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## Russia, Ukraine And Dollar Democracy

The Irish contribution to the United Nations Security Council debate on the Russian/Ukrainian conflict was a suggestion that the foundation of the world-order established at the end of the 2nd World War should be broken up—that the Security Council Veto system should be ended.

We assume that the suggestion was authorised by the Foreign Minister, Simon Coveney. We do not assume that Coveney gave any thought to what it would mean, beyond the removal of the ability of Russia to prevent a motion condemning it from being adopted.

If he meant that the United Nations—with its empty pretensions—should be disbanded, and that world affairs should revert to 19th century-type arrangements between states, that would be a worthwhile contribution to discussion of both the Russian/Ukrainian conflict and to a general discussion of what the world should do with itself in its present predicament.

De Valera took the League of Nations—the precursor of the United Nations—in earnest in the 1930s. Through taking it in earnest, and becoming an influential figure within it, he came to the conclusion that it was hindrance rather than a help to the maintenance of peace in the world because it was a source of illusions.

It was a facade, behind which realpolitik operated. But the calculating of realpolitik was not unaffected by the diligently-maintained illusion of the League as an organisation for maintaining world order.

The actual organisation which determined the main events in the world was the Brit-

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## Outlaw States In The EU!

The EU has now two outlaw states, according to the European Court of Justice. The ECJ has judged that neither adheres to '*the rule of law*' and there could hardly be a more serious charge against a state. They are judged lawless.

The issue began when the Polish Government proposed a different, more traditional and conservative approach to a number of social policies and attitudes, in what could be described as a Christian Democratic attitude: Attitudes on which the European project itself was founded and thrived. Insofar as the project had a *Demos* it was that.

These policies proved very successful and General Elections were won on these policies in Poland, Hungary and elsewhere.

But the policies flew in the face of the new individualist, free market, approach favoured now by Brussels. Brussels, and the European Parliament in particular,

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## Manus O'Riordan, Ernest Bevin And Sinn Fein

In an article on the wake and funeral of Manus O'Riordan in the November 2021 edition of *Irish Political Review*, I referred to a story told at the funeral by Mick O'Reilly, a retired official of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union and a well-known figure on the Irish Left. Given that humour is almost always welcome in social settings,

and that Mick was at the funeral to show his respects, absolutely no offence was taken by the story. Mick was, however, making a political point and answering it affords an opportunity to say something about Manus's views on the British labour movement. Since the focus of attention is the influence exerted by Ernest Bevin on a Labour Government, the challenge

currently facing Sinn Fein on what it would do in Government must be a background consideration.

In my November article Mick O'Reilly is listed among a group of individuals from the worlds of Trade Unionism and politics who were at the funeral. The ensuing paragraph reads:

"Mick, who is the father of Sinn Fein TD and Shadow Spokeswoman Louise O'Reilly, made an interesting comment about Manus. Hearing that he was a member of a group called the

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

"Fuck The EU"

A Retrospect on Ukraine  
(back page)

***Organised Labour:***

Wage Rises and Cost of Living  
Government Package  
Bank Staff

ish Empire. The Empire was completely independent of the League. It made its own decisions on War and Peace. It enabled Germany to break the conditions imposed on it by the League as the instrument of the Versailles Conference. And then, having built up Germany and directed it eastwards by feeding Czechoslovakia to it, it suddenly, in 1939, decided to make war on Germany again. And it did so without involving the League.

A prominent British Parliamentarian, Tobias Ellwood (Chairman of the Defence Committee), when asked in a radio interview whether Britain could act alone against Russia over the Ukraine, seeing that nobody else was going to do it, replied:

"Of course not. What Britain does best is lead other countries into war" (speaking on Vine Show, 14.2.22).

In other words, Britain creates wars but does not fight them.

It fought its 1914 War. That was not

its intention at the outset. Its preparations were for something different—Naval War with a small land force. But things worked out differently, with it raising an army of millions and suffering casualties which were inconceivable to it before the event. It almost bore its share of the human cost. Its casualties were half the size of the French casualties.

It raised up another War in 1939. It led France to war. It did no fighting for eight months—until Germany responded to the declaration of war on it. Then, on suffering a reverse in the first engagement, it brought its Army home and left it to France to continue the War. When France, finding itself occupied, made a settlement with the enemy, Britain cried "Betrayal" and looked for others to do the fighting.

The others turned out to be Russia and the United States. The main fighting that resulted in the defeat of Germany was done by Russia, but the United States—by exerting pressure on Britain—managed to get an Army onto the Continent to meet the Russian Army advance in Germany.

The meeting-point of the Russian and American Armies became the line of division in the world between the two hostile systems.

The Russian and American systems dominated the world. They agreed to the establishment of a new world organisation, but founded it on their hostility to each other. It was a condition of existence of the United Nations that it should have no authority to act against either of them. That left each of them supreme in its own half of the world, to do as it pleased.

Peace in any other sense than that of a stand-off was not a possibility of the situation. And the Veto was the means by which each prevented the United Nations Security Council from mischief-making against it.

That order of things lasted for 45 years. The Soviet system dismantled itself in 1990. The various Republics hegemonised by the Bolshevik Party became independent states, and groped their way from socialism to capitalism. It was a very difficult transition because the universal small-business base necessary to capitalist society was lacking.

The capitalists that emerged were not businessmen who had fought their way up in the market. There were mere "oligarchs": politically-astute and well-connected individuals who managed to get large pieces of State property into their possession, and go into alliance with finance capitalist giants of the West.

That was the case with the Ukraine—a "small nation" ten times the size of Ireland—as well as Russia.

The oligarchs were supreme in Russia for about ten years after 1991, when they were popular with the West. That was also a period of wild democracy in the medium of a score of parties which were unable to form a competent Government able to bring order to Oligarchic Capitalism and halt the decline in the general standard of living and the decline in the birth-rate.

When effective State control began to be exerted after 2000 the Oligarchs who submitted to it began to be called Kleptocrats.

They were all Kleptocrats. They were all operating with property seized from the State when it was breaking up—in the Ukraine as well as in Russia.

In the present conflict, the Ukraine is depicted as the City On The Hill, the modern liberal democracy which Putin must destroy, lest its example should undermine his autocracy.

The decisive change of government in Kiev, leading to the present conflict, was enacted eight years ago by a street-based coup d'etat directed against Russia and against the Russian population in the Ukraine.

On the face of it, the Ukraine was better placed than Russia to develop rapidly into a flourishing capitalist nation-state. It had no Kremlin heritage to overcome. It asserted a strong sense of nationality—a thing not evident among Russians. And it was taken into tutelage by the United States thirty years ago—and has even had an American-born President. It has also had numerous changes of government, most of them electorally-based.

The US is above all else a State. It made itself a State covering half a Continent by means of a ferocious Civil War. Having confirmed itself as a Super-State in 1865, it spent the next thirty years conducting a popular genocide of the native populations. And it asserted "sphere of influence" dominance over the entire Continent with the Monroe Doctrine.

How then can it be that under such tutelage the Ukraine has so little substance as a State? What did all its revolutions and elections amount to?

And what was the significance of the 2014 incident in Maidan Square, which is not mentioned any more?

An elected President prepared to make trade deals with the EU for its agricultural sector and with Russia for its industrial sector. The EU demanded an exclusive trade deal with it.

The EU Parliament set about overthrowing that Ukrainian Government by coup d'etat directed against politicians prepared to work with Russia. And, when the EU appeared to be having second thoughts about the destabilisation of Ukraine, Assistant US Secretary of State Victoria Nuland said "Fuck the EU".

Was that a bid by President Viktor Yanukovich to escape from tutelage and establish ground for independence between Brussels and Russia?

The present conflict is a working out of the forceful suppression of that attempt.

Why did Biden encourage the pres-

## Letter From A Polish Supporter Of The EU!

You might know that I hate Politics and do not read political news a lot. I can tell you my views with just a bit what I had read but I am afraid I read mostly more Conservative sources.

Modern Poland has inherited awful structure of legal system after the Communist State; badly organized and with nepotism as one of most important traits. We had (we still have) dynasties of post-Communist lawyers like Old Irish Brehons (only they are not into poetry, but certainly they have magic, as their main superpower would be to survive and multiply..) Reforming this was a task for Hercules and Einstein together. Perhaps we are lacking Einstein and we tried to use Hercules powers which was a bit inappropriate. I am not sure about this.

As for Europe, they are Bureaucrats, without imagination and empathy (except for clearly defined minorities, like persons who want to change their gender everyday anew, or whales in Pacific, not for Eastern European states who want to rebuild and reorganize themselves in their own way).

Now, from one paper I looked into now, I agree with those who say that the mechanism of the rule of law was not introduced by a treaty, but imposed top-down by a regulation, the content of which did not flow from the previous treaties. If the treaties were designed in such a way that no country could be punished without the absolute unanimity of the others - the decision-makers decided to circumvent their own treaties, introducing additional rules.

All this is a bit like Comecon plus Warsaw Pact than like this European Union we joined so happily. I am feeling that we are being bullied, in fact. But if you look into Liberal-Left papers, they are happy about this, moreover they would like that Poland was punished as much as possible, just because it may help them to win in the next elections.

All this is a mess to me and this is one of the reasons I hate politics.

I love Europe. I love being able to go to Ireland and do research there. But I would also wish to see Edinburgh again, as this is Europe as well. Remember a poor Scottish professor who argued a few years ago that Scotland is Europe like Poland, because they prefer tenement appartments there like we do, and not single homes like the English! Europe is culture for me, and academia, and kind of common cultural history. To keep ourselves connected with it, someone invented the EU. But it was supposed to be about travels, and trade, not about imposing any laws. Breach of international law is for me torture, massive imprisonment, persecution of people because of race, faith or political views, and not re-organising legal system. All this makes me desperate. I do not want any Polexit. Wondering how far Europe will go with Communist-and totalitarian-like ideas and attempts to break us, and when I will be pro Polexit.

ent Russian initiative by predicting it so volubly and saying that it would not be met by US intervention? Was it for fear of a Trump return?

Trump, in effect, announced the end of America's Manifest Destiny to rule the world. Biden has two years to set it in motion again. China and Russia are the obstacle. Russia was all but invited into the Ukraine so that Washington could insist on draconian Sanctions which would take Russia out of the game.

Vonder Leyen says that European Sanctions will destroy the industrial base of the Russian economy. What she does not say

is that Europe itself will be badly damaged by such sanctions, and particularly by the high cost of energy which they entail. And that their effect will be to make Europe even more dependent on America.

Washington says Russia will be turned back into a Third World country—a term not much used in recent years.

We can only wait and see how far-reaching the destructive power of dollar-democracy is.

This is its moment of truth.

## Slide to war?

### Ukraine crisis

Since the break-up of the USSR in 1991, NATO has relentlessly expanded eastwards, adding 14 member states formerly aligned with the USSR and moving ever closer to the Russian border, a line far to the east of the former NATO/Soviet dividing line.

This occurred in a few waves. First NATO admitted Poland, Hungary, and Czechia in March 1999, just before launching its air-war against Yugoslavia without the sanction of the UN Security Council. This brought NATO directly up to the Russian border at the enclave of Kaliningrad. The next wave occurred in 2004 with the accession of the former Soviet Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which brought NATO to within 135 kilometres of St. Petersburg. Other states followed, and a network of “Partners for Peace”, a type of outerring, was also created, including Ireland. NATO stated at the time that it would incorporate any further countries as it saw fit.

The wretchedly weakened USSR under Gorbachev and the Russia of the Yeltsin years of the 1990s had gone along with the Western expansion, become a type of second-tier NATO Partner, and even supported various Western military projects: such as in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

Essentially, as a defeated Power, the Russians sought accommodation with the West’s “New World Order” and what the US Establishment trumpeted as “the New American Century”.

Vladimir Putin was elected Russian President in 1999, and that year was the first time Russia refused to comply with a Western project: the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia. But otherwise he continued the policy of accommodation with the West. This only changed in 2007, when, following NATO announcements commencing accession talks with Georgia, Putin warned the Munich Security Conference that the days of Russia accepting continued aggressive Western

expansionism were over. The US, he said, with its subordinate “allies”, had exploited Russian weakness to create a “pernicious” unipolar world “in which there is one master, one sovereign”, and in which the only acceptable Russian role was that of a vassal. Russia’s friendly position towards the West had been abused and NATO’s relentless eastward expansion was “a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust”.

The US treated Putin’s statement as a joke, ridiculing the then enfeebled Russia. It then proceeded with plans for both Georgia and Ukraine, both formerly part of the USSR itself and with large Russian-majority provinces, to join the “alliance”.

Emboldened by this, Georgia tried to invade South Ossetia and Abkhazia, large Russian provinces that had separated from it and declared their autonomy. Shocking the West, Russia intervened, routing the invading Georgian army and establishing a protective role over the autonomy of the breakaway republics. A Sarkozy-mediated peace deal suspended—though did not cancel—plans for Georgian NATO membership. But NATO’s eastern march seemed to have been brought to a halt.

The Georgia episode proved only to be a lull, however. In 2014 a new pro-Western regime was installed in Kiev with active US/EU support, adopting a constitution declaring NATO membership a national aim and constitutional imperative.

Ukrainian NATO membership would bring US weaponry to within 100 miles of Moscow.

The Kiev *coup*, in which EU parliament leaders gave fiery speeches from barricades on the Maidan, was accompanied by draconian Ukrainian language and other laws attacking Ukraine’s large Russian minority.

There were also physical attacks, such as the burning to death of forty Russian

Trade Unionists in a building in Odessa. It had been surrounded by a chanting Ukrainian nationalist mob.

Putin then moved to support the break-away pro-Russian Donbass provinces, and he secured the predominantly Russian Crimea by re-integrating it with Russia.

A low intensity civil war has since ensued at the Ukraine/Donbass faultline.

A set of Accords agreed between Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany in 2014 and 2015—called *Minsk I* and *II*—agreed certain principles for resolving the conflict through military de-escalation, acceptance of Ukraine’s borders (apart from Crimea), restoration of the status of the Russian language, and devolution of some political and cultural autonomy to regions seeking it. However, Ukraine has refused to implement Minsk, particularly the language and devolution clauses, and has been encouraged in this stance by the West—including by organs such as the “*Irish Times*”—on the basis that the Agreements had been concluded at a time of Ukrainian “weakness”.

In the current stand-off, Russia has sought a comprehensive and legally-binding security agreement with the West. As part of this agreement, it proposes that the West commit to—

- indefinitely exclude Ukraine from NATO membership,
  - end NATO eastern expansion by stabilising the *status quo* of 1997,
  - agree measures of mutual arms control,
- and
- commit to stationing no offensive NATO weaponry on Ukrainian territory.

On Ukraine, it proposed full implementation of the Minsk accords.

In the era of the “sole superpower”, these proposals are treated as an impertinence, with near unanimity coming from organs of western ‘opinion’—including, of course, the “*Irish Times*”.



### What NATO Promised In 1990

As the current crisis was escalating in January 2022, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, wrote a letter to all EU and/or NATO member-Governments (including Ireland), outlining Russia's proposals and quoting the existing OSCE "Charter for European Security" — which stipulates that, while every country had a right to join whatever alliance it chose, there was also an "obligation on each State not to strengthen its security at the expense of the security of other States". Putin backed up Lavrov's statement by reminding the West:

"you promised us in the 1990s that (NATO) would not move an inch to the East. You cheated us shamelessly."

This idea—that the West reneged on solemn commitments it had given President Gorbachev to enable him withdraw Soviet military power from East European states—has caused a bit of a stir and not a few bad consciences.

Among the latter is Fintan O'Toole who, despite denouncing Putin as a "thug"—after all, Fintan has American and other assorted liberal readers to please—admits that Putin actually has a point. He refers to NATO's *eastward creep* and the threat it poses to Russia. The reason for Fintan's pronouncement was a surprise article in the German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, a few days earlier, though he doesn't mention it.

Fintan, who doesn't like to be seen as a crass propagandist, clearly decided to get on the right side of some indisputable facts.

This Column has not been a fan of *Der Spiegel*. It beats even the *Irish Times* in its hysterical denunciations of Russia. Despite popular German sentiment to the contrary, it has been a leading 'critical' voice on the *Nord Stream 2 Gas Pipeline*. This Column was therefore surprised by a report it published on 15th February under the headline 'NATO's Eastward Expansion: Is Vladimir Putin Right?'.

The *Spiegel* article quotes Roland Dumas, French Foreign Minister in 1990, as stating that a clear pledge was made in 1990 that NATO troops would not advance closer to the Soviet Union. Then US Secretary of State, James Baker, denied any such promise had been made, but some of his own diplomats contradict him—with Jack Matlock, then US Ambassador to Moscow, saying that "categorical assurances" were given by Western leaders that NATO would not expand eastward.

Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet

Union, has also been adamant that German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, along with the Americans, promised him during the 1990 talks on German re-unification that NATO "would not move one centimetre further east".

There are, according to *Spiegel*, numerous accounts to confirm that "the U.S., the UK and Germany signalled to the Kremlin that a NATO membership of countries like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic was out of the question".

In March 1991, British Prime Minister John Major promised on a visit to Moscow that "nothing of the sort will happen".

The issue had first come to the fore in January 1990—just over two months after the Berlin Wall was opened—when German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher made it clear that "he was prepared to make broad concessions to the Kremlin" to counter any threat of Soviet intervention in the changes underway. In a speech on 31st January 1990, Genscher publicly proposed that NATO issue a statement saying: "Whatever happens to the Warsaw Pact, there will be no expansion of NATO territory to the east and closer to the borders of the Soviet Union". The *Spiegel* continues:

"In early February [1990, Ed.], Genscher and Baker presented the idea in Moscow independently of one another. The German foreign minister assured the Kremlin that: 'For us, it is a certainty that NATO will not expand to the east. And that applies generally,' clearly meaning beyond just East Germany. The American, for his part, offered 'ironclad guarantees that NATO's jurisdiction or forces would not move eastward'. When Gorbachev said that NATO expansion was 'unacceptable', Baker responded: 'We agree with that' ... French President François Mitterrand told Gorbachev that he was 'personally in favour of gradually dismantling the military blocs'. NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner later expressed his clear opposition to the expansion of the Western alliance ... A short time after that, the Two Plus Four negotiations [on German unification – ed.] began, extending into September 1990. The Soviets, Genscher said, never returned to the question of NATO expansion into Eastern Europe, a fact he interpreted to mean that the issue had been settled ..."

A few weeks after that trip to Moscow, Baker told Genscher that some East European countries were eager to join NATO, "engendering Genscher's response that the issue 'shouldn't be touched for now'".

*Spiegel* published a document which US

political scientist Joshua Shiffrin found for it in the UK National Archives, entitled 'Quadripartite Meeting of Political Directors, Bonn, 6 March [1990]: Security in Central and Eastern Europe. Summary', a record of a meeting of senior Western officials discussing the 2+4 talks, and a British Paper specifically on security for East European states formerly in the Soviet block. In it US Assistant Secretary of State Raymond Seitz is quoted as saying:

"We made it clear to the Soviet Union—in the 2+4 talks, as well as in other negotiations—that we do not intend to benefit from the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe ... NATO should not expand to the east, either officially or unofficially."

The British Paper similarly states that there was: "general agreement (regarding East European states – Ed.) that membership of NATO and security guarantees unacceptable."

West German diplomat Juergen Hrobog said:

"We needed new ideas on how to provide for the security of Central and East European countries. We had made it clear during the 2+4 negotiations that we would not extend NATO beyond the Elbe. We could not therefore offer Poland and others membership in NATO."

He added: "We might however consider referring to our interest in these countries in future NATO declarations", though envisaged these in terms of what "further steps could be taken in the CSCE and through bilateral agreements", i.e. forums other than NATO.

Later in the meeting Hrobog corrected that he had not meant "the Elbe", the river forming West Germany's eastern frontier, but the *Oder*, the river on the East German border with Poland, adding that both Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher "agreed with this position".

*Spiegel* comments that many now "speculate that the West (in 1990 – ed.) intentionally misled the Soviets from the beginning".

