and, where there was not, it set about damaging the DUP to prevent it retaining the top spot necessary for the First Minister.

The Catholic community has observed, over the last decade, the challenge the Alliance Party has represented to the DUP. The DUP hysterics directed at the Alliance, along with loyalist intimidation, has shown the Catholic voter that to 'get at' the DUP, and at "*don't feed the crocodile unionism*", the Alliance is the best weapon.

The DUP became prone to undermining with the demise of Arlene Foster and with the Brexit vote. From that point onwards, it found its vote being shaved from both ends—the liberal unionist and intransigent unionist ends. Donaldson took over the leadership to stop the rot but he has failed, leading to a loss of DUP voters to the TUV [Traditional Unionist

Voice]. But the TUV could not achieve the numbers in each constituency to translate this into seats.

The Catholic community has come to understand that the SDLP vote is a wasted vote when it comes to damaging the DUP. By voting Alliance, or giving the party Second Preferences, the Catholic voter can combine with the liberal Protestant voter to deprive the DUP of seats. That cannot be achieved by voting for a Catholic-nationalist party like the SDLP. The taking of a couple of seats from the DUP on the final counts was crucial to ending its 'top dog' status. In North Antrim, for instance, the well-regarded and very competent Melvyn Storey was squeezed out by an Alliance candidate.

Observers suggest that there is still a unionist majority in NI and Sinn Fein are not really growing their vote. They fail to understand what the Catholic community is doing. It understands Sinn Fein as its primary instrument and is doing what it can to give them primacy in the Assembly, and this involves damaging the enemy as much as it does assisting Sinn Fein. Catholics know that, just as they made Sinn Fein, Sinn Fein made them.

There is also some talk among nationalists about moulding a more accommodating unionism through promoting the Alliance. It is noticeable that there are candidates from the mainstream Catholic community prominent in their new gains. They are taking votes from people who desire normal politics—however, fanciful that might be. Unionism in its various forms has proved incapable—since it rejected the normalisation of politics through the organisation of the parties of state—of incorporating this element.

A century ago this year, the Northern Catholics were demoralised by the activity of Michael Collins. Northern nationalists placed faith in Michael Collins: and that was dashed by his failure: with 6 County Catholics left high and dry. This debilitated the community for nearly half a century. It did not recover until it embarked on a journey which started from the cataclysmic events of August 1969.

Collins was outwitted by the British after they got his signature on the Treaty and he was sold a pup on the Boundary Commission, which Lloyd George led him to believe would whittle away the 6 Counties to an unsustainable rump. He had earlier tested the sustainability of the 6 County entity at Beleek/Pettigo and

got a bloody nose from the State behind the false front. But, by then, he and Eoin O'Duffy had destroyed the Northern IRA in an aborted offensive, mysteriously called off at the vital moment.

After the failure of Collins and the abandonment by Dublin of the Northern Catholics, they found themselves cast adrift in the Six Counties. Northern Nationalism attempted to pick itself up after the traumatic events of 1920-5. But what was it to do in the situation it found itself? Was it to act out the part of a subdued and permanent minority that was designed for it within the new construct of 'Northern Ireland', or was it to withdraw into itself and have nothing to do with the permanently subordinate and humiliating position that it was placed in?

That was the dilemma that faced Northern Catholics, cast adrift of both the Irish and British States within the Six Counties, during the next half century.

The Northern Catholics were then confronted by the very peculiar entity that they were trapped within—a "pseudo-state" with "a simulacrum" parliament in which nothing meaningful could be done.

The *Irish News* in Belfast, appealed to Nationalists to shake themselves out of a feeling of helplessness and despair and make the best of things in the Six Counties. It immediately called for the unity and the development of an effective Nationalist organisation. Its editorial of 17th December 1925 consisted of a review of recent events that was headlined '*The Folly of Despair*', and it was aimed at nationalists crest-fallen at the fiasco of the Boundary Commission:

"The Treaty made on December 6th, 1921, was a complicated document; Articles V and XII provided ample materials for controversies, disputes, intrigues and negotiations. At the end of four uncertain years the situation is clarified at last... no change will be made in the Boundary set up by the Partition Act of 1920.

"Border hopes... aroused by the existence of Article XII, with its provision for the appointment of a Boundary Commission to produce a geographic and economic transformation under conditions capable of many divergent interpretations, have vanished now. The Six Counties are the Six Counties still. All the Nationalists placed under the Northern Government at the end of 1920 are in the same position at the end of 1925. No doubt Irish conditions will be altered to some extent in due course; but the changes will come naturally, gradually and in accordance with developments that cannot be foreseen. And, in the meantime,

as MacMahon said when he had stormed the Malakoff fort— ‘Here we are: here we shall remain’ ...

“We are here; there are 450,000 of us. We can recover all that has been lost within the past half-decade, win the respect of opponents while contending manfully for our rights, and help and hasten the realization of national hopes by proving our lot in the land where our lot is cast. But we shall sink lower and suffer more sorely if we keep on railing at others and groaning on our own account instead of coming together and putting our hands to the work that must be done.”

The outstanding writer of this *Irish News* editorial was the Corkman, *Timothy McCarthy* (1865-1928). It sums up more than any other single piece of writing the Catholic predicament in the 6 County entity and how it was to be manoeuvred out of, in time.

The *Irish News* had been worried about the Boundary Commission because it feared the isolation of the Catholics of eastern Ulster, including Belfast, if the Border Nationalists joined the Free State. It wanted the greatest number of Catholics in the Six Counties to maximise nationalist influence in the area in which they were marooned to maintain the possibility of someday outnumbering the Unionists. It opposed the Boundary Commission on the basis that the Catholic minority needed to be as large as possible so that eventually Irish unity could come about.

Perhaps its relief at retaining the maximum numbers of Catholics within the Six Counties produced its greatly optimistic reading of what might be accomplished, given unity and organisation.

The reference to the *Malakoff Fort* concerned General MacMahon’s taking and holding of the Malakoff redoubt during the siege of Sevastopol in the Crimean War against the Russians. This was a defining moment in the fall of the city to the French after the British had failed to take it. MacMahon had been ordered by his commander-in-chief to evacuate the redoubt he had captured but replied with the legendary response: “*J’y suis, J’y reste*”.

Marshall MacMahon was a descendant of the Wild Geese. He commanded the defeated French army at the Battle of Metz in the Franco-Prussian War, helped put down the Paris Commune and rose to become Chief of State in France and the First President of the Third Republic.

I don’t know if *The Irish News* meant what it seemed to mean through this analogy—that the Northern Catholic presence, if kept solid and redoubtable,

would ultimately result in the fall of the Unionist citadel—but it certainly had such an intention.

Timmy McCarthy would be smiling if he saw what has happened in 2022. He was a staunch Redmondite and is buried near his chief, Joe Devlin, in Milltown Cemetery, Belfast—and not too far from Bobby Sands and his comrades.

The Northern Catholics slowly learnt, out of the Collins experience, and then after the further let-down by Taoiseach Lynch in 1969-70, to trust only in themselves

and what they have produced internally, out of themselves. And now that Belfast has fallen, Dublin is next.

There are seeming mysteries that have come from the resurgence of 1969, out of the catastrophe of 1922-5. Such things are beyond comprehension to those who think within established parameters and do not understand what ‘Northern Ireland’ is, and the history of the Northern Catholics—who, like the Ulster Protestants, have refused to be anything but themselves.

Pat Walsh

No War in Ukraine if Trump Won in 2020

In the Debate at this year’s Roger Casement Summer School, I argued that the war would not have happened if Donald Trump had remained in office and that it would have happened sooner if Hilary Clinton had become President in 2016. Such hypothetical claims, being conjecture, can be neither proved nor disproved. However, given the need to understand the causes of the war, attempting to substantiate them is, I believe, a worthwhile exercise.

There is a weakness in my argument and I will get to that, but I believe the actions of the Biden administration, right from February 2021, had the intended effect of establishing Ukraine as a Western bridgehead on Russia’s doorstep, a development that the US and NATO knew would lead to war. I consider that interpretation of events to be demonstrably true and a factor that needs to be acknowledged in political analyses of the war.

The strategic thinking behind US foreign policy that has led to the present war is more than an outcome of policies devised recently in the Biden White House or less recently in the Clinton camp in 2016. The strategy has been around since at least the 1990s. It found theoretical expression in a work entitled, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy And Its Geostrategic Imperatives* by Zbigniew Brzezinski (Basic Books, 1997).

Brzezinski was a foreign policy advisor to Presidents Johnson and Carter and extremely influential in US foreign policy circles until he fell from favour when he opposed the Iraq War. When that War went bad for the US, he rapidly regained popularity and became associated with the Obama campaign in 2007. In Office,

Obama described Brzezinski as his ‘mentor’. According to the *Behind The Headlines* website Brzezinski, “*became one of the biggest advocates of NATO expansion after former KGB agent Vladimir Putin came to power in Russia*” [in 2000]. Some relevant extracts from *The Grand Chessboard* are quoted below.

The strategy of asserting US hegemony globally has been at the back of US foreign policy since the Soviet collapse, but the actions that created the tensions that culminated in the Russian invasion were driven knowingly by the Biden Administration in 2021 and early 2022. The flow of provocations was explained clearly in a lecture by Professor John Mearsheimer delivered at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence on June 16th of this year. The lecture has the title, *The Causes and Consequences of the Ukraine War*, and can be viewed on You Tube or read as a script on the website of *The National Interest* <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/causes-and-consequences-ukraine-crisis-203182>. I draw from it below. Another useful source on the culpability of the Biden Administration in the months, weeks and days immediately prior to the invasion, and which completes the picture painted by Mearsheimer, is the O’Connor Column from the May 2022 edition of *Irish Political Review* which I will also quote from.

One of Donald Trump’s few merits, perhaps his only one, is that he is a critic of the liberal consensus in the US, including of the foreign policy that arises from that consensus. Of course, he is also a product of the American Right with all the disagreeable traits that go with that category, and

more. Yet no new wars were started during his Presidential term. Despite the chaos that characterised his administration, he won 11.2 million additional votes in 2020 compared to 2016. In percentage terms his vote increased from 46% in 2016 to 47% in 2020. It cannot be discounted that his electoral popularity owes something to his success in avoiding costly military involvements.

In the circumstances where the US political elite (or most of it) is bent on retaining global hegemony through leveraging its military power on the geopolitical chessboard as defined by Brzezinski, Trump, even though his political influence may now be in freefall, performed a useful function for a few years by containing that agenda.

Accepting Mearsheimer's evidence-based argument that "*the United States is principally responsible for causing the Ukraine crisis*", the question investigated in this article is the extent to which the reality behind that statement is due to Joe Biden winning in 2020.

