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IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

May 2022

Vol.37 No.5 ISSN 0790-7672

and *Northern Star* incorporating *Workers' Weekly* Vol.36 No.5 ISSN 954-5891

Ukraine and Irish Neutrality

IRISH NEUTRALITY

Neutrality is one of, if not *THE*, founding ideas of Irish Independence. The impetus for 1916 was the threat by Britain to introduce conscription. The Irish as a nation—as expressed in its vote in 1918, which it repeated in a series of Dáil and local elections in 1920-21—decided that it was no longer prepared to be the cannon fodder for Britain's endless imperialist wars. Some advanced thinkers, notably Casement and Connolly, had seen merit in supporting Germany, but the slogan that prevailed and captured the public mind was “*Neither King nor Kaiser, but Ireland!*” During the Treaty negotiations of 1921, the Irish side made it clear that while its goal was full Irish sovereignty, it was prepared to formally agree to exercise this with a “*certain consideration*” for Britain and to rule out allowing Irish territory being used by any hostile alliance to attack Britain.

The main issue on which the anti-Treaty side opposed what the Dáil Delegation signed under a threat of “*immediate and terrible war*” was the Oath of Allegiance. This is treated by historians as much ado about what was no more than a trivial formality. But the reality of the Oath was its consequences in annulling sovereignty, especially in military, foreign policy, financial and related matters. Without these, the deal amounted to mere Home Rule. These consequences were made brutally explicit in the “*Treaty*”, including in Britain's retention of fortified seaports in the Free State, a veto over foreign policy, full Royal Navy control of Irish waters, and restrictions on Irish defence capabilities. These amounted to a certainty of Ireland having to participate in future British wars. In 1938, de Valera exploited a moment of British weakness to negotiate the return of the ports and Irish control of its own defences, effectively making neutrality possible in a new conflagration. This would not have been possible without the 1938 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

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More of the same from Bacik!

The new Labour Party leader, Ivana Bacik, wrote a survey of her Party's history and its current philosophy in the *Irish Times* on 23rd April (*Labour wants a United Ireland*). She says: “*We have been well conditioned in this nationalist-dominated state to believe that the broader labour movement played no role in the events before, during and after the foundation of the southern state, but this is untrue.*” Of course this is untrue. But what role *did* Labour play? Bacik seems to be suffering from amnesia herself about that role. In her grand overview of history she never mentions Connolly, founder of her party and military leader of the 1916 Rebellion. Quite an omission.

She must be the first leader of the Party—when dealing with the Party's history, however potted—not to even mention him. But this is a virtue on her part because for a long time such a mention would be clearly tokenistic. It is honest at least to have a leader that ignores him. Tom Johnson, “*Labour's English-born leader*”, as she notes, is the hero of the day for her!

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Celebrating Neutrality: Launch of Restored ‘Éire 6’ Sign in Howth

The “*Éire 6*” wartime neutrality sign on Howth Head was one of 83 such signs built around the Irish coast during WW2 to warn aircraft of belligerent powers not to encroach on the territory of neutral Ireland.

On 9th April, President Michael D. Higgins presided at the launch of the sign, retored by local community effort, and the unveiling of comemorative plaques to the volunteers who manned the local *Look Out*

Post, and all who had served in defence of Irish neutrality in the 1939-45 war. The event was attended by hundreds of local people, including descendants of the local “*coast watchers*”, a guard of honour by local scouts and the GAA, and was saluted by a fly-past by the Irish Air Corps and by a large flotilla of local boats.

President Higgins used the occasion to make a pointed statement on the importance of Irish neutrality then and now, and



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CORRECTIONS to April issue:

page 17, column 1, "Ernest Gellins" should read "Ernst Gellner"
page 18, column 2, surely "Yeltsin halted the decline..." should read "Putin" etc.

Irish "to fight bitterly against whomsoever first invades EIRE." (Michael Kennedy, *Guarding Neutral Ireland*, 2008, p. 97).

IRISH NEUTRALITY AND UKRAINE

Despite intense propaganda about a fundamental Good v. Evil conflict in Ukraine, the Irish seem not to have lost some of their more finely-tuned instincts. In near unison, the commentariat of the liberal-democratic and often British-derivative media, as well as some political leaders, have declared the conflict a "game-changer", necessitating a "fundamental re-assessment" of Irish Neutrality, meaning its abandonment. Despite the intense war propaganda, an Irish Times/Ipsos poll in early April found that an overwhelming majority of 66 per cent favour retaining the current policy of neutrality, with only a small minority of 24 per cent convinced it must be changed.

The results showed a generally similar attitude across all demographic and political groups, with the young just as, or even more, wedded to it as the old. The position is thus fundamental and enduring. Those most critical of current policy, but still opposing significant change by a significant majority, were Fine Gael and Green supporters, with support for the current stance highest among Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin voters. But the differences between the two groups were small.

Significantly, these results were almost the same as in a similar poll in 1996, also during intense propaganda on a Good v. Evil conflict, underway in the Balkans. 69 per cent favoured retaining neutrality and 20 per cent wanted change.

Even among the current small minority favouring "change", support is stronger for some form of common EU Defence than for joining NATO, indicating the persistence of a certain EU-idealism. The poll also showed a large majority against participating in military intervention in or in arming Ukraine. All of this is despite a natural outpouring of sympathy for the Ukrainians in their terrible plight. But the Irish, like so often before, seem to smell a rat in what they are being told brought all of this about.

The enduring popular position on neutrality finds little political or media expression, with politicians at best straining not to adopt an unpopular position but few coherently expressing why the popular position is as it is. As in previous matters, it has been President Michael D. Higgins who has articulated it and by doing so strengthened it. He selected an event on 9 April celebrating the restoration by community effort of an "EIRE" wartime neutrality sign on Howth Head and honouring the service of the local

Despite considerable Irish public aversion to the ethos of German National Socialism, and support for the ideal of "collective security" through the League of Nations, the Irish were again wary of the siren calls of British propaganda in 1939. The government, supported by all parties in the Dáil and the mass of the public (apart, of course, from *The Irish Times*), declared the state's neutrality in the latest conflict while making it clear that it valued the principles of liberal democracy.

Britain in 1939-40 desperately sought out allies for its latest crusade. Semi-fascist and anti-Semitic Poland was its chief one, but others it courted included the anti-Semitic "authoritarian" Romania and the straight-forwardly Catholic-fascist powers of Portugal and Spain. It convinced Franco, who was just concluding his own mass-elimination of political opponents, to pursue a neutrality essentially beneficial to Britain. It even continued to court Mussolini, who only finally opted instead for Hitler's side in June 1940 as France was collapsing. In 1939-41 there was as yet no talk of a "war against fascism"!

A recent *Dublin Review of Books* opinion piece described the Irish stance in WW2 as arising from an aversion to being put in harm's way, i.e. cowardice. The notion that neutrality has anything to do with cowardice or weakness would surprise many, not least in West Belfast or Derry. Serious Irish casualties were suffered by Irish troops on UN peace-keeping missions in the Congo in 1961 and in the Lebanon and other areas seized by Israel in special military operations in the 1960s-80s. The popular pride in these missions and spirit of the Irish soldiers involved was well chronicled by the late Robert Fisk in his 1990 book, *Pity the Nation*. No voices are ever raised arguing that such casualties should cause Ireland to refrain from peace-keeping missions – if anything the opposite. In September 1940, when Churchill, not for the first or last time, had the Royal Navy develop a plan to seize Irish ports in a special military operation, Britain's ambassador to Dublin warned the Admiralty against any such plan. They should, he wrote, be in no doubt about the "determination" of the

“*coast-watchers*”, Ireland’s first line of defence in that 1939-45 conflict, to make the point. While denouncing the Russian action in Ukraine, he equally attacked “*the bellicose language of militarism*” infecting the world and pointed to the duty of neutral nations to step in and “*build and promote the cause of peace*” by “*making the case for diplomacy to the very end*”:

“We must seize every glimmer of hope through diplomacy, reflect on that great principle that is lodged in the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and its affirmation that ‘recognition of the inherent dignity, and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.’”

Higgins was arguing against escalation – the favoured position of NATO, the EU, *The Irish Times* and the current Ukrainian leadership. But, as in the Armagh affair last year when, to great public approval but political and commentariat hostility, he had refused to participate in a national humiliation celebrating the creation of “*Northern Ireland*”, he captured the public mood, which was then reflected in the subsequent Irish Times/Ipsos poll.

Neutrality embodies a definition of Irish independence. It is experienced as a proud and distinct international foreign policy stance, one that rejects messianic world conquering ideologies of whatever hue. Its strength is its appreciation of the diversity of the world, of the need for compromise and a rejection of “*winner take all*” absolutes in international relations. It was a stance which made Ireland an exceptional force at the UN for decades, when it knew what it was.

ZELENSKY

The stance of the Ukrainian leadership in the current war with Russia stands in stark contrast to Irish neutralism. It has taken an exact opposite approach. Its leaders have subordinated their country, and its interests, to those of the Western Powers (i.e. the USA), apparently in the conviction that, suitably hyped, NATO will come to their active assistance and restore the *status quo ante* whatever the cost. All of their most extreme demands, up to and including a glorious defeat of Russia, can, they claim, be achieved, if only the “*cowards*” among western nations are silenced. In a key interview,

“President Volodymyr Zelensky told CNN that Ukraine is not willing to give up territory in the eastern part of the country to end the war with Russia, and Ukraine’s military is prepared to fight Moscow’s military in the Donbas region” (CNN, 17/04/22)

What Is Britain?

Britain is a country that evolved as an imperialist entity—it was the womb from which it emerged. But the life that throbbed through its Imperialist existence began to wane after the First World War and continued to weaken into the Second World War and into the 50s.

Thatcher saw this waning of its world influence and sought to retain it through shifting its economy to one that, through the reform of its financial institutions, could hold onto a semblance of its old influence.

But Britain has never made the cultural change that reflected its changed circumstances—something that was acknowledged by her Falklands adventure—and it continues to live in the cultural fantasy that it is in fact the same Britain that previously ruled the waves.

This is what makes it such a dangerous operator in the world. Its fantasy is no longer constrained by a reality that previously could impose some sort of responsible constraint on its actions. The result of this toxic mixture is that the first impulse of its political leaders is to rush to prove itself on the world stage whenever it thinks the circumstances are favourable.

Britain can never be a normal country which can overcome the cultural inheritance of its Imperial past because it was originally formed through a culture that was intrinsic to its Imperial development and that culture continues to be the medium by which the majority of British people define themselves. It cannot be taken away from them through a normal political evolution. It can only cease to exist when Britain ceases to exist.

Eamon Dyas

Editor's Note: As **Pat Walsh** has reported: The Tory Chairman of the Commons *Defence Select Committee*, **Tobias Elwood** blurted out a home truth. Asked on the *Vine Show*: “*Could Britain go it alone against Russia?*”, he replied, quite accurately: “*Of course not, what Britain does best is lead other countries into war*” (14.2.2022).

The European Heartland!

The biggest fear of the US was of German/Russian close economic ties. This friendship was supported by the majority of ordinary Germans and, I guess, Europeans. Two questions remain: Why does US NATO not end the war by guaranteeing Ukrainian neutrality? And why are our politicians and mainstream media not asking the same?

Simon O'Donnell

US President Biden, who from the start of his term has railed against European-Russian economic integration and demanded that it end, despite the consequences for France and Germany, has constantly upped the ante since the war commenced. He has declared that the vast quantities of war materials pouring into Ukraine be used not only to halt the Russians to enable a settlement, but to retake the Donbas and then the Crimea, the majority ethnic Russian regions who do not share the West-Ukrainian Banderite nationalist identity that has been declared the only true Ukrainianism.

In the US view, there can be no negotiating with “*war criminals*” and Ukraine “*can win this*”. There can be no “*capitulation to tyranny*”! The Russian insistence

that this war has been ongoing since 2014 is dismissed with contempt. It is notable that the US did nothing before the war commenced that might have averted it, nor make a single move since it started that might help end it. The only solution it sees is escalation and, as Biden has put it, a Ukrainian “*victory*”. Zelensky has dutifully ordered his troops trapped in the Azovstal in Mariupol (“*City of Mary*”), despite a Russian offer of an honourable surrender that would end the destruction and killing, to fight to the end. He has made it clear that the only settlement is a full Russian withdrawal, including from Donbas and Crimea, the restoration of Ukraine’s “*full territorial integrity*”, and its integration with “*Europe*”. The Ukraine leadership seems happy to fight this war on behalf of the US to the last Ukrainian.

And the US, the EU and the Irish government seem happy to cheer him on to the bitter end.

Anyone who advocates a settlement on terms other than those insisted on by Zelensky and the US, or who equivocates on the western media narrative on what the war is about, such as the MEPs Clare Daly and Mick Wallace, is shouted down in a torrent of hysterical abuse. Daly and Wallace in their actual speeches have changed from a rather incoherent position at the start of the war, denouncing all sides, to support the very coherent neutrality-based position articulated by Michael D. Higgins, and the Irish media has not, as yet, dared to take that on directly.

But for all the huge popular sympathy and support for the Ukrainian population in Ireland, the feeling that a bigger game is being played out, with the UK and US to the fore, means people are agnostic on what it is really about. The threatening mob besieging the Russian Embassy in Dublin, with the streets around festooned by government initiative with Ukrainian flags, has drawn little active public support, and pro-Ukraine rallies are notably smaller than ones in previous years protesting various USUK or Israeli “*special military operations*”.

This is a legacy of the First World War, which had been presented to the Irish as a war to defend religion, justice and the rights of small nations: gallant, corrupt little Belgium! But when the war was over the national rights of Ireland were quickly forgotten. Like in the current war, a diet of atrocity (raped Belgian nuns) was served up, only to be proved false long after they had served their purpose. The Irish at some level suspect that not all is as it is purported to be in the *David v Goliath* story they are now being fed. They know little of the religious and national divisions of the vast territory proclaimed to be an “*indivisible Ukraine*”, which has a population more than a third that of Russia itself and the military backing of the entire western world, or of the racism of West Ukrainian nationalism and its WW2 roots, its views today of the “*Russian orcs*” as an “*Asiatic horde*” and themselves as “*pure European Slavs*”, or of the history of the non-Ukrainian areas incorporated into “Ukraine” in recent times. But they certainly suspect there are things they are not being told.