The US administration—

"included influential hardliners like Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and his neo-conservative undersecretary of state, Paul Wolfowitz ... who dreamed of developing the U.S. into the only global superpower, and saw NATO primarily as a tool to assert U.S. dominance in Europe."

They regarded calls from new Governments in Eastern Europe to be allowed join

NATO as “helpful in that regard”.

Cheney therefore urged NATO to “leave the door ajar”. It was Clinton who ultimately decided to expand the alliance in the mid-1990s. When he did so, Genscher stated that, while the expansion was not formally illegal, given that there had been no treaty to the contrary, “it was impossible to deny that it was counter to the spirit of the understandings reached in 1990”.

The current long-time NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, is a bullish expansionist and responded to the *Spiegel* article by claiming that this was all hearsay, that the alliance had “never promised not to expand”, that “there has never been such a promise, there has never been such a behind-the-scenes deal, it is simply not true.”

In reply, Joshua Shiffrin rubbed this, tweeting to contradict Stoltenberg that the record of the 6th March 1990 meeting of foreign policy officials clearly showed that “Western diplomats believed they had indeed made a NATO non-enlargement pledge”.

#### THE SWORD OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT IS NEVER SHEATHED

Being on the wrong side of the US can make for a precarious existence. Fintan O'Toole is a judicious liberal, what in Irish parlance is known as a “cute” ... eh ... professional.

While liberally throwing around terms such as “thug” to describe Putin, he has nothing but nice things to say of the present incumbent of the White House. If there is thuggery in international relations, how should Biden's recent seizing of the \$9bn Afghan State assets held by the US Federal Reserve be rated? Everyone agrees that that benighted country, following twenty years of righteous warfare on it by the forces of the Enlightenment, is on the point of mass starvation. Its economy is collapsing due to US-imposed sanctions (what used more honestly be called a “blockade”) and the consequent disintegration of its ability to trade. Its Central Bank has had to cease issuing money, as it has no more assets.

The Sword of the Enlightenment is never sheathed, however, and the President of the US in confiscating Afghan's dollar reserves has declared that they will be divided at his whim between relatives of “victims” of 9/11 and “humanitarian relief” in Afghanistan, via NGOs operating apart from the Afghan State.

Any chance of a comment on this act of thuggery, Fintan?

#### SECRET US VIEWS OF HAUGHEY IN THE 1970s

Speaking of spooks and the diplomatic games played by Anglosphere Powers, it is interesting to note the jaundiced views of the US on Ireland in the 1970s, available to us through the publishing a decade ago by *Julian Assange's* organisation, *Wikileaks*, of numerous secret diplomatic cables from the US Dublin Embassy to the US State Department. The Column has read through these secret reports and publishes some extracts here in tribute to, and solidarity with the brave Assange, who is currently being crucified by the USUK regime to the almost total shameful silence of Ireland's self-appointed Enlightenment guardians.

In the 1970s, the US was firmly aligned with Britain for Cold War purposes and allowed sentimental attachments to Ireland little interference with this. This situation would only begin to change after the dissolution of the USSR by Gorbachev in 1991 and the subsequent re-ordering of world affairs by the US.

The 1970s US cables from Dublin betray a surprising level of contempt for Irish politics and politicians, despite all the shamrock and blarney otherwise much on public display. But they are also impressively well-informed and often insightful.

No figure in Irish politics worried US Ambassadors in the 1970s more than Charles Haughey, and they rarely ceased to worry at the “danger” of him returning to political prominence.

When the 1970 *Arms Trial* came up with the wrong verdict, acquitting Haughey, Lynch established a Dáil Committee to retry him, or at least establish a narrative conducive to Lynch's line, which it dutifully did with the connivance of the other parties.

Both Britain and the US also colluded in Lynch's game. As David Burke has recently revealed on *Village* magazine's website, a British Intelligence unit based in Belfast circulated material at this time, blackening Haughey's character on the basis of the alleged dubious source of his “wealth”, and his allegedly central role in creating the Provisional IRA. The US Government adopted the British narrative, with its Ambassador reporting that Haughey, although “one of the [Fianna Fáil] party's few talented deputies”, was a “dangerous nationalist” whose “wealth” was based on “shady real estate deals”. “We entirely accept Lynch's judgement” that he “would be dangerous” as “nothing is less needed

now than Republican opportunism”.

The Ambassador approvingly quotes Garret FitzGerald telling the Embassy in 1973 that the Coalition had decided not to exploit information it had discovered of Lynch's role in suppressing the *Littlejohn spying affair* because it was essential that Lynch remain Fianna Fáil leader: the “loss of Lynch could affect bipartisan policy toward Northern Ireland, especially if he were replaced by Haughey, a not-quite-rehabilitated Republican”.

On Haughey's return to the Fianna Fáil Opposition Front Bench in 1975, Ambassador Moore reported with relief that it was only to Health, a “minor position” and “one of [the] least important”.

His “sources” in the party, he wrote, “confirm [that] Lynch did this to bring him under control” and that, while Haughey “remains one of [the] leading talents in a drab opposition”, “we do not think his ‘promotion’ increases his chances” as it would constrain him speaking on issues outside his remit.

He speculated that the move was even intended to end Haughey's career.

The Embassy saw Haughey as Lynch's only real potential challenger for the party leadership, however reporting that “we would not be surprised to see Charles Haughey mount [an] effective challenge if Lynch fails in [a] general election three or four years from now”.

In October 1975 the new Ambassador, Walter Curley, continued in the same vein, expressing alarm when Fianna Fáil adopted a position on the North favouring “British withdrawal”. Describing Lynch's endorsement of this position as intended merely to appease the party's republican base, it was nevertheless a “coup d'état” by Haughey that had “shattered” the bipartisan position on the North: “Cosgrave and FitzGerald, and their predecessors, have done a masterful job of insulating the Republic from the now eight-year-old Northern Ireland mess”, but —

“if the moderate Lynch has lost control, it is not good news for any efforts at a political solution in Northern Ireland”.

By late 1976 the Coalition had weakened but Fianna Fáil, while armed with a “splashy economic plan” for the upcoming election, was “handicapped by an uncharismatic leader, a generally mediocre front bench and much infighting”. “Fianna Fáil satrap Charles Haughey”, “bright” with “a tough resilience plus charm” but a “tainted record” was “making a comeback as Lynch fades”. When Colley emerged at the 1977 Árd Fheis, with



Lynch's encouragement, for the first time as a potential challenger, Curley lamented that, of the "two party satraps", "Haughey is probably the abler."

The arrival of Democrat Jimmy Carter as US President in January 1977, following two Republicans, did not appreciably change the US line on Ireland. Impressed by Lynch's electoral victory in June 1977, managed by the "brilliant" Seamus Brennan, "a friend of this Embassy" who had trained in the US with American financial assistance, the Ambassador reported with satisfaction how the electoral majority Lynch had achieved meant he would have "no problem putting down the Republican factions in the party".

While "no-one can remember any memorable speech" by him, Lynch in 1970 had "calmly and courageously" "weathered one of the most dangerous crises since the founding of the Republic" (sic).

He had "always been close to the Embassy and is an admirer of American institutions", his "most powerful feature" "a pair of deep, pure, Celtic blue-green eyes", "not the cold, piercing type of a Charles Haughey but warm and redolent of good humor".

But Lynch faced the "problem" of "what to do with Charles Haughey, who gives the British problems and is still considered suspect on Northern Ireland". But "in intelligence, experience and proven administrative ability, Haughey" was "the best available in Fianna Fáil and Lynch can ill afford to do without him". Carter's new Ambassador, William V. Shannon, soon reported with relief Haughey's appointment to the "relatively minor portfolio" of Minister for Health which ensured he would not be "in the mainstream of this government's decision making".

Throughout 1978 Shannon noted with dismay Lynch's failure either to appease farmers on tax or manage the spiralling industrial unrest, as well as Haughey's growing reputation. But, until November 1979, he remained confident that, while Lynch was "tired" and keen on "retirement" as his authority "waned", he would hold on to the next Dáil term as "insiders continue to tell us of their conviction that [he] will not retire until assured he will not—repeat not—be succeeded by Health Minister Charles Haughey" who, along with "those who back him", represented "an unacceptable radical Republicanism" verging on "tacit condoning of the violence perpetrated by the PIRA".

While in little doubt that, if Lynch "did quit now", "Haughey would be favored to take over", and despite "rumors" that "abounded" of his imminent retirement, Shannon was assured by Fine Gael General Secretary Peter Prendergast that Lynch would even prefer a FitzGerald Government succeeding him to one led by Haughey.

The internal challenge, according to Prendergast, was "poorly organized by a few backbenchers" "led (if at all) from behind", though Haughey was certainly "their rallying point". But, following Lynch's dramatic TV appearances in the US in November urging Irish-America to "cut off" funding to the IRA, Shannon believed he would face a leadership challenge on his return in a party now in utter "disarray". He nevertheless remained confident that Lynch would either "weather this storm" or ensure he was succeeded by someone other than Haughey.

Before those assumptions misfired, the Embassy decided it better get a grasp of what a Haughey leadership would entail, and Shannon and his officials finally arranged to meet the troublesome Minister for Health for the first time in March 1979. Unlike the blabbering politicians the Embassy was used to, an impressed Shannon reported that—

"we were struck by [his] confident manner and readiness (constrained by a certain prudence) to discuss virtually every aspect of Irish affairs."

He was "urbane, shrewd [and] tough", and had "wider interests than most of his Irish political peers".

On Haughey's election as party leader and Taoiseach nine months later, Shannon supplied a comprehensive biographical profile, which Wikileaks does not reproduce as it unfortunately remains "classified". But he was nevertheless impressed with Haughey's first statements giving his views on economic, security and foreign policy and relieved at his distancing from IRA "violence".

Brushing aside worries that Haughey might be compromised financially, Shannon, as a pragmatic American, was preparing to ensure good relations with the new order! Unfortunately the stream of cables published by Wikileaks trails off at this point.

**The Column will report other aspects of American views of Irish politics in a future edition.**

## Outlaw States

continued

kept extending its charges about 'breaches' of 'the rule of law' to more areas and, in particular to the issue of an alleged attack on an independent judiciary by both Poland and Hungary. But the two states contended that these matters were outside EU Treaty competences: a matter for each state to decide.

This raised the problem for Brussels: what could it do about these alleged breaches of the rule of law? It could not arrest anybody and jail them. So another way was found—*judicial activism*.

The Commission was denied the weapon of choice to punish these Governments: depriving them of EU funds. Such issues were subject to unanimous decision by the European Council of Ministers. That was the law. No penalty could be imposed because the countries concerned, Poland and Hungary, would exercise their Veto in the Council of Ministers.

That was the way the EU had been conducted since its inception.

What happened then was a disgraceful breach in EU procedure. The law was changed arbitrarily. Instead of countries having a veto on change, majority rule was suddenly imposed. And that was done, not by unanimity, but by the majority deciding to attach "a new conditionality regulation" to EU funding: funding which up to that point countries had been entitled as of right. This was to ensure they abided by the 'rule of law' and it came into force last year. The new rule was: Obey the 'law' or be fined.

The *Irish Times* jubilantly editorialised at this development, and explained quite euphemistically but succinctly what was involved in the 'conditionally regulation' and why it was created:

"The 2020 regulation, introducing what is known as "conditionality" to budget payments, was a controversial attempt to find a way of pressurising states in persistent breach of EU standards of the rule of law to mend their ways. Attempts to use the treaty's cumbersome Article 7 procedure to discipline them through the Council of Ministers have proved ineffective largely because it can be stymied by only one member-state ally of the "offender". (Irish Times 17/2/22)

In other words, an attempt to penalise a

member state could have been vetoed by another member state. So long as there was more than one 'recalcitrant' country, both were safe from interference.

So the *Irish Times*' concept of law is that when very democratic laws and procedures become too cumbersome they must be changed. The *Irish Times* which constantly lectures the world about Democracy suddenly regards very democratic procedures as too cumbersome and to be abandoned.

Imagine if Putin put forward such an argument for changing the law in Russia! What politician has ever dared to advocate a change in the law because what exists was just too damn cumbersome? I wonder what the Treaty Basis is for this view? I am sure many dictators would readily agree with the *Irish Times* on its interpretation of the 'rule of law.'

And there is another twist in the tail of this new conditionality regime:

"While the regulation includes provisions to ensure the final beneficiaries of EU funds, such as NGOs and farmers, do end up receiving the money and don't pay the price, triggering the process could fuel anti-EU sentiment inside the punished country" (Euronews 16.2.22).

Apparently this means the national Governments will have to meet the cost of funding already agreed. So some will be affected and others not, which naturally will cause resentment between citizens of the countries concerned.

And the *Irish Times* reminded us editorially of the logical next step, in respect of Poland and Hungary:

"Meanwhile, the two countries remain under the Article 7 procedure, which could deprive them of voting rights on EU policy. The process has been stalled for years because it requires the unanimity of all member states (minus the accused country). Poland and Hungary have vowed to block each other's vote" (17.2.22).

So this may be the next round of the saga and any self-respecting state could not remain a member in such a demeaning and humiliating role: *You can stay but just shut up!* But there are things that human flesh cannot bear. And can anyone be surprised if Poles raises its head in this scenario and it will be clear who is causing it—certainly not the Poles.

The most persistent allegation by the EU of the 'rule of law' concerns the charge that the Judiciary is not independent of the Government in these states. If that is

the case, then Ireland must be put in the dock immediately.

After all, the Irish Government attempted to set up an 'independent' body to nominate new judges but it was defeated and abandoned.

The leader of the case against such an attempt for a independent judiciary was the well-known high-flying legal eagle, Michael McDowell. He explained quite clearly:

"...the clear constitutional function and duty of the elected government (is) to make appointments to the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court in accordance with the governments' own discretion and judgement as to the composition, balance and outlook of those vital constitutional courts" (*Sunday Business Post*, 20.9.18).

He won his case hands down as the Government threw in the towel. The appointment of Judges remains a matter for the democracy.

In this situation, why is Ireland actively supporting the contrary elsewhere? Mr. McDowell should be to the fore in pointing out the hypocrisy! But he is strangely silent on the issue. He should be offering his forensic services to the Polish Government and making a name for himself in Europe as he did in Ireland on the same issue.

Law is being made up as they go along by the EU.

It might be made to sound more pompous in Latin as such things are sometimes labelled, perhaps as *Constituimus dum vadimus*, but that would not make it more legitimate.

It seems that for the European Council, the new norm is judicial activism taking the place of political responsibility and democratic consensus. Imposing that change should be the prerogative of the whole Council acting in consensus and of nobody else. The tried and trusted method. That was the guiding principle up to now and rightly so. But now a totally new consensus, or *Demos*, is to be created for the European project but that cannot be done by law or the counting of heads. A *Demos* for 27 nations must go beyond that. But the carts are being put before the horses now in the EU—legalism before politics. It will fail. Bismarck is reputed to have said that there were two things not pleasant to see in their making—sausages and laws. I can personally verify the former and the EU is verifying the latter.

**Jack Lane**

## Manus O'Riordan

continued from page 1

*Ernest Bevin Society* in London many years ago, he and a group of colleagues asked Jack Jones, then Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union in Britain, for his view on Bevin. The reply from Jones, who incidentally was also a friend of Manus's and whom he stoutly defended when Jones was slandered in the British press, was that "*Bevin never had a left-wing thought in his life*". It was a friendly and decent gesture on Mick's part to attend the funeral and his presence underlined how Manus kept on good terms with all strands of trade union opinion. He can rest assured that an explanation of Bevin's contribution to the socialist advance achieved in Britain by the post-war Labour Government, with which he is free to disagree, will be offered in *Irish Political Review* in due course."

The first points to be acknowledged are that, on the surface of things, it is certainly out of the ordinary that a group participating on the left of British Labour politics should call itself after Ernest Bevin, and strange also that Manus, the son of the most well-known General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland and, despite differences, someone who continued a fraternal relationship with that party, should wish to be associated with that group. In his time, Bevin was known, not only as a staunch opponent of communist influence in the Trade Unions, but also as a Union leader who was opposed and resented by socialist MPs and intellectuals from the 1930s onwards, including Nye Bevan. When Foreign Secretary, Bevin was accused of being anti-Semitic, simply because he spoke up for Palestinians, while Manus grew up in a Jewish district in Dublin, had many life-long Jewish friends, and was known for his outspoken support of the Jewish contribution to socialist and communist movements throughout the world.

The statement from Jack Jones about Bevin never having a left-wing thought is what one would expect of Jones if he were simply a Union leader aligned with the Left. It's quite possible that he made that statement at some stage in his long career. Yet Jones was not a typical leftist Union leader. He was General Secretary of Bevin's Union between 1968 and 1978,



a critical time, and was a firm supporter, unlike most of the Left, of Industrial Democracy and of the Bullock proposals for having workers on the Boards of all large enterprises on a 50-50 basis with share holders.

Jones, having participated in the Spanish Civil War, knew Manus through the International Brigade Memorial Trust.

In any case, Ernest Bevin was and is reviled by the British Left to the point that his contribution is all but forgotten. It was left to a mainstream academic, Alan Bullock, to chronicle his leadership role at a critical time in British history. Bullock spent twenty years writing a well-regarded three volume biography of Bevin.

On a less important note, Bevin was, in 1922, the co-founder and first General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union in Britain (hereafter referred to as the T&G). He must have had a role in choosing the Union's name. It might be said that the choice of name displayed an arrogant attitude towards Irish Trade Unionism, given that the largest Irish union at the time was the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU). In any case, the T&G had members in Ireland, especially in the North, so the similarity between the two names was likely to become a source of confusion. Discussions took place and the agreed compromise was that in Ireland the T&G would be known as the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union. That relatively unimportant piece of history provides another reason why Manus, a leading official of the ITGWU (now SIPTU), very familiar with its history, might not be well disposed towards Ernest Bevin.

*Labour Affairs* is the journal of the Ernest Bevin Society. In researching this article, I have drawn from four articles on the *Labour Affairs* website: 'Bevin Society', a summary of the aims of the Society (<https://labouraffairs.com/bevin-society/>), 'How the Bevin Society came about', an explanation of how a group of Irish communists in the 1960s, then called the *Irish Communist Organisation*, recognised the career of Ernest Bevin up until 1945 as the high point in working class power (<https://labouraffairs.com/how-the-bevin-society-came-about/>), and two articles by Brendan Clifford, 'Ernest Bevin: Labour's Churchill by Andrew Adonis', a review of what appears to be a dreadful biography of Bevin by a Blairite member of the House of Lords (<https://labouraffairs.com/2021/04/02/ernest-bevin-labours-churchill-by-andrew-adonis/>) and 'Bevin,

*The Anti-Semite*', a lucid investigation and refutation of the various claims that Bevin harboured a prejudice against Jews (<https://labouraffairs.com/2021/05/01/bevin-the-anti-semite/>). (These articles can be accessed by using Google or by navigating the *labouraffairs.com* website).

I've also used articles from *labouraffairsmagazine.com*, a website holding old articles from predecessor magazines to *Labour Affairs: Labour and Trade Union Review* and *The Communist*. An interesting page on that site, entitled 'Ernest Bevin's Lost Labour Heritage', comprises seven editorials written for *The Communist* in 1981 mainly by the late Conor Lynch (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/ernest-bevins-lost-labour-heritage/>). In addition to a summary of the relevant labour history, these contain useful quotations from the Bullock biography, as well as extracts from speeches made by Bevin in the House of Commons, retrieved from *Hansard*.

On the same site I was surprised to come across a speech given by Jack Jones to a Labour Party fringe meeting in 1991 with the title, 'What Ernest Bevin did for Trade Unionism' (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-020-to-029/magazine-026-xx/what-ernest-bevin-did-for-trade-unionism/>). The meeting was organised by the *Ernest Bevin Society*!

In the course of the Address, Jones stated, "And Bevin was a socialist, make no mistake about that; he advocated socialism all through his life". Jack Lane tells me that he doesn't recollect the details of the meeting but reckons that that Manus must have been instrumental in Jones making that Address. The Address to the *Bevin Society* and Jones's statement about Bevin's socialism really answers Mick O'Reilly's story. However, more needs to be said.