EXTRACTS FROM THE GRAND CHESSBOARD

Zbigniew Brzezinski was the architect of the strategy that is now unfolding in Ukraine. The entire content of *The Grand Chessboard* is relevant to understanding the evolution of US foreign policy since the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, but the focus of this article is Ukraine and Russia. In this section two short passages will suffice to provide some necessary context.

On the subject of US primacy or hegemony Brzezinski says:

"Today, the geopolitical issue is no longer what geographic part of Eurasia is the point of departure for continental domination, nor whether land power is more significant than sea power. Geopolitics has moved from the regional to the global dimension, with preponderance over the entire Eurasian continent serving as the central basis for global primacy. The United States, a non-Eurasian power, now enjoys international primacy, with its power directly deployed on three peripheries of the Eurasian continent, from which it exercises a powerful influence on the states occupying the Eurasian hinterland. But it is on the globe's most important playing field—Eurasia—that a potential rival to America might at some point arise. Thus, focusing on the key players and properly assessing the terrain has to be the point of departure for the formulation of American geostrategy for the long-term management of America's Eurasian geopolitical interests."

His contention that Ukraine is the key

space on the chessboard is set out in the following paragraph:

"Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire. Russia without Ukraine can still strive for imperial status, but it would then become a predominantly Asian imperial state, more likely to be drawn into debilitating conflicts with aroused Central Asians, who would then be resentful of the loss of their recent independence and would be supported by their fellow Islamic states to the south. China would also be likely to oppose any restoration of Russian domination over Central Asia, given its increasing interest in the newly independent states there. However, if Moscow regains control over Ukraine, with its 52 million people and major resources as well as its access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically again regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia. Ukraine's loss of independence would have immediate consequences for Central Europe, transforming Poland into the geopolitical pivot on the eastern frontier of a united Europe" (Both extracts from "*A Unipolar World and Ukraine*" in the May 2022 edition of Labour Affairs <https://labouraffairs.com/2022/05/01/a-unipolar-world-and-ukraine%ef%bf%bc/#more-1269>)

Brzezinski's geopolitical strategy deserves to be challenged in its entirety but one point leaps out here. He refers to Russia regaining control over Ukraine and that country losing its independence when what Russia has demanded all along is a neutral Ukraine remaining within the Russian sphere of influence. The key point, however, is that Brzezinski saw US control over Ukraine as essential to its global primacy.

MEARSHEIMER'S CASE

In the Address he gave to the European University in Florence, Mearsheimer argues that the fatal decision on Ukraine was made at NATO's annual summit in April 2008 in Bucharest during the Presidency of George W Bush. It was announced there that Ukraine and Georgia "*will become members of NATO*". The response of the Russians was immediate. Mearsheimer quotes a Russian source on what Putin said at the time: "*If Ukraine joins NATO, it will do so without Crimea and the eastern regions. It will simply fall apart.*"

However, it is the evidence he presents about the change in direction by the White House in early 2021 that is relevant to this article. He says that the change was evident in Kiev as well as Washington.

"In addition to NATO's ongoing efforts to make the Ukrainian military a more formidable fighting force, the politics surrounding Ukraine's membership in NATO and its integration into the West changed in 2021. There was renewed enthusiasm for pursuing those goals in both Kyiv and Washington. President Zelensky, who had never shown much enthusiasm for bringing Ukraine into NATO and who was elected in March 2019 on a platform that called for working with Russia to settle the ongoing crisis, reversed course in early 2021 and not only embraced NATO expansion but also adopted a hardline approach toward Moscow. He made a series of moves—including shutting down pro-Russian TV stations and charging a close friend of Putin with treason—that were sure to anger Moscow."

There seems to be divided opinion on what caused Zelensky to change course in early 2021, with some commentators speculating that he was influenced or outmanoeuvred by the nationalist element in Ukrainian politics, but this ignores the power held by the US in the internal affairs of Ukraine since 2014. The important change in 2021 was the transfer of power from Trump to Biden.

The strong likelihood is that Zelensky was persuaded to drop his election promises by pressure from representatives of the Biden White House. Zelensky would have needed exceptional ability as well as an international profile and a level of support from the Ukrainian elite that he did not have, to have withstood the pressure the US could bring to bear on him.

On the question of Biden's position on Ukraine, Mearsheimer states that Biden "*had long been committed to bringing Ukraine into NATO and was also super-hawkish toward Russia*". In the Obama administration, Biden had held responsibility for Ukraine, so the US officials who supervised US involvement in the *coup* were answerable to him. In line with the propaganda line pushed by the Democrats throughout Trump's tenure, Biden believed that Russia had interfered through social media outlets in the 2016 Election, helping to pull in votes for Trump. In American parlance, regarding Russia, Joe Biden had skin in the game.

Mearsheimer shows how earnestly the Biden administration pursued its aim of bringing Ukraine into NATO in 2021 as follows:

"Ukraine's military also began participating in joint military exercises with NATO forces. In July 2021, Kyiv and Washington co-hosted Operation Sea Breeze, a naval exercise in the Black Sea that included navies from 31 countries

and was directly aimed at Russia. Two months later in September 2021, the Ukrainian army led Rapid Trident 21, which the U.S. Army described as an “annual exercise designed to enhance interoperability among allied and partner nations, to demonstrate units are poised and ready to respond to any crisis.””

Further evidence he provides is a quotation from a NATO communiqué following its annual summit in Brussels in June 2021.

“We reiterate the decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Ukraine will become a member of the Alliance with the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as an integral part of the process; we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions, including that each partner will be judged on its own merits. We stand firm in our support for Ukraine’s right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference.”

In the same vein Mearsheimer states:

On September 1, 2021, Zelensky visited the White House, where Biden made it clear that the United States was “*firmly committed*” to “*Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations*”. Then on 10th November 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba, signed an important document — the “*US-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership*”. The aim of both parties, the document stated, is to “*underscore ... a commitment to Ukraine’s implementation of the deep and comprehensive reforms necessary for full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions*”.

That document explicitly builds not just on “*the commitments made to strengthen the Ukraine-U.S. strategic partnership by Presidents Zelensky and Biden*”, but also reaffirms the U.S. commitment to the “*2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration*”.

An important part of the story in 2021 is the response to Biden’s escalation of pressure on Russia. Mearsheimer says:

“To deal with this growing threat, Putin stationed ever-increasing numbers of Russian troops on Ukraine’s border between February 2021 and February 2022. His aim was to coerce Biden and Zelensky into altering course and halting their efforts to integrate Ukraine into the West. On December 17, 2021, Moscow sent separate letters to the Biden administration and NATO demanding a written guarantee that: 1) Ukraine would not join NATO, 2) no offensive weapons would be stationed near Russia’s borders, and 3) NATO troops and equipment moved into eastern Europe since 1997 would be moved back to western Europe.

“Putin made numerous public statements during this period that left no doubt that he viewed NATO expansion into Ukraine as an existential threat. Speaking to the Defense Ministry Board on December 21, 2021, he stated: “what they are doing, or trying or planning to do in Ukraine, is not happening thousands of kilometers away from our national border. It is on the doorstep of our house. They must understand that we simply have nowhere further to retreat to. Do they really think we do not see these threats? Or do they think that we will just stand idly watching threats to Russia emerge?” Two months later at a press conference on February 22, 2022, just days before the war started, Putin said: “We are categorically opposed to Ukraine joining NATO because this poses a threat to us, and we have arguments to support this. I have repeatedly spoken about it in this hall.” He then made it clear that he recognized that Ukraine was becoming a de facto member of NATO. The United States and its allies, he said, “continue to pump the current Kiev authorities full of modern types of weapons.” He went on to say that if this was not stopped, Moscow “would be left with an ‘anti-Russia’ armed to the teeth. This is totally unacceptable” ”

THE O’CONNOR COLUMN

Four paragraphs in the above-mentioned *O’Connor Column* succinctly describe the lead-up to the invasion on 24th February in a way that fully supports the argument that Professor Mearsheimer is making. They read:

“These proposals [the December 2021 proposals from Russia] were dismissed out of hand by both Kiev and Washington, acting in lockstep, despite French and German leaders desperately urging them both as a workable solution. Biden insisted that the “full territorial integrity” of Ukraine had to be restored; that there could be no limitations on the freedom of states to become NATO members; and that the siting of nuclear arms on Ukrainian territory was a matter for the “Ukraine Government”.

“It is verifiably the case that Ukraine not only refused to implement Minsk but set about preparing the military recapture of the Donbas. It now had a greatly re-equipped army and was confident of success. As Russia had not recognised the breakaway areas, it would be excluded from intervening other than surreptitiously as long as it was trapped within the “international rules-based system”.

“Prior to this, while breaches of the ceasefire in the Donbas had been frequent by both sides, on 18th February 2022 the OSCE [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe] Observer Group on the ‘contact line’ reported what even the Guardian admitted was an “indisputable dramatic escalation of violence” fourteen times the level recorded at any time over previous months. There were over 1,000

missiles fired, with the Ukrainian side, which had amassed its most effective military units along the contact line, mostly responsible. The following day, on 19th February, Zelensky attended the Munich Security Conference where he not only requested massive Western military support to forestall a threatened Russian “all-out invasion”, but ruled out any neutral status for Ukraine.

He strongly hinted that Ukraine intended to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Pact and allow the stationing of nuclear weapons on its territory. In a secret meeting at the fringe of the meeting, as the Wall Street Journal of 19th February revealed, German Chancellor Scholz urged Zelensky to accept the Russian formula of neutrality and implementation of Minsk as the precondition for peace. Zelensky, evidently emboldened by Biden’s assurances, refused. Greeted with applause by the NATO leaders, Zelensky’s stance at Munich was a clear signal and final straw for Moscow.”

The additional information here is that Scholz and Macron were attempting to press for a diplomatic solution in the period before the invasion but that NATO under US instruction was resolute in opposing any suggestion of compromise. Indeed, the Ukrainians had greatly increased attacks on the separatists in the Donbas and were planning to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Pact, something the Russians were surely aware of. It was as though Biden needed the invasion to happen.

When the invasion came on February 24th, its first consequence was a major diplomatic victory for the Americans: the ground was pulled from under the long-standing German policy of trading with Russia. Brzezinski had advised that the maintenance of US primacy depended on preventing the emergence of regional powers like Germany and Japan. That danger regarding Germany was certainly averted by the outbreak of war.