Morality of course has little to do with what is happening, apart from the medium through which the propaganda occurs. Nor have the rights of small nations: gallant, corrupt and not so little Ukraine! At the time of writing (24 April), it seems inevitable that the strategy of the Anglosphere, with the rest

of the “*West*” in tow and in the palm of its hand, and with the Ukrainian leadership itself urging it on, is for ever greater escalation, culminating in a major NATO intervention justified by alleged atrocity. The aim is to inflict a disabling defeat on Russia and capture the Ukraine glacis for the “*West*”, even if only this in the end is only its actually western chunk west of the Dniepr.

Before military action began, Russia said it wanted a legal agreement setting a durable security architecture for Europe to end the instability the lack of this was generating on its borders. It wanted a pull-back of offensive nuclear weaponry, arms control, rules on military “*exercises*” at its borders and a permanently neutral and non-nuclear-armed Ukraine. All of this was rejected by the US/UK and Zelensky, with the rest of the “*West*” diligently if sullenly falling into line.

Ireland, as a nation, should have the self-confidence to see and act in its national interest and eschew the hysteria being generated by a resurgent, aggressive and lethal imperialism.

More of the same from Bacik!

continued

What we have instead is the old Labour Party line of a polite curse on both the other main parties for being nationalist:

“Labour is the only national movement whose primary focus is on the basis of social and economic, not nationalist goals, and I believe that has afforded us a different perspective on some of these questions, a focus that is markedly different from the Civil War parties of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Sinn Féin.”

And this ‘*different perspective*’ has kept Labour on the side-lines of Irish politics since Connolly. This is the question that any serious Labour Party leader should address.

Connolly saw no need to counterpose the two issues of national and social interests in Ireland. He soon realised after the outbreak of WWI, launched by Britain, that socialism and social progress generally had to be pursued in a national framework—they complemented each other. That has proved to have been the case ever since across the world: the most striking example today being China and its ‘*socialism with Chinese characteristics*’. This approach is almost like a secret, operating in broad daylight, that many socialists refuse to see.

Ms Bacik no doubt considers nationalist interests *passé* in this globalised world, but that world is fast disappearing before our eyes. It is happening even within the

political structure that purported to supplant such alleged narrow and dangerous interests—the EU—which the Labour Party voted against joining.

National interests are now dominant everywhere to the point of war in some situations.

If she looked objectively at Irish history, she would see that, among the major parties, it was the party that espoused the national interest most unashamedly, Fianna Fáil, that owed its success to the social programmes which were based on consolidating and advancing the national interest as an Independent State. In the process, it created the most radical and progressive governments across decades. It did what Labour should have done, and were given a headstart to do by Connolly in 1916.

She lauds Tom Johnson:

“In particular, Labour put forward a concrete proposal for a referendum on the Treaty, a proposal which, if taken up, would have had the potential to clearly determine the views of the people.”

This looks a very good suggestion—but only in the abstract: it would have been disastrous in practice. It was a facile idea in the circumstances and shows how Labour were ‘*not at the races*’ after accepting the ‘Treaty’.

There had been the equivalent of referendums in the General Election of 1918, the urban and rural Local Government Elections of 1920, and another General Election in June 1921—which were all won overwhelmingly by Sinn Féin in support of independence. Surely the message was clear?

A referendum on the ‘Treaty’ divide was the last thing that was needed in 1922, as it would only have exacerbated the divide. Both Collins and de Valera realised this and did their best to stay united in their plans for the General Election of 1922 and *not* make it a vote on the Treaty. That is why they made an Election Pact and agreed a Constitution that people would vote on. But their plans were thwarted by Britain, which forced a rejection of both the Pact and Constitution and thereby brought about what is called the ‘civil war’.

The only vote which passed the Treaty was that of the Dail, under the threat of ‘*immediate and terrible war*’. The same threat remained and would have been the main factor in a referendum, just as it was in the 1922 Election. Johnson, like Labour itself, never appreciated the realities of the situation and always came up with glib solutions.

Bacik ends with a long series of platitudes about uniting Ireland that are no different from the *tsunami* of same from all parties on this strictly nationalist issue.

Jack Lane

The O'Connor Column

A USUK War Of Choice

For seven years, until 2006, Putin, while re-establishing the Russian State and ending the meltdown of Russian society occasioned by Western influence during the disastrous Yeltsin years, proposed the integration of the revived Russian state with the West. This made him, temporarily, a western hero. He addressed the Bundestag in 2001 in fluent German, which he called “*the language of Goethe, Schiller and Kant*”, pleading for Russia to be allowed “*join Germany and Europe on the path to freedom and democracy*”. The assembled German politicians responded with an enthusiastic standing ovation. He also attempted to turn Yeltsin’s chaotic political system into one that functioned like a western one, with standard parties, elections and, as everywhere in the western world, a nominally autonomous judiciary.

After the 9/11 incident, Putin supported the West’s all-world-embracing “*War on Terror*” and the *forever-wars* that followed across the Middle East, destroying a series of States and reducing the area to ruins and murderous mayhem.

He facilitated these USUK-led invasions by providing the use of Russian military bases and logistical support.

He did this in the mistaken belief that Russia was to become part of the West. And the West loved it, with a smiling Blair having himself photographed with Putin along with the western cultural baubles, Bono and Geldof—supplied by Ireland.

Putin not only did not object to NATO’s ‘defensive’ operations as far afield as Afghanistan, but proposed that Russia join NATO for the alliance to become a world security system.

He also proposed that Russia join the EU, making it a truly European economic order.

He suppressed an Islamist-criminal regime in Chechnya using methods and justifications identical to those employed by the West in its “*special military operations*” in the Middle East.

But all his advances were arrogantly rebuffed.

The turning point came with the West’s resurrection of a Kennan-type “*containment*” strategy, after Putin dealt with its crossing of the NATO/Georgia “red line” on Russia’s borders in 2008.

Putin abandoned his western-friendly strategy, while the West applied the first of thereafter escalating illegal sanctions (economic warfare) against him. Putin decided firstly, as a backstop, to cultivate a relationship and eventual alliance with China. China, believing itself indispensable to Western economic globalisation, was initially reluctant, until it found itself the target of a similar escalating containment campaign and became cautiously

responsive to Putin’s advances.

Secondly, Putin sought a legally binding ‘framework’ with the West to settle the unstable security fault-line in Europe, de-escalate points of tension and formalise political and military boundaries. Putin would eventually succeed in his first aim (China), but not in his second (European military and political security).

The restoration of Russian strength and welfare under Putin was viewed with alarm and as a “*threat*” in the West. Following the Georgian affair, the West moved to consolidate its hold over troublesome former Russia-friendly countries, such as Serbia, by flooding them with EU funding, conditional on political compliance.

It also exploited the openings which Putin’s western liberalism had created within Russia to cultivate oppositional groups and media against him. After the US-managed *coup* in Ukraine in 2014, Russia seized the Crimea and, after a referendum, incorporated it into Russia itself. The western response was to further escalate political and economic warfare.

The war of containment by the West against China/Russia has now been underway for nearly a decade. USUK, with the EU in toe, declared Russia/China to be their “*strategic rivals*”, which, diplomatically, is a label just short of “*enemy*”, though that term is also liberally used. There are minor disagreements within US foreign policy circles—which the western media greatly exaggerate to present as the workings of a wonderful liberal system. But the extent of disagreement is little more than over which of China or Russia is Enemy No. 1 or Enemy No. 2 at any given time. There is no debate over the core aim, that the US must remain the dominant or hegemonic Power in the world. The US policy elite recently concluded, after some wavering on whether Russia and China could be turned against

each other, that they should henceforward be treated as joint Enemy No. 1 and be jointly “*contained*”. Sanctions have been liberally applied against companies and individuals, technology transfers, academic exchanges, trade, and on unwanted “*aliens*”.

Although illegal under its own “*international law*” unless approved by the UN Security Council, US sanctioning has a long history—having been applied over decades to police recalcitrant Latin American states acting at odds with the Monroe Doctrine, which the US does not tolerate. An extreme version of economic war was trialled against Iran and Venezuela and perfected as a type of total blockade, and this is now being applied for the first time against a Great Power, Russia, with the spectacular aim of collapsing the enemy’s economy and eliminating it from the global capitalist system. China knows it’s next.

A US “ally” such as Israel may occupy and annex other countries’ territories at will and carry out punitive raids, massacres and assassinations among captive native populations with impunity. But those that displease the leader of the Free World can expect economic devastation. Afghanistan, after its resistance movement assumed control of the state on the exit of the Imperial force, has had its central bank assets simply confiscated by the US for not being what it could by definition never be: a compliant liberal democracy. Biden simply confiscated these reserves for distribution to “*victims of 9/11*” and US-directed “NGOs” to meddle in Afghanistan while, deprived of its reserves, Afghanistan’s population descends into famine.

This is the reality of economic warfare, and it is implemented with a knowing non-chalance by the US. The response among western liberal-democrats to this devastation is a shrug of the shoulders. They can’t say it, but what they feel is that “*wig-wogs*” don’t really count. This has meant that none

but the most lily-livered of objections are raised by western “Powers”, including the sickly-saintly EU, against this savagery. But the recent refusal by China and most of the global South to join the USEU sanction regime against Russia — with the somewhat pathetic exception of Afghanistan, in a desperate attempt to court favour! — indicates that the racist reality of liberal-democrat hegemony is well noted by the countries representing most of the human race.

The NATO eastward march—and radical upgrading of capabilities, in a ‘Europe’ defined as stretching to Georgia in the Caucasus—has been accompanied by moves to develop a NATO-type surrogate infrastructure for the entire Indo-Pacific, led by the QUAD: the so-called “*Pacific Powers*” of the US, India, Japan and Australia. This is being accompanied by an EU-style economic integration project to form a military-economic ring of steel around China: from India in the West to Japan in the North-East, and everything south of that. As an article in the May issue of the *US Foreign Affairs* enthused:

“NATO ... can be enhanced both by welcoming Sweden and Finland... and by tightening ties with critical Pacific allies—turning the NATO alliance into an essential hub of Western military cooperation around the globe. The recent NATO announcement on enhanced co-operation with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea was a good step. This cooperation should be codified in NATO’s Strategic Concept at the upcoming Madrid Summit in June, and include more frequent military exercises and exchanges, both in Europe and the Pacific ...”

The project, however, is not going very well. Nevertheless, under Biden, it established some coherence last year through the imposition of clear Anglosphere leadership under the ‘Asian powers’, the UK, Australia and the US! This military strong-arm group, called AUKUS, necessitated the carving out and humiliation of France, which regarded itself as another so-called ‘Pacific Power’. Australia simply cancelled a massive order for French nuclear submarines and transferred it to the US. The purchase introduces another nuclear player in the push-back against China.

These developments occurred in tandem with the escalation of a crisis over Ukraine during 2021, since Biden’s assumption of the POTUS [President of the US] role. The sequence of events leading to the Russian decision to intervene militarily in Ukraine, though rarely referred to in the Western media, is necessary to understand that drastic Russian decision.

A war had been ongoing in Donbas since 2014. At that time, following the Maidan

coup against an elected President, and the turning of Ukraine to a radical nationalist course aligned with US anti-Russia plans, the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in the East declared themselves autonomous of Kiev. Although Russia refused to formally recognise them, the new Kiev regime launched a war to reconquer them and by sheer military force retook and installed military rule over half their territories by 2015. About 8,000 people died in this first round of that war. But an ongoing low-intensity conflict continued, contained by precarious ceasefire arrangements at a “*contact line*”, negotiated through the OSCE. Despite this deal, in the period from 2015-21, a further 7,000 died. The total deaths by military action in that region since is comparable to those so far in the current war, but attract no interest from the West.

A broad Ukraine/Donbas accord to settle the stand-off was negotiated under the German-French brokered “*Minsk Agreements*”, which also allowed for limited autonomy for the ‘breakaway’ regions within the Ukraine state. Russia agreed to the settlement, but it has never been implemented by Ukraine. It is known that the US greatly disfavoured the peace and encouraged the new Ukrainian President, Zelensky—elected in 2019 on a platform of implementing it—to ignore it, which he did, and to up the military pressure on its boundaries. It can only be guessed that Zelensky could not implement Minsk for fear of the considerable right-wing fascist-nationalist forces which are integrated into Ukraine’s police, army and oligarchic economy.

The Ukrainian Army, including these elements, has been greatly modernised and expanded since 2014 through massive financial injections, and acquisition of modern armaments and training by NATO. Ukraine became effectively what Prof. John Mersheimer has called a “*de facto NATO member*” without the *de jure* Clause 5 automatic protections actual membership would confer.

As these facts on the ground were maturing, Russia in December 2021 called for a new legally-binding European security agreement which would halt the Eastward advance of NATO and its escalating provocative military ‘exercises’ near Russian borders. The Russians proposed a legal setting for this that would end the increasing instability it was generating. It proposed that the disposition of NATO forces return to the “*status quo*” of 1997; that offensive nuclear weaponry be excluded from eastern European states on its borders; that there be agreements on arms control and rules on military ‘exercises’. It also proposed the “*permanent neutrality*” of Ukraine and a commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons. In return it would guarantee its territorial integrity as of 2014 (i.e. post-Crimea)—once the Minsk

arrangements for Russian minority areas were implemented.

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

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

Prior to this, while breaches of the ceasefire in the Donbas had been frequent by both sides, on 18th February 2022 the OSCE Observer Group on the ‘contact line’ reported what even the *Guardian* admitted was an “*indisputable dramatic escalation of violence*” fourteen times the level recorded at any time over previous months. There were over 1,000 missiles fired, with the Ukrainian side, which had amassed its most effective military units along the contact line, mostly responsible. The following day, on 19th February, Zelensky attended the Munich Security Conference where he not only requested massive Western military support to forestall a threatened Russian “*all-out invasion*”, but ruled out any neutral status for Ukraine.

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

Within hours of Zelensky’s statement, the Russian National Security Council called on its Government to urgently recognise the Donbas “*People’s Republics*”, which implicitly meant undertaking to help defend their territory, including the large part of it occupied by Ukrainian forces.

Putin had previously repeatedly refused to do this, but now, on 21st February, he did

so. Three days later, the Russian operation began, citing Article 51 of the UN Charter authorising coming to the aid of states under military assault. There can be little doubt that, when Putin and Xi met at the closing ceremony of the Chinese Olympics on 4th February—which had been boycotted by the West (was it over the Uighers?)—and concluded a Pact of “*friendship without limits*”, he ensured that, if matters escalated to the point of war, Russia had its back covered.