## What Bevin Stood For

That Manus was willing to lend his support to a London-based group called the *Bevin Society*, and his having such an association should be regarded as bizarre by a representative of the Irish Left, is a difference of opinion that can be taken at different levels. At one level it represents a disagreement regarding British labour history between two Irish Trade Unionists who share a common commitment to Socialism, at another it is an unresolved core issue for both European Social Democracy and for the European Left, and it is a crucial issue for Sinn Féin as it strategises to win sufficient electoral support to participate in Government.

Conor Lynch put what Bevin stood for in a nutshell when he said: "*Ernest Bevin made democratic politics effective in bringing about substantial social changes, and, in order to make it effective, took it out of wonderland*". On the other hand, Bevin's leftist critics clung to the dogma that Socialism could only be achieved in some Marxist variation of the model established by the Bolshevik Revolution. It is hard to credit but that dogma still underpins a great deal of left-wing thinking.

It was deeply unfortunate that the 'leftist' politics of figures like Nye Bevan, Manny Shinwell, Michael Foot, Tony Benn etc. won out over the politics that Bevin established—and not just for the British Labour Party. The success of the post-War Labour Government in Britain set an example for Social Democrats in Europe and further afield, so patterns set in Britain tended to be followed elsewhere: witness how the triumph of Blair was emulated by other Social Democratic parties as they caved in to, or embraced, the liberal economics that eventually led to the international banking crisis.

The socialist politics represented by Bevin, and the opposition he faced at every turn from leftist MPs, especially Nye Bevan, Manny Shinwell, James Maxton and Willie Gallacher, are well described in Conor Lynch's articles. In one he quotes Alan Bullock as follows:

"Bevin knew that because of what he represented he was one of the great powers in the land. On joining the Churchill government in May 1940, he called a meeting of all the trade union executives in the country and came to an agreement with them as to how the war economy was to be run. Then, knowing where the power lay, he advised them: 'I don't want you to get too worried about every individual that may be in the Government. We could not stop to have an election... But this I am convinced of: if our Movement and our class rise with all their energy now and save the people of this country from disaster, the country will always turn with confidence to the people who saved them. They will pay more attention to an act of that kind than to the theoretical arguments or any particular philosophy'..." (*Life and Times of Ernest Bevin* by Alan Bullock, Vol 2, p. 20)

Bevin was able to take charge of the war economy partly because of low morale in the Tory Party following the resignation of Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister, but some Tory representatives were affronted by the idea of a Trade Union leader wielding State power. Lynch describes how Lord Beaverbrook, enjoying the favour of Churchill and owning a number

of newspapers, resented the authority that Bevin quickly attained as Minister for Labour. He began to obstruct Bevin, eventually forcing a showdown, but it was the newspaper baron that was forced to resign while the Minister for Labour consolidated his position.

Bevin's strategy regarding the war economy was straightforward. The supply of materials like coal and steel needed to be guaranteed so strikes needed to be prohibited or at least kept to a minimum. He introduced strict regulations setting down that all workplace grievances were to be resolved through arbitration. Strike instigators were to be given jail terms but he chose to use such provisions as sparingly as possible.

In response to MPManny Shinwell's demand that military discipline be enforced on workers, Bevin stated he wished to be a leader, not a dictator. He considered managerial standards in industry to be weak. He said that conferring military authority on company directors would undermine the atmosphere of national solidarity necessary to the war effort.

Nye Bevan strenuously objected to Bevin's preference for working out agreements between Unions and Employers before bringing proposals to Parliament. He considered Bevin wrong to operate the war-time regulations in close cooperation with the Unions, thus ignoring the millions of workers who were not Union members. In the course of a long oratorical speech to the Commons on 28th April 1944, he concentrated his fire on the *"the logic behind the Minister of Labour's policy throughout the war"*. He stated:

"This regulation is the enfranchisement of the corporate society and the disfranchisement of the individual. It gives status to the organised body, and destroys the status of the individual citizens."

This antipathy to *corporatism* is a recurring theme of the British Left. Structured negotiations between Unions and Employers, under that way of thinking, run close to being class collaboration. The approach jars with the Marxist concept of class war—a conflict always destined to end in defeat, from that perspective. And, of course, from that perspective, meaningful corporatist arrangements cannot but lead down a slippery slope to Fascism.

But the leftist MPs in the Labour Party, exemplified by Nye Bevan, along with the Independent Labour Party represented by Maxton and Shinwell, and the Communist Party of Great Britain represented by Gallagher, were quite unable to address the

needs of the situation in the common-sense manner offered by Bevin. In retrospect, their snapping at his heels comes across as opposition for its own sake—indeed the Speaker of the Commons ruled early in the War that they should be denied the status of Official Opposition, meaning that they did not represent an alternative governing force.

Bevin answered Bevan on the question of Corporatism by defending the consulting of Unions regarding the war-time regulations. He charged that *"when the first Regulation was made [in 1940] there was no protest from the hon. Member for Ebbw Vale [Bevan] against consulting the TUC, things were more dangerous then, and silence reigned over a great part of the country that is now vociferous"*. Bevan had attacked one of the regulations on the grounds that it protected what was said in Trade Union branch meetings but these protections did not extend to individuals who were not Union members and therefore not in Union Branches. Bevin's reply on that point captures some of the spirit of what he stood for.

"I regard the trade union branch jealously as a place of assembly, where no one but those entitled to attend can be present. Whatever is said in that branch is as sacrosanct to me as what a man says in his own home and I am against detectives, police or anybody having the right to go into a branch and use anything that is said, however wise or however foolish, in a police court as evidence against a man."

Bevin was a life-long socialist who picked up ideas from his Baptist upbringing and from time he spent in the early Marxist organisation, the *Social Democratic Federation*, yet he approached politics and Trade Unionism pragmatically and thoughtfully. In that same parliamentary debate on 28th April 1944, he said:

"I am not going to elaborate this too much, but I have fought more unofficial strikes than any other man in this country and won, and I have got the largest union in the world to-day, one of the most effective and one of the most efficient, whatever may be said."

Speaking to dockers in February 1942, he made a proposal which shows how he could develop original ideas that could be used in advancing workers' interests, despite war-time pressures.

"You have all got your books of rules, you have all got your past customs and practices, and I propose to register them en bloc...; and when the time comes for us to restore them they can be put back

without question. I said in the House of Commons the other day that those things are property rights. It has taken years to get them—I have spent a few years getting them myself..." (Bullock, Vol 2, p. 208).

## Laying Foundations of Post-War Government

The viewpoint originating on the left that the united front with employers and participation in the war-time Coalition with Churchill would end badly for Labour could not have been more wrong. The Labour Party won a famous landslide victory in 1945. An important element in the success of that Government was the preparatory work done during the war, and Bevin was to the fore in that work.

In one of the 1981 editorials, *Full Employment*, Conor Lynch wrote about the importance of a White Paper on employment that Bevin introduced in 1944. He wrote:

"...Bevin had by this time already taken steps to make the maintenance of full employment in the post-war period the first priority which all parties would have to subscribe to, and had proposed measures for achieving it. The Beveridge Report, produced under his auspices, was a detailed development of an approach which he had had in mind since about 1930, and on June 21, 1944 he introduced a White Paper on employment policy based on the Beveridge Report. The object of the White Paper was the maintenance of a 'high and stable level of employment without sacrificing the essential liberties of a free society'..." (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1944.ju/21/employment-policy>).

In the course of his speech on the White Paper, Bevin related an anecdote:

"I had an opportunity of visiting one of our ports and seeing the men, of the 5th Division... going aboard ship... They were going off to face this terrific battle... The one question they put to me ... was, 'Ernie, when we have done this job for you, are we going back to the dole?'"

On that occasion Churchill was present alongside Bevin. Both leaders answered the question by saying *no*. In other words, Bevin had the support of a section of the Tory leadership in proposing that Full Employment should be the centre point of economic policy. The following extract from Bevin's White Paper speech shows how well he understood the meaning of socialism, but also how well he grasped a key dynamic of British history.



“The main purpose of the White Paper, and the Motion, is to declare war on unemployment, and to indicate how our resources should be harnessed for that purpose. Our monetary system, our commercial agreements, our industrial practices, indeed, the whole of our national economy, will have applied to them the acid test—Do they produce employment or unemployment? Under the system which governed our economic life from the industrial revolution onwards, unemployment and deflation were regarded, in the main, as automatic correctives for the lack of equilibrium in our financial and economic position. Incidentally, it was just 100 years ago, after the passing of the Corn Law Act and the Bank Act, that that automatic control was introduced. This meant that industry and human beings had to adapt themselves to the working of the financial system, instead of the system being adapted to the needs of the individual.”

In the debate on the White Paper, Maxton, Shinwell and Bevan, probably suspecting that the employment policy would be implemented by a post-war coalition, greeted the proposal with their customary vociferous opposition. Churchill wanted the war-time Coalition to continue after the war but did not get his way on that and, as they say, the rest is history. A fatal mistake of the Labour Government, arguably, was to appoint Bevin as Foreign Secretary rather than Chancellor of the Exchequer. In any event he died in April 1951 when Clement Attlee’s recently installed second Government was already in trouble. A topic worthy of investigation by historians of European social democracy is why the most successful Labour Government in British history was unable to deliver a second term.

## Bevin’s Place in History

The following two paragraphs by Brendan Clifford provide a succinct account of Bevin’s legacy:

“Bevin was both the strategist and the founder of the welfare state established in the 1940s, which was constructed so securely that it still exists in substance despite all that has been done by Thatcher and Blair to erode it. He was the strategist in the 1920s and 1930s when, as creator and leader of the powerful Transport and General Workers Union, he distanced himself from the socialist ideologues and worked out how to make actual and functional reforms in the working class interest. He laid the foundations of the welfare state between 1941 and 1945, in Coalition with the demoralised Tories, when, as Minister for Labour, he ran the country while Churchill ran the war. In 1945-50 he was Foreign Secretary while the domestic reforms were worked out under Attlee’s direction.

An evolving Labour movement would have taken the Bevin/Attlee era (1940-1950) as its historical base area and worked its way forward from it. What actually happened was that Bevin was depicted as a right-wing ogre by the socialist ideologues prior to being removed from political memory, and Attlee was sidelined as a kind of plaster saint. With the passing of Attlee and Bevin, the Labour Party was ‘radicalised’ by Nye Bevan, Michael Foot, etc. In this state of mind it could only enact superficial and fleeting reforms. It could not see where essential reforms, difficult to reverse, were to be made. The last Labour (as distinct from New Labour) Government enacted many reforms, all of which were easily undone by Thatcher. But the radicals had no time for the proposal of a Royal Commission that the workforce in enterprises should be represented on the board of management on equal terms with the shareholders. That reform, if enacted, would have been well-nigh irreversible, and on a par with the 1945 reforms. But it somehow appeared worthless, or even damaging, to the ideology which had developed from a rejection of the Bevin/Attlee approach” (From the review of *Labour’s Churchill* by Lord Adonis)

Brendan answers the accusation that Bevin was an anti-Semite by arguing that anyone making that charge would need to provide evidence of it in the years before he became Foreign Secretary—a major task he faced as Foreign Minister was responding to Zionist terrorism in Palestine. He shows that none of the accusers have taken that elementary step. That they have not done so tells its own story.

## SINN FEIN INFLUENCED BY THE BEVAN TRADITION?

It was fortunate at the funeral that Mick O’Reilly drew attention to Manus’s support for the *Bevin Society*. It’s an aspect of his involvement in socialist politics that deserves to be remembered, especially now that the possibility of Sinn Fein playing a role in government has become a real prospect. If Manus considered Ernest Bevin a Trade Union leader worth naming a Society after, then some people in the movement might be induced to investigate the matter. That Manus acted as a sort of bridge between diverse elements in Irish politics was plain enough at the funeral.

But, in so far as Irish Republicans pay heed to British radicalism, is Sinn Fein influenced by the political tradition that Jeremy Corbyn belongs to? Does the cult of Nye Bevan hold sway with

them? On the surface of things, those questions would have to be answered in the affirmative. A book by Eoin O Broin, the Sinn Fein spokesperson on Housing, was published in 2019. Entitled, *Home*, it addresses the Irish housing crisis and has a chapter with the heading, ‘Nye Bevan’s Vision’. In the book’s Preface, Paul Mason, a socialist writer in Britain, steeped in the Bevanite orientation of the British left, lauds O’Broin and highlights the author’s referencing of Bevan’s conviction that housing should not be seen as a commodity.

In fairness to O Broin, both his chapter on Bevan and the Preface might be described as window dressing or packaging. The book’s main proposals address the core issues of the housing crisis and provide solutions that are practical and politically doable; they are based on years of hard campaigning by Sinn Fein and are superior to the proposals set out in, for example, Rory Hearne’s book, *Housing Shock*. While some statements in the chapter on Bevan could be disputed, the extract from his speech during the passage of the *Housing Bill* of 1949 contains a good summary of the socialist case for public housing.

Sinn Fein deserves support for its efforts to tackle the crises in housing and health. However, before placing Nye Bevan on too much of a pedestal that party should take cognisance of the weaknesses of the British Left. The Labour movement in Britain would have met with much greater success, as against the loss of its basic sense of purpose, if it had kept to the path designed for it by Ernest Bevin. Jack Jones and Manus O’Riordan were certainly open to that viewpoint.

Dave Alvey

## Irish Foreign Affairs, March 2022

*Red Lines bring High Noon to Ukraine*

Pat Walsh

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

*Gorbachev’s Administrative Massacre: Baku, Black January 1990* Pat Walsh

*On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians* Vladimir Putin

*De Valera, DIAS, the Polygamist, and the Red* Pat Muldowney

*De Valera – an appreciation* J. L. Synge

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## Sean O'Faolain And Canon Formation

It says a lot about Irish literature and culture that someone of the ilk of Sean O'Faolain is deemed by many in today's Ireland as one of our most important critical voices. This was not the case during his lifetime and, when push came to shove, his own *alma mater*, University College, Cork, denied him the post of Professor of English and gave it instead to Daniel Corkery. The latter had not been to University—which was to provoke in O'Faolain a rage that never really disappeared!

In 1924 Daniel Corkery produced one of the great classics in Irish criticism, *'The Hidden Ireland'*, which even Aodh de Blácam writing in 1934 stated: "*It kept Irish literary and historical criticism in a ferment*", since its publication a decade previously. And then his next book, *'Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature'*, published in 1931, generated enough controversy that Corkery's name was now quite well-known.

But a lot of bitterness seeped into any analysis of his work: and most of that came from none other than O'Faolain—his former protégé and student who had benefited greatly from Corkery's deeply benevolent friendship.

It says a lot about what we have become as a nation, that, when Corkery died in 1964—

"Séan O'Tuama, an Irish language scholar and former student of Corkery's contacted Radio Eireann to enquire about a memorial programme and to his proclaimed astonishment, ended up in conversation with a staff member who had never heard of Daniel Corkery!"

And such blind *insularity* only came about from the constant negativity of the likes of O'Faolain—this indeed is the nub of all our troubles. Ireland's *provincialism* is now almost too embedded an idea to be questioned properly and it has rendered our reliance on English values and standards which have become all-pervasive.

Frank O'Connor is also in there with O'Faolain, but the former's talent was too great for the latter, and so O'Connor

was never the embittered man of letters that was the lot of O'Faolain. And isn't it ironic that, while O'Faolain constantly bemoaned *'Irish provincialism'* and more especially *'Ireland's insularity'* during the Second World War, when it was really O'Faolain who was ingrained with these very strains and not those whom he loved to despise: Jacky Whelan, the son of an RIC constable, was, as he himself acknowledged, born an Empire loyalist boy—how could it have been otherwise? And it is my thesis that he never travelled far from that initial taint.

According to O'Faolain's autobiography, *'Vive Moi!'*, he had two other brothers who were older than him: the eldest Pat became a priest in Australia, and the second son, Gus, became a British Civil Servant who went on to make his career in England. The youngest son, John P. Whelan, attended a local school, *'The Lancasterian'*, and then got into the Presentation School—which was fee-paying. But the Brothers, realising that the Whelans were having trouble with payment, reduced the fees or sometimes abolished them altogether as was their wont. In later years, the Brothers put some money Sean's way by giving him weaker pupils to tutor.

At every turn Sean O'Faolain—the name he later adopted for himself and *his* family (as he proudly boasted)—was met with great kindness (in those times sternness and beatings both at home and at school were the norm). Naturally, he *canáned* greatly about this—though again it seemed to me that he got off very lightly.

I too remember being given slaps with a sally rod in our National (secular) School and can truthfully say that I deserved every one of them. Sometimes our hands were blistered, but that was because of the fatal error of pulling our hand back as the cane came down (I only learnt later on that this was an automatic reaction by the body), but alas too late to have told this to our poor over-worked Master!

Both his parents, Bridget and Denis, were fervent Church goers and his father went to Mass every morning. They moved home a few times and ended up in Half Moon Street, where his mother ran a lodging house which faced the Stage Door of the Opera House, and thereby got most of its touring trade. By the times they were in, the Whelans were financially solvent but always their younger son wanted more and in time he became quite ashamed of their poverty much to Gus's fury.

It is very revealing that Sean/Jack never had a friend but only the company of his two brothers growing up—naturally he put this down to his parents', but more especially his mother's coldness to outsiders. Truly, Sean seems to be saying that his mother's apron strings were that long!

In 1918, Sean went to UCC and there he studied English, Irish, Latin and French. After obtaining a pass, he went on to study English Language and Literature as his major subjects and Irish and Latin as subsidiary subjects. He received Second Class Honours but got awards for his exams, and more especially for his College activities, which won him the *Peel Memorial Prize*: that included a gold medal and £5 to be spent on books of his choice.

He returned to UCC twice after his BA, first in 1924 to do a MA in Irish, then in 1925 to do a MA in English and to obtain a Higher Diploma in Education. But even Maurice Harmon, Sean's biographer in 1994 (published in London by Constable and Company Ltd), is amazed that these MAs really consisted of little more than long essays.

His Irish MA focused on two of Dáibhí O'Bruadair's poems ten years apart and the finest analysis of O'Faolain's thesis is to be found in *'The Heidegger Review'* (No. 2, May 2015, Athol Books), in an article by John Minahane titled *'Sean O'Faolain and the Poets'*. Minahane demolished O'Faolain's thesis with such lethality that his article really should be on the reading lists of all schools and universities!

When Sean met Eileen Gould in 1918, they would spend every summer learning Irish in the Gaeltacht and would marry ten years later. They would cycle to Ballingeary and stay in Turín Dubh and have lessons in the morning at the Irish College in the former and were free to wander far and wide in the afternoon, and in the evening there were songs and music, especially the old fiddle-playing that could wring emotion from the sternest heart.

In West Cork, there was Gougane Barra which became Sean's favourite place. And it was in these Irish places that Jackie Whelan became Sean O'Faolain.

And it was there that they met Nancy McCarthy, and Michael O'Donovan who went on to become known as *Frank O'Connor*, and others.

In the midst of all this there was the Rising of 1916, where the execution of the sixteen leaders was to move Sean to tears and to make his break with the Empire.

According to O'Faolain he got involved with the struggle for Irish Independence and became something of a bomb-maker. In his autobiography, he wrote, somewhat disingenuously, that he could never attain the status of Tom Barry or Ernie O'Malley because he was younger (by a mere two years!), and because he was the son of an RIC constable, thereby attracting suspicion from his comrades.

But Tom Barry was the son of a RIC constable and not only that—he fought for the British Army! His deeds and dedication made him the hero he became—and he was never one for the limelight, unlike the lesser-known O'Faolain.

I was surprised to see that, with all the talk of his name change, he was still registered in UCC as J.F. Whelan, and even his MA in English has him so titled: over the name of his thesis '*The 'Prentice Years of English Poets: A Study of Old English Verse*' in 1925.