A WEAKNESS IN THE ARGUMENT

There is an apparent weakness in my argument. Professor Mearsheimer believes, credibly, that the tension with Russia that has led to war was set in motion by NATO’s 2008 decision to allow Ukraine to join. That policy mistake, he argues, was compounded over the years by all the subsequent US administrations, including Trump’s. As he puts it:

“The April 2008 decision to bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO was destined to lead to conflict with Russia. The Bush administration was the principal architect of that fateful choice, but the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations have doubled down on that policy

at every turn and America's allies have dutifully followed Washington's lead."

It's possible to argue, as Mearsheimer does here, that Trump was nearly as complicit as Biden in pushing NATO's 2008 agenda. Since the invasion, Trump, in his usual manner, has been saying that the war would not have happened under his watch while bragging that the Javelin anti-tank weapons that he supplied were proving most effective against the Russians. He certainly contributed to the Ukraine cause by sanctioning a continued supply of arms there. An article in the US magazine, *Politico*, in 2019, describes him as escalating the Ukraine agenda above what had been set by Obama as a defence against widely held suspicions that he sympathised with Russia.

"The Trump administration in 2017 approved lethal arms sales to Ukraine, taking a step the Obama administration had never done. The move was seen as a sign that Trump's government was taking a hard-line approach to a revanchist Vladimir Putin despite the president's public rhetoric flattering the Russian leader. Scaling back that assistance could expose Trump to allegations that his policies are favoring Moscow." (*Politico*, 28 August 2019)

But the claim that Trump was on the same page as Obama, (Hilary) Clinton and Biden regarding Ukraine or that he shares responsibility with them for the present conflict, simply does not stand up.

The same *Politico* article describes a major controversy over Trump's resistance to plans by Congress to increase military assistance to Ukraine in 2019. Funding of \$250 million had been voted for the *Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative* but the President had ordered a review of the *Initiative*, which had been established in 2015 before he had been elected. The review was to ensure that its funds were being used "in the best interests of the United States" and to seek assurance that other countries "were paying their fair share". This initiative from the White House caused outrage in both Houses of Congress from both parties with Trump being denounced as "an asset to Russia".

Trump's handling of Ukraine was, of course, the subject of his first *Impeachment*. (He was Impeached twice by the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives. In the first case, in late 2019, it was claimed he had applied pressure on the Ukrainian Government to investigate Joe Biden and thus influence the 2020 Presidential Election. In the second in early 2021 it was claimed he had incited

an attack on the US Capitol. In both cases he was acquitted by the Senate.)

The overriding consideration, however, is that Trump dissented from the policy of using Ukraine to generate tension with Russia. Mearsheimer's Address in Florence shows how much effort was invested by the Biden administration in forcing a military response from Russia.

Trump played along with the Ukraine policy he inherited from Obama, Bush and ultimately from Brzezinski, but clearly disliked it and placed obstacles in its way. His actions as President show that he would not have taken the path chosen by Biden in 2021. It is therefore indisputable that, had he won a second term, the world would have been spared a devastating war, the full tragic consequences of which are yet to unfold.

Does Trump deserve credit for dissenting from the Washington consensus on Ukraine, for not being Biden? Was his dissent accidental? The historians will probably need time to work that one

out. It is undeniable that he used in high politics the dubious tactics he employed as a businessman. He embodied the spirit of American capitalism and was, in that sense, anti-politics. He exploited and probably shared the prejudices of his support base, demeaned institutions over which he had power and presided over a chaotic administration. But, behind the chaos, there was a coherence to his opposition to the vision of US power that was devised by Brzezinski. I think that was understood by a large swathe of the US electorate.

It looks as if Trump's star is now on the wane. An interesting development is that a new contender who shares his view of America but not his antipathy to politics, is emerging in the Republican Party. Ron DeSantis, the present Governor of Florida, might be a candidate in the 2024 Presidential Election. In that eventuality, US voters will get the opportunity to vote against the disastrous war making indulged in by its progressive element.

Dave Alvey

From the 2022 Roger Casement Summer School

An Audience Debates Ukraine

The contributions from the floor to the debate on the Ukraine War between Clare Daly and Barry Andrews on 6th May this year was as interesting, if not more so, than the exchanges between the two main speakers. (A summary of the arguments from Daly and Andrews was included in a report on the 2022 Roger Casement Summer School in the June *Irish Political Review*.)

The Ukraine Debate at the School was notable in that an expected flood of attendance by supporters of the Ukrainian cause never materialised. Some individuals holding that view did attend but decided not to speak and some left while the debate was still in progress. The organisers were aware that a number of pro-Ukraine individuals had booked tickets by phone to be paid for on the door, but these never showed up. During the Debate the only pro-Ukraine/anti-Russian contributions came from a group of Fianna Fail representatives who arrived late. These were given an uninterrupted hearing and received applause.

A possible explanation for the absence

of any heated exchanges regarding the war is that, when confronted with a structured debate in which informed opinion as opposed to emotionally charged propaganda was the order of the day, supporters of the prevailing media discourse were disorientated and at a loss for what to say.

This point is relevant to the manner in which the Ukraine War has been handled throughout Europe. Rational analysis has been drowned out by a trumped-up emotionalism based on Russophobia, pure and simple. Such emotion devalues the concept of democratic debate. While one of the propagandist tropes has been that European values need to be defended in the face of Russian aggression, the European value of discussing events in an informed, calm atmosphere has been thrown out the window.

Unfortunately, the quality of the audio on the live stream video of the contributions from the audience was poor. It was nonetheless good enough to capture much of what people said. In the following report my descriptions are between square brackets while my reproductions of the contributions are not.

[The first speaker was a former Irish Ambassador to the Holy See (the Vatican).]

In 1921 there was a belief in Western countries that all the bits of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union should be recognised as independent states without regard to the associations between them. In Ireland it was different. There was a recognition that the interests of powerful neighbours needed to be taken account of. Partition was eventually recognised, as was the Common Travel Area, and eventually the compromises of the Peace Process were accepted. The approach has been that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. That is my first point.

As a former Ambassador to the Holy See, I was glad to see Clare drawing attention to the role of Pope Francis. I read every document issued by the Vatican. It was interesting that Francis recently referred to the work achieved by Cardinal Casaroli in the cause of *Détente* between East and West during the 1970s. The Pope wishes to see a new coming together across the Continent of Europe from Portugal and Ireland right across to Vladivostok. As a third point I would say that, with four billion people, Africa is the future—China is the future. We can't afford to look at the whole of international relations as a question of the relationship between the United States and certain other Powers.

[The first of a number of speakers from the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) spoke about the far-Right and fascist elements supporting the Ukraine Government. She objected to the one-sided media coverage of the war in which much of the real story was being edited out.]

In 2014 Ukraine's democratically elected Government was overthrown in a US-backed coup. Since that time things have been falling apart in Ukraine. Nearly 15,000 people were killed in the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk in Eastern Ukraine in the course of an eight-year conflict. Civilians were being slaughtered by Ukrainian military units associated with fascist organisations. I've hardly seen a word of that in the media coverage. There has also been ethnic cleansing of Jews and Roma from Eastern Ukraine by the same fascist organisations.

[I spoke next.]

As Chair of the Roger Casement Summer School I would like to thank the two speakers for their participation today. I also thank Déaglán de Bréadún for chairing the debate and Mary Delany for playing the important role of time-keeper. I wish to

express my own views as a private citizen regarding this debate. The Government has said that we should have a debate about neutrality and in the meanwhile it has backed the US position. The point is the debate about neutrality has not yet taken place but the Government is acting as if the neutrality policy has been dropped. This was brought home to me when I heard the Taoiseach denounce the position being taken by the Republic of India as unacceptable. So, we have the head of a supposedly neutral State denouncing another neutral State for holding the line regarding a multi-polar world order.

The Ukraine war is a catastrophe for those at the rough end of it. The fundamental question is: what has caused this to happen? Some people say it has been caused by Russia—end of story, and I respect that point of view. But there is more to it than that. The Americans have been stoking the issue since at least 2004. Actually, it is unfair to blame America. It is one party in America that has been using Ukraine to exert pressure on Russia: the Democratic Party. I would argue, and I am prepared to back this up with a documented article, that if Trump was still in Office, this War would not have happened, and if Hilary Clinton had won the 2016 Presidential Election, it would have happened a lot sooner.

[The next speaker who was from Saudi Arabia spoke about the need for democratic values to be defended consistently.]

I am from Saudi Arabia and am living in Ireland for seven years; I'll be an Irish citizen soon. Neutrality is connected with defending values and defending democracy. The Irish Government has good relations with the Saudi Government even though it is an Absolute Monarchy. This is worse than Putin. The EU also refuses to raise the question of human rights in its dealings with the Saudis. Both the main speakers have had relations with Bashar al-Asaad of Syria who is a fascist. My point is that democratic values should be defended consistently.

[This was followed by a speaker with knowledge of the Bosnian wars in the 1990s.]

I canvassed against Ireland joining the EEC in 1972 so I go back a bit. Barry made points about the downing of the plane in Ukraine and that action should be condemned but he hasn't mentioned what has brought us here. It's been mentioned that this war is a US proxy war. Eight years ago this week the murder of 42 people in a Labour Hall in Odessa took place. That

was carried out by the far-Right Azov Battalion. Events of that nature in Ukraine in 2014 provide the background for what is going on at present.

I was in Bosnia for three Elections after the Bosnian war. I read a lot about the conflict and spoke to a lot of people. In 1992, under the guidance of the Portuguese Prime Minister at that time, the leaders of the Serbs, Muslims and Croats all signed up to an Agreement which would have ended the war. Then the US intervened and two weeks later the Muslim leader, Alija Izetbegovic, withdrew from the Agreement and there followed three years of war in which 100,000 people died. There needs to be more discussion about the Bosnian conflict and the US role in it, just as there needs to be more discussion about what has caused the present war in Ukraine. It is not simply a question of the Putin regime's invasion. We need to understand what has gone on between 2004 and 2014 in Ukraine and about the conflict since that time. A conflict cannot be solved unless we understand how it came about, that is why we need Ireland as a neutral country.

[The contributions of the next three speakers were impossible to hear but I can recall important points that each made. The first said that, having admired Eamon de Valera all her life, and having some understanding of the contribution he made nationally and internationally, she was at a loss to understand why the policy of neutrality that he developed was being abandoned. The second adverted to the fact that the US has 800 foreign military bases around the world whereas Russia has 21, mainly in former Soviet Republics. The third encouraged people, on behalf of PANA, to attend a Stop the War event on the following Saturday. His view was that negotiations needed to start at the earliest possible opportunity so that the military actions could be stopped.]