Some final attempts to avert war were undertaken by the sorry leaders of France and Germany (though not by the 'EU', which has integrated itself with NATO). There were visits to Moscow and, even after hostilities commenced, some long telephone conversations between Putin and the likes of Macron and Scholz, at their request, though not with Johnson or Biden. But the Franco-Germans had nothing to offer, despite their best wishes. The US had established the NATO line on Putin's proposed security agreement, and, themselves client states, they simply could not dissent from this. Putin knew he was dealing with messenger boys and, while humouring them, treated them accordingly. Why talk to the monkeys when the organ-grinder has already set the course?

In the long run-in to the war, the US at no stage undertook any steps that might have helped avert it. On the contrary, every move by Biden since his inauguration had been to escalate tensions and exaggerate differences. He responded to Putin's call for talks on a new security 'framework' with rhetoric about Ukraine's “*territorial integrity*” and an insulting offer of a meeting of low-grade officials on marginal technical-military points. Once the War started, the US undertook no steps whatsoever that might have contributed to ending it. Every step it has taken has been to further escalate it, flooding Ukraine with \$ billions in armaments of ever higher capability, providing satellite and other *intel* to directly support Ukrainian targeting and provide it with detailed information on Russian dispositions, and preaching the certainty of a Ukraine victory. The scale of Western weapons transfers since January, and even before the long-range artillery now under discussion, was very substantial: 25,000 anti-aircraft weapons, 60,000 anti-tank weapons, 50 million rounds of ammunition, 7,000 small arms and 75,000 sets of body armour; as well as extensive training by US and UK Special Forces (NYT, 19.04.22).

What is striking about the arms flowing into and committed to Ukraine—nearly €10bn's worth so far—is the move from

“*defensive*” to “*offensive*” weapons. Western leaders, i.e. Biden and Johnson, declare that the War could go on “*for months, or even years*”. The nature of the latest equipment—long-range artillery, tanks, and possibly fighter aircraft (already being sourced from countries with former Soviet supplies)—and the time needed for training crews and integrating them means that most will not reach the field of battle for months. It is therefore an obvious calculation that these are intended not for use in the immediate countering of the Russian forces, but in subsequent Ukrainian counter-attacks to retake territory.

A recent article in *Foreign Affairs* (May 2022), the authoritative voice of the US foreign policy Establishment, was headlined “*Ukraine can win: The Case Against Compromise*”. It states:

“... The Ukrainians will, of course, pay the ultimate price for victory... They will sacrifice a tremendous amount on behalf of Europe... If Ukraine can win, the ultimate result will be a weakened Russia... This is by itself an essential outcome... It is also important for protecting liberal values and ideals... A resounding win in Ukraine would be a victory for democracy over authoritarianism—a chance to revitalize liberalism, as the Biden administration aims to do... The United States has a window of opportunity to shift the trajectory of the war... so that Russia is forced not just to stop but to fully retreat. This will require swift action and resolute vision, with a laser-beam focus on victory ...”

The US doctrine on the Ukraine conflict is thus that it can only be ended after a long war, sucking Russia into an Afghanistan-like “*quagmire*”, as British Minister Liz Truss described it, and by Ukraine being supported sufficiently to win it. The *New York Times* (19.04.22) reported that “*concerns about supplying arms that Russia might consider 'escalatory'...*” have ebbed — as has “*the initial worry that Ukraine will use longer-range weapons, like jet fighters, to attack Moscow itself and set off a bigger war*”. Some US officials, it continued, were “*grappling with how much intelligence to give the Ukrainians about bases inside Russia*” and Biden had—

“held back on supplying weapons that could strike Russian forces across the border, like rocket artillery, ground attack planes and medium range drones.”

But these concerns are fading for, as Lt. Gen. Hodges, former US Commander in Europe, put it: “*We have been deterred out of an exaggerated fear of what possibly could happen*”.

The chaos of war will provide opportunities which can be exploited to achieve victory, given the ultimately overwhelming western military and economic superiority. Zelensky's willingness to go along with this

(for Ukraine) suicidal agenda—which can only lead to vast destruction, is explicable only if NATO, i.e. the US, has already assured him of ultimately intervening at the level and on the scale necessary to help him achieve 'victory'.

Another article in the May issue of *Foreign Affairs* urges him to continue the War and take the consequent destruction in Ukraine on the chin: a Western-driven revival of Ukraine from the ruins can transform it from the effectively failed state it had been into a model Eastern economic miracle, as the Marshal Plan had done for Germany: “*For models to guide him in this daunting next phase, he should look west and to history—specifically Germany's*”.

The US position from the start of the conflict is reminiscent of Trotsky's position on the March 1918 *Brest-Litovsk Treaty* between the new Soviet state and Germany ending WW1 in the East. Lenin supported it as stabilising the State and the boundaries of Eastern Europe. Trotsky had globalist ambitions to expand the Russian Revolution ever westwards to encompass what he regarded as the more 'civilised' proletariats of Europe, particularly Germany. He urged the Bolsheviks to reject the Treaty and adopt a position of “*neither peace nor war*”, so as to keep the situation in permanent turmoil and flux, enabling the revolutionary state to exploit any opportunities that arose from German weakness to launch Soviet forces westwards.

Trotsky lost the argument, but there is an uncanny continuity with his thinking in the strategy of today's US leadership, many of whose most extreme “*neocoon*” influencers, such as Robert Kagan, had transitioned from youthful Trotskyism to central policy roles after 1991. The doctrine is one of permanent turmoil and then exploiting opportunities, such as latterly provided by the Ukraine crisis.

This is a NATO/Russia war executed on Ukrainian territory and a fight to the finish, of Ukraine at least. Many East European states with an animosity to Russia, goaded on by Washington, are effectively urging NATO to launch WW3 on their behalf. What the 'West' will actually do will probably fall short of that, but not by very much. Imposing a no-fly zone over west Ukraine—the core territory of actual Ukrainian nationalism—justified by a concocted atrocity or humanitarian crisis, or probably a combination of both, is daily increasingly likely, with a 1961-Berlin-style standoff at the Dniepr. Or, depending on military developments, further east, there could be a Ukrainian rump state, though weakened massively economically, happily integrated

into the West.

Instead of the neutral, undestroyed, multi-aspect large Ukrainian entity on offer so recently, Zelensky seems to be happy with the prospects of such an outcome. Pining like many states in the Cold War over lost territories, such a rump Ukraine would serve as a permanent source of instability and 'incidents' along the new East/West faultline. The very goal of a "*Neither peace nor war*" approach!

The glee among the primarily Anglo-sphere leaders of the West at the turn history has taken is palpable and barely concealed in the pronouncements of Biden and Johnson—and even those of some of the lesser creatures of the "*Western alliance*". Kagan, one of the authors of Bush's *Project for a New American Century* and husband of Asst. Secretary of State Victoria ("*Fuck the EU*") Nuland, argued in his May *Foreign Affairs* that, if Russia suffers a crushing defeat in Ukraine, continued US global dominance will be assured.

After the East German Communist Government opened the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the dust had hardly settled before the West sat down to consider its options. US President George H. Bush was urged by his advisors, including Robert Kagan, and by the strategy paper, *Project for a New American Century*, to seize the opportunity to establish US "*global hegemony*" through "*full-spectrum dominance*", and to begin by re-ordering the Middle East in the US interest. Bush, an old-style Republican, instinctively drawn to a Rooseveltian solution of Great-Power agreement, hesitated, but, as has been widely written, was finally convinced by Margaret Thatcher to 'go for it'. Even after routing the Iraqis in the first "Gulf War", he again hesitated about going "*all the way to Baghdad*". The British, and the US hawks, had to content themselves with massacring the defeated and retreating Iraqi soldiers from the air in the famous "*turkey shoot on the road to Basra*".

That the western side of the Ukraine war, i.e. the NATO side, has again been herded and led by a combined US-UK directorate is beyond dispute. While France and Germany have been on the back foot, having to be dragged to each new level of escalation, the general administration of the effort has been securely in USUK hands. As the *New York Times* reported (19.04.22):

"... Much of the coordination, including how to get [Western] matériel into Ukraine, is being handled through the United States European Command, or Eucom, based in Stuttgart, and through a blandly named International Donors Coordination Center set up with the British. The command said that it established a "control center"

to coordinate weapons and humanitarian assistance "from around the world" for Ukraine in early March. But it declined to discuss the details ..."

One irony of the conflict is the reaction of the US and Australia to a decision by the tiny but 'sovereign' Solomon Islands to enter into a security arrangement with China, although it does not provide for the establishing of a Chinese base there. USAU is nevertheless livid, with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison declaring the threat of a Chinese base "*in our region on our doorstep*" to be a "*red line*" and "*totally unacceptable*" (RT 24.4./22). So, while Russia having "*red lines*" on hostile nuclear weapons being stationed on its immediate land border has no legitimacy, USAU is justified in having one 2,000 km out to sea from the Australian coastline!

The EU for its part has abandoned its pretensions to any "*European*" security policy distinct from that of NATO, i.e. the US. In a letter to the *Irish Times* (14.03.22), Brussels resident Martin McGarry called on that organ to invite Irish MEPs who—unlike Clare Daly and Mick Wallace—supported a European Parliament resolution on the Ukraine war,

"to explain the implications for Ireland of statements in the resolution of March 1st that the European Parliament: 'encourages the strengthening of Nato's enhanced forward presence in the Member States geographically closest to the Russian aggressor and to the conflict'; 'calls for common military exercises to be launched'; 'stresses that this attack requires the EU and Nato to prepare for all possibilities; welcomes, in that regard, the activation of Nato's defence plans as well as the activation of the Nato response forces and their partial deployment, in addition to troop deployments from Nato allies including the UK, the US and Canada, in order to strengthen the eastern flank and deter any further Russian aggression'; 'reiterates its call for the Member States to increase defence spending and ensure more effective capabilities and to make full use of the joint defence efforts within the European framework, notably the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund, in order to strengthen the European pillar within Nato, which will increase the security of Nato countries and Member States alike.'

The Ukraine War has been described as Putin's "*war of choice*". But others had choices too, and they have certainly made and continue to make them.

FINIS GERMANIAE?

Trump, the miscreant President, at first seemed eager to scale back confrontation with Russia so as better to concentrate on Enemy No. 1. Neither did he start any new wars: and even wound up a few he inherited from his millenarian Democrat predecessor.

It is commonly said that the multi-billion-euro Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline was terminated in response to Russia's "*full-scale invasion*" of Ukraine. But, when Biden was elected US President over a year before, one of his first acts, while lifting Congress's sanctions—which Trump had endorsed—on European companies involved in the pipeline, was to declare, not only that the project should not go ahead, but that it "*will not go ahead*".

Several months later, and long before the open Ukraine crisis, it was announced that commissioning of the project, whose construction had been completed, had been "*halted*", allegedly for regulatory reasons. On the day after the Russian operation commenced, it was formally and definitively terminated on Washington's orders. When German Chancellor Scholz came out to announce this, he was ashen-faced. He knows what is in store for Germany.

It is hardly incidental that German trade returns for 2021 showed that to be the first year in which its combined trade—exports and imports—with China and Russia surpassed that with the US, and the trajectory was going in only one direction. A Rubicon was being crossed and a tipping point reached, from whence there might be no return. But overnight, the situation was dramatically reversed.

Angela Merkel was Germany's most able leader of the 21st century. "*West Germany*" had been a Cold War backwater economically, if its front-line militarily. Its cities "*Dresden*" in WW2 and its cultural and political prestige smashed, it was a compliant if dutiful and industrious lower-order element in the great Western Civilisation. In the 1990s, re-unification caused it great economic difficulties. But after 2000, and particularly under Merkel, its fortunes soared, as it integrated economically with Russia and China and resumed something of a geopolitical role, especially as a leader of the EU. This is so blatantly Germany's natural role.

Its greatest period of economic growth and welfare in its history appeared to have dawned. Commenting on this now vanished prospect, Ralph Bollmann, a German biographer of Merkel, noted: "*We export to China and import cheap gas from Russia; that's been the recipe for the German export success*" (NYT 12.04.22).

But Merkel is now pilloried as the person who, by her attempts at an accommodation with Russia, is responsible for the current war. Many German media commentators, intimidated by the moral lecturing of Zelensky and the Anglo-Saxon leaders of the Free World, whose countries have traded little with Russia, have capitulated.

Political figures have come out with their hands up to declare “*mea culpa*” as many, especially from the Green-Liberal side, raise Germany’s “*moral duty*” to cease importing Russian gas.

Germany has been commanded to “*take a hit for democracy*”. As one German Minister, Robert Habeck, intoned: “*We will pay a price ... We will become poor and society will have to shoulder this*” (*Irish Times*, 24.04.22).

A prominent German publicist, Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff, stated: “*Not only is the post-Cold War order crumbling in front of our eyes, so are the strategies deployed by Germany and France*” (*France24*, 05.04.2022). A leading Christian Democrat, Friedrich Merz, wants Germany to arm Ukraine to re-establish its “*full territorial integrity*” and castigated Chancellor Scholz for “*endangering the unity of the international community*” by wavering on this and on an EU oil and gas import embargo (*FAZ* 15.04.22). The pressure on Scholz has been enormous, with the radical-Atlanticist *Spiegel* (23.04.22) screaming from its front cover: “*What Are You Afraid Of, Mr Scholz?*”

The pressure on Germany has been driven by US and Ukrainian radicalism in escalating the war. An influential former US Ambassador to Germany, John Kornblum, warned that “*German pacifism runs very deep*” adding that, while “*German illusions may have shattered, ... its traumas about Russia and the [Second World] War*”, which accounted for its “*neurotic relationship with Russia*”, had not (*NYT* 12.04.22).

Ukraine’s bellicose Ambassador to Berlin, Andriy Melnyk, has driven home his advantage, relentlessly savaging “*spineless*” and “*cowardly*” German leaders and accusing Merkel’s CDU-SPD Coalitions of the past for having spun “*spider’s webs*” with Russia that had enabled it launch its “*war of extermination*”. Parading pictures of very useful alleged Russian atrocities in Bucha, he intoned plaintively, “*What does it take for Germany to act?*” (*Spiegel* 18.04.22).