Maurice Harmon, who was a Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature in UCD, again expresses puzzlement at how poor was O'Faolain's thesis in his O'Faolain biography. It—

“is given over to so much generalisation that it lacks coherence. It is a passionate, whimsical and unfettered piece in which lyrical energy and impressionistic pronouncements take the place of scholarship. Unimpressed, Professor Stockley gave it a mere pass mark.”

This was to have repercussions in his relationship with the Professor of English who, like Corkery, gave him so much but would end up being cold-shouldered by the writer when he went on to places far afield. And, which was infinitely worse, O'Faolain bad-mouthed both these Professors who were both scholars of outstanding ability. And no-one could do bad-mouthing like O'Faolain, as will be seen in next month's Irish Political Review.

Julianne Herlihy ©

## The Fall Of Paris

Written by Ilya Ehrenburg, the Soviet writer, between August, 1940 and July, 1941, it was published, in English, by Hutchinson & Co. Ltd in December, 1942, and reprinted six times up to 1949, such was its popularity! And that reflected the popularity of the Soviet Union in Britain, in its winning of the war against Nazism.

Obviously the post-WW2 Labour Government had to offset this popularity with a rigid socialist system of social programmes. These ideas had been thought about during the wartime years, especially when it seemed the Soviets were effectively striking back out of what looked like certain defeat.

It was said Stalin was intrigued by this novel. Ehrenburg went on to win the *Stalin Peace Prize*. It is written in the style of socialist-realism, an in-depth style the more socially aware journalists in Britain once used

Ehrenburg describes the decay and eventual collapse of French society between 1935 and the German Occupation in 1940. He was living in France during those critical years before the Nazi invasion, and describes life in the capital as events unfold and shows how the atmosphere of war causes widespread fear as the war gets closer.

His protagonists are taken from all walks of life, classes and political backgrounds. There is the opportunistic radical party politician Paul Tessa, with his ailing devout Catholic wife, his wastrel son, and his daughter, revolted by his politics. She leaves home, joins the Communist Party, giving up her middle-class way of life to live in a room and earn her living doing precarious, low-paid jobs.

Other characters are Breteuil, the unscrupulous fascist leader; Pierre Dubois, the socialist engineer, working in a large aircraft factory; his friend the apolitical artist Andre; Michaud, the militant worker, who goes off to fight in the Spanish Civil War; and Dresser, the wealthy boss of the factory—plus many other fascinating characters.

It's salutary to be reminded that well before the Nazi invasion of France, the country had a flourishing fascist movement,

and that a fascist coup was a distinct possibility in the 1930s, with the governing and opposition parties constantly bickering and squabbling fruitlessly among themselves.

Ehrenburg suggests that the French Government's not intervening in Spain and ignoring the plight of Sudetenland was a capitulation to Hitler. This enhanced Hitler's sense of invulnerability, and fed his voraciousness. (This is suggested by John Green, who rediscovers and admires Ehrenburg's novel in his article: *Culture Matters*, dated 19th January, 2021, Online.)

Ehrenburg was born in Kiev, into a Lithuanian-Jewish family. When he was four years old, his family moved to Moscow, where his father had been hired as chief of a brewery. At school he met Nikolai Bukharin, and the two remained friends until Bukharin's death during the purge (or Moscow Trials) of the 1930s.

In the aftermath of the 1905 events—when there was a 150,000 strong demonstration against the Tsar and the Russo-Japanese War (which ran from 1904–1905, a defeat for Russia). It was led by an Orthodox priest, in St Petersburg.

Ehrenburg became involved in the illegal activities of the socialist opposition. In 1908, when he was only seventeen, the Tsarist police arrested him and detained him for five months. Finally, he was allowed to go abroad. He chose Paris for his exile.

There he moved in Bolshevik circles, meeting Lenin and other prominent exiles. But he soon felt more attracted to the bohemian life in the Paris quarter of Montparnasse. He regularly visited the cafes and became friends with artists such as Picasso and Modigliani.

During WW1, Ehrenburg became a War Correspondent for a St. Petersburg newspaper. In 1917, after the revolution, he returned to Russia. In 1920 he moved to Kiev, where he experienced four different regimes: the Germans, the Cossacks, the Bolsheviks, and the White Army which caused anti-Semitic pogroms. He fled to Koktebel on the Crimea, where his friend, from Paris days, Voloshin, had a house.

Then he decided to return to Moscow and became a culture activist and journalist, going on to decide to spend much of his time abroad as a writer. He was offered a

Column in the *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the Red Army newspaper, days after the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. By the end of the War he had published 2,000 articles in Soviet newspapers.

Fascism was on the rise in Europe during the 1930s, including Britain. Belfast had its share of it, as if it needed any more!

A death squad was set up by a loyalist group, which included members of the RUC. They were said to be in touch with an SS unit in Berlin. This was revealed by the late Manus O’Riordan. I can’t enlarge on this as I lost the information naming the members of the death squad and the precise name of the SS unit in Berlin with which it was associated.

Manus at the time, himself, was struggling to find the source of his information, at my request. Being eternally busy in his political writing I heard no more from him.

I had a personal interest in this death squad, being a child of the 1930s. A vivid experience planted itself in my small brain in 1936 when the neighbour next door, a Catholic woman, was shot dead when she answered the door to a knock. My father, on hearing the gun go off, stuck his head cautiously through the door and watched the assassin, in broad daylight, with no attempt to disguise himself, casually walk away with the smoking gun in his hand, a .45, issued to the RUC.

Now it was the furniture against the front and back doors every night. My father, being unemployed, took my mother, a Catholic, and my sisters of two year old and one year old, to the Grove Park across York Road, where we sat all day with a milk bottle of cold tea, and some sandwiches. Grove Park had an elevated section to it from which my parents could see their front door. Luckily it was Summer.

Some days lone males would knock on our door. We weren’t expecting anyone. How many days, or weeks, we sat there I have no idea. In the end my father borrowed money from his brother for a removal van, and we were in another side of Belfast. It was a matter of continually moving on being discovered as a mixed family. It was pointless going to an RUC barracks to complain when this sectarian police force could have a few assassins among them.

My father always had to live in Protestant areas because of the trauma of being beaten up by a Catholic gang of youths in 1912, age 12, when he was passing through their area. Stopped and questioned, he

pretended to be a Catholic. When challenged to cross himself he did but in the manner of the Russian or Greek Orthodox Church in which the tips of the fingers go to the right shoulder first.

The next moment he was lying on the ground being kicked, but was rescued by one of the attacker’s fathers, who chased the boys away. It was the time of the signing of the Ulster Covenant by Protestants, including members of his own family, and the city was very tense.

Some memories for me are still pictures of traumatic incidents: Gunfire and a man’s body lying on the pavement on the Donegall Road. Then there is the three-minute film, on a loop, that still plays occasionally today: Gunfire, the shrieks of women, the body of another man lying across the tram lines, the bloody patch on his coat growing bigger, his legs kicking in the air, like a beheaded chicken, the tram driver looking down on him from his cab. Then silence, followed by the grey-painted lorries of the RUC, caged on top against bomb or stone-throwers, and inside the cages, B’Specials with rifles. They had just been patrolling the nearby Falls Road.

I have deviated from the Ehrenburg story somewhat but his description of the Paris of 1935, with its low-paid jobs, crummy lodgings, poor housing, industrial strikes and demos, police attacks on peaceful marchers—while leaving the fascist rallies alone—does fit the pattern for many European cities. Exchange fascist rallies for police-protected Orange demonstrations, on Northern Ireland, and you could get a full picture.

Ehrenburg’s novel has a modern feel to it. There is love and unrequited love. Couples move in with one another without any moralising. *L’Humanite*, the communist newspaper, is selling half a million copies of each print.

Then, as the 1930s progress, the German threat grows, the Popular Front is collapsing, and 34,000 communists have been arrested and interned. The population, from which the army comes, is demoralised, followed soon after by demoralisation in the army.

Pierre Laval, who will eventually be Prime Minister of the Vichy Government, is mentioned a lot and accused of collaborating with the French fascist movement. There is a call from the left of the now defunct Popular Front to arm the Communists—the only ones willing to fight—and from there the arming of the entire population.

Starving and unkempt soldiers, still armed, roam the countryside—deserters, after an initial clash with the first German invaders on French soil. These deserters have now become a menace to the population. Farms and villages lock their doors against them, and in some cases, when the soldiers attempt to break in, in the search for food, they are shot by the defenders.

The population generally had thought the Maginot Line (part of the fortified border with Germany) would keep them safe, and that the Ardennes Forest was impenetrable. Ehrenburg fails to mention the German Army avoiding the Maginot Line and advancing through the Ardennes Forest.

The *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact* was signed on the 23rd of August 1939, between Germany and the Soviet Union. It was meant to last until the 23rd of August 1949. But it was terminated in July 1941 by the German invasion, labelled *Operation Barbarossa*, which began on the 22nd of June 1941.

Ehrenburg says there was no faith in the Pact anyway, as the Soviet leadership knew that Germany, along with a number of European countries, was intent on not allowing the Soviet Union to continue to exist.

The *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact* is mentioned a few times in the novel but called *The Pact*, so it’s easy to miss, or to mistake it for British Prime Minister Chamberlain’s Pact, when he handed over territory to Hitler, which wasn’t his to give, in the mistaken belief that Britain would continue to support Hitler and German Nazism.

Germany entered France with a vengeance, softening up some French towns and cities with aerial bombing. Refugees on the roads are machine-gunned; some French Army units are fighting back, and in some cases, halting the German advance, with great sacrifices, but they know it’s going to be defeat.

Many of the wealthy are fleeing to the spa-towns, which the author notes is a good place to take the waters and heal the liver.

He also sees France as being a British Dominion, and soon to become a German province.

Previous to this collapse, he describes the returning International Brigade fighters from Spain—after the victory of Franco—being arrested for desertion when they weren’t there for the French Army conscription, or call-up. They are detained in what Ehrenburg describes as Concentration Camps.



He is not afraid to let a character speak of the crisis in Spain as being partly due to the burning of Churches by anarchists. Though many could also have been Trotskyites. Like many of the anti-clerical French, he sees Catholicism as a neurosis. He gives this view through the ailing wife of one of the main protagonists, whose wife prays day and night.

But, in the end, the author relents: finding there is no solution to the woman's true invalid condition, he recognises her spiritual needs. In the meantime, her husband discusses her condition with his young mistress.

Finally, the German Army approaches Paris and declare it a free city before they enter with a grand parade down the Champs Elysees. There are no more bombings and shootings. The average German soldier is now a tourist, buying up wine, food and various household items, and souvenirs to be sent back to Germany. They pay readily with marks, and not in the manner of a conquering army.

Some of the German officers, as gourmets, seek out the best restaurants. Signs in German appear in shop windows to attract the new customers. The foot-soldier's task has been done. People start returning to Paris.

**One German, having lived in Paris, during the 1930s, returns as a German officer. He seeks out his artist friend, Andre. Andre insults him to such a degree that he leaves, disappointed, but not angry.**

So France settles into its occupation, relieved that the war for them is over. Some turn their attention to what way Britain will react when it too is occupied.

Ehrenburg writes of women, wearing heavy lipstick, taking up immediately with the German troops. To him they are prostitutes, and maybe they are, but he forgets, or isn't aware, that middle-class women are now the escorts for German officers at the horse-racing courses, at the opera, theatre and ballet and the famous venue of Folies Bergere. This is the German and French middle-class at play.

The British magazine *Picture Post* showed such scenes post WW2. It had scenes, also post-WW2, of working-class French women having their heads shorn of hair in public for *collaborating* with the enemy.

General peace reigned except for British warplanes over France bombing the odd target, or dropping saboteurs and spies. Some of the spies were young women and a few of them were given false information.

When arrested, and under brutal interrogation, it was hoped the Germans would be fooled by what they heard.

This novel, having been written between August 1940 and July 1941, does not record further developments. The Soviet Union was at war and Ehrenburg had a bigger job on his hands in the information business.

I haven't spoken to any French people who lived under German occupation. I have spoken to my son's father-in-law, in the Netherlands, who recalled the brutal German occupation made worse by the Dutch mercenaries, from the Dutch fascist movement, as they searched for Jews and communists.

He was also disappointed that the Dutch, speaking a Germanic language, could be treated so badly, and who in the end suffered half of the Netherlands being flooded when the dykes were blown up by the occupiers in their retreat from the country.

Thousands also died from famine, with those surviving eating tulip bulbs.

The French were treated much better: that is, those who stayed quiet, and kept out of the hands of the SS and the Gestapo. There were penalties of course, and terrible decisions to be made, like saving the French Jews at the expense of the foreign Jews. That reminds me of the novel *Sophie's Choice* by William Styron, an American novelist. Sophie, a Polish Catholic, has to face a difficult choice, when brought to a Concentration Camp for smuggling pork from the countryside into Warsaw, when all meat was meant for the German Army. She has two children and has to make the choice of which one will live and be brought up in an SS home as a German.

There were penalties in France, like being sent to work in German factories. This direction of labour also happened in Northern Ireland under the British war-machine. My father, a woodworker, one day was ordered to learn a new trade as a fitter for the aircraft factory at Harland and Wolf. There was also the aircraft factory of Short and Harland, also known as Short Brothers.

He was sent to the Belfast Technical Institute to learn metal work, after which he was assigned to the Harland & Wolff aircraft factory to help turn out Stirling bombers. This involved working a compulsory seven days a week, in a permanently blacked-out factory with intense artificial lighting. Falling ill for

a few days brought the RUC to our door, enquiring about his absence from a vital war industry.

He had complained previously to them about the stoning of our house, in Carryduff, County Down, by a sectarian gang who wanted us out of *their* area. The police ignored him, and the stoners.

His illness got worse and he was now off work for a month with aluminium poisoning and severe stress and sent to hospital. He wanted back to his old trade but it wasn't allowed. Then a compromise: he would have his old trade back but would have to go to the Orkney Islands, to build huts for the British Army. After months of waiting, the Orkney Island job was cancelled, with him back in the aircraft factory with no daylight and intense lighting and the aluminium particles sparking in the artificial light beams.

My father suffered breathing problems from this work for the rest of his life. Wages were high in that industry but with wartime restrictions there was nothing to buy, except black-market eggs from local farms.

A wartime photograph in *Picture Post* appeared post-WW2, showing a middle-aged German soldier, unarmed, on the Left Bank of Paris, his army jacket hanging from his easel, while he, in his shirt, braces and trousers, paints with concentration. A few of the French public look on, in curiosity, as they try to catch a glimpse of what he is painting.

The German Army is now withdrawing from Paris as D-Day Allied Forces draw near. A few of the French Resistance in the upper floors of high buildings are firing at them, or tossing hand grenades. One hits an army truck and causes casualties. This was filmed by Movietone News, and shown in cinemas. A British camera-man had sneaked into Paris.

German officers halted their staff cars and go into to bars, restaurants and hotels to pay their bills before leaving for Germany.

The Soviet Union is advancing fast on Germany. The French population has sat out the War, without much harm, except to their egos. Who can blame them? The Soviet Union which sacrificed and suffered so much will be threatened by the atom bomb, and be the subject of a Cold War, that still goes on today. The French will also suffer slurs and falsehoods from every direction Britain can fire from.

**Wilson John Haire.**

7.2.2022

## 1969: The Invasion That Never Was!

August 1969 is back in the news. New light has been shed on how close the Irish Government was to sending its troops over the Border to help defend Nationalist areas under attack from Unionist forces. A Dungannon activist from those days, Killian McNicholl, has recently thrown some light on what happened.

The background was that Civil Rights activism had energised Catholic civil society in Northern Ireland. Derry nationalists took control of the Bogside, building barricade to prevent hostile incursions and to control who would enter. Their example was followed elsewhere, including Dungannon.

The situation became very tense and reached the point where the RUC, B-Specials, and Protestant militants were preparing to break the Catholic defence. If that had happened, there would have been violent confrontations, not only in Derry, but all around the province.

The British Government ignored the whole thing, maintaining its attitude of aloof disinterest in how the majority-rule devolved government of Northern Ireland conducted its affairs; and it had no intention of altering this convenient, 50 year old, arrangement.

Jack Lynch's Government, however, could not remain aloof from this explosive situation, which was playing out on the television screens of an incensed electorate. Ministers were recalled from their Summer breaks to attend emergency Cabinet meetings. It was proposed that troops be sent over the Border to relieve the Siege of the Bogside. Such a move would not only have relieved Catholic distress in the North, it would have been very popular in the South—where people had been watching attacks on peaceful Civil Rights marches on their television screens for some months.

The Cabinet put the Army on standby. For the first time ever, the Army considered intervention in Northern Ireland, and started war planning. Troops were sent to the Border under the guise of establishing Field Hospitals to treat Catholics wounded in the disorders. But the situation then went into stalemate. The following extract from my *Military Aspects Of Ireland's Arms Crisis Of 1969-70* gives an idea of the preparations which were set in hand:

“Rng P70, CCA [Planning & Operations Section, Army Headquarters],  
Geata Na Páirce.  
14 Lúnasa, 1969  
OO [Operation Order] No. 8/69

### SIT [Situation]

1. A state of civil disturbance exists in NORTHERN IRELAND, particularly in the area of DERRY CITY. The Government of Ireland has directed that a military force will be deployed in the EASTERN portion of County DONEGAL, with a view to rendering such assistance as may be desirable.

...

### EXECUTION

3. Gen [General] Outline: The operation will take the form of

a. the establishment and location of 14 Infantry Group in the general area LETTERKENNY/BALLYBOFEY,

b. the establishment of field hospitals at ROCKHILL and DUNREE...

...” (*Military Aspects...* p22-)

This short extract gives an idea of the seriousness with which the Irish Government and Military approached the task in hand, namely the defending of the Catholics of the Bogside.

In the event, a majority in the Cabinet followed Taoiseach Jack Lynch's lead and opposed putting the military into the Bogside, even though it was for the one and only purpose of defending a population under siege.

Instead it was decided to make an appeal to the UN, with the vague idea that the Security Council would order a Peace-keeping mission, in which both Irish and British troops would participate. (The fate of that initiative is detailed in my pamphlet, *Ireland's Only Appeal To The UN Nations: a cautionary tale of humiliation and moral collapse.*)

Unfortunately, only a minority in the Cabinet understood that the only way to force the British to accept UN involvement was by establishing a ‘fact on the ground’: Irish troops defending the Bogside.

There can be no doubt that, if an international incident had been created along these lines, there would have been no Provisional or Official IRAs and the North would have been spared decades of turmoil. As we know, Taoiseach Jack Lynch did not have it in him to act decisively and

he found enough Ministers to support him in preventing the decisive action which would have forced Britain to agree to a UN deployment of peace-keepers, and a political solution to undemocratic governing arrangements which ensured that Catholics remained a powerless electoral minority for ever and a day.

However, that *Military Aspects* book under-estimated how close the Irish Government came to sending troops. Below are some salient extracts from a story outlining the role played by Kevin McNicholl, an activist of the time who worked closely with the Irish Cabinet's emissary, Captain Kelly. These appeared in the *Irish News* of 17th January.

### “Irish army invasion of north called off at last minute

A Co. Tyrone man has claimed the Irish army came within minutes of invading the north to highlight the plight of nationalists faced with a sectarian onslaught in the late 1960s.

Killian McNicholl (82) from Dungannon has broken his silence on secret plans by the Dublin government to force an international crisis more than 50 years ago.

While it was already known that the Irish government had drawn up a blueprint to cross the border in 1969, Mr McNicholl has revealed fresh details. ...he acted as a guide for Irish army officer Captain James Kelly in 1969 as he searched out potential border crossing points. He said several locations were identified from Co Louth to Derry city. He also revealed how he was in a house in Dublin with former Irish government minister Neil Blaney when the daring operation was dramatically called off at the last minute.

A key figure in the civil rights campaign in Co Tyrone in the 1960s, Mr McNicholl worked closely with Dr Conn McCluskey and his wife Patricia on the Campaign for Social Justice, which highlighted discrimination against the Catholic minority. He later emerged as a founding member of the civil rights movement in Dungannon.