[The next speaker was also from PANA]

A recent opinion poll by the Irish Times showed that 24% of people would either like Ireland to join the European Defence Agency or NATO. On the other hand, 66% want to continue supporting neutrality. I don't believe for a scintilla of a second that 66% of Irish people are left wing. Being neutral has come to define the Irish role in international affairs. We don't wish to get involved in imperial wars. That's a big problem for the Irish corporate media. Some time ago RTE decided to specifically cut off the receipt of press statements from

PANA. I have paid the license fee all my life. RTE were giving me as an advocate of neutrality through PANA the two fingers. That is not democracy.

[The next speaker was American but had lived in Ireland for many years. He apologised for being a bit late but explained that he had just come in on flight from New York.]

I don't know how many people in this room are familiar with the name George Kennan. George Kennan was the architect of the Truman Doctrine which was about the containment of Communism (the policy that the US should give support to countries or peoples in which there was a possibility of Communist insurrection, first expressed in 1947 by US President Truman—DA). No American, no person, knew Russia better than Kennan. After the Soviet collapse he pleaded with America, really with the world, not to take advantage of Russia at its weak moment. Gorbachev made a similar appeal. What has happened since the bipolar world collapsed is that the US saw an opportunity to take advantage against Russia and took it, something that Roger Cohen and John Mearsheimer understood and wrote about. What is happening now, sadly, is a story foretold. It's not just the Democrats but also the Republicans who have this policy on Ukraine—there is no real difference on this in American politics.

The US was only too happy to take advantage of the differences between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in 1948 but did not tolerate Soviet missiles being located in Cuba in 1963—the Caribbean was basically considered an American lake. This attitude has to change. Unfortunately, the Ukrainians are now paying the price of it.

[Being far from the microphone, none of the remaining speakers could be heard on the live stream. One was a retired senior officer from the defence forces who said that, to be serious as a neutral state, Ireland needs to build up its defence capacity. He said it was shameful to see in recent years a dependence beginning to develop on the British RAF regarding the defence of Irish air space. A speaker from the *Irish Political Review Group* said that without understanding the geopolitical context in which the Ukraine war was occurring it was impossible to understand the war itself.]

[A female speaker said that the best contribution Ireland could make is to press for peace and to retain our neutrality. An elected representative of the Social Democrats party said that the Russian invasion needed

to be condemned but that Irish neutrality also needed to be defended. A climate change activist was deeply disappointed by a European Parliament resolution on the war which had contained clauses that would ultimately cause climate damage. He wished to know why Fianna Fail had supported it. A final speaker from PANA described how arms manufacturers were doing very well out from the war and that the danger that nuclear weapons would be used in this conflict was very real.]

[A local Fianna Fail TD (member of parliament) and two Fianna Fail councillors arrived late in the debate. Both councillors spoke in defence of Barry Andrews' side of the argument. The only points from their contributions that could be heard on the live stream was first that de Valera had opposed Italy's invasion of Abyssinia and Japan's invasion of Man-

churia, so logically from the perspective of the foreign policy framework that he developed Ireland should actively oppose Putin's invasion. The second point related back to the point made by the speaker from the defence forces. The councillor said that Irish reliance on the British for the defence of Irish air space was indeed embarrassing and should be ended as soon as possible.]

Dave Alvey

Note: regarding a point made at the end of this article, that de Valera's opposition to invasions by Japan and Italy in the 1930s established a precedent for Irish foreign policy, the intent of Dev's position in the League of Nations was to counter the influence of the major world Powers who were bypassing the League and tacitly supporting the aggressors. The logic of that position today is that Ireland should counter the machinations of the US and its NATO allies regarding Ukraine, machinations that generated the tension with Russia that has led to the present war.

An Apologia for Peter Hart

Eve Morrison's new book "Kilmichael: The Life and Afterlife of an Ambush" should have a subheading "The life and Afterlife of Peter Hart" which would be a more accurate description of its contents.

I was intrigued to read in the report on the Casement School (IPR June) that Pádraig Yeates' claimed that the book "transcends the dispute by being scrupulously objective." I must have read a different book.

I have long been interested in the issues she deals with, Peter Hart and his two iconic claims – that there was no false surrender at the Kilmichael Ambush and the alleged sectarian nature, or the ethnic cleansing of the war of Independence in West Cork.

I began correspondence with Hart sometime in the 1980s and helped him in any way I could as I would anyone who was interested in the War of Independence, particularly in Cork. I do not have a proper record of this correspondence as it was in the days before the use of email and I did not keep copies of my letters to him – and his letters to me had the odd feature of not been dated.

I was amazed by his book when published and readers will no doubt be aware of the intense controversy it caused. Morrison's book is a very industrious effort

to rescue Hart's reputation which has not survived the controversy. The need to write a book like Morrison's inadvertently confirms this. Compared to his previous stature in academia and the media he is now a non-person. When it comes to resuscitating Hart, flogging a dead horse comes to mind.

Morrison's and Hart's work together constitute over four decades of intense research to make their case. But despite all this effort neither found any participant or anyone connected with the Kilmichael Ambush who denied a false surrender. That was the smoking gun they never found. Instead they 'make mountains' out of varying accounts of it. It does not take much imagination to realise that in such a short, hectic, life or death firefight of split second decisions involving dozens of highly motivated soldiers on both sides that individual accounts may differ about aspects of what happened. If they all agreed on what exactly happened it would be *prima facie* evidence that the story was concocted. In the circumstances of such an ambush it is the varying accounts that are credible as it could not be otherwise. "Every man fights his own war" and every man fought his own ambush at Kilmichael. The participants in such a fearful situation cannot be expected to be able to record their own or others' actions

as if they were embedded reporters. But this is the type of evidence that Hart and Morrison expect from the volunteers and is simply childish.

And, for good measure, the Commander of the Auxiliaries, General Frank Crozier and the main advisor to Lloyd George on Irish Affairs, Lionel Curtis, made their own enquires at the time and concurred that there had been a false surrender and said so long before Tom Barry or anyone else gave their accounts. What more proof is needed of a false surrender?

Hart's other effort was to claim that the war of independence was an example of an attempt at ethnic cleansing but thanks to the very thorough refutation of that claim he had to abandon it and did so himself very publicly: "I have never argued that 'ethnic cleansing' took place in Cork or elsewhere in the 1920s - in fact, quite the opposite." (Irish Times 28.6. 2006).

He was of course being, shall we say, disingenuous. In his article "The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland" (in 'Unionism and Modern Ireland', Gill & MacMillan, 1996), He had written "Similar campaigns of what might be termed 'ethnic cleansing' were waged in parts of King's and Queen's Counties, South Tipperary, Leitrim, Mayo, Limerick, Westmeath, Louth, and Cork". And he compared the situation to Bosnia and "the post-war 'unmixing' of people in Europe". And in his infamous book he attributed the shooting of Protestant civilians in Cork to the IRA's "fear of a desire for revenge", rather than the actual guilt of those victims

However, this admission was much to his credit and made me think that he might have had the potential to be a good historian but was encouraged and "led up the garden path" by people like Professor Fitzpatrick, the lying priest, Fr. Chisholm, The Irish Times, Kevin Myers, Eoghan Harris, John A. Murphy, Dudley Edwards, Roy Foster and a host of others who had their own agendas and axes to grind and that he was used by them to pursue their agendas. But he made his bed.

Morrison's reliability as a historian and the claim of her "being scrupulously objective" need not rest on her methods to defend Hart but can be judged by her treatment of another subject in her book, the Irish Bulletin, which illustrates her style - or methodology. This is curious as the Bulletin was the one primary source ignored by Hart from a most extensive list of sources acknowledged in his book. He never mentioned it. This was a bit like ignoring the elephant in the room when

writing about the War of Independence. It cannot have been accidental.

However, for some reason best known to herself she makes the following reference to the Bulletin: "The Bulletin was neither neutral nor always accurate" (p. 13).

It was the daily newspaper of a democratically elected Government that was fighting for its life against the most powerful state in the world at the time. How could it possibly be neutral in a war waged against it? The mind boggles that such an idea, as a criticism, could occur to anybody. Can you be neutral about your destruction?

The Bulletin was renowned for its accuracy, its secret weapon, and Ms. Morrison does not provide a single solitary example of any inaccuracy from any of its six volumes across three years. Thanks to us she could conveniently consult all volumes of the Bulletin, fully indexed, to seek to support her allegation of inaccuracy.

Instead she tries to support her allegation by referencing two sources that imply agreement with her allegation. One is by

Ian Kenneally in an article by him headed "'A tainted source'? The Irish Bulletin 1919-20." This can give the impression to an unsuspecting reader that the title was the author's but it was not. He makes clear it was courtesy of Hamar Greenwood, the notorious Irish Chief Secretary, whose lies and provocations were relentlessly reported and exposed by the Bulletin. Kenneally was being ironic.

Her other 'source' is a book by Maurice Walsh, "The News from Ireland," which again has nothing but admiration for the paper and makes no reference whatever to any inaccuracies. She is being too clever by half in the way she presents these sources. Her antics in this regard are but another variation on what could be described as an abuse of sources - providing sources that appear to confirm but in fact contradict her allegations.

Both authors provide objective accounts of the Bulletin and in effect totally reject Morrison's glib comments about the paper for which there is no basis. "Scrupulously objective" my eye!

Jack Lane

Editorial Reply to Roger White's letter (page 3)

Russia And Ukraine

If Roger White will supply us with a transcript of the Russian State broadcast threatening to nuclear bomb Donegal we will publish it. We know nothing about this threat, and are surprised that neither RTE nor the BBC nor Sky has brought the matter to our notice.

We have no independent information about what is being done to the Uyghurs in Xinjian Province. We only know what is disseminated by the propagandists for the "totally discredited" British and American systems who want the Chinese State to be destroyed.

Britain made war on China in order to open it up as a market for Anglo-Indian opium, destroyed the State, and plundered the country before losing control of it to a mass political upheaval led by the political movement which Roger White hates.

From the Washington viewpoint, the Uyghurs are a possible lever for use in disrupting the State. We have not noticed much support from the Muslim world for this project.

We have searched the article to which

he replies, *Proxy War In The Ukraine*, for some sign that "the author... thinks Communism is fantastic and has created some kind of Utopia", but couldn't find it. The war in Ukraine is treated as arising out of a conflict of interests between states, arising from the US policy of bringing the Ukraine into the anti-Russian alliance called NATO, and the Russian response.

If there is a "fantastic Utopia" afoot in the world today, it is the American one. Only the United States is in the business of dominating the world and giving it a vision that will make it happy.

If Roger White supplies some evidence that the people who produce the Irish Political Review "believe Joseph Stalin, who killed 10 million of his own people, was a benign father figure", we will of course give it serious consideration. But we are bewildered that any reader of the *Irish Political Review* should have got that impression from it.