The US-supported Ukrainian propaganda offensive against Germany reached a high-point when Zelinsky, who has zoom-addressed any and every parliament or gallery of rogues anywhere in the world who were willing to host him (and most of them don’t want to be left out of the World Tour), declared German President Walter Steinmeier “*unwelcome*” in Ukraine. He said he would refuse to meet him if he arrived in Kyiv. He also lambasted the “*cowardly*” Germans for dragging their feet on supplying heavy offensive weaponry and resisting an EU-wide gas import ban.

So, Germany is to commit economic suicide to aid Ukraine itself commit suicide.

French President Emmanuel Macron too has been damned by the Ukrainians for being “*on the wrong side of history*” in daring to speak with Putin in the early days of the War to explore a basis for peace. France had already been humiliated by Biden in 2021 when he launched NATO’s expansion into Asia, the AUKUS military alliance against China, not only excluding France from it, but unilaterally cancelling the previous contract for France to supply it with nuclear-enabled submarines in favour of Britain.

That NATO was an Anglo-Saxon world force was rarely so clearly demonstrated.

The current crisis has revealed the real leadership of Europe to be, not the reviled leaders of France and Germany, but the king of Brexit Britain himself. With his support for ever more radical NATO weapons deliveries and conflict escalation, Boris Johnson is fawned upon, not only by Zelensky, who calls him “*Ukraine’s best friend*”, but by leaders across Eastern Europe (with the honourable exception of Hungary).

Whatever the outcome of the current war, Germany and France will be greatly weakened states, economically and politically, and the “*EU*” barely visible at all. A German business leader, who as head of KPMG Germany can be seen as a USUK voice in the castle, has stated that the costs of Brexit had already been “*enormous*”. But the Ukraine War necessitated quickly agreeing not only a new US Free Trade Agreement (“*TTIP 2.0*”) and implementing the Canadian deal, CETA, which had stalled due to EU member state resistance, but, most immediately, “*renegotiating*” the Brexit Treaty as, with the war,

“the goal must be a much more integrated Europe, inclusive of Great Britain, from both an economic and security perspective” (*Spiegel Manager Magazine*, 01.04.22).

Despite the demonisation of Germany and France, the ‘EU’ leadership in Brussels, led by the feminist Ursula von der Leyen, has managed to steer closer to the militant line of the Anglosphere NATO leaders. Meeting Zelensky in Kyiv on 15th April, she called for the economic destruction of Russia, prophesising that “*Russia will descend into economic, financial and technological decay while Ukraine marches towards a European future*” (*Euronews* 16.04.22).

But she did not elaborate on what bright economic future there was for a Europe cut off from its Russian hinterland and subordinated to a reckless Anglosphere leadership.

The crisis has in fact derailed the notion of the EU as anything other than a support arm of NATO. Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff, head

of the Berlin office of the ‘German Marshall Fund of the United States’, has used the opportunity to insist that the Ukraine War means that NATO is the only game in town, telling *France24* (05.04.2022):

“We’ve seen that the defence of Europe is not Europe, it’s NATO... That’s the conclusion from everything we’re seeing. The solution to our security problem lies in Western unity — not in fantasies of European armies that will never become true.”

Brussels has been binned by Washington: do they even bother to ring Ursula?

The enormous ‘moral’ pressure on Germany from USUK/Zelensky notwithstanding, sane German minds are slowly rebelling at the demands to commit economic suicide by accepting an EU ban on cheap imported Russian gas. Germany’s sources of energy, foodstuffs and metals in the East are being shut down, reducing it to a supplicant of the US for much more expensive versions of the same materials, whose supply will be controlled by Washington.

The future of Germany in the new world order envisaged by the US seems to be to return it to the diminished role its western part played in the Cold War. While the craven commentators who dominate the German media, as well as German neo-conservative economists, have dutifully described a gas ban as “*manageable*” and a “*moral imperative*”, some voices are emerging in the real economy to warn of what it means.

Minister-President Markus Söder of Bavaria has said that Germany —

“stood on the brink of social and economic overload ... If we stop gas from Russia overnight, we will experience mass unemployment, social decline and democratic upheaval”

— with the “*middle class*” (i.e. the mass of the population) being sucked into an “*undertow of decline*” (*WAZ* 10/04/22).

The chief executive of chemicals giant BASF, which employs 50,000, warned of “*economic disaster*”, as “*cheap Russian energy has been the basis of our industry’s competitiveness*”. Another industry leader, the head of the Otto Fuchs Group which employs 10,000 workers and supplies engineered components throughout industry, declared that turning off Russian gas or even reducing supplies would be a “*catastrophe*”, as chemical and steel plants cannot simply turn furnaces on and off. It would lead to mass “*shut-downs*” and permanent closures across the most productive sectors of industry (*Spiegel International*, 05.04.2022).

The Bundesbank estimates that an immediate gas embargo would cost Germany €180bn and collapse production by

5 per cent, pushing “the German economy into one of the biggest post-financial crisis recessions, as overall GDP would shrink by 2 per cent” (Irish Times, 23.04.22).

In a rare joint statement reflecting the depth of the threat, German Employer and Union leaders declared on 17th April that the hit to the German economy from a gas import ban would be “far more than in Russia” and cause “a halt of production, further deindustrialisation and permanent job losses”.

But maybe German deindustrialisation would not be such a bad outcome for the already deindustrialised and envious Anglosphere NATO leaders? Whatever the outcome of the current war, it is certain that Germany and France will be reduced nations, economically and politically. The unconcealed glee of the Anglosphere leaders at how things are turning out geopolitically is nowhere in evidence in Paris or Berlin.

While America can no longer dominate the globe—though that will remain its messianic objective—there is no doubt it will be king of its shrunken 'western' bit, a dominance it had been steadily losing. The economic threat from Germany through its successful economic integration with Russia has been halted.

Germany is expected to militarise its economy to “confront Russia”, with Scholz initiating an “epochal turn” (*Zeitenwende*) to massively increase its military budget to €70 bn (2% of GDP) and end its policy of not supplying weapons to warzones (except of course to Israel). This is nearly twice what France spends annually and will make Germany the third highest military spender in the world (NYT 12.04.22). But this will have little economic stimulus effect, as it would in the military parasite economies of Britain and America, because most of it is earmarked, not to buy German industrial-military product but nuclear-capable planes and other lethal gadgetry from the US and UK!

Nor will it replace Germany's lost economic power with political punch. As the loser of WW2, Germany remains excluded from possessing nuclear weapons.

The German media was shocked by Zelinsky's insulting of President Steinmeier, with even its polite pro-Western elements calling it a “diplomatic affront”. For all the moral pressure on a “Dresden” Germany, it is in Germany that a European fight-back might start. Former US Ambassador Kornblum is certainly worried, warning that Germany's “neurotic relationship with Russia”, based on a misguided war guilt (sic) meant that “German pacifism” was probably only “on pause for the moment” and “will return in full force as soon as the shooting stops” (NYT 12.04.22).

Launch of Restored ‘Éire 6’ Sign in Howth

continued from page 1

on the critical role of neutral states in a world again dominated by the “bellicose language of militarism”. Here is the full text of President Higgins' speech at the event

A cháirde, Sabina and I are delighted to be here with you all today in the beautiful surroundings of the Howth peninsula as we formally launch the restored ‘Éire 6’ wartime neutrality sign.

May I pay tribute to the *Éire 6 Restoration Group*, drawn as it is from such local community organisations as Howth Peninsula Heritage Society, Howth Pathways, Howth Writers Group, and the Irish Coast Guard, all of whom have been involved with the painstaking restoration of the ‘ÉIRE 6’ sign on Howth's eastern mountain.

‘Éire 6’, a large Second World War aerial recognition marker, was intended to be visible to encroaching aircraft of the combatant powers. It is a surviving monument of that war and, along with the more than 20 other surviving aerial markers that are dotted around our coastline, forms part of our national heritage and local history.

The sign had become hidden by overgrown shrubbery, buried from sight and in disrepair. The concealed sign was partially revealed in 2018 and was assessed to be still largely intact.

In the involvement of youth groups, clubs and local societies in its restoration, your Committee has helped promote a growing awareness among the local community of its historic significance.

Even before the installation of the sign, neutrality was being given expression by the local volunteers of the *Coast Watching Service* who manned the nearby look-out post from 1939 to 1945 and installed the ‘Éire 6’ sign in 1943. We commemorate today then all those who played an integral part in defending Irish neutrality during World War II through their role in guarding the coastline.

The work your Committee and supporting organisations have undertaken, situated as it is in an environmentally sensitive part of Howth, is covered by a *Special Area Amenity Order* (SAAO), with *UNESCO Natura 2000* protection, required meticulous care and sensitivity in order to ensure that habitats on the site must be protected.

It is a credit to all those volunteers who worked on this project, as well as ecologist Dr. Mary Tubridy, several other botanical and horticultural experts, and staff from the *National Park and Wildlife Service*, that this work, by demonstrating compliance with these important ecological protections, was able to receive a *Ministerial Order* and was thus granted permission to proceed in what is an exceptionally sensitive area of great ecological importance. And it is an example of how one can be ecologically responsible and at the same time achieve an important heritage result.

Comhghairdeas libh go léir.

The ‘Eire 6’ sign will now serve as a welcome for passengers flying into Dublin, but also a reminder of the violent, bloody recent past that Europe has endured. Wars that were a catastrophe and as they proceeded destroyed generations of the young. Wars that should serve as a reminder of how we must always exert all of our efforts to avoid war and armed conflict, and how we must relentlessly pursue a diplomatic approach and particularly through the multilateral institutions to avoid yet more bloodshed.

It was unthinkable to many that Europe could find itself once again embroiled in war in the 21st century. A great sense of darkness has fallen across the world at the unfolding tragedy in Ukraine that has resulted from this outrageous act of invasion by its powerful neighbour operating with total disregard for the principles of international law.

The hearts of the Irish people go out to all of those who are suffering and to all those brave Ukrainian people struggling to defend their homes and their people.

The rise of the bellicose language of militarism must end. There is a special role for peoples and countries who embrace neutrality to be active in making the case for diplomacy to the very end, in demanding full humanitarian access to all civilians in need. We must seize every glimmer of hope through diplomacy, reflect on that great principle that is lodged in the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and its affirmation that “*recognition of the inherent dignity, and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world*”.

These times, these events, however challenging, are times when diplomacy is tested. It is a time when multilateralism must come to the fore in our international institutions. The citizens of the world were coming together when they sought the peace that is contained in the Charter of the United Nations, not only as an alternative to war, but as our best hope for humanity's future.

So today we commend the outcome of the toil of all those volunteers who put in their time to restore this important war memorial, this act of positive neutrality. Let us celebrate their achievement, but let us also recall how this monument is not passive, it serves as a reminder of the horrors of war, the unnecessary destruction and waste of human potential that it constitutes. So let us exert all our collective efforts to bring an end to the war in Ukraine so that we can return to living in a Europe and in a world that is free from war.

We live on an island that has been an exemplar to the world in building a sustained peace over the past 25 years, whose citizens value peace and understand the misery of war. We must remember so many of our Irish people died in the wars to which I have made reference. Let us all commit to play our part in an international peace-building effort, one that will deliver a more peaceful and inclusive world. (See EIRE6 website - <https://www.eire6howth.com/>)

Sean O’Faolain and Canon Formation.

Part 3

It is never easy to try and ferret out some obscure piece of information when it is being denied one by a writer who himself seemed to have something to hide. Sean O’Faolain was very coy about who funded *‘The Bell’*, and who gave it the paper (for printing), which was one of the scarcest things during the Second World War. I have always wondered just how the whole thing managed to come about, just in time for the beginning of the war in 1940. Then things became easier when one realised that O’Faolain had obtained a *Commonwealth Scholarship* to study in Harvard in 1926 to 1929. According to the tale he tells, one day he chanced upon a notice on the notice board in the stone corridor in University College, Cork, and there was an invitation to apply for the Scholarship.

He immediately went to Dublin, to two men of eminent qualification, as he explained, and they were AE (George W. Russell) and Lennox Robinson who agreed to sponsor his application. Amazingly, it was an American who was behind the scheme’s funding and he was Stephen Harkness who loaned a poor man named Rockerfeller some money for oil speculation which made both men fabulously wealthy. O’Faolain soon received a letter telling him he had won and that he was now a *Commonwealth Fellow*.

Next up for the Fellow was a visit to Saint James Palace in London, where he mixed with his fellow Fellows who were all English—he was the only Irishman—and hearing the ‘master race’ prattle on about their backgrounds, universities, clubs and hardest of all to bear—their travels abroad while O’Faolain “*spent his time sitting under dripping hedges in West Cork talking Irish to old men with mouths full of bad teeth and minds full of primordial memories*”! But here he was reborn as he awaited to be presented to—

“His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII and the Duke of Windsor, at the time the Patron of the Commonwealth Fund.”

Afterwards in his telling and retelling of that famous moment to his father in particular—

“I had to tell him about Saint James’s, about the equerries, about HRH. (‘The grandson,’ he said in sad recall ‘of King Edward VII whose head is on my constabulary medal!’.)”

O’Faolain had another telling record of leaving Cobh on the liner and another fellow traveller with whom he had a slight

acquaintance saying to him that he hoped he wouldn’t be too “*homesick in the States*”—to which O’Faolain replied:

“For Ireland? I asked bitterly, I don’t care if I never see the bloody place again.”

His companion was “*shocked*” and promised him that he would shed tears for his country yet.

““Nonsense ! I laughed. ‘What is Ireland but a country of grasping peasants? Yeats is right. ‘Romantic Ireland’s dead and gone, ‘tis with O’Leary in the grave.’ And ‘Paudeen grubbing for his greasy pence.’ No, son! It’s finished for me. Forever.”

A year later Eileen joined O’Faolain in the USA. In the meantime, Sean had grown up and was now equipped for anything, but there was a niggling notion that Eileen was not as suitable for him as first he thought. He tried to get her to go back home but she insisted that she had nothing to go back to and so she stayed on, getting a job as soon as she was able. Her push-back was right because she had given up her prospects in Ireland to come out to him as invited and now she felt she had to make the best of things.

In the meantime, O’Faolain was sending his work—a few short stories—and one person replied who was influential and that was Edward Garnett who was the reader for Jonathan Cape. He replied: “*You are a writer.*” And told him if he was ever in London he was to visit him.