In August 1971 he was detained without trial on the first day of internment and later held in Ballykinler British army base, the Maidstone Prison Ship and cages of Long Kesh, where he says he was “badly beaten”. While on the Maidstone he was accused of trying to set fire to the ship and recounts “suffocating” below decks where he was being held as the vessel burned.

Although he had “republican sympathies” he said his role at the time was with the civil rights movement.

The rise of the campaign coincided with

an upsurge in sectarian attacks against Catholics, with the RUC and B-Specials often accused of looking on or taking part. As pressure on nationalist districts increased throughout 1969, then taoiseach Jack Lynch declared that the government "can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse" and revealed plans to set up field hospitals along the border.

A secret Irish army document, *Interim Report of Planning Board on Northern Ireland Operations*, also known as '*Exercise Armageddon*' and drawn up in 1969, later confirmed plans by the government to cross the border but warned such as move undertaken against the north would be "militarily unsound".

Mr McNicholl said he agreed to act as a guide for Captain Kelly after a request from Belfast republican John Kelly... who was a leading figure in the Citizen Defence Committees, set up to protect nationalist districts in the late 1960s.

John Kelly, a veteran of 'Operation Harvest' in the 1950s, went on to become an early leader in the emerging Provisional movement after the IRA split into two factions in late 1969.

Mr McNicholl said he was aware of Captain Kelly's role.

"I knew he was intelligence with the Irish army, I was just civil rights," he said.

He said the pair travelled around the north for a week as Captain Kelly identified potential crossing points.

These included Aughnacloy in Co Tyrone, Garrison and Derrylin in Co Fermanagh and Blacklion, on the Cavan/Fermanagh border.

A site near to Derry and another close to Dundalk in Co Louth were also identified.

"He was gathering intelligence to see where they could set up their camps, scoping sites," he said.

"He was obviously working under the instructions of Jack Lynch.

"He was a very nice man—there's not a chance you would have thought he was a military man, a tall guy and very dignified."

Mr McNicholl said the operation was part of a wider plan to highlight the plight of northern nationalists and force an international intervention to ease their plight.

"The reason for this was not that the Irish government wanted a united Ireland there and then, it was to protect the Catholic people because they were being slaughtered," Mr McNicholl said.

"The idea of the whole thing was to create that big an incident that the United Nations would have had no choice but to have come in.

"If the incursion had taken place there would have been no Provisional IRA. They would not have been needed."

Mr McNicholl revealed that he was later asked to travel to an address in north Dublin on the date the operation was due to take place.

Several other people were present including Donegal TD Neil Blaney and Belgian businessman Albert Luykx, who were both later involved in the 1970 Arms Crisis.

According to Mr McNicholl, the Irish army had been ordered to launch the operation at 2 am from a "centre point" in Monaghan.

He said that as those gathered in north Dublin waited anxiously, the invasion was halted minutes before it was to take place.

Mr McNicholl said government minister Kevin Boland rang the house and believes taoiseach Jack Lynch gave the order. "There was a phone call to this guy's house to Neil Blaney to say it was called off—after all the work that had been done Lynch had chickened out," he said. "He put the phone down and was quiet for a few seconds and he said it was called off.

"He could not understand it and made a few phone calls to find out what had happened but he could not find out."

Mr McNicholl said Mr Blaney blamed Jack Lynch.

"He called him a f\*\*\*ing b\*\*\*ard, he was raging, he was absolutely raging," he said.

Mr McNicholl said he personally "felt sick" that the Irish army had been stood down so close to the launch.

He returned north the following day and said he provided a report of what had taken place to some within the civil rights movement.

"I think some of them were happy," he said.

"Some of them were very much afraid that something disastrous would happen. But something disastrous did happen, worse than if they [the Irish army] had come in.

"In my opinion we would not have had the trouble we had for 30 years.

"The whole objective was to create the international incident but it didn't happen."

Mr McNicholl regrets that the military action did not take place.

"The RUC would not have known what happened until daylight the next day," he said

"Jack Lynch is Jack Lynch and he is what he is but in my opinion he was a coward.

"I don't think there was a person in the

Irish army that would not have gone across. At that stage things were bad and the Catholic community had no protection."

...  
While critical of those who called off the invasion, Mr McNicholl believes British intelligence may have played a part.

He said it was known at the time that British military intelligence had well-placed assets within Garda Síochána.

"I am 100 per cent confident that the British, MI5 or MI6, were involved in Jack Lynch's decision, either through the Garda Síochána or the TDs they had in their pocket," he said.

"I am convinced the intent was there because I would not have been in that house that night if it had not been."

Months after the abandoned invasion, details of plans to smuggle weapons into the north for use in nationalist areas became public.

Known as the *Arms Crisis*, it sparked a political storm.

Among those linked were Neil Blaney, Albert Luykx and Captain James Kelly.

The plot was also said to involve Dublin minister Charlie Haughey—whose parents were from Swatragh in Co Derry—and who later served as taoiseach.

As details emerged, Jack Lynch sacked Haughey and Blaney while fellow minister Kevin Boland resigned in solidarity.

In May 1970, Haughey, Blaney, John Kelly and Captain James Kelly went on trial and were joined in the dock by Albert Luykx. All charges against Blaney were dropped and the trial collapsed in July 1970.

A second trial began in October that year but the remaining accused were eventually also cleared.

Captain Kelly and his family remained bitter over his treatment at the hands of the Dublin authorities. Mr. McNicholl also believes he was poorly treated.

"We talk about great Irishmen now—I think he was one of the greatest Irishmen because he ended up a scapegoat for everyone", he said.

"He did everything he was asked to do and they threw him under the bus."

## A Comment

The suggestion that the Army told the Government that incursions were *militarily unsound* is misleading. While the Army Planning Board concluded that a full-scale operation to intervene in the North was untenable, it believed that there were a range of military options to help Catholic defence in the North that were feasible.

Angela Clifford



## Ukraine: World Orders !

When was “*the rules based international world order*”, about which so much has been heard in recent weeks, established? 1815? 1919? 1945? 1991?, in 2001? in 2014?

What is the basic principle of that order?

In 1815 it would have been something like the Legitimacy of Monarchical regimes as a safeguard against the subversive, anarchic, influence of Democracy.

In 1919 it would have been Democracy as a safeguard against continuation of the traditional authority of governing elites.

The principle of *Legitimacy* was asserted by Britain in its War against the French Revolution. The course of the Revolution had been taken as demonstrating that Democracy was incompatible with the maintenance of stable Authority. So the legitimacy of traditionally-based authority became the British watchword in its guardianship of Europe under the Treaty of Vienna in the era of the Concert of Europe, known as the Holy Alliance.

The hub of traditional authority in Europe under the *Treaty of Vienna* was the Hapsburg Empire, which was often referred to simply as *The Empire*. But, in the second half of the 19th century, Britain began to subvert the principle of Legitimacy by encouraging the growth of Italian nationalism against Hapsburg authority. It praised Garibaldi and allowed Mazzini to publish terrorist propaganda in London against the authority of Vienna.

The middle class was enfranchised within the aristocratic party system in 1932. There were further enlargements of the franchise in the 1860s and 1880s, still within the aristocratic party system of Whigs and Tories. In 1914 Britain suddenly saw itself as a democracy, although the Parliamentary franchise was held by less than a third of the adult population. When it declared war on Germany it announced that it did so as a democracy against the authoritarianism of Germany. The Parliamentary franchise was at least as extensive in Germany as it was in Britain, and the German Parliament controlled the Budget just as the British did, but the relationship of the Crown to Parliament

was not quite the same in Germany as in Britain. Based on that slight difference, the British propaganda declared the German State to be an Autocracy.

The defeat of Germany was hailed as a triumph for Democracy. The future of the world was to be democratic. In the League of Nations era, only Democracy would be legitimate. And, so that it might be functional anywhere and under any circumstances, Democracy was reduced to a formula—as if the ground of human society was of a kind with the ground of the Earth, where a chemical formula could be applied anywhere and would work.

But it did not work in the human world of the 1920s. And the philosopher of English political life at the time of the French Revolution, Edmund Burke, could have told the Versailles statesmen why it could not work.

A State is a system of authority. Democracy as a system of party conflict is a system obstructive of authority.

It can work as a development within an effective system of authority, but it cannot produce a system of authority out of itself.

The new Versailles states, groping for the establishment of national authority, found it in Fascism. Europe became Fascist out of its own resources and its own needs. And Britain encouraged Fascist developments in Europe, beginning with Mussolini and culminating with Hitler.

Britain did not ‘*appease*’ Hitler: it collaborated with him in breaking the League of Nations restrictions imposed on Germany. It acted in this matter as a world Empire, independent of the League—both when collaborating with Hitler and when suddenly changing its mind and deciding to make war on him.

By making war on Germany over the trivial issue of Danzig a year after breaking up Czechoslovakia for it, and then by refusing to make a settlement with Germany after losing the War which it had declared (which it did lose in June 1940), and then by casting around for other forces to draw into the War, Britain threw the world into the melting-pot.

Russia liberated Europe from Fas-

cism—it would be indelicate to say that it deprived Europe of Fascism. And, apart from the brief post-War Christian Democratic period, Europe has been puzzled ever since about what it is.

Was a *rules-based international order* established in the 1945 division of the world between the Power that had destroyed Fascism in Europe and the Power that had come across the Atlantic to ensure that Britain and France—the Powers that started the War—should remain viable capitalist democracies at the end of it? Was there an international rules-based order then?

In Churchill’s view, Russia had been the main enemy from 1918 onwards. He reasserted this view after 1945. He was a hero of “*the anti-Fascist War*”, but he had been a supporter of Fascism, and never apologised for that.

He admired Hitler. He said that, if England was ever put in the position in which Germany was put in 1919, he hoped an English Hitler would arise and liberate it. But he was allowed to become Prime Minister only after Britain had declared War on Germany—and had lost it.

He refused to make a settlement with Germany after withdrawing the British Army from the War and leaving France to fight alone. (Britain, after withdrawing its Army, stood alone in a War with Germany, a war in which not a shot was fired in Europe!)

Churchill made war on France because it made a settlement with Germany after its Declaration of War led to it being occupied by Germany.

Churchill’s strategy was to spoil the Franco-German settlement by keeping the War simmering with minimal engagement, thus maintaining a general feeling of uncertainty in Europe—out of which something might turn up.

What turned up was the German/Russian War in June 1941. When that happened, it became *The War*. The British purpose in launching War fell away. Poland had been lost in August 1939, while Britain was standing idly by.

When the Russian Army did not break, as the British and French Armies had broken, the issue became whether European Capitalism would survive within a Fascist political form, or whether Europe would become Communist. If Hitler had not brought the United States into the European War by declaring War on it in December 1941, and if the US had not given priority to the War in Europe over its own Pacific War with Japan, and

if it had not hustled Britain back into the War in Europe in May 1944 (by forcing it to commit to the Normandy Landing), the probability is that Europe would have become Communist in 1945-6.

But these things did occur. And so it happened that the Communist Armies met the Armies of *laissez-faire* Capitalism on the ruins of the German state in 1945. And now:

“What is at stake here is nothing less than the international order, the global order that we set up after World War Two, that said that the boundaries of nations are sacrosanct...”

That was said by Evelyn Farkas, an American Security Adviser who supervised the Ukrainian situation for Washington in 2014, interviewed on BBC’s *Newsnight* on February 23rd.

The global order of 1945 was set up by Stalin and Truman. It divided the world along the cease-fire line between the Russian and American Armies. The German Army had been crushed by the Russians, but the Americans—who had played a little part in that War—had managed to hustle the British to allow them to use Britain as a launching ground for getting an Army into Germany in time to meet the Russians there.

The War might well have continued after May 1945 as an American/Russian War if certain American Generals had had their way—or if Churchill could have had what his heart desired. But America had its War with Japan to finish—which it did in style by nuclear bombing undefended Japanese cities. (If any other country, and particularly Russia, had done that, we would never hear the end of it! Such is the way of things in the Anglo-sphere!)

And Russia helped it to finish off Japan. To do so it broke the Japanese/Russian Treaty, which Japan had honoured when it might have benefitted handsomely from breaking it. Russia invaded Japan along with America, and added Sakhalin Island to its territory.

Bertrand Russell, the famous British philosopher and Peace campaigner, urged America to do the obvious thing in the interest of World Peace, and obliterate the Russian State while it had the monopoly of nuclear weaponry. If that was done, the world could rest easy under American dominance. But President Truman did not risk it. He had the small-timer’s view of the world. He completed Roosevelt’s War with Japan and then let the situation drift.

Roosevelt seems to have intended to establish joint Russian-American dominance of the world, but he died before he could give any tangible expression to that vision.

Aside from Roosevelt’s vision, and the mystique of his aristocratic presence, the world could only be seen as existing in a situation of latent war between America and Russia. The possibility of fighting that War head-on ended when Russia tested its own nuclear bombs in August 1949.

Since 1945 a country without nuclear weapons is defenceless against a country with them. And countries with them must always be feeling out the possibility of using them with impunity. That applies on all sides, regardless of ideology or culture. It is a condition of existence.

Russia became a defended country when it constructed nuclear weapons. And it had in addition the most powerful land Army in the world, which it had developed for the purpose of surviving the German assault on it.

Until 1945 neither Russia nor America was an actual World Power.

America was brought on as a World Power by Britain in its two reckless World Wars, and its methods of Total War. In 1918 America had sent an Army to Europe (commanded by General Pershing—who had served in the last military action of the American genocide at Wounded Knee) to defeat Germany, and save the enormous debt that Britain had built up with it during the War). But it balked at dominating the post-War settlement. Its time had not come. It left it to Britain to make an atrocious ‘Peace’.

It committed itself to never again being drawn into a European War—meaning a British War. It held to that decision for more than two years after Britain launched another World War—though it did supply Britain with armaments for War and the money to buy them. It confined its actions to what it considered its proper sphere of influence, given to it by Destiny—the Pacific. It precipitated War with Japan and only returned to Europe when Hitler declared War on it in support of Japan.

But England was not in danger of defeat in its declared war in 1942, as it had been in 1918. Germany was fully occupied in Russia. Britain, with the Royal Navy still supreme, was safe. It had left its War in June 1940, evacuating its troops from France, while refusing to withdraw its Declaration of War. But its War consisted

of skirmishes on the sidelines. (There is no absolute size for a *skirmish*—it is judged by proportion of the major events of the War.)

America tried to get Britain back into the War in 1942, but it refused.

It tried again in 1943, but was refused again.

Britain then agreed under pressure in 1944, when it began to appear that, if it delayed another year, it would find the Russian Army at Calais.

America forced the Channel crossing, and pushed forward, against the smaller detachment of the German Army allocated for defence in the West, until it met the Russian Army which had defeated the main bulk of the German Army. And the US decided to stay in the part of Europe that it occupied and make something of it.

Russia, likewise, had been a regional Power, not a World Power, until, by surviving the German invasion, it came to the centre of world affairs alongside the United States. And, until it held the German Army (which neither the British nor the French—who had declared the War had been able to do—it had not been highly rated as a regional Power. The belief—or at least the contention—of the West in the late 1930s was that the effectiveness of the Russian Army had been destroyed by insane ideological purges.

But both the Russian and the American States were based on and shaped by universalist ideologies. The American ideology was of the mid-19th century British variety, the belief that unrestricted capitalist Free Trade would generate harmony in the world. The Russian belief was the contrary of this—that market-driven development produced conflict and disorder, and that its replacement by direct production for use according to a well-informed Plan was what was required for human contentment.

It could be said that the British position was somewhere between the two. It was in Britain that the market was freed from all social, legal and political restraints by the great iconoclastic purges of the two Cromwells, the destruction of monarchy as the real form of the State, the freeing of individual enterprise until the Tory *Factory Acts* of the mid-19th century, and the construction of a World Market based on the *Triangular Trade*, resting on slavery at two points (West Indies and the American South), and wage-slavery at another. All made possible by the British conquest of the sea.

But then, towards the end of the 19th century, Britain began to introduce measures for the greater protection of the workforce against the operations of Capital, partly because workers were no longer prepared to tolerate the abysmal conditions of competitive capitalism.

However, these measures of social welfare protection within Capitalism, established by Britain, did not become an example to the world because the whole thing in Britain was based on its exploitative Imperialist relationship with a major part of the world.

Britain's gift to the world was *laissez-faire* Capitalism in a world market.

*Laissez-faire* is a free-for-all. It is *free* in that sense. And American ideology is entirely logical when it condemns any curbs on Capitalism as Socialist.

Capitalism, as far as one can tell, is inherently expansionist. A market must expand in order to survive. If it does not expand, profits cannot be realised. The longer it continues, the more every human relationship is carried on through market exchanges. (This now extends even to the conception and birth of children! Ed.)

Therefore if Capitalism does not expand, life becomes miserable and problematic.

Communism does not need to expand. The conflict between Communism and Capitalism was initiated by the Capitalist side. A region which lapses into Communism is closed to the expansion of the market, and in that sense it endangers Capitalism.

But that conflict belongs to a bygone era.

Trotsky, who urged on the Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917, and who was active in consolidating the Communist State, held at the same time that Communism was certain to fail in the State he was constructing because the whole world was in the grip of the world market, and the pressure of the international division of labour in the world market was irresistible.

Communism, he held, could only succeed if it came to power at the centre of the capitalist world, which he took to be Germany. But Germany was effectively broken in its political life by Britain at the time. And the capitalist centre of the world was America, which was capitalist in every fibre of its being.

The Communist State in Russia sealed itself off from the international division of labour for a generation, and it beat off

the capitalist invasion when it came in 1941. (Churchill said that Fascism was the force that defended Capitalism from Communism and there seems to be no reason to disagree with him.) And so the world was divided between Capitalism and Communism in 1945, with Communism being the vital force in Europe and Capitalism being a form of American intervention.

At the centre of the world there was a War that could not be fought because of nuclear weapons. Europe was in a condition of ceasefire. And that condition of ceasefire in a war that was being warded off is what is now called "*the global order*" that was set up after World War 2 which said that the boundaries of nations are sacrosanct.

At the very centre was a nation that was divided by the Ceasefire line. On one side of the line was a State constructed out of the American, British and French Occupation Zones of Germany. On the other side was the State that was constructed out of the Occupation Zone of the State that had freed (so to speak) Germany from Nazism.

The Western German state did not recognise the Eastern German state as legitimate.

This was the heart of the makeshift global order of 1945.

It was a Globe of two halves. There was a notional Global institution that combined the two halves into a whole—the United Nations. But the United Nations was prevented at conception from establishing global order. Russia and America exempted themselves from its jurisdiction. So did Britain. And America exempted China—which was then its client state—and Britain exempted France.

These five States were legally entitled to do as they pleased in the world of "*international law*" set up in 1945.

Certain common Declarations were issued in 1945 but the words meant different things in the different spheres of influence.

The 1945 division of the globe between Russia and America, on the Ceasefire line between them, was a practical arrangement made under the circumstances but it had nothing to do with *law*. But it could be said that there was a *de facto* rule that each would do as it pleased in its own half of the world. And they did so.

Russia brought Hungary and Czechoslovakia to order. America brought Guatemala, Haiti and a range of other

countries into line. It might be argued that the discipline enforced by the USA over the American Continent does not rely on its exclusion from the reach of 'International Law' by its Veto power on the Security Council, but is a right that it had long awarded itself under the *Monroe Doctrine*. But this is a debating point, as is everything to do with 'International Law' within the UN system.

The UN Charter took no account of the Monroe Doctrine—did not challenge it. The UN set up a make-believe Court for adjudicating its pretence of law. Nicaragua brought a case to it against the USA and won. But the Court has no Executive Power (no Army or Police Force). The US ignored the finding against it. The Security Council is the Executive of the system, but it is debarred by the Veto system from taking action against a Permanent Member or a country under its protection.

\*

After 45 years the foundation of the 1945 World Order crumbled. The Ceasefire relationship between the Soviet and *laissez-faire* capitalist halves of the world ended. Potential World War ceased to be the stabilising element. The Soviet Union set about becoming Capitalist, and accordingly dismantled itself into independent nation-states—the nation-state being understood to be the proper form of capitalist existence.