Lenin set a questionable revolution in motion in Russia. He pre-empted the capitalist revolution that was on the cards

in semi-feudal Russia and set about constructing a socialist society, even though it had been widely accepted in European Social Democracy that Socialism could only be built on capitalist foundations. He asked why socialist culture should not be constructed first and the economic foundations—which Capitalism had failed to establish—should then be constructed by the socialist superstructure. This was not Stalin's idea. In 1917 he had proposed that the Social Democracy should be the Opposition in a bourgeois state.

When Lenin died seven years later, he had set in place a powerful regime which had destroyed all the rudiments of a capitalist State development, and driven out the Armies of Anglo-French interventionists. Nobody within the regime suggested that Lenin's project should be abandoned. Conflicts within the regime led to Stalin becoming the dominant figure, as Lenin had been. This was in accordance with the dynamic of the system. We were called 'Stalinists' because we insisted that Stalin had not 'betrayed' the system created by Lenin but had kept it functional, and we ridiculed the idea of 'Leninist democracy'.

This is the view of the development of Russia that has been asserted repeatedly and at inordinate length in our publications.

As to the 10 million—surely it used to be 20 million?—we have made the point that the costs of capitalist construction in the West and elsewhere have not been accounted because of being widely dispersed and incurred by private enterprises, and because capitalism has no interest in bringing such things to light, while it has a powerful interest in accounting the cost of socialist construction. As far as we know there were no children sent down the mines in Russia, nor were they employed from an early age in cotton mills!

Churchill's Bengal Famine during World War 2, the Persian Famine around 1918, the massive slaughter by which the 'Indian Mutiny' was suppressed and the Indian spirit broken for half a century, the collateral damage of the Slave Trade, the 'civilising' of the Congo etc., etc., are costs of production of the capitalist system and would easily exceed the 10 million.

The millions can be plucked out of the air where Russia is concerned, but the higher the figure is put, the more problematical the Second World War becomes. Was it a peasant population cowed by State terror

that built a modern industrial economy in about ten years and then applied that economy in war against a Nazi Germany that had the support of the greater part of Europe, and then shared the world with the USA for half a century?

Of course everyone is free to denounce it as Evil, but surely there should be some attempt to explain how it was done?

Roger White may be "*no fan of NATO*", but he is a fan of the Ukraine, and the reason the Ukraine is at war with Russia is that it committed itself to joining NATO.

NATO is an anti-Russian military alliance that was formed in 1948 because Russia, in order to defend itself against Germany, had to fight its way into Germany, and had become a Power in Central Europe.

NATO had rejected Russian proposals to join, including one from Molotov in 1954.

Most European states had supported the German invasion of Russia. Russia therefore asserted hegemony over those it had to occupy in the course of defending itself.

When the Soviet system broke down in 1990, these states aligned themselves against Russia and were incorporated into NATO.

Conflicts between states need no special explanation. Those conflicts arise in the course of nature. States with relation to each other exist in a state of nature. The Russian State at present is surviving. The President of the European Commission declared confidently in March that the EU would destroy the foundations of the Russian economy.

EU hostility to Russia did not begin this year. It is only that this year the EU saw the opportunity of giving expression to its hostility by direct action.

It may be that it has miscalculated and that it will fail to wreck the Russian economy. If it fails, it will have strengthened Russia. Such is the way of the world.

The major contribution of Ukrainian nationalism to world affairs up to the present has been the destruction of the Jewish Pale, a project which began in 1918 and continued under Nazi Occupation. Whatever may have been the personal reservations of Pelliura and Bandera,

their movements were anti-Jewish and anti-Russian, and seemingly anti-Russian because anti-Jewish.

President Zelensky began by describing the first casualties in the present war as a Holocaust. Israel told him to be quiet. It knows that bringing up Nazi parallels in the Ukraine is a risky propaganda venture. Only the 'Stalinists' were on the right side. The nationalists were with the exterminationists.

It might be that Ukrainian nationalism is now transforming itself and is repudiating its origins. That remains to be seen. But at Maidan Square in 2014 that was clearly not the case.

There is little resemblance between Palestine and the Ukraine. Palestine was gifted to the Jewish Nationalist movement by the British Empire and the League of Nations. Britain started cultivating the nucleus of a Jewish State not long after conquering Palestine from the Ottoman Empire—which had pursued a benign policy towards Jewish colonisation. It stifled Palestinian state development.

After the Zionist war against the British began and the British prepared to abandon the place by placing its future in United Nations hands, the United States and the Soviet Union armed the Jewish nationalists for conquests beyond the UN award of 1948. The Jewish State was imposed on Palestine by something close to a world consensus.

Ukraine, on the other hand, was constructed into a State by the Soviet Union. Ukrainian nationalism had failed in State-construction in 1918-21 and in 1941-2 had collaborated with the Nazi occupation without attempting to form a State. It was constructed into a State when re-occupied by Russia, and it became a founder member of the United Nations.

It was relieved of the bonds connecting it with the other States of the Soviet Union in 1991. For thirty years it was an independent state, with an Army and a relatively modern industrial economy, free to do as it pleased with itself. What it chose to do was let its economy decay, align itself with the USA as a frontier State against Russia, and conduct a cultural campaign against its Russian minority. It gained as a reputation as the most corrupt and the poorest country in Europe.

Finally, it might be added that the Ukrainian-Palestinian equation doesn't seem quite symmetrical!

The Ukraine Quagmire

A month before the Russian military intervention in the Ukraine the British Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss stated:

"... the number one thing that will stop Vladimir Putin taking action (in Ukraine) is if he understands the costs of that action. This could result in a quagmire like the Russians saw in Afghanistan or Chechnya, and he should be well aware of that... We cannot favour short-term economic interests over the long-term survival of freedom and democracy in Europe. That's the tough decision all of us have got to make" (Daily Mail, 30 January, 2022).

President Putin ignored the warning from the British Foreign Secretary. He chose to enter the Ukrainian quagmire instead of allowing Kiev's forces to penetrate into the Donbas and to threaten the vital Russian interest in Crimea. He decided he had good reason to do so from the Russian point of view. Evidently the Kremlin viewed the situation as an existential threat—so a quagmire was unavoidable. It was the lesser of two evils. If it were not, why do it?

CAUGHT IN A TRAP?

As Russian expert, Prof. Geoffrey Roberts, late of University College, Cork, has written that Putin saw an imminent Kiev/Western-backed military assault about to be launched against the breakaway provinces in the east along with,

"a future nuclear-armed Ukraine embedded in NATO and intent on provoking a Russian-Western war. From this perspective, going to war to stop Ukraine from becoming yet another NATO bridgehead on Russia's borders was not a difficult decision to make. As is often the case in decision-making processes that result in drastic military action, the hard option, the statesmanlike choice, would have been for Putin to persist with diplomacy and accept the risks of remaining at peace with Ukraine.

"If the public record is to be believed, Putin felt he had no choice but to wage a preventative war against Ukraine. Much like Kaiser Wilhelm II and his advisors in July 1914 when they urged Austria-Hungary to crush the Serbian threat to their empire before it was too late, Putin concluded that it was 'now or never'—invade Ukraine before NATO's position in the country became too strong to risk war. And the hard fighting of the

actual war with Ukraine can only have reinforced that calculation of Putin's." (*Now or never: Putin's Decision for War with Ukraine*, p.2)

Making a Quagmire for the Russians in Ukraine was undoubtedly a Western objective. On 9th May the *Washington Post* triumphantly headlined with "*Putin is trapped in a Quagmire and doesn't know how to get out*". The aptly named website *americanprogress.org* headlined on 3rd March with "*Putin's Quagmire: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine is a Strategic Disaster for the Kremlin*". Its article heading gave the reasons for US jubilation:

"The economic costs from sanctions will weaken Russia as a global power";

"Putin now needs to worry about his internal standing";

"Russia's global pariah status will be hard to undo";

"Europe will now become a military power";

"Russia's invasion has shown the strength of the democratic world".

Robert H. Wade, Professor of Global Political Economy at the prestigious London School of Economics, stated it bluntly and in amazingly candid fashion in "*Why the US and Nato have long wanted Russia to attack Ukraine*" on the LSE's official website:

"The US-laid trap

It now appears the Kremlin has fallen into a trap. The trap has similarities to the trap the US set for Saddam Hussein in 1990 when it said it would not interfere in his government's dispute with Kuwait. Saddam invaded Kuwait, which gave the US the *casus belli* to destroy Iraq's military.

"The trap also has similarities to one the CIA laid for Moscow four decades ago, by arming the mujahideen to fight the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan. The US intended for Moscow to send in its military to defend the government, which it did in 1979. President Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, in an interview in 1998 with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, happily admitted the US had set a trap...

"Brzezinski presumed, as the US does today, that control of Eurasia is vital for US 'primacy' or 'hegemony' in the

world system (directly countering Russia's Eurasian ideology)... So the long-held US aim has been to push Ukraine away from Russia, as a major step towards constraining Russian strategy, and more distantly Chinese strategy too, thereby sustaining US primacy.

It seems likely that US and Nato strategists have a second Ukraine trap in mind. The first one was the invasion; the second one is Russia bogged down in another long insurgency, the second after Afghanistan, the second Russian "Vietnam". As the Afghanistan insurgency against the Soviet military helped bring down the Soviet Union, the western strategists hope that the Ukrainian insurgency against the bogged-down Russian military will help end the Putin regime. From the US standpoint, the longer the Ukrainians can sustain the insurgency and keep the Russian military bogged down the more likely is the end of the Putin regime. This is called "realist politics"!..."

The US and Nato's ulterior motives in the Ukraine crisis is to end the Putin 'regime' and replace it with one friendly to and subordinate to the US. This larger strategy for containing Russia is the context to understand the expansion of Nato members all along Russia's borders, from the Baltics to Bulgaria, and the presence of 30,000 Nato-designated troops.

It also helps explain the US and some other western states' military intervention to overthrow Syria's ruler, Bashar al-Assad, Russia's ally, as well as the policy of encouraging USNGOs to foment unrest in Russia.

Since 2015 the CIA has been overseeing a secret intensive training programme in the US for elite Ukrainian Special Operations forces and other Intelligence personnel.

On 13th January, it was reported that the CIA-trained forces "*could soon play a critical role on Ukraine's eastern border, where Russian troops have massed in what many fear is preparation for an invasion*".

A former CIA official explained, "*The United States is training an insurgency*". It is no surprise that Moscow has long read US and Nato actions as being deeply hostile and intended to produce "*regime change*" in the Kremlin.

There was barely concealed joy in Foreign Affairs and the Western media generally over the luring of the Russians into a second Afghanistan. Even the usually sober and mild-mannered Prof. Stephen Kotkin was purring in a "*I told*

you all Mr. Biden was a clever man and the US is back" kind of way.