And so the O’Faolains came to London and got teaching posts there eventually and they remained there from 1929-’33. But for Sean—first things first—he “*called on Edward Garnett and he straightaway became our best and dearest friend in London.*” But—“*one thing disturbed our peace of mind in Richmond. I kept thinking*

of that Chair of English in University College, Cork”—which really was the only way he was going to make good money and have security in Ireland. But here Sean O’Faolain was chasing a chimera—there is no other way to describe it. And that he took it all so seriously shows up massively how out of touch he really was—and how disliked!

His sheer arrogance was his undoing, and his nasty behaviour towards his wife was also an issue that burnt beneath the surface. There is an account: that he once went in to one of Cork’s finer hotels and once seated caused a rapid exit of many of its other patrons. This event was not when he was chasing the votes of those who would eventually determine who would end up as the Professor of English in UCC, it was much later: but I think that Daniel Corkery was so obviously the right scholar for the job that only the delusions of O’Faolain prevented him from seeing this obvious fact. After all—what had O’Faolain produced?

Whatever the ructions that followed Daniel Corkery’s *‘The Hidden Ireland’* (1924) and *‘Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature’* (1931), the latter had brought substance to an ongoing debate. Quite literally, there was to be no contest in the end about the new Professorship—Corkery won by the proverbial mile. O’Faolain got two votes and Corkery all the rest, the latter got probably (and this is from O’Faolain’s account so the numbers might be incorrect) 112 out of a possible 114!

Sean O’Faolain went back to London and as he says himself:

“I now toiled, at that handful of stories which I had begun while at Harvard in the spring of 1927, and was not to complete until the winter of 1932.”

The collection was *‘Midsummer Night Madness’*, and was banned by the Irish Censorship Board as obscene. But, if Ireland seemed to be a bit overly concerned about certain things, so too was Britain. O’Faolain’s mentor Edward Garnett—as he must have known—was banned early in his career: his play *‘The Breaking Point’* (1907) was not allowed to be performed under the censorship system of the time which was The Lord Chamberlain’s Office.

And we only need remember Séan O’Casey who was blacklisted by George Orwell who thought him to be a crypto communist—very much like the same system of McCarthyism in America.

Indeed there is an account by Edward Garnett on how he made sure of the publication of D.H. Lawrence’s *‘Sons and*

Lovers' by Duckworth. Garnett censored at least ten per cent of the novel and he did not negotiate these changes with the author but sent the manuscript direct to the printers. The changes included replacing "hips" with "body", and "thighs" with "limbs". He removed the word "natural" from "He could smell her faint natural perfume". Lawrence accepted the changes saying "It's got to sell, I've got to live". And, while O'Faolain contends that Garnett "never warmed to John Galsworthy", Garnett was in contrast a very strong "supporter" of the merits of the writer and *The Man of Property* in the *Forsyte Saga* was dedicated to him for being such a friend!

But the O'Faolains came back to Dublin as Sean had decided to become a "man of letters" in 1933. In 1932, *The Irish Academy of Letters* was formed by W.B. Yeats and G.B. Shaw, and Sean was asked to join as soon as he arrived back in Dublin. He thought himself "privileged" to be part of 1930s Dublin—well for all of five years or so, anyway, as he recalled. James Joyce refused to join and Sean O'Casey refused ("violently") to join as well. As did Daniel Corkery and Douglas Hyde—who thought an Irish Academy should be confined to writers in Gaelic confirming their linguistic stance.

Sean O'Faolain goes on to decry our Gaelic past—

"it is the central tragedy of the Irish that... isolation barred them from subsequent European developments. Caught in the web of prehistoric custom and outmoded tradition, they proved to be no match in war or diplomacy for the ultra-modern Tudors... By the coming of age of Queen Victoria nothing but sheer racial pertinacity, equalled in Europe only by the Slavs and Jews, kept the Irish serf proudly aware, however dimly, however uncritically, of his island as the only living memorial to what the historian Arnold Toynbee felt nevertheless obliged to call an aborted Celtic civilization..." (!!)

O'Faolain admits that all that was left was—

"a few Last Minstrel lays from homeless poets, a handful of doomed harpers, an anthology of popular fireside songs at times of startling beauty, the gay music of part-time fiddlers, and a goodly harvest of rebelly political verse that on occasion flowered into real poetry. But as for an Irish Novel?... Even today—I am writing these pages in 1984—there is no such genre as the Irish Novel".

And then as he was setting out again for London, he found himself—

"reading a novel that seemed to me at the time to solve all my problems by demon-

strating that one actually could be a Turge-nev when writing in holy, simply pietistic, peasant, bogtrotting, jansenistic, lower lowermiddle-class agricultural Ireland...

It was exotically placed in my own County Cork and it was a beautifully written work of romantic genius composed realistically. How had she composed this miracle? For it was a woman who wrote it—name of Bowen. It was, like my own first stories, about the Irish Troubles, but as experienced largely, but not wholly, by the elite" [not so!] in their final autumn of power, which gave the novel its title —'The Last September'..."

What follows are O'Faolain's attempts to contact this author who wrote the novel which was published to acclaim in 1929—eight years prior to his reading it. I should also point out that what the "Troubles" alluded to by O'Faolain was in fact Ireland's 'War of Independence'!

Sean O'Faolain is celebrated as one of Ireland's foremost critics and in today's 'modern' Ireland, his word carries weight. So I feel it is important to know who we are dealing with, especially when it comes to Ireland's canon formation.

Julianne Herlihy ©

The Eire Sign At Howth Head:

its significance for Irish Neutrality

In the 6th century AD, the sainted poet Colmcille wrote that it was sweet to be on *Ben Eadar*. He was referring to *Howth Head* which features large in poetry, mythology and the history of Ireland.

In the 9th century, exactly 1201 years ago in 821 AD, Viking raiders gathered together in a place they named "Hoved" meaning "Head". Some of their descendants undoubtedly still live in Howth, probably in keeping with the maritime culture of the Vikings, belonging to today's fishing community.

The 20th century versifier, Oliver St. John Gogarty, commemorates the Viking raid in his poem *Fog Horns*:

" From the fjords of the North
The fogs belly forth
Like sails of the long ships
That trouble the earth.
They stand with loose sail
In the fords of the Gael:
From Dark Pool to White
Ford the surf-light is pale.
The chronicles say
That the Danes in their day
Took a very great prey
Of women from Howth.

I lived from December 1941 to November 1964 on the Hill of Howth and, as a baby, when people in England were reduced to using powdered milk, I was being fed on goat's milk, bought from the tiniest of farms on the cliffs' edge, and on fish caught by trawlers nearby.

By sheer happenstance, after an absence from Dublin for six years, on Saturday April 9th, I sat on a chair 100 yards from the cottage where my mother used to

buy milk, on a plastic chair three rows behind Uachtaran na Éireann, Michael D Higgins, his wife Sabina, various politicians and the Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence Forces.

During World War II, the Irish signalled their wish to be non-participants, by spelling the word *EIRE* in whitewashed stones over high points on her coasts to indicate to belligerent aircraft crew that they wanted no part in their war. Each sign was accompanied with a numeral in white-washed stones, so that the pilots would know in which direction to head, thus finding their way home safely without endangering neutrals.

On Howth Head, on the North Arm of Dublin Bay, from 1945 onwards, the 'Eire' sign was progressively covered over by vegetation, sinking out of view until a gorse fire partially uncovered it in the 1980s.

Somebody recognised its significance and over the years local groups set about clearing the site with the aim of its restoration to its pristine glory.

There were about four anti-aircraft batteries around Dublin Bay during the war, and only two others in the State. One was about 400 yards from the sign.

The State, had no arms industry and was forbidden by its former occupier from purchasing arms other than from Britain. And Britain was not anxious to sell many to Ireland. Poor, and depopulated after nearly 700 years of British occupation, the Irish were reliant on their wits to merely

survive during World War II, even when not re-occupied by their old enemy, nor invaded by new ones.

They not merely survived, but thrived, for both leaders and other citizens matched wit with backbone.

The restoration of the “EIRE 6” Sign and its unveiling as a National Monument was planned and scheduled long before the current Emergency in Europe, and fortuitously, it fell on President Michael D. Higgins to do the unveiling.

A simple ceremony included the Presidential Salute, an air on the uilleann pipes by a local maestro, short speeches

by those involved with the project, and a superb speech by the President, in Irish and English.

He called for less bellicose rhetoric from politicians, stressing the constructive role which can be played by neutral nations in persuading warring ones to settle disputes by diplomacy.

He was, of course following principles which the electorate had pledged the State to, when they enacted the Constitution in 1937, together with practices—adhered to most notably by Éamon de Valera and Frank Aiken—over many decades.

Donal Kennedy

I was. He had also been a member of the YWL in Belfast, and had pushed it more nationalist and away from its Unionist orientation—much to the chagrin of the Protestant leadership of CPNI. So he fitted in better to the CA than I did, as a Catholic (for identification purposes).

He was quickly spotted by the leadership as a valued member. But he did stay clear of any discussion of the industrialised North. He had quite a brain for economics and would eventually take a Degree in it and become a lecturer: this, from being a carpenter for the Belfast Corporation. He returned to Belfast and, as a Protestant, got a desk job in the Belfast Corporation. At that time the Corporation didn't employ Catholics.

When back temporally in the city, to avoid National Service, I enquired about a job in Belfast Corporation and he told me not to waste my time because they don't employ Catholics. I suppose I was naïve when I reminded him that we were both communists and couldn't do something for me but he said, being a Catholic, I had no chance. He had a managerial position in the Corporation and I thought he could maybe sneak me in. That would have put his job at risk if I were to be discovered. He was just going to keep the 'Prod only' rule. That didn't alter our friendship.

A few months later the papers reported a demonstration on the Falls Road, some protest I can't remember, and there, leading the demo, was my friend, holding an Irish tricolour. Later he told me that no one at work spoke to him for weeks, that he faced the sack, but that his stepmother, a prominent Unionist, intervened with the Corporation and his job was saved. After all he was a Protestant, as he reminded me, as he had always been a Protestant in the CA. He said Protestants had rights, more rights than I had.

As a Protestant he even had the right to be an Irish nationalist, something I didn't have as a Catholic in NI. He saw the absurdity of it all and all we could do was laugh. He was active in NICRA (Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association) and by its name, had a lot of Protestant influence. He later wrote a pamphlet, with a foreword by Clare Short, a Labour MP, appealing for PIRA not to kill RUC members on the grounds that they were Protestants.

At the same time he wrote, on behalf of the Connolly Association, the leadership's mantra of *One people, One nation*, for various Scandinavian newspapers. He was a real friend through both our stormy lives, and we remained as such.

After all, I had thought like him one

In The Name Of Connolly!

I can't quite remember why I joined the Connolly Association when I first came to London in 1954. It could have been because of the anti-Irish feeling in London at the time, when we were called *Paddy* or *Bridget* by the less intelligent. It was a way of ganging up and showing our mettle.

I was still young enough to join the *Young Communist League*. It was a continuation of being a member of the *Young Workers' League* in Belfast. The CA was completely alien to members of the YCL. To some of them it was almost an act of hostility to be a member of it. This degree of hostility differed in being more intense among the Jewish members, who tended to see the Irish, in being Catholic, as being pro-fascist. The non-Jewish members also had reservations about Irish organisations in London.

I had arrived in London with a friend I had known since my early teens. We both joined the YWL and the CA. My friend didn't take to the CA and missed most meetings. He also found it alien. When in Northern Ireland we had met very few people from the South but here in London we were inundated with so many people from so many Counties, with so many different accents!

The level of understanding about the North was almost non-existent, and the CA leadership was keeping it like that. At times I felt like a mere collaborator with the Republic of Ireland.

There was no explaining the North at CA meetings. How could I say I had been a shipyard worker, and that it was

the biggest shipyard in the world, and along with the rest of heavy industry, it employed a third of the population—that is, mainly the Protestant population. Oh, and the Rope Works was the biggest in the world. All of this from a small population. If I was asked what part of the North I came from, I would say County Down or County Antrim, not the townie Belfast, or Carrickfergus or even Holywood. That fitted me more in with the mainly rural Southern Irish.

The *Irish Democrat*, the publication of the Connolly Association, sometimes printed rural scenes of Ireland. A favourite was of a donkey looking over a stone wall in the West of Ireland. There would never be photos the mighty gantries of the Belfast shipyard or the tall chimneys of the line mills. I was even told by a member from Galway that industry in the North was a myth, and that they had a lot more of it down South.

Trade Union disputes were sometimes discussed. One involved the closing of a small factory in rural Tipperary. When I joined in the discussion, I was asked if I came from there. There were some Northerners in the CA, though very few. Joe Deignan, from the Falls Road, Belfast, was a stalwart member, and had built up such a reputation for Irish nationalism that at one time people on the Falls Road were wondering when he would be coming home to help free them!

Another one, who was to become prominent, was the late Bob Heatley, also an early teenage friend of mine, a Protestant, from Belfast. He took to the CA immediately and was more of a enthusiast than

time, defying the logic of the NI setup, and knowing the tremendous differences in the two people.

Back in the early 1960s I had taken part in a *London to Birmingham March* in which we walked the full 100 miles plus, carrying banners that read: *One People, One Nation*, with the Irish Tricolour. We stopped off in various towns and villages to hold meetings and sometimes we got six curious people as an audience, or none at all, and ending up talking to one another.

Some of our demonstrators had beards and wore straw hats so local papers had us down as Irish Cubans, hell-bent on causing trouble for England. On our way through England we were put up in the houses of members of the CPGB. Alan Bush, who should have been Britain's leading composer, but lost out because of the Cold War, put some of us up in his magnificent country mansion.

Some taking part in our demo couldn't understand how the organisers of the march could know so many influential English people, and most of them living in fine houses! The *Catholic Women of Bedford Organisation* had volunteered to put us up: A group of middle-age women, all in the same tweed suits, met us as we entered Bedford. Taking one look at the beards and straw hats, and the general smell of beer they cancelled all arrangements. They said they were mostly lone women and couldn't possibly have such young men in their homes.

Desmond Greaves did say, when marching along side us, that a glass at the next pub wouldn't do any harm, as beer was better than water.

The industrial towns drew more of an audience with their large Irish populations. Birmingham turned out to be our worse experience for anti-Irish abuse and threats of violence. We had to form a protective ring around the speakers, and kick away people who tried to grab the Tricolour.

I was in a wonderland world and mouthed the slogans against my better judgement, for I knew I was in close proximity to that *other people*—my father, the very Protestant communist. He would have laughed to have seen me on the road that day. I was never to mention the CA to him. He knew, when I was born, that I was to become something very different from him, due to him agreeing to be married to my mother in a Catholic Church.