The military structure of the Soviet system, the *Warsaw Pact*, was broken up. What was the military structure of Western defence, NATO, going to do with itself when the enemy stood down? It was capitalist, and therefore it was going to advance. That was its nature. But the Russian leader (Gorbachev) believed it when it assured him that nothing was further from its intentions than expansion against Russia.

With the process of Soviet dissolution safely in motion, NATO decided that it was going to continue without an enemy, which meant that it would expand, and defend its expansions. With Russia going to pieces in its transition to Capitalism, it sought security by offering itself for NATO membership. NATO refused. Regardless of social system, Russia was the enemy: the great Russian land mass was.

Russia could continue to exist only by re-making its power as a State in a medium of capitalist economy. It needed an effective State in the first instance. And where else could one start in the construction of a State but with its basic instrument of force:



the Army. There is general agreement that the hallmark of a State is the monopoly of force by a Government.

The next thing was to impose order on the economy, to make it a national economy, and to impose taxation on the oligarchs who had made themselves capitalists by taking possession of great chunks of State property and making alliances with the Finance Capitalism of the West.

And then the need was to establish a system of politics that was capable of being elected to exercise actual government.

During the Yeltsin period, recognised by the West as democratic, there were political parties in plenty — so many that it was impossible that a Government capable of governing could be elected. And, when Parliament made a half-serious attempt to determine what the Presidential Government should do, Yeltsin turned his guns on it.

The sequence in which this was done is the sequence in which the present British regime of State Power was established.

The Foreign Affairs spokesman of the British Labour Party deplores the fact that the present Russian State is “*barely democratic*”. But it is a State, and it is barely democratic.

Neither of these things could have been said about it twenty years ago.

And it took the British regime established in 1688 about a century and a half to become barely democratic.

The Russian State is now intent on establishing a sphere of influence around itself. That is what States do. The greatest sphere of influence ever seen is the *Monroe Doctrine* of the USA. And, if the Russian State does not exert a sphere of influence around itself, it will find itself surrounded by a hostile sphere of influence.

The matter in the Ukraine is the outcome of conflict over spheres of influence between the European Union and Russia.

The EU was constructed within the parameters of the Cold War. It began as an association of six States, including the two premier Fascist States, which were reconstructing themselves following the destruction of the Fascist order of Europe by Russia. The medium binding them together was Christian (effectively Catholic) Democracy — a medium which by British reckoning was a half-way house to Fascism. Its first concern was to make itself secure as a small region of the world which had been damaged seriously by British war-making Balance-of-Power strategy. The founders were well aware

that Britain was not a European country — a country whose fate was directly involved in the fate of the Continent. Britain, in De Gaulle’s words, was insular and maritime in its concerns.

But the following generation of European leaders forgot the lessons of two World Wars and admitted Britain to membership. And Britain encouraged random expansion when the opportunity for it arose with the dismantling of the Soviet system.

The EU’s first adventurism in foreign policy was the breaking up of the multinational Communist system of Yugoslavia, which was independent of the Soviet system. It encouraged the revival of the particularist Balkan national passions, which seemed to have withered away under the relatively open Communist system pioneered by President Tito.

When Balkan affairs had been returned to their pre-Communist norm, the EU turned its attention to the various states into which the Soviet system had been dismantled. It set about establishing a sphere of influence over about half a dozen of them, including the Ukraine. But the scheme began to encounter obstacles, possibly because of the very fact that a functional State was being reconstructed, rather than because of any action by it.

The Ukraine had its “*colour revolutions*” which all amounted to nothing much. But then a Ukrainian Government sought to give secure establishment to the State by making trade deals with both the EU and Russia — which made good economic sense in view of the fact that the industrial region depended on the Russian market for its goods, rather than the EU.

But the EU, which had begun to envisage itself as a World Power, and which had been expecting the Ukraine to make an exclusive deal with it, could not stand the disappointment. It set about overthrowing the Ukrainian Government by the French Revolution method of riot in the Capital.

The method by which that Government had been elected had not been questioned at the time. But when it made the wrong decision from the EU viewpoint, it must be opposed by whatever means were necessary.

The Maidan Square *coup d’etat* has not been mentioned at all in Western media discussion about the conflict between Russia and the Ukraine. The Ukraine is presented as an ideal liberal democracy. And it is denied that there has ever been anything anti-Russian in its policy. The suggestion is that Russia in 2014 invaded the Crimea for no reason and annexed it, and that it

introduced a Russian populace into the Donbas Region for mischief-making.

But in 2014 the Western media, that now denies all these things, reported them. The *coup* was anti-Russian, Fascist elements were active in Maidan Square, there was a moment of apprehension when Nazi flags were seen.

When the EU tried to moderate the extremism which it had unleashed, Washington said “*Fuck the EU!*” and carry on.

The EU purpose was to break the Government that aspired to establish Ukrainian independence on sound economic lines between the EU and Russia. And the nationalist agitation against Russia that was set in motion was certain to bring into play in revived form the Fascism of the early 1940s.

In 1941 there was undoubtedly a substantial stratum of strong anti-Russian sentiment in the Ukraine. Hitler was widely welcomed as a liberator. He would have had the Ukraine in his pocket if he had responded. But his purpose was the expansion of German *Lebensraum* and he refused to play the opportunist card. The Ukrainian nationalists had to reconsider.

A Communist Partisan movement got going against the German Occupation. But so did a Ukrainian nationalist force, opposed both to Russia and Germany, and Fascist in outlook. It was oppressed later on, of course, but such things always leave a heritage. And that heritage was called upon in 2014.

The Baltic States have been very assertive in support of the Ukraine in recent months. They have in one important respect a common history with the Ukraine. They were States within the Communist system for two generations and their history was washed clean by it. They did not have to account as individual States for their doings during the problematic period when they were oppressed by the Soviets, welcomed the Nazis as liberators, only to find themselves a few years later back with the Soviets again.

There are credible accounts of how, in some of the Baltic States, in 1941-2, the killing of Jews was Sunday afternoon public entertainment.

The Ukraine, of course, was the Jews’ heartland. It was the only place where a Jewish state might have been constructed on the basis of an existing population. It was the site of the Pale of Settlement where Jews constituted almost a normal society.

Very large numbers of them were moved eastwards, away from the German ad-

vance, to constitute the core of the post-War Jewish population of the world. That was the Soviet way. Otherwise anti-Semitism was strong in the Ukraine.

All of this was common knowledge at one time.

It was freely acknowledged in 2014 that some strange things were said in Maidan Square by the element brought to prominence in the *coup* set in motion by the EU and the US. A past that had been thought to have been wiped away by the best of all good events, the Second World War, was found to be undead. But now, suddenly, there is comprehensive memory loss about 2014.

President Zelensky appeared to have been genuinely shocked and bewildered by the association of Ukrainian nationalism with Nazism. He seems to have lived in an American cultural bubble of the most superficial kind until he was chosen to be President. But there is no doubt that Ukrainian nationalists cooperated to a considerable extent with Nazi Germany, and that they would have co-operated an awful lot more if Hitler had allowed it.

It is now denied that Stefan Bandera was made a Hero of the Ukraine. I know it was reported that he had been, and I thought it would be strange if he had not been.

The Second World War was not an integral event. It was a combination of many wars, spun by propaganda into a general war in defence of Civilisation—how else could the alliance of Churchill and Stalin be made sense of? Under cover of the propaganda ideology, Britain made war on Iraq and Iran because they insisted on being neutral. And the Ukrainian Nationalism made, or tried to make, an alliance with Hitler against Stalin, but were rejected by him.

The first attempt by Ukrainian nationalists to form a state was in 1918, in alliance with the Kaiser's Germany. And now Federal Germany, through Ursula von der Leyen, is threatening to destroy the Russian economy in support of Ukraine's right to bring NATO to its aid in the policy of antagonism with Russia which it launched eight years ago. (Will Ursula succeed where Adolf failed?)

The *Ukrainian Encyclopedia*, produced by the Ukrainian National Committee in Canada in the 1960s does not deny the attempt at an alliance with Hitler in 1941, or the extensive cooperation with the German Army. Simon Bandera had tried in June 1941 to form a Ukrainian Legion to act in conjunction with the Germans. Hitler discouraged it:

"Only after German setbacks in the winter of 1941-2 and the widespread Red guard attacks in the rear of the German armies, did some German commanders form Ukrainian units on their own initiative. The first Ukrainian unit thus organised was the Sumy Division (some 10,000 men)... It took part in the battles of Kharkiv and Stalingrad, where it was almost annihilated (600 soldiers escaped alive). In the winter of 1941-2 the German Sixth Army's command organised 16 Ukrainian mobile units to fight against the Soviet guerillas... Despite successful battles against the Bolsheviks the German SS Einsatzkommando demobilised the Ukrainian units and sent the men to prisoner of war camps. Other Ukrainian units organised by the Sixth Army fought against the Red Army in the Crimea. Their formation was strictly prohibited by Hitler, with the exception of small units which fought against the Russian guerillas or performed auxiliary functions..."

In 1942 the Germans organised a Russian Liberation Army from Russian POWs and 200,000 Ukrainians were enlisted in it.

"The first regular Ukrainian unit allowed by the Germans was the Division Halychyna (Galician) formed in April 1943... The various Ukrainian units in the German army... numbered nearly 75,000 men... The Ukrainian formations actually constituted the garrison units in training. The combat battalions which were formed from those garrisons were assigned to German units and placed under German command" (Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia, Vol 2, p1087).

Another point of contention at the moment seems to be about whether the Ukraine as a distinct entity was a creation of the Soviet Union. I looked up the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to see what it was before the Great War. The whole article takes up four lines:

"Ukraine ('frontier') is the name formerly given to a district of European Russia, now comprising the governments of Kharkov, Kiev, Podolia and Poltava. The portion east of the Dnieper became Russian in 1686 and the portion west of that river in 1793..."

An attempt was made by the Kaiser's Germany to set it up as an anti-Russian state but it came to nothing. Then there was the Allied war of intervention in Russia (1918), which failed. Then there was nothing but the Soviet State—excepting the Hitler period when the region was intended for German Lebensraum. Then the Soviet State disintegrated leaving a viable Ukrainian State behind it. There was nowhere else for it to have come from.

**Brendan Clifford**

**PS**

Stalin was of the opinion that wars between capitalist states were more likely than wars between social systems. Russia has become a capitalist state.

Stalin also, having studied English conduct, also advised that war is best conducted on the defensive, if that can possibly be arranged. He won his war by following his own advice. Putin, the capitalist, has been unduly dismissive of his Communist predecessor.

## Fianna Fail Centenary!

In four years' time it will be one hundred years since the founding of Fianna Fail, once the most successful democratic political party in the world.

I doubt it will be around to celebrate its Centenary. For many years it had the brains, heart and backbone of the country. It sought from the start to heal the wounds of the Civil War attracting former opponents whilst adhering to the principle of national sovereignty, upholding the rights of Abyssinia against Mussolini at the League of Nations, protesting against the Nazi Nuremberg Laws which withdrew civil rights from Germany's Jews, and refusing to join the Catholic Hierarchy and Fine Gael in supporting Franco's assault on Spanish democracy, Fianna Fail in the 1930s refused to pay Annuities to Britain and won the Economic War, increased industrial production,, replaced much of the slums with well-built houses for the workers, introduced annual paid holidays for workers who had been denied them - all in the teeth of Fine Gael condemnation. They got rid of the the imposed oath of allegiance to the British Monarch, drafted a Democratic, Sovereign, Republican, Constitution and submitted it to the electorate which had repeatedly favoured them, which enacted it into law.

All against the Begrudgers who had formally adopted Fascism when turfed out of office in 1932. In 1938 it negotiated Britain's withdrawal from Cork Harbour,

Bantry Bay and Lough Swilly. And while most of the World was suffering during the Second World War most of Ireland was a very Heaven by contrast—though Churchill. and later Franklin Roosevelt tried to bully her into the conflict. You won't find that record in the Irish Times which in February 1933 warned its (few) readers of the dire consequences of voting for De Valera's Fianna Fail, and the fol-

lowing month welcomed the accession to power of Herr Hitler's Nazis in Berlin. Nor indeed can you expect the Sindo or the Indo to record these truths: Because they supported the Blueshirts whose spokesman, John A Costello in 1934 assured the Dail that, as the Blackshirts had prevailed in Italy and the "Hitler-Shirts" had prevailed in Germany, so too would the Blueshirts in Ireland, A few months later Hitler personally led the party which shot dead the Brownshirt leader Ernst Rohm in his nightshirt.

Fianna Fail under Lemass, Haughey, Albert Reynolds, Bertie Ahern, and Brian Cowen achieved a lot for Ireland, helped by Donough O'Malley, Brian Lenihan Senior and Junior amongst the second generation of its leadership. The founding generation

Sean T O Ceallaigh, Frank Aiken, James Ryan, Oscar Traynor and Sean Moylan were nobody's yesmen.

Some of them were brilliant. All of them were honest and had cheerfully risked death and suffered imprisonment and other hardships over many years. They should be remembered

with pride by all Irish people, and with all decent people on this planet. They, their principles and achievement appears to be forgotten today by the Micheal Martin School of History.

I don't think the party will be around in 2026 to celebrate its Centenary,

But Ireland, as a Nation, ought to celebrate it with pride.

**Donal Kennedy**

## Padraig Yeates

I have to agree with Emmet and Borodin. People tend to forget that the British did not evacuate Dublin until December 1922 when they knew the military outcome of the Civil War was secure. Opponents of the Treaty knew that the British Army wasn't going to leave unless the terms of the 'Treaty' were accepted, just as well as its supporters. The military logic of the Anti-Treaty forces in the Four Courts was to provoke a British attack in the hope it would reunite both sides in defence of the 'Republic'. Some of them, such as Ernie O'Malley, believed they had won the Anglo-Irish War. Fortunately the majority of the population knew better.

## Jack Lane

Emmet O'Connor complains about socialists "*splitting hairs over the meaning of words*." I assume that he means the splitting of hairs between accepting the status of a Dominion within the Empire which the 'Treaty' entailed rather than the defence of the democratically established Republic which it repudiated. That's the essential issue about the 'Treaty'. It is hardly splitting hairs to describe this historical fact and its consequences for everybody. The '*national revolution*,' i.e., Irish political independence was thereby halted by the 'Treaty' and Emmet's position is that Labour should have gone along with this which, apparently, was Borodin's view on behalf of the Comintern. This would go a long way to explain why the Comintern had such little success in Ireland, and if true, something for which we should be very grateful. I am surprised at Emmet's view. He has written very useful material on Labour issues in that period and concluded in a piece on Labour in Munster that "*However, the Labour leadership of the time was poor. It can be faulted for not engaging with the national revolution and seeing it as an opportunity rather than a problem.*" This is quite correct but he now advocates what he then criticised in the Labour leadership. I think Labour should have followed Connolly's position and his "*engaging with the national Revolution*" to the point of leading it militarily at its most seminal moment. He was the model for Labour to follow and I suggest that if it had done so Labour would have had more success than it has had. Perhaps even to being the vanguard of social progress rather than the mudguard of the Free Staters as was often said.

Padraig Yeates agrees with Emmet and Borodin. He says the Four Courts people wanted to provoke an attack on the British. They did not agree to that. That was

## 'Treaty' Debate

Extracts from a discussion on Academia.edu  
about a paper by Jack Lane "The Treaty that never was"  
<https://www.academia.edu/s/595388fe43?source=link>

### Jack Lane:

There is an easy way to establish whether or not there was an Anglo-Irish Treaty agreed in London on 6th Dec 1921 – is there an agreement in existence headed "A Treaty between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom" signed automatically and appropriately by the respective Heads of State, President Eamon de Valera and His Britannic Majesty King George V? That's a rather simple and straightforward description of such an agreement. Are there any, much repeated, Pathé newsreels of such an auspicious event? Of course not as it never happened. Such a Treaty does not exist and could not exist. Why? That's what I will try to explore. Any Treaty worthy of the name must have some basic preconditions; first and foremost that it was freely entered into by mutually recognised independent states. What was signed at 2am on 6th December 1921 did not meet a single one of these preconditions and entailed much worse:

- It was signed under a threat of immediate war.
- The Irish Republic was not recognised.
- The British Government demanded and got an oath of allegiance from the Irish negotiators.
- The Irish Government was specifically prevented from seeing or agreeing to its final terms before the document was signed.

- The word 'Treaty' is not mentioned anywhere in the text – instead it is referred to as an 'instrument' throughout. It is oxymoronic to call such a thing a Treaty.

### Cathal Brugha

I like what you write, Jack. It was what people thought it was. The Dáil passed it. Four votes would have swung it the other way. Some of the IRB were so extreme that they would not accept a vote of allegiance to Dáil Éireann. Yet IRB members voted 25 for and 14 against.

### Emmet O'Connor

It's bad enough to have nationalists splitting hairs on the meaning of words. There's no excuse for socialists to go down that road. The best comment on the Civil War came from Mikhail Borodin, Comintern rep in GB, to Roddy Connolly, July 1922: It is my firm opinion that they will crush the Republicans... It is really laughable to fight the Free State on a sentimental plea. They want a Republic. What the hell do they want a Republic for?... There are two military sections fighting – one is very strong and the other is very weak. One says Ireland should be fighting for prosperity. The other one is absolutely void of interest in any [such] matters.



Tom Barry's idea. The real 'provocation' involving the Fours Courts people was Collins's arming of them to jointly attack Northern Ireland which he attempted and resulted in a military defeat at Pettigo followed inevitably by the absolutely disastrous results for the Northern minority.

### Padraig Yeates

Sorry to disagree with your analysis Jim. You are of course right about Tom Barry, he could not get his proposal adopted at the Army Convention but again it is an indication of the state of mind in the anti-Treaty camp. They didn't want the agreement but nor did they want to face the consequences of rejection. The 'Northern Offensive' backed by Collins demonstrates the military as well as the political poverty of the anti-Treaty position. Far from being viewed as potential allies, Liam Lynch dismissed Labour as Red Flaggers in terms not dissimilar to Eoin O'Duffy; and Labour itself was deeply divided, as the special delegate conference of the ILP&TUC to discuss contesting the Treaty election in 1922 clearly shows.

### Jack Lane

Padraig says: "*The 'Northern Offensive' backed by Collins demonstrates the military as well as the political poverty of the anti-Treaty position.*" I find that is very odd reasoning. The essential Republican position, first and foremost, was independence from the Crown but Collins' position was to accept the Crown which he did under the 'Treaty' and concentrate on the destruction of Northern Ireland for a United Ireland. Therefore the war offensive against Northern Ireland was distinctly his and consistent with why he signed the Treaty. He and he alone was responsible for it. By the way, I am Jack, not Jim.

### Emmet O'Connor

Borodin's comment was not a criticism of opposition to the AI Treaty but of the republicans' lack of interest in a social programme. Labour would have been better off opposing the Treaty, but on the basis of peace, democracy, and social radicalism. FF would later show that that was the winning formula.

### Jack Lane

Emmet O'Connor says that Labour should have been more like Fianna Fail. That's like saying my uncle could be like my aunt if he had different genitalia. With apologies to the transgender community but I am sure they will get my meaning.

### Emmet O'Connor

Well that's a non-sequitur. I'm saying 1) FF showed that a deft combination of practical republicanism and social democracy was a winning formula. Labour did adopt that approach under Norton, with good effect until he was ambushed by Wm O'Brien in 1944, and 2) socialists should look at history from a socialist perspective rather than arguing about nationalism.

### Jack Lane

Emmet does not explain why exactly Fianna Fail did what Labour should have done. Fianna Fail did what they did as the Republican Party that continued the effort for independence following the

setback by the 'Treaty' and its social and economic policies were complimentary to that effort. That was an effective, credible, coherent package for the electorate and hence its success. Labour was 'Treatyite' and its social policies were inevitably overshadowed by that political choice. The whole society was "arguing about nationalism" which in reality was about how the state and its people should relate to the world – as a Dominion of the British Empire or as an Independent state. Emmet sees this as a distraction for socialists despite it being the issue that preoccupied the society. This was indeed the Labour approach and explains their subservient role in Irish politics.