Afghanistan was popularly thought of in the West as having 'done for' the Soviet Union and Ukraine, it was believed, would similarly destroy the revived Russia, along with the man who had revived it.

But how wrong this has turned out to be! Now the quagmire in Ukraine is Europe's quagmire, in which it is bogged down, overwhelmed and progress made extremely problematic. And, most of all, extrication is most difficult without great moral loss, and without Washington's permission.

QUAGMIRE FOR RUSSIA?

Ukraine was meant to be a quagmire for Russia both militarily and economically.

The Russian military, employing only one-fifth of its strength up until now, have gone about the business of demilitarising Ukraine in a business-like fashion, in a way no Western army could have done. Sure, there have been military blunders but what is a Russian war without some military blunders? The Russians always learn quickly—except in 1914-17 when British finance encouraged the Tsar and Kerensky to destruction. And they learned from this.

The Western narrative on the Russian Special Military Operation is completely false. The Russians intervened in Ukraine to support the Russian-inclined separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk and to protect the vital Crimean strategic port of Sevastopol on the Black Sea. The early thrust toward Kiev was most likely a feint to divert Ukrainian forces and material from the Donbas, or at most a lightning strike which, when it encountered substantial resistance, was abandoned, as all military manoeuvres should be if they would prove costly.

There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that it has ever been the Kremlin's desire to conquer or occupy the bulk of Ukraine. Russia never employed the forces on Ukrainian soil necessary to achieve such an objective. It was neither desirable nor feasible from Moscow's perspective.

The slowness of the Russian advance in the Donbas is often derided in the Western media. It has been compared to a glacier. But the thing about glaciers is that they are slow, but relentless in their forward movement, carving out the hardest of rock and sweeping up everything in their path.

The terrain in the Donbas, with multiple meandering rivers and limited crossing points, boggy ground and long-prepared well-fortified defensive positions, makes

swift movement very problematic and costly. Western military 'experts' have been spinning a yarn to their audiences and tending to their media careers at the expense of their future credibility. British Generals, who have never won a battle in their lives, pontificate against a real military that they would never be capable of commanding and certainly not in the field.

The fact that Russia is going about its business of demilitarising Ukraine in a slow, methodical and systematic manner should be a concern for the West. It shows that Russia believes time is on its side. And that is not the general experience of a quagmire.

A word should be said at this point about the form of warfare Kiev is waging, that the Western media would never point out. The Ukrainians have admitted to intentionally digging into urban positions in the midst of the local civilian population. This is clearly to maximise Russian difficulty and casualties. But it also maximises civilian casualties, of which the Ukrainian military does not seem to care about. Perhaps Kiev views these eastern Ukrainians as disposable "*collaborators*" whose only use is to make good anti-Russian propaganda in the West.

A close aide to Zelensky, Mikhail Podolyak, explained the reasoning behind the strategy on 14th June, in "*Why Ukraine fights in urban areas*". He stated that "*you can resist a longer time and inflict significant casualties on the Russians*" so that Ukraine could "*inflict several military defeats*" against Moscow's forces which would result in a "*transformation of the political system of the Russian Federation*".

In other words the Ukrainians are fighting in a manner designed to suit Western geopolitical purposes, and their paymasters in Washington, rather than in the interests of Ukrainians.

Certainly, this is unconventional warfare, using civilian populations, and one's own citizens, as human shields against the enemy. The conventional military practice is to avoid encirclement in which costly breakouts become necessary in order to preserve forces to fight another day. That was the pattern of German tactics when the Red Army fought them in Ukraine in 1944. However, the present Ukrainian practice is to embed their forces in highly fortified urban centres, among helpless civilians, making it necessary for the Russians to destroy everything with artillery prior to street by street fighting. Then the Ukrainians either die or surrender at their

fixed positions when they have inflicted as much Russian (and civilian) losses as they can manage.

This is all part of making Ukraine a quagmire for the Russians out of east Ukrainian blood.

It is the very opposite of what Patrick Pearse did in Easter 1916 when the British began to destroy Dublin and its civilian population using long range artillery. Irish Republican forces surrendered to the British and the leaders went to the firing squads. And Ireland lived to fight again.

Russia, having embarked upon its limited Special Military Operation, involving less than 200,000 troops, and rotated for purposes of rest and recuperation, has aimed to secure an eastern Ukrainian/Black Sea coast as protection against Kiev/NATO. It had no intention of attempting a conquest of right-bank Ukraine (west of the Dnieper) against a much larger Ukrainian army totalling around 400,000 dug into formidable defensive positions.

Any Russian move across the Dnieper and further on, perhaps toward Eastern Galicia/Western Ukraine, would undoubtedly be the result of Western provocation rather than Russian strategic objective.

The big Ukrainian bombardment of its own citizens in Donetsk, in the week beginning 13th June, using long range artillery supplied by the US, prompted calls for Russian assistance to eliminate the new threat. A move by Russian forces across the boundaries of the Donetsk and Luhansk boundaries will come about as a consequence of Kiev's use of longer range artillery, which is not being used to target Russian forces, but is being used to bombard civilian areas behind Russian lines.

Whether this is Washington's intention—to embroil Russia deeper and deeper into Ukraine's territory through the necessity of protecting its Donbas and Crimea buffer against long-range Western artillery and missiles supplied to Kiev—is a moot point. But that will surely be the consequences of such a policy from the West, in which Kiev seems only too happy to oblige at present.

A supreme and ultimate sacrifice, involving the maximum amount of Ukrainian deaths and territory lost, seems to be the policy of the Kiev government, until their army cracks or some force finally says enough is enough!

QUAGMIRE FOR EUROPE!

Europe should realise by now that this is not Soviet Afghanistan II.

In the Afghan War there was limited Western involvement in fighting the Soviets. It has been called "*Charlie Wilson's war*" after the Congressman single-mindedly pursued the supplying of the Mujahideen with modern weapons. Of course, there was wider involvement among the US Intelligence services and military-industrial complex but it all had a controlled, semi-secret atmosphere about it, with President Reagan exercising careful restraint.

But the Ukraine War is completely different. Washington and the West has invested almost totally against Russia in terms of moral, military and economic resources. This is a reckless, unlimited war on the lines of 1914. It aims at limited liability in that the military battlefield has been so far confined to Ukrainian territory and the blood is meant to be that of Ukrainians and Russians in Ukraine alone. However, the only restriction from the Western side at present is that for now President Biden has prevented Western conventional forces being employed alongside the Ukrainians.

Given the current extent of Western involvement such a move would seamlessly make it a World War.

So Washington has made Ukraine a quagmire not only for Russia but particularly for the Europeans, who have consented in a great altruistic suicide pact. European leaders go on pilgrimage to Kiev, following in the footsteps of Boris, to kiss the feet of Zelensky, paying homage to the hero of democracy.

Such altruistic, self-destructive, behaviour is rare among self-respecting states and statesmen. It is not the sort of thing Hungary or Türkiye would consider doing, for instance. But Europe has departed from the pragmatic realism of Angela Merkel and become something different under the moral leadership of Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel. It has become like those members of a cult who self-sacrifice for a charismatic leader—in this case Volodymyr Zelensky and his democratic cult.

The blowback of the economic sanctions are hitting Europe hard and will hit harder still if the Ukrainians can stay in the field until winter. Inflation is spiralling to unprecedented levels in a generation as energy gets dearer, growth projections are falling down and the European currencies, Euro and Pounds, are sinking like stones against the Dollar. German industry will be made uncompetitive without cheap

and reliable Russian gas and the LNG contracts are already tied up by the Asian producers. Who would bet against energy shortages, 3 day weeks and a depression by the end of 2022?

At the same time Russia gets new customers for its oil and gas—like India, Saudi Arabia and UAE (who energy wash the Russian oil by using it for the domestic market whilst selling on their own energy at the new inflated prices to the West, courtesy of sanctions). Russia takes in more revenue for lower sales, with the rising prices. And the Ruble, predicted for meltdown, soars in value on the foreign exchanges.

There, alas is to be no release for Europe from the chains it has bound itself to Ukraine. There have been increasing voices calling for restraint in the West, most notably from the illustrious Mr Kissinger. However, on 13th June Zelensky reasserted his objective of "*liberating*" the Donbas and Crimea and flying the Ukrainian flag there again. This is despite the fact that the war has been an unmitigated disaster for Ukraine. In less than 4 months of war Russian forces have captured 20 per cent of Ukrainian territory; over 6 million Ukrainians have fled the country and 8 million are internally displaced; the economy is practically destroyed; and 5 billion dollars is required every month from Washington to keep the State functioning. It will take a trillion dollars to rebuild the country from its present state.

And Boris Johnson, trumping the Europeans by returning to Kiev, promised to organise the training of a new Ukrainian army in ultra-fast time:

"My visit today, in the depths of this war, is to send a clear and simple message to the Ukrainian people: the UK is with you and we will be with you until you ultimately prevail."

This is very bad news for the people of Europe. Their foolish governments have invested far too much moral capital for any retreat from the suicide pact they entered into in February. Zelensky will fight to the end in pursuit of an impossible agenda and Boris Johnson will squeeze the last drop of blood out of every Ukrainian willing to fight for it.

In the immortal words of Elvis Presley:

"Caught in a trap, I can't walk out, because I love you too much, baby..."

PUTIN, THE SAVIOUR OF EUROPE?

There is no way this war ends anytime soon since both sides—the US and Russia—are committed to avoiding defeat. Their

objectives are diametrically opposed, so there is no chance of compromise. There is, in fact, a powerful tendency toward escalation within the conflict, despite the recent calls for restraint from some voices in the West.

So it is unlikely that President Biden will assist Europe out of its predicament in the quagmire it made for itself. The US, for one thing, now has Europe in its pocket. An independent Europe has been aborted after a short flirtation with the idea and Britain, after leaving Europe, has come back to lead it to its destruction. And just like Russia, the US cannot afford to lose the great trial of strength it has entered into. Its standing in the world would be seriously damaged if it fails to put an end to Putin at least. It may not be enough to simply deny Russia a clear victory. Any territorial concessions to Russia, which is the only conceivable way to end the war, would humiliate Washington.

The war may put paid to President Biden, Prime Minister Johnson and President Zelensky before it ends but it is unlikely that the US will give up on it until the Ukrainian will to fight has been eradicated by suffering hundreds of thousands of casualties.

Europe can only be saved from itself if Mr Putin obliges with a swift neutralising of the Ukraine through a mobilising of Russian forces and an absolute ruthlessness to do the necessary to end this problem for the people of Europe. He will have to take off the gloves to deliver a knockout blow to this most stubborn opponent and silence the corner.