There were no Northern Irish organisations in London I could join. There was one that met at Speaker's Corner, in Hyde

Park. It was all Catholic religious pictures and rosary beads. In between prayers, threats were issued that Armageddon was coming to Northern Ireland. There would be burning buildings and bodies in the streets, and people would be stepping over them as heathens. I knew that, my mother knew that.

They always attracted groups of nuns as an audience, who prayed with them, and in unison, turned their backs just before the threats were issued. Other than that, there was little contact with the North—except to leaflet outside the Ulster Office, the unofficial embassy of the Unionist Government. That was until the Met police came along to chase us away.

The CA was good in working within the Trade Union movement. We met the MPs that represented our areas and presented them with evidence of resolutions we had passed in our trade union branches. That was during the period when Trade Unions held weekly meetings in Labour Party premises or above pubs. You might get 20 members attending, out of a branch that had 600 members. Those attending were to the left, but also including a couple of militant right-wingers.

Seeing your MP at Parliament you said the resolution came from a branch of 600 members. Whether he believed there were that number attending was of no consequence to us. The MP knew he was facing militant leftists. The whole idea was to seize the Secretary and Chairman positions of a particular branch, through the annual vote. In that way, many branches had an Irish leadership, as it was the Irish, on building sites and in factories, who were mainly the agitators.

Local Labour councillors attended a number of CA branches. They usually represented Irish areas in London. I remember mentioning to one of them, when he asked me where I lived, and I telling him, and adding it was two small rooms for my wife and children. He asked me to see him next day and he would discuss getting me a council flat. I would thereby jump the 5 or 10 year waiting list. Being a zealot, I thought of corruption and didn't meet up with him. Maybe my wife and children preferred living in two miserable rooms in smog-bound London, than in a nice new roomy council flat?

I thought back to the day, in Belfast, I had met the stepmother of my friend Bob Heatley, the influential member of the Unionist Party. I seemed to be always living in two rooms with my wife and children. She asked me where I was

living, and what sort of a place I had. At that time a Unionist was running a Post Office in a Catholic area and was standing as a Unionist for a seat in Stormont. The problem was he was standing in a Catholic area where a nationalist usually got the seat.

She give me directions and said for me to go down and see him. I was to tell him I was a Catholic and couldn't get a house or flat because of my faith. She said he'll give you one, but you have to vote Unionist. Promise him that with all your heart. Well, being a zealot etc . . .

He was voted in as the new MP. A lot of Catholics must have voted Unionist in order to get a Belfast Corporation house or flat. But they only voted that once. At the next General Election their gratefulness had run its course and they voted him out. He of course was made, either as a Unionist MP or a former Unionist MP. Having luck with anything in Belfast and people would say: You're elected!

When I met up with her and her stepson all she said was: Well? and stormed out the room, banging the door, calling me fuckin' stupid! My friend said I had made her swear, and she a practising Presbyterian, and that the favour she was doing for me was on his behalf.

Then another conundrum entered in the shape of his father. He was a former professional soldier, and now a high-grade clerk at Stormont. In conversation he said he voted Irish Labour, but not to say anything to his wife. Some suspected him of doing this at his workplace, but he said to me that, as a Protestant, he had the right to vote for whomever he wanted. He backed me in not exchanging a Unionist vote for a house or flat. He was also a zealot but lived in a nice middle-class house, in a leafy area.

Shortly afterwards I returned to London. I had to, my wife was terrified of the armed police in the streets, and their wailing, clanking half-track vehicles. She sensed that someone was being kept down and that would bring trouble in the future. It was no place for children.

It was back to the CA. I was asked to give an account of my experiences in Belfast. I dodged the reality of NI once more. To talk of heavy industry, except to say few Catholics were part of it, was to give the impression that the Protestant community put their ethics into play. It wouldn't take much for someone to shout *Orangeman*.

Another insult was that I wasn't Irish, in coming from the North. I had been

told that a few times. It was a different situation when selling the *Irish Democrat* around the Irish areas of London. You were sometimes called a communist by the odd person, and if you were threatened with having the papers taken from you and torn up, a nearby card game would stop and the players would get to their feet until the would-be assailant left the pub. We noted that card and darts players were seemingly non-political and never bought the paper, but any threats against us and they were the first to come to our aid. You could sell the paper in the public section of the pub but not in the saloon bar section where the English drank, along with the more *respectable* Irish

At the CA meeting I recounted some experiences from my job in delivering flour and animal feeding stuff around all of the Six Counties. It was dealing with farmers mainly, and of great interest to them. At the time there was a boycott against buying cars, tractors and farm machinery from British manufacturers, by the Catholic farmers through being overcharged by them. They imported instead from France and Italy, for a while.

Rank Flour Mills, for whom I worked, would supply flour and feeding stuff in plain bags that could be collected and taken South. The border with South Armagh was the place. The bye-roads to the border had been cratered by the British Army. We stopped and phoned a number in a public phone box to tell them south of the border we would be arriving in five or ten minutes. Soon after tractors pulling trailers would arrive across the fields into the North and we would load our cargo. Nothing was ever said and we drove off with an empty lorry.

Rural information about the North went down well with the mostly rural audience. There were very few Dubliners in the CA, except for the Redmond brothers, one of whom was a full-time organiser in the CA. Then there was Tony Coughlin, the academic. All hard workers working for a minimum of money.

So now the working manual Irish have gone, some years ago, and so have the Irish dancehalls, the community buildings, the county clubs, the Irish bookshops and most of the Irish pubs, and of course the Connolly Association, as I remember it. From that organisation, despite some negative experiences, I also lost some good friends. London is a less interesting place for me now.

Wilson John Haire
26.4.22

Remembering Tommy Dwyer

Tommy Dwyer came into contact with the Irish Communist Organisation in the shape of Len Callender in August 1969. It was a strange encounter: a Belfast republican who was a fluent Irish speaker, steeped in Irish history, and a Communist bio-chemist who had been energised into politics by Hardial Baines—a TCD biology lecturer who founded The Internationalists and radicalised a generation of students.

The times were propitious to revolutionary agitation—with opposition to America's Vietnam War politicising a generation around the world. Len parted company with the Internationalists in 1967 and in 1968 joined the Irish Communist organisation, along with his then wife, Rosheen, who had also been an Internationalist until 1967. Dublin ICO was a lively group, with such as Pat Murphy and Dennis Dennehy crashing through mental barriers and stirring up the society.

Dennis (1938 – 1984) is remembered for agitating homeless families in the mid-1960s and bringing Dublin to a standstill with big marches that gave a fright to complacent Leinster House politicians. (Other Housing Groups were formed around the country, a particularly successful one being the Cork Housing Action Committee, in which Jack Lane was active.)

Eventually that housing agitation bore fruit in a second wave of social housing. De Valera's Fianna Fail had sorted out a housing crisis for a previous generation —

but social housing had failed to keep up with modern demands.) Pat Murphy and other comrades are remembered at athol-st. people.org

Len Callender had been Baines' second-in-command in the Internationalists when he and fellow-radical TCD student, Rosheen Yasin, were in the Internationalists, until 1967. They then became actively involved in the Dublin Housing Action campaign, where they met Dennis Dennehy, Pat Murphy and others in the ICO, which they then joined.

Among their contributions to politics at that time were to help with the production of numerous broadsheets, magazines and leaflets. A printing machine was bought, which Rosheen learnt to operate; she was also the main typist of all those many publications. Most memorable of these was Dennis Dennehy's newsletter, *The Agitator*, which Rosheen and her friend Lorna printed in their little bedsit. The printing machine had the brand name of *A.B. Dick* and Pat Murphy always referred to it as *Moby Dick*. Other publications that emerged from Moby Dick were *The Irish Communist* and *Communist Comment*. Dennis brought out a paper called *The Agitator*.

The group maintained a weekly Communist presence in O'Connell Street, selling literature, and the public at large encountered radical communist politics. Old hands in the left-wing movement prophesied that the literature sellers would be thrown in the Liffey—a traditional Dublin way of dealing



Tommy (Second from left), among the volunteers who rebuilt Bombay Street, December 1969, after it was burned out by loyalists

with malcontents. But they never were. Plenty of people stopped to argue and a few became involved themselves.

Something similar was afoot in Belfast. But here it was Trotskyist groups, under the aegis of the London-based *New Left Review*, which infiltrated the Civil Rights movement and formed the *People's Democracy* as a radical spearhead for change, and created a live situation. (Later on, a few of us, including Rosheen and myself, attended PD meetings in Belfast and disrupted the scene with our two-nationist views.)

Len and Rosheen were instrumental in bringing ICO politics to Belfast and a group formed around them. That was how they came to meet Tommy, initially behind the barricades on the Falls Road in August 1969, just after Rosheen moved to Belfast who was already living there. Mounting night-time guard duty gave plenty of opportunity for conversation and argument, and Tommy became a member. His brother, Mickey, was also to join.

Len did not feel constrained by the fact that he was not Irish. His father hailed from the West Indies and had established a night club in London—a situation which gave him an *entrée* into gangland. His mother was half Russian and half Polish and Jewish on both sides.

In the Summer of 1969, in the wake of the 'Siege of Derry'—when the Bogside sealed itself up to prevent RUC and Loyalist incursions—the trouble spread to West Belfast and other areas. Barricades were raised to protect the Falls Road from RUC and Loyalist attacks. A desperate cry for guns went out from the people behind the West Belfast barricades, Len was able to use his family contacts to bring in small-arms.

I do not recall Len or Tommy ever go into detail about how they met up—but I imagine that Tommy impressed Len with his wide-ranging grasp of strategy, military expertise, and intelligent interest in world affairs.

Len impressed Tommy with his commitment and his scientific approach—which he applied to the defence task in hand. He had a very fertile mind.

One thing led to another and the upshot was that the ICO gained a Branch in Belfast in addition to those in Dublin, London and Cork, and was to become the B&ICO in recognition of the new Northern and British dimension.

Tommy, Len and Rosheen were to form the core of the Branch in the initial stages. A printing machine was bought and most Belfast members, including the late Joe Keenan, were taught to print. Literature

was produced and sold on Royal Avenue.

Tommy and his brother Micky (who also joined BICO) developed their printing skills to the extent that they were able to print the chits they required as self-employed bricklayers. Mickey's death was marked in *Irish Political Review* and it is worth quoting it fully, as a lot of it applies to Tommy too:

"A good comrade, Mickey Dwyer, died in Belfast on October 12th last [2010]. He had had a long illness but did not tell even his closest family until four weeks before he died, and no one else at all. He said he did not want to be a bother to people, which was typical of the man. So his death came as a great surprise to all of us. His brother [Tommy] said that only a few weeks earlier he was still working in his garden.

Mickey joined the IRA in his youth and his unit fought in the Lower Falls area during the pogroms in August 1969. A nasty rumour did the rounds during the bitter split between the Provisional and Official IRAs that IRA stood for I Ran Away. Nothing could be further from the truth. Gerry Adams, a Provo, paid the most fulsome tribute to Mickey's unit in his autobiography. He said that they fought day and night to the point of almost complete exhaustion with the meagre supply of rifles that they had.

The Belfast IRA was indeed starved of supplies by GHQ in Dublin, and the Dublin Volunteers were kept South of the Border, which led most of them to join the Provos. By contrast the Cork IRA made its own way with full kit to Derry where it placed itself under the Derry Citizens' Defence Committee.

Mickey later became associated with the Irish Communist Organisation (later BICO), whose members brought short arms from England and rifles from the South and manned the barricades in the Upper Falls-Beechmount area under the local Citizens' Defence Committee. Manning this barricade was Mickey's brother Tommy. Also with them was Jack Lane who learned the necessary military skills from them.

In BICO Mickey's concern was to further the interest of his class and community by establishing national Labour politics in Northern Ireland, whether of British or Irish origin being of no more concern to him than to the rest of us. Sadly all our efforts were in vain. It cannot be any coincidence that, throughout the years they spurned and rebuffed us, the British and Irish Labour Parties have completely ceased to notice, let alone represent, the working class interest. The situation today is even worse in that respect than it was when Mickey helped form the Campaign for Labour Representation in Belfast in the mid-1970s.

Mickey was a particularly gifted builder. When work was short in Belfast, as it often was, he would go to London for work, regu-

larly staying in an ICO squat in Islington. Though the youngest member of the family he was probably the wildest. But if you ever needed him he was on your door step in half an hour. And among those he knew and cared for he was a gentle man.

Mickey's great passion was hurling and he was active for many years in the GAA in Andersonstown. He used to make an annual 'pilgrimage' to Thurles, as he said, before the new 'backdoor' rules came in, that the Munster Final was the real All-Ireland Final!..."

Michael Dwyer 1945 - 2010 (*Irish Political Review*, December 2010).

When the *Campaign for Labour Representation* was formed, both Tommy and Mickey supported it actively, bringing a group of supporters to a Blackpool Labour Party Conference, to help canvass support for the Labour Party to establish a presence in Northern Ireland—a region which they governed when in power. The Trade Unions did not boycott the Northern Ireland region of the United Kingdom state, so it appeared bizarre that the Party which was supposed to represent the working class did not maintain an active presence there. (Many years later, after the Campaign was effectively destroyed by Kate Hoey MP and her local supporters, the Labour Party started accepting members in Northern Ireland—after the Conservative Party started to do so. But the Labour members were banned from contesting elections; and the Northern Ireland region was treated as an unloved appendage.)

After Mickey died, Tommy—along with his friend, Dinny Caldwell—remained a strong member of Belfast Branch while it was actively agitating the society to promote cross-community Labour politics. Their commitment was so strong that they even attended Robert McCartney's rallies in the Ulster Hall—until it became clear that the 'party organisation' issue had been hijacked by a Unionist tendency led by Kate Hoey MP.

Tommy could see the point of the Labour Party—which ruled NI when it won a Westminster majority—establishing a cross-community party transcending the national divide in the North, but he was no unionist. His ambition remained that the working class should look out for itself across the national divide. That remained his guiding light. Even after retiring from active politics, he continued as a subscriber to *Irish Political Review* right up to his death on 6th August 2021.