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## An Example Of Double-Think On De Valera!

In his book, *De Valera* (Volume 1, Rise) David McCullagh says quite correctly says that "*those who ascribe de Valera's position solely to wounded vanity and stubbornness miss the essential point: he was desperately trying to find a compromise that would preserve unity.*" (p.249). McCullagh is correct in treating that as the central issue in assessing de Valera at this time.

Preserving that unity in the Cabinet was the essence of DeV's position, and the disregarding of that Cabinet unity by others was the essential cause of the 'Treaty' debacle. And it was the British insistence on the letter of the implementation of the 'Treaty' that caused the 'civil war', not disagreements between de Valera and Collins over the 'Treaty', which they could have overcome if left to their own devices. This was proved by their co-operation over the agreed Election Pact and New Constitution in the early months 1922. But they were not allowed to continue on that basis and both agreements were rejected by the British.

McCullagh reviewed his own book in *History Ireland* and felt obliged to give a different picture of de Valera. Now he is treated as a psychological wreck driven by:

"A curious mix of self-reliance and insecurity... I believe that his career was shaped by his character, and that

his character was shaped in turn by his early life—by the question marks over his paternity; by his effective rejection by his mother, who sent him home to Ireland to be raised by his grandmother; by the hard grind of his childhood among the labouring class of rural County Limerick; by the insecurity of his patchy academic performance and the difficulty he found in forging a career. All of this left him with a curious mixture of self-reliance and insecurity; he relied on his own judgment while being over-sensitive to criticism... ...His ego was boosted while at the same time the fragility of that ego became more marked." (*History Ireland*, March/April 2019).

It is quite normal to want to know one's paternity. There is now a Government Department charged with catering for this need. DeV was not rejected by his mother. If he had been, he would never have been sent to Ireland. She did the opposite. She fostered him out to her family, a quite normal practice at the time, and they established a close family relationship afterwards.

Also, there is no evidence that it is some sort of affliction to have experienced "*the hard grind of his childhood among the labouring class*". Quite the opposite, I would say from personal experience! He was always proud of this background and indeed it was the key, as he made clear, to his understanding of the people and their deepest feelings. And who has not had career difficulties? But I suggest he overcame them. All this says a lot more

about his biographer than it does about de Valera.

McCullagh then goes on to allege that:

“This peculiar mixture contributed to his mishandling of the Treaty and the descent into civil war. De Valera evidently bears his share of responsibility for that disaster, but of course there is more than enough blame to go around, and the tendency to hold him solely culpable for the Civil War is just as far off the mark as the claim that he was blameless. Lloyd George, Churchill, Collins, Griffith, Rory O’Connor, Cathal Brugha and others on both sides must all take responsibility for what happened” (*History Ireland*, March/April 2019).

What a pathetic cop-out from making a judgement on such an important issue — it

is hardly worthy of kindergarten history. Uncle Tom Cobley may have had a hand in it as well .

With such a variety of complexes, how could such a person have become the democratically elected (with PR!) head of government **ten** times between 1919 and 1959, and Head of State from 1959 to 1973? A unique world record by any reckoning.

Perhaps David McCullagh should use his amateur psychological skills to write another book to explain how this happened and how, in the process, one of the newest but longest unbroken democracies in the world was maintained. Or were the millions concerned all psychological basket cases as well?

**Jack Lane**

## China and Russia Checkmate the Nixon Policy

The momentous Putin/Xi Summit and subsequent *Joint Declaration* of early February, issued by the two leaders, represents a checkmating of the West and a burying of the US *divide and conquer* manoeuvre, begun half a century ago by President Nixon, in February 1972.

The joint Chinese/Russian Statement that emerged from the summit is over 5000 words long and is in rather clunky diplomatic language, but it can be roughly summarised in plain English in the following way:

"The US and its numerous vassal states wish to retain world hegemony and ignore international law along with the treaties and agreements they have made with others. This represents a threat to the peace and security of the world and is opposed by both Russia and China. The US has no right to judge other states as to the standard of their “democracy” and other countries have every right themselves, to decide on how they wish to live and organise themselves socially, economically and politically — that is democracy!

We intend to build a Eurasian community which will encompass most of its land mass, which will be sovereignly ruled by those nations and peoples who compose it. There cannot be security for some without meaningful security for all—collective security in which states take into account the security of others in making provision for their

own security. We will stand together to defeat those forces who threaten our sovereignty and collective security. Russia will support China in its efforts to reintegrate its national territory (Taiwan). China, in turn, will fully support Russia in opposing the expansion of NATO and the Russian ultimatum to the West to halt its advance into its borderlands. The West is attempting, through colour revolutions, to destabilise, control or destroy any state which is unwilling to become a US vassal state. The two states have a common interest in opposing the West’s imperialistic policies and will institute full-spectrum security co-operation in doing so, in common friendship, in the future.”

This momentous development, which is of real historical significance, has emerged 50 years to the month after President Nixon’s visit to China which, in the West’s narrative, helped to win the Cold War. Is a reassessment of history now in order?

Nixon proclaimed in his Beijing toast that it was “*the week that changed the world*”. The Nixon-Kissinger visit to China 50 years ago was primarily an anti-Russian manoeuvre aimed at driving a wedge through the Communist world and isolating Moscow. It was a startling manoeuvre because the US did not formally recognise the People’s Republic of China at the time and Nixon was a fierce anti-communist.

Nixon had written an article, penned

for *Foreign Affairs* in 1967, well before his election as President, in which he said—

“...we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside of the family of nations”.

“The world cannot be safe until China changes. Thus our aim, to the extent that we can influence events, should be to induce change. The way to do this is to persuade China that it must change: that it cannot satisfy its imperial ambitions.”

In the early 19th Century China was a self-contained civilisation, going about its own business, when it was made war on by the British Empire because it attempted to prevent English merchants smuggling opium into the country.

China attempted to require Britain to have regular terms of trade with it. The British Opium Wars waged on China resulted in territorial concessions and *unequal treaties* with the Chinese which imposed fines in compensation for interference with British Opium traders.

Other European Powers followed the British precedent and gained their own concessions. The United States, not to be left out in the scramble for plunder, declared its *Open Door* China policy.

This US *Open Door* policy differed from the European plundering which involved the taking of territorial enclaves within the disintegrating Chinese state by treating China as being open to everybody in a kind of capitalist exploitation free for all.

American power in the world was much about economic penetration and dominance in East Asia—which was facilitated by the disintegration of the Chinese State as a result of the Opium Wars.

The rise of US power was dependent on a weak and declining China.

It took the Chinese State over a century to recover from these Opium Wars and foreign exploitation and to reassemble itself as a functional state in 1948.

In 1945, after its Second World War victory, the US regarded Kuomintang China as a client society which it could cultivate on capitalist lines. However, within a decade, China had escaped from its embrace and constructed itself into an absolutely sovereign state with its economy serving its own purposes for development.

By 1967 this new Chinese substance confronted the US and Nixon found a new use for it in the geopolitical struggle against Moscow.

After the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, the

US sought to develop a more powerful China integrated in the Western world order.

To show American good faith prior to his trip to China, President Nixon gave Mao Zedong most of what he wanted on Taiwan. Nixon ordered the US 7th Fleet out of the Taiwan Strait and the withdrawal of US forces from Taiwan, where they had been stationed since the *US-Taiwan Mutual Defence Treaty of 1954* (when Nixon served as President Eisenhower's Vice-President).

For a generation after the change of government in Peking in 1948 and the retreat of Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang army to Formosa, Washington had recognised the Kuomintang regime as the legitimate Government of China and employed its UN veto to prevent the actual, *de facto*, Government in Peking from taking China's seat in the UN. In essence it treated China as "*one and indivisible*" with mainland China being in rebellion against the legitimate Government in Formosa (later renamed Taiwan).

Nixon's geopolitical manoeuvre against Russia resulted in the actual Chinese Government joining the UN and deposing the Kuomintang.

The Nixon policy paved the way for the 1972 *Shanghai Communiqué*, in which Beijing stated its one-China principle: that Taiwan is part of China and would eventually be reunified with it by either peaceful or non-peaceful means.

Washington used the communiqué to state its own one-China policy, which implicitly accepted Taiwan's future merger with China (as long as it was accomplished more or less peacefully).

The current US President, Joe Biden, recently excluded China from his "*Democracy Summit*" and has warned Beijing against re-incorporating Taiwan into the national territory. He treats Taiwan, in effect, as a foreign state from China, while Taiwan itself has never revoked its claim as being the legitimate Government of China!

While the primary aim of US policy had been to drive a wedge between Communist China and Communist Russia, Nixon's manoeuvre appears to have been also part of a broader US strategy, aimed at promoting liberal democracy in China and bringing it into the Western orbit. But Nixon later, in an interview with *New York Times* columnist William Safire, one of his former speech-writers, feared that he had created a "*Frankenstein's monster*" in what

he had done. In his 1978 memoir he had revealed the impending potential danger:

"We must cultivate China during the next few decades while it is still learning to develop its national strength and potential. Otherwise we will one day be confronted with the most formidable enemy that has ever existed in the history of the world."

It had become the US objective to intentionally promote the development of the Chinese economy and expansion of its middle class, with the understanding that greater prosperity would inevitably bring about a demand for political pluralism and democracy, destroying the rule of the Communist Party of China.

Western investment and Chinese participation in the global market was greatly encouraged by Washington. Following Nixon's visit and the gradual opening of China's economy, capital and technological know-how, encouraged by the US authorities, poured in. The US encouraged the growth of China, believing in the inevitable expansion of liberal democracy. Washington promoted investment and welcomed the country into the global market.

In January 1979 Deng Xiaoping visited the US. The following year the US granted Communist China "*most favoured nation*" status, giving it the best possible trade terms with the US and full access to the American market.

China's manufacturing was reoriented for export to the US market where extravagant American middle class consumption stimulated a massive growth in its economy, impossible without this free access. The granting of this free access to a Communist Power was an extraordinary thing for Cold War America to do, given the strength of anti-Communist attitudes in the US.

Even after the events of Tiananmen Square, when the Chinese successfully headed off the kind of disintegration promoted in Russia, the policy was continued and China was granted favoured status annually until it was made permanent in 2000. John Mearsheimer warned the US in 2001:

"It is clear that the most dangerous scenario the United States might face in the early twenty-first century is one in which China becomes a potential hegemon in Northeast Asia... What makes a future Chinese threat so worrisome is that it might be far more powerful and dangerous than any of the potential hegemons that the United States confronted in the twentieth century... The United States

has a profound interest in seeing Chinese economic growth slow considerably in the years ahead. For much of the past decade, however, the United States has pursued a strategy intended to have the opposite effect. The United States has been committed to 'engaging' China, not 'containing' it. Engagement is predicated on the liberal belief that if China could be made both democratic and prosperous, it would become a *status quo* power... As a result, American policy has sought to integrate China into the world economy and facilitate its rapid economic development... This US policy on China is misguided" (*The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 399-400)

In 2001 China was permitted to join the WTO, opening the global market to the Chinese economy, making it more competitive and powerful. George W. Bush, while smashing up the Muslim world and attempting to remake it in the US image, was saying that "*China is on a rising path, and America welcomes the emergence of a strong and peaceful and prosperous China.*" (February 2002).

And, to get its wish, Washington continued to let its technology flow unhindered into China, allowing the Chinese to build a remarkable capacity for innovation. All, it seems, in the continuing geopolitical battle against Russia, long after, it appeared, the Cold War had been won and victory proclaimed.

It seems to have been believed that encouraging Chinese collaboration in the capitalist world market would undermine the Communist Party, since politics follows from economics, doesn't it? However, at the same time as the Russian enemy was being effectively subverted, China was being built into a formidable force (the new enemy?) because the Communist Party of China had no Gorbachev, who liquidated the Party in the name of aimless reform, and instead has conducted its statecraft very shrewdly indeed. Both Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger, Cold War warriors from both wings of US democracy/imperialism, enthusiastically supported the policy.

In 1995 China accounted for 3 per cent of global trade but now it accounts for over 12 per cent, the largest share of any country, and it has displaced the US as the EU's largest trading partner. More dangerously, China has shown that a Communist Party can run the world's most successful capitalist economy and democracy is not essential to success. In fact, while the US attempts to export democracy have met with dismal failure, chaos and state collapse, "*authoritarian*" China has just gone from strength to strength. That is very bad when there was supposed to be an "*end of history*" as liberal democracy annexed the world, creating a utopian paradise. *Paradise Lost?*



The People's Republic of China, or the Chinese Communist Party to be precise, presiding over the world's most successful capitalist economy, is a provocative affront to the accepted wisdom that liberal democracy won the Cold War

Is this why *Cathay Delenda Est*?

Xi Jinping gave a speech after he became General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, on 5th January 2013, to the Party's then-newly elected Central Committee. It was made behind closed doors.

An abbreviated version of it was published in Xi Jinping's first book, *The Governance of China*. The Party's premier ideological journal, *Qiushi*, published a much larger version later. The speech and subsequent events appear to have badly shaken the sense of triumphalism in the West. It has not been made available to the general public in the West, perhaps in fear of it disrupting the accepted victory narrative. War is said to be won in the mind of the enemy command. If it is, then the war in which victory was proclaimed, was not won. Here is the significant part:

"There are people who believe that communism is an unattainable hope, or even that it is beyond hoping for—that communism is an illusion...

Facts have repeatedly told us that Marx and Engels' analysis of the basic contradictions in capitalist society is not outdated, nor is the historical materialist view that capitalism is bound to die out and socialism is bound to win. This is an inevitable trend in social and historical development. But the road is tortuous. The eventual demise of capitalism and the ultimate victory of socialism will require a long historical process to reach completion. In the meantime, we must have a deep appreciation for capitalism's ability to self-correct, and a full, objective assessment of the real long-term advantages that the developed Western nations have in the economic, technological, and military spheres. Then we must diligently prepare for a long period of cooperation and of conflict between these two social systems in each of these domains.

For a fairly long time yet, socialism in its primary stage will exist alongside a more productive and developed capitalist system. In this long period of cooperation and conflict, socialism must learn from the boons that capitalism has brought to civilization. We must face the reality that people will use the strengths of developed, Western countries to denounce our country's socialist development. Here we must have a great strategic determination, resolutely rejecting all false arguments that we should abandon socialism. We must consciously correct the various ideas that do not accord with our current stage. Most importantly, we must concentrate our efforts on bettering our own affairs, continually broadening our comprehensive national power, improving the lives of our people, building a socialism

that is superior to capitalism, and laying the foundation for a future where we will win the initiative and have the dominant position."

Stephen Kotkin, a thoughtful US Professor, historian and observer of Russia was recently asked what he thought of this. He remarked about the Chinese Communist Party:

"We all thought they were cynics... they just wanted the Leninist structures to stay in place politically and therefore they tried to legitimate themselves with the verbiage and rhetoric of Communism. And so we were dismayed that the Communist ideology was still there. We just could not believe it. Smart people could not believe that. Not after what happened in the Soviet Union, not after what happened with the triumph of the markets globally. But some of them actually believe it!"

It appears that old Communists never die! Was there really a Cold War victory at all?

Perhaps this is what spurred President Trump to draw some conclusions, call a halt to the US policy begun by Nixon, and declare a trade war in 2018. President Biden has continued the Trump policy, but without giving his predecessor the credit for having put a stop to (dare we say it?) this "*appeasement*". The US *Innovation and Competition Act* of 2021, passed by Congress, labels China the greatest political and geo-economic challenge for United States foreign policy and has defined Taiwan as a sovereign state of vital strategic importance for the US.

It appears, however, that the Nixon manoeuvre was not an American stroke of genius after all. The Chinese, we were always told, are "*an inscrutable people*". They have a civilisation much older and wiser than the West and they take history very seriously. They are not taken with superficialities and fads and fashions as is the way in the West.

The 1972 opening wasn't just Nixon's idea, or that of his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger. It was also Mao's—or, to be more precise, it was a product of a select group of Chinese military men working for Mao. Nixon and Kissinger are widely credited with playing China against the Soviet Union, but Mao's China was a strategic actor as well with its own political agenda.

This information is contained in Michael Pillsbury's sensationally titled 2015 book, *The Hundred Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace the United States as the Global Superpower*.

Before the Great War of 1914 it was said that Germany was out for world domination. Before that it was the French and the Russians, who, in the decade prior to 1914 were acquired as allies to prevent imminent German world domination. History seems to suggest that people who write books about enemies seeking world domination speak on behalf of the actual dominators of the world.

Pillsbury served in a number of high-ranking positions within the US Government and its accompanying think tanks, including RAND. He is currently senior Fellow and Director for Chinese Strategy at the Hudson Institute in Washington. In the late 1960s and 1970s, he was well-situated to observe the first steps in America's partnership with China. Indeed, Pillsbury was an early advocate for a Sino-American alliance, arguing that the US should provide more economic and military assistance to China to fight the USSR.

Pillsbury, while working at the United Nations in 1969 and 1970, collected Intelligence from the Soviets that played a minor role in the Nixon administration's decision-making. During the 1980s, he rose to the position of *Assistant Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Planning* at the Pentagon, during the Reagan administration.

Pillsbury makes his view clear that, even though Nixon did propose an engagement with China in 1967, Chairman Mao was actually the more proactive agent: "*Nixon did not first reach out to China; instead, China in the person of Mao, first reached out to Nixon.*" Pillsbury points to Mao's overtures, including his unprecedented public appearance, on October 1st, 1970, alongside the American journalist Edgar Snow on the Tiananmen review stage. Mao "*gave his guest a message: President Nixon was welcome to visit China*".

In 1969 Mao had had discussions with his generals concerned at the threat from Soviet Russia since the split in the Communist world. The fear Mao had was that the US would provoke a major conflict between the two great Communist states. During mid-1969 there had been a number of battles on the Sino-Soviet border that resulted in hundreds of casualties on both sides. Mao feared that Washington would sit on top of a mountain watching two tigers fight. It was decided to study the *Russian-German Pact* of 1939, concluded by Stalin. The US was viewed by the

Chinese in the Hitler role, as the ruthless hegemon aggressor.

The Chinese had carefully studied the period of the Warring States (475 BC-221 BC) in Chinese history. They examined how the less powerful states had unseated the hegemon. The Chinese even mentioned this in their talks with Nixon. A diplomatic translator referred to the US as the “*ba*” translating the word as “leader” but which more accurately means “*tyrant*” in Chinese.

Mao successfully turned the tables on the US, according to Pillsbury.

It is now universally accepted in the US that it bungled in relation to assisting the growth of Chinese power. At the very least, it is understood that this policy was continued for too long. But what should have been done? *Foreign Affairs* is at a loss for an answer. But all that needs asking is what its predecessor, Britain, would have done in its position. Britain’s great success was built around its *Balance of Power* policy, which meant great reorientations in foreign policy following the cutting down to size of former enemies and the employment of these old enemies against new rivals that appeared on the scene.

Sure, Britain catastrophically miscalculated in 1914 in relation to Germany but for two centuries this policy made Britain, a small island people, master of the globe.

Taking a leaf out of Britain’s book, the US should have concluded, around the year 2000, that Russia was done as a serious rival and employed it as an ally against a rising China. Putin, who was open to friendship with the West, would probably have co-operated in return for Western benevolence toward Russia. China, potentially a much more significant geopolitical rival with its vast population and economic potential, could have been encircled and effectively curtailed, at least for a generation. But the US lacked the immorality of Britain which had enabled it to ignore the character of its allies. True, during the Cold War, the US had managed to suspend its morality in assisting dictators and authoritarians all over the world to do down opposition in ferocious ways. But that was to vanquish the greatest evil of all—Communism. Now there is internal evil in the US as well as external, and it can never let go of its hatred of Russia.

This has left the US with the worst of all results as the Cold War enemy reunites for purposes of mutual defence against the US, 50 years after Nixon prised them apart.