Far from ridding itself of Putin Europe has now placed its future in the Kremlin's hands. Only President Putin can save Europe from Washington and London! Will he oblige or will he prolong the agony for those who ganged up on Russia but refused themselves to fight?

Europeans may pray for this deliverance in the privacy of their own homes while their leaders cheer on the Ukrainians to the ultimate destruction of their menfolk and territory.

Pat Walsh

Look Up the

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AFTER THE BOMBS FALL WE'LL BE ONE

You make the world in your own image.
The remorseless banks of piggery
that snatch at your meagre savings,
without interest while throwing
millions to a shady property developer
who build homes beyond the reach of those
who build them.

Organised crime will be much more
sophisticated, in the form of off-shore
tax-avoidance, and dirty-money
laundering.

Drugs could be delivered by well-known
brand couriers, much like the East India
Company did yester-year.

A date via Tinder or Plenty of Fish
for a one-night stand, or a wife with
a beard who can still give birth but
won't be known as mother.

You can act as you like, be anyone
you'd like to be, dress as you like,
piss where you like, be in any hospital
ward you like, or any prison cell you
like, with full genitalia.

Meanwhile, back in your damp,
black-moulded

lat, having visited the food-bank, and
paid off your education fees,
like a mortgage,

you can read about them who flaunt
their wealth in your tabloid. Protest, if
you're envious of these fine philanthropists,
while you work away in your underpaid job,
where you didn't get a proper wage-rise
for what seems decades now.

If that three million pound yacht is
out of reach, or that five million pound
house, at least you can join in our
climate-change programme.

De-Industrialisation.

Reagan taught Thatcher that.

No more coal-mines, no more heavy
industries,

no more militant trade, unions.

No more socialism?

Now we need to persuade Russia,
especially China, to do the same.

It's saving the planet for a free world. Sorry,
got to go, must catch a plane, I'm
delivering bombs.

Wilson John Haire
16th February, 2022.

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How The Manchester Guardian's C.P. Scott Saw Michael Collins

C.P. Scott's Diary for 28th-29th October 1921 starts with a visit to Lloyd George, who tells him that the Tory Party (which is in Coalition with his Liberals) is very restive over the Irish negotiations and that the Sinn Fein delegation was being very difficult.

Lloyd George said he had—

“told the Sinn Feiners that he must have their reply in writing. His terms to them had been put definitely in writing and so must be their reply. He had great difficulty getting them to the point. He would talk to Griffith and find him quite reasonable. Then he went away and came back with another story. Erskine Childers was, he thought the villain of the piece. The written reply was promised for 12 o'clock that day. It was, I gathered, to deal with the fundamental issues, the de Valera telegram to the Pope having made it necessary that these should be raised at once.”

A footnote states that de Valera's telegram had asserted the "independence of Ireland" and had repudiated allegiance to the "British King".

Scott suggested it might be useful to Lloyd George if he (Scott) were to see Griffith and Collins, and he replied that he would be glad if he would do so and see him again.

Scott's Diary continues:-

"Telephoned at once to Desmond Fitzgerald, co-Secretary with Childers to the delegation, and he arranged for me to see Collins at 3.30 at Cadogan Gardens. He was still engaged at the Conference in Hans Place. There was a series of characteristic muddles, precision not being as yet an Irish characteristic, and it was close to six before Collins turned up in immense force at Cadogan Gardens, turned everybody, including an unhappy typist, out of the room with a sweep of his arms and settled down to talk for an hour and a quarter. The telephone rang at intervals when he sprang upon it fiercely as an enemy and yelled a challenge that might have split the instrument. Then Fitzgerald would appear and he relapsed into gloomy silence till the interruption was over.

In spite of these mannerisms I found him a straightforward and agreeable savage. He was intent on the question of the Government's claim to retain the Irish ports as a naval base and I could hardly get him off the subject. (I afterwards found from Lloyd George that it was his speciality.) I pressed him on the question of allegiance but he was for giving nothing away. At last I had to point out that if he had come to negotiate on the principle of claiming everything and conceding nothing he might have spared himself the trouble and might as well pack up at once. Then he became more moderate and evolved a more constructive policy of his own. Why not have a linking of constitutions, each country swearing allegiance to its own constitution. But where, I asked would the King come in, 'Oh we'll find room for the King' he said.

Here Scott, acting as Lloyd George's agent, argued that the British Coalition would fall apart and Parliament would reject such an arrangement. Collins retorted that he knew nothing of British politics and only had to think of Ireland.

The Diary Continues:-

"He went on declaiming as to the war they were making on us everywhere, in America and wherever they were in Europe, 'Oh! if I had a hundred men in Cologne I would make the place untenable'. And for himself he did not care if it was to be war in Ireland..."

Scott reported back to Lloyd George:-

"and of course he found no help in the suggested union of constitutions, 'I must have something quite simple, direct, unequivocal, something I can put put without qualification or beating about the bush before the House of Commons'. Collins was an uneducated rather stupid man, but he liked him (as I did) and if he had him and Griffith alone to deal with could settle in five minutes."

Donal Kennedy

Does
It

Up

Stack

?

English and US Morality

The English ruling classes have for centuries reared their children in a manner which reflects the child rearing practices of the Ancient Greeks in Sparta. In Sparta, notoriously, boys were taken from their families at seven years of age and were then schooled to become warriors. Their education was, as we say still, Spartan. Bare and non-emotional and amoral.

In England, someone at some time towards the end of the Age of Chivalry decided that the Spartan model was the appropriate one to follow for the education of English children. The education of boys was the principal concern. The girls were usually educated at home by governesses—not, emphatically not, by their mothers.

We are dealing here with the ruling class in England. Girls and boys of the other classes were taught to work and were not taught to think. Some exceptional people, such as Geoffrey Chaucer and Thomas Beckett, did rise from the merchant class because of their exceptional parents and their own innate ability, but this was rare enough.

The ruling class, the class from which the rulers were chosen, schooled their boys in Boarding Schools which were strict, cruel and single-minded. Team games and competition were important to teach leadership, co-operation and the all important winning spirit. Those boys who were not good at games were destined to be ordained as clergymen and were usually not the eldest son and heir in their families.

For all ruling class boys, learning the Greek and Latin Classics was a necessary part of their education. Because it would have been unseemly to teach them in English how to kill, cheat, murder and lie in order to succeed in life. But this is what the 'Classics' taught.

Julius Caesar's '*De Bello Gallico*' is a good example, perhaps the best example of the *genre*.

Gaius Julius belonged to the patrician *Julian* family in the inner circle of Roman aristocracy. His education and training were along Greek lines and he had a fondness for Greek culture and history which led him to spare the Greeks from death when in 48 BC

he conquered Athens. He did it, he said, because of the Greek's heroic dead.

In the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad* of Homer, as in other Greek authors cruelty, deceit, despair and violence were routine but glorified into a High Culture. Which it certainly was not in practice with its slavery, rape, pillage and burnings.

Poverty and endemic disease were the lot of the lower classes.

Gaius Julius himself was reared to be careful of what he said and not to reveal his opinions. He is said to have dressed well and was always fit and lean. He suffered from epilepsy but he was always supported by his friends who were, it seems, very close to him.

He did his military service with the Roman legions in the east, in what is now Turkey, Palestine and Egypt. After the siege of Mytilene, he served in the Roman fleet against Sicilian pirates who were the scourge of the seas at the time.

He was biding his time. When he heard that the great reformer Lucius Cornelius Sulla had died, he returned to Rome to seek his opportunity.

Gaius Julius needed a profile and so he turned to the law courts and he prosecuted, one after the other, two unsuccessful cases against extortionists. He failed but it gave him his public profile.

He decided to be better at it and set out for Rhodes to study under a master, but on the way he was captured by pirates. He was ransomed and returned to Rome where he lived with his very influential mother and with his wife.

He got elected to his first public office. He found that the only way to

get anywhere was to have an army. So he cultivated his friendship with Marcus Crassus. And he needed a man with influence among the mob and so he and Crassus allied themselves with Clodius—who was a leader of the mob and one of the top gangsters in Rome.

Rome was supposedly a democracy but in Gaius Julius's time the elections were won by enormous bribery and savage threats.

He was getting there but he still lacked an army. Pompey had an army. So Gaius Julius gave his daughter Julia to Pompey who had divorced his wife because she and Gaius Julius were having an affair. (Roman morals were at a low ebb).

Gaius persuaded the Senate by much bribery, using Crassus's money, to give him Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul and Illyria and four legions. Now he was on his way! He commenced his campaigns in Gaul—which meant beating up the Celtic tribes, setting them deviously against each other, uniting and dividing, and all the time plundering and extracting booty. Levying tribute, he called it.

It was a blueprint for making the British Empire. Enslaving and exporting hundreds of thousands of slaves. Merchants and bankers followed the Roman legions as they later followed the English army and navy. Oliver Cromwell alone exported well over 80,000 Irish captives as slaves to the West Indies, and of course he received payment for them.

On one occasion when a Celtic chief would not come to Julius Caesar because he did not trust Caesar, Caesar sent a peace delegation together with a band of experienced Centurions to visit the Celtic chief. On the giving of a signal, a Centurion cut off the Celt's head. The signal consisted of the Ambassador shaking the hand of the Celtic chief.

Here there are clear echoes of the Smerwick Massacre in Dun an Óir in Co. Kerry. Obviously Spenser and Raleigh knew their classics.

Weren't Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith lucky it didn't happen to them in London in 1920?

Michael Stack ©

LABOUR continued

The distinction between core principles and the practicalities of policy is widely accepted in many social-democratic parties across Europe. It was a key component of the book *The Future of Socialism*, by Anthony Crosland, which was published in 1956 and influenced a generation of Labour politicians in the UK.” (p.56/57)

“There has been some comment about the Labour Party’s relationship with the trade unions. Compared to other social-democratic parties in Europe, the links in Ireland between the Labour Party and trade unions are pretty limited: the financial contribution that the unions make to Labour amount to only about 5% of our annual income, whereas it can be as high as 60% in other countries”. (p.104)

“I believe there is more to life than money. Don’t get me wrong: money matters a lot. You have to put bread on the table. But life is also about ‘the rose in the vase’”. (p.197)

“The biggest single donor in this year’s [2010] U.S. congressional election is a public service union, which has made huge financial contributions to the Democrats. In the recent British Labour Party leadership election, the unions had one-third of the votes. That could not happen in Ireland because unions have no say at all in the election of a Labour leader; no say in the selection of Labour candidates; and no reserved seats on the Party’s executive. (Eamon Gilmore with Yseult Thornley-*Leading Lights* : People who have inspired me-Liberties Press-2010-200p.p.)