Angela Clifford

Readers are invited to send
recollections to:
athol-st@atholbooks.org

The Ukraine: *Irish Parallels ?*

A major article in the *Sunday Independent* on March 20th (*Anglo-Irish Treaty Lessons Could Point A Way Forward For Russia And Ukraine* by Colin Murphy) appears to advocate a submission by the Ukrainian Government to Russian demands—Neutrality and Partition—as the Irish Government submitted to British demands between December 1921 and June 1922.

To that extent it is a discordant voice in the media chorus. And also, when it puts the British Prime Minister on a par with the demonised Russian President. But, in its comparison of the British/Irish relationship of 1921 with the Russia/Ukraine relationship of 2022, is very wide of the mark in matters of substance—particularly with regard to the Treaty.

The Ukraine, the frontier region of the Tsarist Empire, had never been a state, or attempted to be a state, until 1917. It had at various times been Polish, Lithuanian and Russian and, when a Ukrainian nationalism was forged in the early 20th century, it had considerable difficulty in discovering something distinctively Ukrainian in the cultural mix.

The first Ukrainian Government was formed in 1917-18 under German protection in the Great War. When Germany surrendered, that region became a major site of a three-sided war between Petlura's Ukrainian Nationalists, Makhno's Anarchists and the Bolsheviks, and then of the Anglo-French War of Intervention to restore the Tsarist State.

Here is the gist of the *Sunday Independent* article:

“Zelensky has indicated he has the capacity for compromise, but there is little indication that he is actively preparing his people for this.

“Eamon de Valera faced this dilemma in 1921, and mishandled it: his failure to prepare either the army or the people for the necessary compromise made a split over the Treaty inevitable, and found him on the wrong side of it.

“The dilemma is real, of course: how to prepare people for compromise without undermining morale for the fight? Irish history does not offer Zelensky a straightforward answer to this, but it does at least offer a warning about the risks involved. Those compromises

will come on the key issues: partition (i.e., the severing of Crimea and Donbas separatist regions), demilitarisation, and nationality (i.e. Ukraine's relationship with NATO).

“The situation in Crimea and Donbas is superficially similar to that of Northern Ireland in 1921: partition is a de facto reality; there is no military path to reclaiming them.

“The Irish compromise on partition thus looks instructive: the Dail (including de Valera and many of those who were anti-treaty) effectively acknowledged that there was nothing they could do about it, for the time being at least, and chose to downplay it as an issue. Demilitarisation in the Irish context meant accepting limits on Ireland's right to raise an army and navy.

“This deeply offended republicans... but Michael Collins accepted the realpolitik that Ireland was within what would now be called Britain's 'sphere of influence' ...”

I know of no evidence that Collins in the Summer of 1921 advocated acceptance of Partition or acceptance of the Crown. He did not even accept Partition after he had made his 'Treaty' deal with the British Government, under which he was installed as Chairman of a Provisional Government of Ireland on British authority.

In May 1922 he made war on the Northern Ireland Government, apparently not realising that it was merely a facade in front of continuing British Government. And, when De Valera in America suggested that Ireland might concede military bases to Britain—such as Cuba did to the United States—Collins did not second the proposal.

Collins, without warning, on 6th December 1921, signed a deal with the British Government—in breach of his instructions from the Irish Government—under which he agreed to establish a 26-County Government under the authority of the Crown.

He had done nothing to prepare the Dail or the Army for this new departure. He seems to have relied on his legendary reputation to carry the measure through, but the shock effect of his unprepared action was to split the Dail, and to lose him the support of most of the Republican Army which split on the issue, and to make him dependent on a paid Army,

established on British authority and with British support.

De Valera, by contrast, had tried to prepare the Dail and the Army for Partition, and for a kind of accommodation with the Crown. But Collins took the game away from him at the critical moment, and was responsible for directing the course of events for the next seven months—up to the 'Civil War', during which both Griffith and Collins died, leaving behind a Government whose only purpose was to crush the Volunteers with British arms and humiliate the survivors: a project in which it failed.

The Second Dail met in August 1921, when the War of Independence was suspended by a Truce, negotiated between the British Army and the IRA.

The members of the 2nd Dail were returned in an Election organised by the British Government for the purpose of dividing Ireland into two jurisdictions, *Northern Ireland* and *Southern Ireland*—each with a Home Rule Parliament and Government. The Dail rejected the British Act, under which this election was held, but decided that its members should renew their mandates by contesting their seats in both North and South.

The Election was held before the Truce was negotiated.

Piaras Beaslai, a close colleague of Collins during the War, and then a supporter of the 'Treaty', wrote an account of the period a few years later in the form of a biography of Collins. Here is his account of the 1921 Election:

“Considering that this Election was held during the height of an English campaign of Terror, and that the election of a new Dail was intended as a gesture of defiance to the English Government's Partition Act, it was natural that Sinn Fein candidates should be selected, not so much with a view to securing a representative deliberative assembly, as to emphasising the strength of the national resistance” (*Michael Collins And The Making Of New Ireland*. 1926, Vol. 2, p228).

So the 2nd Dail was thoroughly Republican in spirit. And it met after the British Army had negotiated a Truce with the Irish Army, which for two years had been denounced by the British as a “murder gang”. Nothing like it had happened since the 17th century. There was a feeling around that the War had been won.

De Valera discouraged that feeling. He told the Dail that it might be that

the War was yet to come. The British had not been exerting their full force. If there was a return to war, it would be on a very much greater scale. *“They should remember that they were now deciding issues of war and peace”*.

They would have to, *“if they wanted a Republic, challenge the might of the British Empire, and face the possibility of war”* (Dail Report, 22nd August 1921).

And then there was the North:

“An tUachtaran explained it was difficult to have a policy for Ulster when they could not get in contact... They had not the power, and some of them had not the inclination, to use force with Ulster. He did not think that policy would be successful. They would be making the same mistake with that section as England had made with Ireland. Ulster’s present position was that she claimed the Six Counties as a constitutional right given to her constitutionally through the Realm... The moment contact was established they were up against a big difficulty. Ulster would say she was as devotedly attached to the Empire as they were to their independence and that she would fight for the one as much as they would for the other...”

“For his part, if the Republic were recognised, he would be in favour of giving each country power to vote itself out of the Republic, if it so wished. Otherwise they would be compelled to use force...”

Eoin O’Duffy, Collins’s close colleague, who supported the Treaty four months later, and was a founder member of Fine Gael, dissented. He was for the use of force against the Ulster Unionists and was confident of defeating them.

On August 23rd De Valera was nominated for re-election as President. He said he would accept the nomination only if it was understood that—

“I would act as head of an established government would act and that I can act in no other way. I cannot accept the responsibilities of office if it is not understood that I can act as the head of any government in any country would act.”

On August 18th he had told the Dail, on the basis of his experience in America—

“that no nation would recognise the Irish Republic until she wanted to go to war with England... As far as getting recognition was concerned they might put it out of their heads. When a nation wants to fight Britain she will be very glad to make Ireland’s claim a moral issue but that was a very vague hope”.

England was top dog in the world,

and nations acted out of self-interest even more than individuals did. And, as for the Irish-Americans, they were Americans first and last, and would only act out of American interest.

If the Dail retained any illusions about the world, and the Republic’s place in it, and the necessity of compromise on some principles, when it re-elected De Valera as President, it was not because he fed them illusions.

It was arranged to send delegates to London to try to negotiate a Treaty with Britain, even though Britain ruled recognition of the Dail Government off the agenda. The delegates were called *Plenipotentiaries*, apparently because Britain would not negotiate with representatives of the Dail. The term was obsolete, dating from a time when communication was possible only by means of horses and sailing boats. Benjamin Franklin was *Minister Plenipotentiary* of the United States in France during the American *War of Independence* when it took about six weeks to send a message from Paris to Boston and get a reply. Franklin had the power to make treaties on behalf of his Government.

De Valera, acting as head of Government, imposed a condition on what the Irish Plenipotentiaries could do—they could sign a Treaty only after clearing it with their Government. (It should be remembered that both telephone and telegraph communication was freely available in that era, and Dublin was only a few hours’ crossing away from London.)

De Valera acted as head of the Government while the delegates negotiated drafts for a Treaty. He did not act as if the Government was on hold while the delegates negotiated—and was liable to be put out of action at any moment by some new arrangement, come to between the Plenipotentiaries and the British Government.

During that period he regularised the Volunteers as the Army of the Republic so as to either prepare for war, or for an acceptable compromise to avert war.

He brought two Ministers who had considerable influence with the Army—Cathal Brugha and Austin Stack—to agree that the Crown might be recognised as head of an association of countries of which the Irish Republic would be one.

The British were beginning to sell the Empire as a *Commonwealth of Nations* and De Valera was willing to buy into the idea—the meaning of *Commonwealth* being very different from that of *Empire*. Brugha didn’t like it, but it was something he could swallow.

De Valera’s object was to bring matters to the point where Lloyd George, if he declared War, would be declaring it over a difference between two ways of recognising the Crown.

The delegates aborted that line of development when, without warning, they acted as Plenipotentiaries in earnest, signed a Treaty on the strength of the name given to them by the Dail—by-passing the authority of the Government.

A state cannot have two Governments. The Plenipotentiaries could not themselves have the power of government and yet leave the Government which instructed them in being. Griffith held that their authority came directly from the Dail. He then gained a small majority in the Dail, by reason of Collins’ personal influence and rash promises that he gave. The De Valera Government fell.

It was replaced by an incongruous combination of two Governments—a Provisional Government of the Parliament of Ireland, chaired by Collins; and a residue of the Dail Government with Griffith as President. Actual power lay with the Provisional Government, which launched the ‘Civil War’ about six months later when the British Army would have gone into action if it had not done so.

De Valera had done his best to prepare the Army and the people for difficulties and compromises. Collins and Griffith when deciding to take matters out of De Valera’s hands, had made no preparations at all.

Three days before signing the Treaty on his own authority, Griffith had agreed at a Government meeting that the document would split the country. He assured the Government that he would not sign it. He would make a further attempt at negotiations, and then would return to the Government for a decision. But he signed, and then seemed eager to get on with splitting the country.

Collins relied on his reputation and his control of the Irish Republican Brotherhood conspiracy to hold the Army together in support of what he did.

He was, said Griffith, “*the man who won the war*”. But then, in the next breath, the country was told that the War had not been won at all, that nothing bigger than a small police station had ever been taken, and that in military conflict with British the Irish position would be hopeless.

The Army was antagonised by this carry-on. In March it was accused of mutiny by the Treatyites who had shifted power from the Dail to the Provisional Government. There was talk of military dictatorship. But the fact of the matter was that, by means of the change of Government, the Government had abandoned the Army.

The Government to which it had sworn allegiance no longer existed. Its effective power had been transferred to the Provisional set-up by Britain, which Britain was supplying with an Army.

The story of the Treaty is a horror story.

What points of similarity are there between the Ukraine today and Ireland in 1921?

Nationalist Ireland had a population of three million. It declared itself independent of Britain, which had a population of about fifty million, and of the British Empire, which included four fully armed colonial states in its membership.

The Ukraine has a population of 44 million against the Russian Federation’s 146 million. The Ukraine is a state created by, and given its independence by, Russia. Ireland was denied statehood by Britain, and after an Irish Government set up on the basis of a clear election victory by the independence party, and after the British administration lost all support, the British Government tried to carry on governing the country by means of its police and its Army.

The Irish Government existed because it won two General Elections and a round of Local Government Elections. The present Ukrainian Government exists by reason of a *coup d’etat* which overthrew an elected Government that decided to establish trade relations with both Russia and the European Union.

The elected Irish Government was hostile to Britain because Britain denied its right to independence and tried to destroy it by force. The Ukrainian Government was the Government of an independent state recognised by Russia when it was overthrown by *coup d’etat*

mounted by forces that were hostile to Russia on grounds which had nothing to do with independence.

The forces of the *coup d’etat* resented the existence of a Russian national minority in the state and were intent on abolishing it. That minority defended itself against Ukrainian nationalist attack in 2014 and Russia intervened in support of it.

The British national minority in Ireland declared that it would not submit to a form of devolved government in Ireland within the British state, even though all the major powers of State in Ireland would remain British. It armed itself to resist devolved government. Its illegal Army was trained by officers of the British Army and was supported by one of the two Parties which made up the British state system.

An Irish Volunteer Army was raised in support of devolved Government. Its attempt to acquire arms was attacked by British forces. The Ukrainian state has a regular Army, and arms industries—and the United States, Britain, and many states of the EU are eager to supply it with whatever else it needs—apart from weapons that would probably lead to World War.

The Ukrainian Government considers it most unfair that US/UK/EU do not see it as being worth a World War.

The conflict between the Ukrainian Government and the Russian minority in the East of the state was going on for eight years before a Russian invasion was launched.

Independent observers estimate that 13,000 Russian-Ukrainian civilians were killed.

There was no military conflict between the Irish state and the British national minority in the North-East of the island, except for a brief foray by Michael Collins’s British-authorized Provisional Government in May 1922, which was repelled by the British Army.

The US Defence Secretary, Lloyd J. Austin, has said (April 27th) that the USA will ensure that the Russian state will be defeated in the Ukraine. That is also the position of the UK, whose Foreign Secretary [Liz Truss] has declared that reconquest of the Crimea by the Ukrainian Government is a British War Aim. That is also the position of the EU (or at least of its President, Ursula von der Leyen). And it is a virtual certainty

that it was on this understanding that the Ukrainian President refused to give the assurance that the Ukraine would not join the NATO military alliance against Russia that would have averted war.

Moscow responded to the statement of the US Defence Secretary by saying that it made the Ukrainian President a proxy of the USA in its war with Russia. The term “*proxy*” has been rejected indignantly by those who like to see the conflict in *David and Goliath* terms.

The President of the EU said at the outset that the EU would destroy the foundations of the Russian economy by means of economic sanctions. Three months on that has not happened. It seems that the Russian state must be destroyed by war, with the Eastern Ukraine as the killing ground. The art of it is to keep escalating the war while maintaining its proxy status.

The *Sunday Independent* shows pictures of Zelensky and Collins side by side, and comments:

“...an Irish delegation sailed to London to negotiate an end to the war with Britain and the issues on the table anticipated those at stake in Ukraine today: partition, neutrality, demilitarisation”.

The Irish Government was starved of arms, and British dominance in the world ensured that no other Government recognised Irish independence. But suppose that the United States had wanted war with Britain then, as it wants war with Russia now. There was a possibility of that being the case. Many acute observers saw it as a probability.