President Xi Jinping in his Summit with President Putin and Joint Declaration have

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Letter published in *Evening Echo*, Cork, 7th February

## Neutrality Nettle!

John Dolan asks: "How long can Ireland remain a neutral nation?" (*Echo*, 29/1/22), and concludes: "The question of Irish neutrality is going to remain with us until someone grasps the nettle."

He says he was inspired to ask the question by a recent film starring Jeremy Irons as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

Essentially, we live in an area which is growing rougher and more violent by the day. Should we join one of the neighbourhood gangs and square up for a brutal, no-holds-barred street-brawl? Or should we keep out of it and urge everybody to calm down, get off the street, go home to their own houses and try to get along in peace?

And suppose we do as John prefers? Which of the many brawls in our shrunken world should we choose? I hear there is something interesting brewing up in Kashmir. But the Yemen is a bit closer. In these days of instant news it is no longer a "quarrel in a far away country, between people of whom we know nothing".

But which gang should we join, which thugs should we send our teenagers to fight?

Common sense suggests that if our words of peaceful reason fall on deaf ears, and if we are forced into a brawl, we should set our face against the bully whose custom and practice is to beat us up whenever they think they can get away with it. John says the "UK lost its three Treaty Ports in the 1930's". In fact these ports were taken from us at gunpoint in 1922 by the same street thug that more recently shot down our friends and relatives in the streets of Derry, along with many other acts of violent aggression against us.

But I don't think this is what John has in mind. In fact I am coming more and more to the conclusion that John is winding us all up. By putting forward these Gulliverian absurdities, John is really a Jonathan Swift, trying to get us to think rationally about our situation in the world.

If that is the case, then all I can say to satirist John is: "Keep up the good work!"

**Pat Maloney**  
Editor, "*Labour Comment*"

left no doubt that the Nixon/Kissinger policy has been a failure and the West has been checkmated in its move on the East by the cohering of a powerful bloc of resistance. Russia has arisen from the ashes and is ready to stand and fight for the revision of the humiliating settlement being relentlessly imposed on the country by the US and associated powers.

The victory of the market and the death of Communism has also apparently been greatly exaggerated in relation to China.

What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object? Perhaps we should consult von Clausewitz:

"If one side uses force without compunction, that side will force the other to follow suit. Even the most civilised of peoples can be fired with passionate hatred of each other. The thesis must be repeated: war is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force." (Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Book One, Chapter One)

Perhaps President Biden should now realise that, if he chooses the path of confrontation with the parts of the world that wish to remain outside of US hegemony and want to exercise self-determination he may be choosing Armageddon for us all.

**Pat Walsh**

## Climate Change: Ammonia and Hydrogen

Climate change ideation is producing some really devilish proposals. Apparently proposals to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels will attract academic funding and one gigantic error leads to other gigantic errors in the greedy hunt for money i.e. funding.

Several Japanese companies have joined together to undertake a joint research and development programme seeking to use Ammonia to fuel large ships. The project proposes that an Ammonia gas carrier would be fuelled in its main engine by Ammonia. The syndicate states:

"Since carbon dioxide, CO<sub>2</sub>, is not emitted when Ammonia is burned; it is viewed to have promise as a next-generation fuel that could mitigate shipping's impact on global warming."

"A significant reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is expected to be achieved by replacing coal and natural gas as the main fuels for power generation."

I am sure they are correct, but why the race to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>, when CO<sub>2</sub> is needed by the plants we grow for food and by trees which we need for shelter and building materials? And the Japanese syndicate avoids telling us what evil gases are given off by burning Ammonia!

We humans, together with all the animals on Planet Earth, need Oxygen to breathe and to live and so why is funding devoted to a project which, in the creation and burning of Ammonia, will damage our air quality? It just does not stack up at all.

Many years ago one half-breath of Ammonia made me seriously ill. I was told that two breaths of Ammonia will damage a person's lungs for life. So what happens when a tanker full of Ammonia runs aground? Ammonia is heavier than air and so it will cover the sea and the ground, exterminating life.

Why allow a project to burn it as fuel? The Japanese economy should be commercially isolated until the Japanese Government puts a stop to such dangerous and harmful projects.

The other project, which is not so serious, is that to develop the use of Hydrogen as

a fuel. Hydrogen is a very flammable and unstable gas. It will ignite and explode at any flash or spark. The development is proceeding in Irish universities on funding provided by, among others, the European Union. Again, the pretext is to reduce carbon emissions.

Anybody who has watched the recent volcanic eruptions in Italy and on the Canary Islands will be aware that in one day — any half-decent volcanic eruption can produce as much harmful gases and carbon dioxide as could be produced in a year by all the trucks, ships, cars and tractors in Europe!

Why is it that scientists do not explain these simple facts of life to us? It is surely because they do not want us to know! The Capitalist System provides funding for projects like Ammonia and Hydrogen use as energy sources to keep our attention away from obvious truths such as: *we have no control over climate change*.

When you stand in the middle of Paris, France, and you get the exciting heady smell of petrol fumes and ethanol, you are smelling the environment, not the climate! Likewise the fresh pure air in the Alps is the environment, not the climate. It is the environment which we need to protect because the climate will look after itself and we do not control the climate.

### PETROL AND ETHANOL

Petrol and Ethanol are worthy of our attention because E 10 is spreading and it is not good news. **E 10** is the new fuel for petrol engines and it is made up of petrol plus 10% Ethanol. Ethanol is **H<sub>3</sub>C**, a hydrocarbon not too far from methane. It is an industrial alcohol also used in detergents and cosmetics. Why it is being sold with petrol I do not know but it is promoted "*for environmental reasons*" and "*to reduce carbon emissions*". It is colourless and odourless.

It has been sold as "gas" in the USA for many years to drive petrol engines. But it is far from harmless. It is alright if the engine is run every day but if an engine is not run for a few weeks the ethanol in the tank will separate from the petrol and, ethanol being hygroscopic, it likes to join with condensation in the tank and it forms *acetic acid* and bacteria called *acetobacter*. Acetic acid is very corrosive and will eat into metal and rubber: i.e. pipes and washers and gaskets, leading to engine failure.

Heavily at risk are motor lawnmowers, outboard engines, cars not frequently used, motorbikes, generators etc. Because the ethanol can cause the older rubber pipes to harden and crack, this can lead to fuel leaks and fires. Keep a Fire Extinguisher handy but do not wait around — the fuel tank may explode.

These problems are caused by greedy capitalism.

### GREEDY CAPITALISM

Greedy Capitalism is that which enriches the wealthy and impoverishes everyone else. It is not just change for the sake of change but change to take away our resources of money and time so as to enrich the wealthy owners of large corporations. Automatic telephone call centres are a notorious example of time-theft. At any given time millions of people around the world are holding their phones listening to "*press one for ... press two for ... press three for ...*" and they hear "*all our lines are busy right now, please hold*". If I can help it, I just put the phone down. But sometimes you have to suffer it while someone else gets rich. But not the human telephone operators — they get fired or not hired.

### SAINT PATRICK

The books written on Saint Patrick must run into thousands. His '*Confessions*' and his '*Epistle to Coroticus*' are fascinating documents. Patrick reveals that he was captured into slavery at sixteen years of age from the house of his father, Calpornius, at Bonaventum Tiburniae. (Various authors give various spellings for the place.) One English biographer begins baldly in his first sentence "*Saint Patrick was of course British*", and many authors under Oxford/Cambridge influences attempt to capture St. Patrick for Scotland or Wales and for locations on the River Severn.

However, nowhere in the UK could any of them find the place name of his birth. St. Patrick says in his '*Confession*' that, on his escape from slavery, he got a place on a sailing boat and it took three days to get to land.

There is nowhere on the west coast of England or Wales more than 5 or 6 hours sailing from Ireland. Perhaps 10 hours or even 15 hours in adverse winds. But Patrick's ship took three days: which is about right for Brittany in France. And Brittany, or La Bretagne as it was and is now named, is a Celtic area and so St. Patrick could understand the people in Ireland and he could be understood by them.

Now it has emerged that there is today a place called Bonaban, which is built upon the ruins of a castle or fortress from Roman times then called *Bonavenna de Tiberis*, not far from St. Malo in France. So it looks very like St. Patrick (Patrice in French) was a Celt. Capturing slaves who spoke the same language made sense to Niall of the Nine Hostages, to whom sailing to France was no problem.

Michael Stack ©



## LABOUR continued

General Secretary Patricia King said there would be no upper level for sectoral wage increases but that there would have to be a minimum level.

ICTU has also called on the Government to relax the *Small Benefits Exemption* rules for this year.

Employers can currently give employees a non-cash once-off payment worth up to €500 tax-free each year. The committee has recommended this be increased to €1,000 for employees in receipt of weekly gross wages up to €1,462 per week.

“Our job is to ensure that the value of wages doesn’t fall.”

The ICTU pay guidance does not cover the public sector, whose claims are done in a different timeframe.

\*\*\*\*\*

**THE Government** yesterday announced a €505 million package aimed at cutting the cost of living for hard-pressed people across the country. (*Irish Independent*, 11.2.2022)

Taoiseach Micheál Martin stated that the €500 million outlay was “mostly one-off” and would not be repeated in the Summer if the rising rate of inflation does not level off.

This includes the doubling of the energy credit to €200, a temporary 20% reduction in public transport fares to apply from April until the end of the year, and a lump-sum payment of €125 on the fuel allowance to be paid in early March to 390,000 recipients.

\*\*\*\*\*

**DON’T** submit your minds to any one man. Think these problems out for yourselves. A leader who can lead you out of the wilderness can lead you back again. If there is a thinking intelligent movement, no leader can mislead you. (*Jim Larkin-Special Delegate Conference ITGWU*, 14.5.1923)

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**BANK STAFF**—Up to 9,000 Bank of Ireland workers are set for wage hikes worth 7.5% in its “most significant pay award in over a decade” (*Irish Independent*, 16.2.2022).

Staff will vote on proposals for two pay rises after a deal was brokered at talks at the Workplace Relations Commission.

It comes as the leader of the Financial Services Union, John O’Connell, said all pay claims lodged in the sector need to be “inflation-proofed”.

A 4% increase will be backdated to January 1st this year under the proposals.

A second 3.5% pay rise will be paid on January 1st next year.

Starting rates for staff will rise by €1,500 to €26,500, and there will be a higher award for staff who get additional professional qualifications.

Financial Services Union senior industrial relations officer, Maeve Brehony, said it is recommending acceptance of the deal.

General secretary John O’Connell said the Union’s position on seeking an inflation-proofed pay rise had been vindicated by a recent readjustment of the Irish Congress of Trade Union’s advice to unions to seek pay rises between 2.5pc and 5.5%. “*The deal negotiated with Bank of Ireland meets this criteria*”, he said.

\*\*\*\*\*

“**The Government** has been accused of favouring businesses over workers with new measures on working from home” (*Irish Examiner*, 26.1.2022)

Employers will have at least 13 grounds to refuse an employee’s request to work remotely under draft legislation published by Tánaiste Leo Varadkar.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions General Secretary, Patricia King said the 13 criteria set out are “sweeping and subjective” and claimed they “do not strike a balance between employer and employee needs” (*Ibid*).

“They duplicate and extend on the eight business reasons for refusing a request contained in current United Kingdom legislation—reasons which have been found to allow employers to retain and use their unfettered ability to turn down requests for remote working and which are now subject to review”, Ms. King said.

Among the 13 valid reasons to refuse requests include employers being concerned about costs, or poor internet coverage in the area where a worker lives.

An employer can also deny a request if it is felt there is a potential negative impact on the quality of work or performance.

Concerns about the protection of busi-

ness confidentiality or intellectual property, and the suitability of the proposed work-space on health and safety grounds are also listed as valid refusal reasons.

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## Extermination!

“There has been a better debate upon the Matabele case in Parliament than I expected, though the Irish were dumb and the Government justified their Matabele slaughter. Gladstone surpassed himself in the use of his double tongue. He is a shameless old hypocrite as the world has ever seen. I have determined to oppose him what little I can at the next elections. The spectacle of Gladstone, Morley, and the Irish members supporting this anti-human policy in Africa is enough to make dynamiters of us all.”

“Drove with the Balfours [leading Tories Gerald & Arthur]... had a grand discussion, Gerald maintaining that patriotism was the Imperial instinct in Englishmen, who should support the country’s quarrels even when in the wrong ... Gerald has all his brother’s inhumanity in politics, and it is a school of thought decidedly on the increase, for it flatters the selfish instincts of the strong by proving to them that their selfishness is right ... On our way home we renewed our argument as applied especially to the Irish. “They ought to have been exterminated long ago” said Gerald, “but it is too late now”...” Entry for 10th Nov 1894, “*My Diaries*”, by radical liberal Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, with Foreword by Lady Gregory, 12th June 1921: <https://archive.org/details/mydiaries00unkngoog/page/n24/mode/2up>

Submitted by **Pat Muldowney**, who comments:

“This was 1892 post-Parnell, after the period of the Tories “*Killing Home Rule With Kindness*” (Congested Districts Relief, development, roads, harbours etc etc), and during the Liberal + Irish Party *interregnum*, and prior to the return of the Tories and their establishing of democratic Local Government in Ireland, 1898.

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## UKRAINE continued

Similar things were done in the rest of the world. Suharto's Indonesia, allowed a protectionist capitalism during the Cold War, was destabilised; Muslim fundamentalism was encouraged, etc.

The last election in the Ukraine was not judged to be politically-corrupt. It negotiated favourable economic deals with Russia, while also establishing links with the EU. It tried to make an arrangement with Russia, which had been prostrated before Western capital during the period of oligarchic anarchy created by Yeltsin, and was restored to a degree of national economic and political existence by Putin.

Oligarchs who tried to preserve the anarchy in which they flourished were imprisoned or exiled. The exiled oligarch, Berezovsky, was a devout believer in an exceptionally debased form of Marxist economic determinism. He knew that economics determined politics, and that Putin must fail because the oligarchs owned the economy. When Putin succeeded, Berezovsky formed a kind of Capitalist International, and made the "Orange Revolution" in the Ukraine its base for attacking the national restoration that was happening in Russia.

But the Orange Revolution was a bubble of illusion. The Ukrainian oligarchs fell out with one another and set about doing each other down. Julia Timoshenko was jailed for the corrupt crime of being soft on Russia by other oligarchs with other interests. And Berezovsky was ruined by a libel dispute with another of Yeltsin's creatures.

Independent Ukraine has been dominated by oligarchs but it has not been ruled by an oligarchy.

Conservative elements in Germany in the late 1980s favoured assisting the incompetent Gorbachev in reforming the Soviet bloc, or a large part of it. But Washington decided to precipitate its collapse. And, when the Warsaw Pact military block, against which the NATO military block was supposed to be a defensive instrument, disintegrated, NATO was immediately given an international expansionist purpose.

The EU fell into line with Washington policy. Yugoslavia, which did not fall with the Soviet bloc because it was independent and Western-orientated, was destroyed by incitement to national/religious war.

...Ukraine... tried to make an arrangement for a closer arrangement with the EU, but wanted compensation for the destruction of its industrial economy which this would entail. But the EU would not put up the money. It expected the Ukraine to make sacrifices for the sake of being admitted to the European ideal.

Russia also made it clear that a Ukraine in a free trade relationship with Europe would encounter tariff barriers at the Russian border. In this situation the Ukrainian Government accepted a Russian offer, which exceeded what the EU would put up. It was an offer that would enable it to preserve its industrial economy.

The occupation of the central square in Kiev began immediately. Fortifications were built in it. EU personnel went to Kiev in order to enhance demonstration into insurrection. Washington poured money in and took control of the insurrection.

The Government was overthrown by an insurrection in the capital, which was not representative of the country. It was like the action of the Paris mob at various points in the French Revolution.

The EU leaders became apprehensive about the consequences of what they were doing. They brokered a deal between the Government and the insurrection for the formation of a Coalition Government. "*Fuck the EU!*", said Obama (through Victoria Nuland, his Assistant Secretary Of State). The EU compromise was brushed aside overnight. The insurrection was intensified. Government buildings were occupied. Suddenly there was a new Government supported by Militias of various kinds

When it became public knowledge that Obama was directing the insurrection, Yanukovich did not call in the US Ambassador and expel him and his extensive entourage. That fact, more than anything else, demonstrated his unfitness to govern.

There is now talk of the division of the Ukraine on the basis of nationality. But those who were disrupting government last week now insist, having become the Government, that the Ukraine is a national unity and must be held together under their rule.

The Russian population of Ukraine points out that the militant groups in the insurrection are Nazi. No doubt they are. Hitler in his half-hearted gesture towards destroying the Soviet Union by establishing national states in areas he had conquered found no difficulty in raising up large bodies of Ukrainians for the project. The most recent tradition out of which a Ukrainian nationalism might arise is the Nazi tradition.

The Imperialist West in the late thirties apparently sought to use Nazism against Communism, but accident and poor calculation led to its becoming dependent on Communism to defeat Nazi Germany. So the important thing in our world is not Fascism *per se*, but whether it serves our interest. And the Interest to which our world is committed now, more than ever before, requires complete dominance of the world.

[Readers are invited to send in their Trade Union news]

## Organised Labour!

**Private sector Unions** are advising their members to seek pay increases in the light of the rising cost of living.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has told members in December, 2021 they should seek wage increases of 2.5% to 4.5% (*Irish Examiner*, 12.2.2022).

However, given the rising rate of inflation and the growing uncertainty surrounding high prices, the Private Sector

Committee of Congress has revised this advice. The committee are now recommending members ask for increases in the range of 2.5% and 5.5%.

"Every pay negotiation would have to be cognisant of the employer's ability to pay, some will be less than the 5.5%, while many other companies were very profitable and could afford to pay wage increases" (*ibid*).

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**LABOUR**

# Comment

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## UKRAINE: Pawn To King Four Fuck The EU!

*Deja Vu*

We reproduce this Editorial from the *Irish Political Review* of March 2014. It provides a good explanation to the mess in Ukraine

**YELTSIN**

The appearance of the Ukraine as a state was an incidental by-product of the destruction of the Soviet State by the corrupt, demagogic, democrat, Yeltsin.

Corruption played an essential part in the construction and maintenance of the Liberal British State and its modification into what we now call democracy. The necessity of corruption in the stabilisation of the system of representative government was acknowledged for about a century and a half by British political writers. But the single-minded ideological expert on Irish political corruption, *Irish Times* columnist Elaine Byrne, who preferred to emigrate rather than stand by her vacuous principles in Court, didn't have a clue about the foundations of the ideology which she peddled childishly in the mysteriously-funded newspaper that employed her.

Yeltsin was not usefully corrupt. He was a Communist Party functionary who found himself, in a political crisis, in a position where he could pull the State down, and he did it.

He enacted national revolutions by destroying the multi-national State, and he enacted a capitalist revolution by giving big chunks of the nationalised property to cronies for a song.

**UKRAINE**

The Ukraine was a component of the Soviet state, within which it was functional. Its appearance as an independent

state was not the result of national struggle. It came into being as a product of disintegration. It had no long struggle for independence behind it, such as Ireland had when Britain denied it independence in 1919. Independence was conferred on it.

In its formal capitalist independence it had neither a capitalist ruling class nor a political system which had cut grooves in the society on which it might run. It had only a group of economic oligarchs who had never functioned as competitive capitalists. They were stinking rich through no effort of their own. To describe them as corrupt capitalists would be to flatter them.

Russia, which had been prostrated before Western capital during the period of oligarchic anarchy created by Yeltsin, was restored to a degree of national economic and political existence by Putin. Oligarchs who tried to preserve the anarchy in which they flourished were

imprisoned or exiled. The exiled oligarch, Berezovsky, was a devout believer in an exceptionally debased form of Marxist economic determinism. He knew that economics determined politics, and that Putin must fail because the oligarchs owned the economy. When Putin succeeded, Berezovsky formed a kind of Capitalist International, and made the "Orange Revolution" in the Ukraine its base for attacking the national restoration that was happening in Russia.

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