Eamon Gilmore’s dozen “*Leading Lights*” includes a Hurler, a Bishop, a Musician, two Trade Unions activists: one, a member of the RTE National Symphony Orchestra; and a Bricklayer. It would appear that not a single leader or founder of his party did enough to inspire the EU Special Representative for Human Rights—however, Margaret Thatcher did just that!

“Margaret Thatcher was a revolutionary of the Right; she transformed Britain, including its politics.”

But surely from a labour prospective, Tony Blair was worthy of a far greater claim, not only did he embrace Mrs. Thatcher’s revolutionary policies while in government, but he brought about “*a revolutionary*” change to all that the Labour

movement ever stood for: Abolition of *Clause Four*, “the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange”; “. . . the days of a job for life are over”.

Blair continued Thatcher’s job of eroding the European work ethic from within the Union : , let the Free Market rip—hence Globalisation.

Irish Defence forces will undergo NATO training in Cork.

A NATIONAL exercise evaluation of the Irish Defence Forces is taking place in Kilworth Camp in Cork this week, under the supervision of NATO. (The Echo, Cork Daily, 9.6.2022)

The No.1 Brigade Artillery Regiment (BAR) is being assessed by NATO to ensure that its tactics, techniques, and procedures are in line with best practice and NATO standards.

The military exercise evaluation is part of NATO’s *Operational Capability Concept* (OCC) programme, a voluntary programme that the Irish Defence Forces have been involved in since 2016.

Involvement with the programme is primarily about standardisation of equipment and procedures, and the Irish Defence Forces have already had three exercise evaluations involving our land, maritime and special forces.

Ireland’s role as a NATO partner dates back to 1999 when Ireland joined NATO’s *Partnership for Peace* (PfP) programme and the *Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council*.

“OCC is designed to assist those NATO partner nations who aspire to improve their national militaries by measuring their performance against a wide catalogue of

NATO standards,” said a spokesperson for the Irish Defence Forces.

“A nation which engages in NATO OCC military exercise evaluation is improving its overall military capability, is reinforcing its force protection measures and is ultimately strengthening its national defence,” they added.

This week, from June 6 to 9, the 1 Brigade Artillery Regiment is conducting a Defence Forces led self-evaluation known as a ‘SEL’.

They will continue training until November, when they undergo NATO-led evaluation.

Ireland’s role as a NATO partner dates back to 1999 when Ireland joined NATO’s *Partnership for Peace* (PfP) programme and the *Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council*.

The Defence Forces spokesperson said participation in PfP is “seen as fundamental to Ireland being able to meet its obligations in providing professional peacekeepers for international crisis management, and peacekeeping operations mandated by the UN, and in enhancing the Defence Forces’ interoperability with other professional military forces”.

Ireland is currently a participant in a NATO-led and UN-mandated *PSO mission in KFOR (Kosovo)*.

(The Echo, Cork Daily-9.6.2022)

LABOUR continued

“I worked for the union from 1978 until my election to the Dail in 1989. Today, that might seem like an unusual career path—staying for so long in what was effectively my first job after college. In fact, it was an immensely varied role, and gave me a practical insight into a large swathe of the commercial and economic life of the country. I had the privilege of representing people from all over Ireland and all walks of life. In many ways, it served as an excellent training ground for my later work in politics.

“One dispute I particularly remembered concerned refuse trucks. [1979] This dispute went to the Labour Court, and thereafter to a ballot for strike action. Our timing, as it happened, was a bit unfortunate: the strike was planned to start about two weeks before the Pope was due to visit Galway. No effort was spared in finding a way of settling the strike before he arrived. Whilst this worked to the advantage of the members, the union was concerned that its actions might be misinterpreted. The day before the Pope arrived, a papal flag was dispatched to me from Liberty Hall; [Dublin]. I was ordered to hang it out the window of the union office, and was warned that a check would be made to ensure that I had complied with the edict! (p.94)

“By autumn 1981 ...I applied for the job of secretary of the professional and managerial branch. Luckily, I was successful. By the end of 1981, I was back in Dublin working in a new position in Liberty Hall.

“Although I was based in the capital, the job took me around the country, and to a wide range of workplaces. The membership of the branch mainly consisted of managerial-level employees, as well as some professional staff. We had a lot of public sector-managers, like county managers and regional tourism managers, and also some senior managers from the semi-state companies. (p.96)

“Many of the members were people who had been trade union members and activists, very often shop stewards and had been promoted to management in the private sector. It was frequently the practice of private companies—and still is, although to a far lesser extent—to recruit

shop stewards as managers because they were individuals with proven leadership skills. This was the 1980s, and in many companies, employees would retain their union membership when they moved into managerial positions.

“We also recruited people who came to the union, very often on a purely confidential basis; these were often quite senior managers in multinational companies who did not want their company to know that they were members of the union. They were joining the union partly in order to provide themselves with some level of protection if anything went wrong; but mainly to seek advice of one kind or another. I did a lot of work advising managers about the levels of salaries that they should expect, as well as reward packages and pension schemes. Our members also included teachers in private fee-paying schools.

“Of course, that was only one of many ballots I had to conduct during my years with the Transport Union. It is not an easy position to be in. The job of a union official is to get the best deal possible for the members, and to bring negotiations to a conclusion. Then it is back to the members to ask them to approve the deal. It is almost inevitable that someone will not be happy with what is being offered. (p.99)

“Presenting the case to members can sometimes be quite delicate, and is never helped when those who had no involvement in the negotiations start offering their opinions from the outside.

“That is why, during the early part of 2010, I refrained from becoming an advocate for the Croke Park agreement on public sector pay and reform. This brought a fair degree of criticism down on my head—in some cases, I have to say, from people who had no experience at all of industrial relations, or indeed of any form of negotiations. As an opposition leader, I had no role in negotiating the deal. Yet, I was being asked to interfere in the ballot. Political interference in the ballot process would have been very unwise, and indeed disrespectful of those who were being balloted, and who were entitled to space to make their own decision. (p.99)

“In the case of Ireland, we also have the role of Connolly and the Citizen Army in the 1916 Rising. The great slogan ‘We serve neither King nor Kaiser’, emblazon-

ed on a banner across Liberty Hall . . .

Each year, the Labour Party organises a commemoration at Arbour Hill, where we pay tribute to Connolly; I am proud to address the commemoration as leader of the Labour Party... James Connolly is the founder of our party and of our movement. He is a huge, iconic figure. But all of that, important as it is, is only one part of the story (p.90)

... I find it interesting that, over the course of time, the emblem of the Irish Labour Party moved from being the Starry Plough of Connolly and the Citizen Army, and became the rose. We are, and always will be, Connolly’s party, but I don’t think we acknowledge sufficiently the significance of our connection with Sean O’Casey and his red rose. (p.91)

“I was greatly saddened by the circumstances in which I ended up leaving the ITGWU. In 1989, I was elected to the Dail for the first time, alongside another new Workers’ Party TD and ITGWU official, Pat Rabbitte. As we celebrated our election success, the union sent letters of dismissal and our P45s by courier to our homes. Previously, union employees who were elected to the Dail were granted leave of absence for a period of time, and didn’t have to immediately resign their jobs, but the union had decided to reverse this policy when Pat and I were elected. But we were determined not to take it lying down. (p.102)

“A few days later, we mounted a picket—on Liberty Hall! I am happy to say that we received a lot of support from fellow members of staff, and from many individual members of the Union. Many of those supporting us were Labour Party members who, even if we were not on the same team at the time, were anxious to see fairness prevail. I had worked hard for the union, and I was very sore at the time about the shabby way we had been treated. But all that is a long time ago now, and it didn’t change my attitude to trade unions.

“We have to balance political principles—the philosophical starting point of our thinking—with practicalities. As a social-democrat, I see the world in a particular way, and I am not about to change that. However, I am open to changing the way we achieve our ways in a particular area.

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LABOUR

Comment

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NATO'S Way Is Labour's Way ?

The former leader of the Labour party, Eamon Gilmore, is in Ukraine on an EU fact-finding mission, to discover first-hand who is "responsible for these atrocities" so they can be brought to justice (Irish Independent, 22.6.2022).

Yesterday, Mr Gilmore visited mass graves in Bucha which contained up to 116 bodies. He said the youngest person who was buried in the graves was just one year and seven months old (RTE, 20.6.2022).

Speaking on RTÉ's *Morning Ireland* Mr. Gilmore claimed he had also met with people who have been shot, beaten and sexually assaulted by Russian soldiers. He said the evidence of Russian war crimes can be seen "all around" in places like Bucha and Irpin.

"What I saw through yesterday was evidence of civilian life being targeted, these are not military targets, this was an attack on civilians. These are war crimes and there has to be accountability for it", he said.

"A main purpose of my visit is to talk about how we can support the efforts to bring those who are responsible to justice."

Mr Gilmore said the EU delegation, which he is part of, is supporting the International Criminal Court and the prosecutor's office in Ukraine by gathering and retaining evidence which could form part of potential court proceedings.

"What we all want... is those who are responsible for these atrocities being held accountable, having to be brought before a court and also not just those who are on the ground and were doing this, but those who sent them there. Those right up the chain of command, who have responsibility for what has happened in Ukraine," he added.

The European Union Special Representatives (EUSR) are emissaries of the European Union with specific tasks abroad.

While the EU's ambassadors are responsible for affairs with a single country, Special Representatives tackle specific issues, conflict areas or regions of countries. They answer directly to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Josep Borrell, Spanish Socialist Workers' Party.

EAMON GILMORE: EU Special Representative for Human Rights (Appointed 2019). He was nominated initially by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney.

EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Colombia. (Appointed-October, 2015)

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Student Politics?

(Eamon Gilmore with Yseult Thornley-
Leading Lights: People who have inspired
me-Liberties Press, 2010, 200pp)

"AFTER I finished my term as president of Union of Students of Ireland in 1978, I went to work for the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union. I was one of a group of nine union officials who were recruited at that time, in what was a major departure from the union's normal recruitment practice" (p.93).

"Traditionally, union officials were employed on a one-by-one basis; very often, they were volunteer activists of shop stewards in their own workplace, who then became officials in that branch of the union.

"In the late 1970s, however, the union decided to recruit a body of trainee officials who would learn about and become familiar with all aspects of the job from the outset. The idea was that we would do courses in subjects such as labour law, negotiating skills, and economics; the union hadn't taken such an organised approach to these things before. Since many of these new recruits were third-level graduates, one was declared 'they are destroying the union by degrees'!"

"Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore begins a two-day visit to Russia to-morrow during which he will meet the Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov" (Irish Times, 5.11.2011).

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