The USA had, for its own reasons, joined the 1914-19 European War in order to prevent England from being defeated in its war on Germany, and it had made England its major debtor state.

And it would not allow England to resume its pre-War status in the world—neither its Naval dominance nor the alliance with Japan which guaranteed its Empire in the Far East.

If Britain had not given way to America in 1921, there would have been war, and the Irish cause would have been supported vigorously by the Americans, and Collins would not have signed that ‘Treaty’.

But Britain gave way to American demands, and Collins made war on the IRA instead of on Britain.

What would Zelensky’s fate be if he tried to do a Collins?

Brendan Clifford

The “Famine” Lie

Retired History Professor Liam Kennedy’s published claim (Irish Times, 4.15.2022) includes the sub-headline, *The Ukrainian famine was state terror; in Ireland the British state tried—even if badly—to alleviate a massive failure of the food supply.*

Can Prof. Kennedy be unaware that the 1845-1850 starvation of Ireland was perpetrated by Britain’s armed forces; thus was genocide? How can he fail to be familiar with the War Office records (WO 379/7, Disposition of the Army) of all six years, 1845 through 1850? There is no excuse; those contemporaneous, handwritten records, are publicly available where I encountered them while researching the life of my grandfather Kieran Fogarty (1839-1923) at Britain’s Public Record Office (now The National Archives) in Kew, Surrey. Those records (certified-copies in my possession) show that, in addition to 12,500 English-led, carbine-toting Irish Constabulary and 37 landlord-commanded militia regiments, the starvation of Ireland was perpetrated by 67 named regiments, more than half of Britain’s 126-regiment regular army.

Those records show the dates that each named regiment entered and exited Ireland’s districts. The Commander-in-Chief, throughout, was General Sir Edward Blakeney who was awarded an Order of the Bath by Queen Victoria in 1849 as he neared successful completion. On 5th July 1847 Viceroy Clarendon wrote semi-cryptically to P.M. Russell: “*Sir Edward Blakeney says that the Country is tranquil and if it were not for the harassing duty of escorting provisions the troops would have little to do.*” Records show the dates of some of their explicit food removal raids, townland by townland.

At that time non-potato food processors were operating across Ireland: 1,935 grain mills, 1,984 grain kilns, 555 flour mills, 136 (grain-using) breweries, 74 (grain-using) distilleries, 62 threshers (though the flail was the usual method), 948 livestock pounds, 45 woollen mills (mutton and lamb), 43 windmills (more grain), and town markets for meats and dairy- and poultry-products. Militarily-escorted to the ports, they were exported while their producers starved.

Like other contemporaneous writers, *The Cork (now Irish) Examiner* newspaper, from 4th May 1846 until 19th November 1855, reported it as a “*Holocaust*”.

In 1900-1910, the landlords who then “owned” Ireland (in typically 20,000-acre estates) were all bought out by the British Government. Those not already England-domiciled repatriated to it. So munificent were those “*golden handshakes*” to the departing landlords that the amortization

period was set at 68.5 years. Thus, like all farmers in Ireland, my parents were still paying, in addition to “rates” (taxes), an annual “Rent” for decades after I emigrated in 1953.

Christopher Fogarty

Author of “*Ireland 1845-1850: the Perfect Holocaust, and Who Kept it ‘Perfect’*” (4th Ireland edition sold—gone, but available *gratis* at irishholocaust.org). 900 N. Lake Shore Dr. Apt. 1507, Chicago, IL 60611 fogarty@att.net. Tel. 312 437 3189



Gas For Poland ?

"Here the background to the Polish gas story that I gathered last year from the Russian press:

Poland used to have long term contracts with Gazprom like Germany. That means contracts decoupled from the spot market. But roughly ten years ago when spot market prices were consistently lower than the contract prices, Poland sued Gazprom to switch over to spot market prices. They finally managed to partially get out of their contract. Unfortunately that was in 2018 if I remember correctly.

Anyhow, suddenly Poland had a problem as the spot market price was significantly higher than the Gazprom price which Poland had paid before.

The EU in their neoliberal furor hat always disliked these long-term contracts and in the meantime had completely opened 'competition' in the European gas market.

Poland was of course a poster child and the naughty boy for once was the teacher's pet.

As a result of free trade in gas within the EU the German importers with their long-term contracts began to sell their Russian gas to the Poles and made huge money. That is why German gas storage was at its emptiest ever in March of this year.

Of course neither the EU nor Poland nor Germany are advertising these facts.

Concerning the current stance of the Polish Government, I posit that we don't see self-defeating stubbornness but a high degree of cleverness. As the spot market price of gas is

through the roof the Polish Government simply doesn't have the funds or else doesn't want to subsidise the gas of Polish consumers. And subsidise it would need to. as the spot price is over the moon and no way any but the richest of Poles could afford to pay. So Poland takes a 'principled' stance although it probably couldn't pay anyhow. An added benefit is shaming Germany to let Poland have some of the gas it gets from Russia. Here one needs to know that Germany last month passed a law forcing importers of gas to first fill up the huge salt caverns used as storage before selling any on the market. Anyhow that is my reading of this murky situation.

<<https://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2022/04/gas-flares-europe-has-a-hissy-flails-about-as-russia-imposes-gas-payment-countersanctions-and-economies-already-feel-blowback-bite.html#comment-3717238>>

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

NTA Plan for Cork

The Minister for Transport and several other Ministers Eamon Ryan TD, Green Party, launched recently *'The Bus Connects Cork, Sustainable Transport Corridors Report'* on behalf of the National Transport Authority (NTA).

The Report was produced at great expense to show apparently that something is going to be done. Why it needs to be shown in an expensive report is just more of how Ireland is being governed today. *Corus Iompair Eireann* has always served the country well up to 1986. In 1986, CIE was broken up into three subsidiary companies—Iarnród Eireann for the railways, Dublin Bus for Dublin buses and Bus Eireann for all the other buses in Ireland outside of Dublin. It looked like somebody, somewhere, was preparing to sell the companies off and privatise them in imitation of what was happening in England. Since 1986 the whole transport system in Ireland has gone downhill, bus and rail systems competed with each other and did not co-ordinate their routes and fares. Planning became sporadic and chaotic.

The transport situation got worse when in 2009 the *National Transport Authority* was set up. The NTA expanded into the various areas of transport including roads, rails, buses, cars, trains and trucks. Ireland is an island, it needs to be acknowledged, and the most vital transport of all are aeroplanes, airports, ships and seaports but, as far as we know, the NTA has not extended its tentacles into these areas, yet. In addition we have recently been blessed by the formation of yet another National body called *Transport for Ireland* (TFI) to co-ordinate transport matters for Ireland. What Department officials do in this matter is now a mystery.

The NTA is highly politicised, particularly in Dublin. The Developer of a new estate of houses can usually arrange to have a bus route changed to suit the location of the houses, no matter how much inconvenience this causes to other

users in delays and circumambulation. After all, the developer will not be using the bus. Train stations also can be created almost overnight to suit some Developer's plans.

The NTA will also ensure that road maintenance will be done in constituencies of TDs with influence, and will be neglected or postponed in other areas.

Road signage has become a big political football. As has road design. An example of this is the entrance to Cork City from Dublin and from the east, which used to be a fine wide road with two carriageways outwards and one carriageway inwards and which has recently been altered to one carriageway about three metres wide going outwards and one about three metres wide going into the city at Tivoli, which is near the Silversprings Hotel (now renamed the Clayton Hotel). A three metre wide entrance to the second largest city in the State!

The explanation is in the signage: there are seven signs on the N25 approaching Cork City which tell the driver how to get to **Limerick**. Drivers approaching Cork City definitely are given the impression that Cork is not the place to be going to.

The Signage is tribal war by other means and Limerick has long campaigned against Cork in the way of road design and signage.

There was a time when the main road south from Limerick was the road to Cork. So a motorway was proposed by the Department of Local Government, not South to Cork from Limerick but south west to Tralee and on it, about six miles/ten kilometres out from Limerick there was a small sign saying 'Cork' and it pointed into a narrow boreen which was indeed the road to Cork. Easy to miss on the wide motorway to Tralee!

It was said, by my father and by others, that the late Jim Kemmy TD, Independent Labour, and the late Donough O'Malley TD, Fianna Fáil, and Desmond O'Malley, Fianna Fáil and Progressive Democrat—all from Limerick—used to arrange for all young Limerick entrants into the Civil Service to opt for the Department of Local Government so as to do the greatest service for the City and County of Limerick.

Because of the vital part played by the City and County Councils in bringing down the English Government in Ireland in the years 1916-1922—they helped to make Ireland ungovernable—the new Irish Free State Government was wary of the powers

of the Local Authorities and the Government eroded the power and centralised it in the Department of Local Government. The key piece of legislation was the *'City and County Management Act 1932'* and this trend of taking power from the local elected councillors continued until they had lost all their power. Today councillors have no effective power. I have heard a County Council official saying: *"even if we propose to repair a footpath we have to get permission from the Department in Dublin"*.

This reduction in democratic power is physically exemplified in the architecture of Cork County Hall. When it was originally designed and built, it was the highest building in Ireland and the elected council chamber occupied the top floor. Next floor down was occupied entirely by the County Manager and his two secretaries.

This arrangement meant that, in going and coming to and from their Council Meetings, the elected Councillors had access to every floor in the building and to the County Manager in particular. This was later altered. A wing was added and the wing has two floors. On the ground floor is a reception area the size of a basketball court and on the first floor is a Council Chamber and the Mayor's office. Very impressive but without direct access to the executive offices in the tower.

The elected council was literally sidelined. To access any executive office the councillors have to arrange with a ground floor receptionist to have an appointment and have the door unlocked upstairs for them. Just like any member of the public. No direct access to their own staff!

The Manager controls the behaviour of the Councillors. If any Councillor opposes the Manager in any meaningful way, that Councillor's expenses claims are ruthlessly studied and cut—and that Councillor's positions on sub-committees, for which they are paid extra, are cut. And the 'offending Councillor' tends to be omitted from delegations going abroad and from other travel perks.

So the Councillors have no effective power and the Manager and his staff are completely controlled by the Department of Local Government in Dublin. It would seem that every worker in Local Government is replicated and controlled by an opposite public servant in Dublin: and the public servants in Dublin are responsible, not to the Minister of the Department but to the Secretary of the Department.

Ministers, being democratically elected, appear to be despised and manipulated by the Department Secretaries.

Such is democracy in Ireland today. And I suspect it is the same in every State across the EU.

Ministers are told after the event what has been done in their name and they are sent out with prepared *briefing notes* to deal with media meetings and constituency meetings, and meetings with other politicians abroad. Anything, to keep the Minister occupied and out of his office.

THE TONY HOLOHAN AFFAIR

It really is unbelievable that neither the Taoiseach, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Public Expenditure nor the Minister for Health knew that Dr. Tony Holohan was being seconded to lecture at Trinity College, Dublin (TCD) with his salary and benefits continuing to be provided by the Health Services Executive (HSE) and Two Million Euros a year to be given to TCD all out of taxpayer's monies!

The Minister for Higher Education it seems did not come into it at all. The TCD Professors all vociferously refused to have Dr. Holohan and they added insult to injury by stating that Mr. Holohan did not have a doctorate and was not qualified to hold even the lowest lecturer's job in TCD (such are their high standards?)

When the affair first emerged on the media it was admitted that the Secretary of the Department of Health Robert Watt had arranged the secondment unknown to any Minister. Later it emerged the affair was discussed "with the Taoiseach's office" last June 2021 – the smoke and mirrors is ongoing. We are most unlikely to get the truth anyway but, one news item said, the Two Million Euros a year will continue to be paid to TCD – out of taxpayer's money of course.

NTA Plan for Cork Buses.

In the meantime the public i.e. the taxpayers are being lined up to support this plan which is stated to cost Six Hundred Million Euros (!) by the daily drip of news items and statements from public representatives, business associations, Chamber of Commerce and other influencers. But as the plan entails the widening of some roadway by the compulsory acquisition of private gardens and parking spaces and the spending of 600 Million Euros so that buses can own our streets it will be a slow and painful process. Democracy has not come into it so far.

Michael Stack, ©.



Casement Summer School hosts controversial debate

The fourth DLR *Roger Casement Summer School* is taking place in this, the year when the Casement memorial statue in Dún Laoghaire will be unveiled. Happening at its usual venue, the Dún Laoghaire Lexicon on 5-7 May, the 2022 School has a strong Programme.

Top of the bill is a politically controversial debate between **Clare Daly** and **Barry Andrews** on the topic, 'What the war in Ukraine means for Ireland and the EU'. Chaired by well-known journalist, **Deaglán de Breadún**, it will provide an opportunity for a rare exchange of views on the tragedy that is unfolding in Ukraine.

For the first time we are this year holding a Musical Evening in which renowned tenor **Paul Linehan** will perform songs by Thomas Moore, Thomas Davis and Percy French (Moore's songs were a favourite of Casement's). The rest of the Programme, encompassing human rights sessions, a screening of *Secrets of Putumayo* about Casement's work in South America, history lectures, and culminating in a session on the long running project to convert Casement Park in Belfast into a modern stadium (led by Tom Daly of the Ulster GAA and chaired by author and former Sinn Fein publicity director Danny Morrison).

Outside of the Programme and in collaboration with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLR), The Casement Memorial Statue, a beautifully designed book, written by Angus Mitchell and published by DLR, will be launched.

ORGANISED LABOUR continued

to grant the country's Defence Forces the right to Union affiliation, which they have wavered over ever since *PDForra*, which represents enlisted personnel, won a European Court ruling in 2019 that this should be allowed.

RACO said its members have lost faith in the ability of any parallel process to recognise and compensate for the unique restrictions of Defence Forces service and this, coupled with the weakening of their Conciliation & Arbitration Scheme, "has resulted in its members seeking a new approach to pay negotiations" (*Irish Examiner-20.4.2022*).

Some readers may not recall : but on several occasions in the past, the army was used during strike action by bus workers during Tom Darby's days in both I.T.G.W.U. and after the founding of the National Bus and Rail Union (N.B.R.U.) Any thoughts of I.C.T.U. affiliation by army members should surely take that situation into consideration, European Court or not!

Two former bosses of Deliveroo were given suspended one-year prison sentences and fined €30,000 by a French court on Tuesday, 19.4.2022 for abusing the freelance status of riders working for the British takeaway delivery platform.

The company was also fined the maximum penalty of €375,000 and will have to publish the court decision on Deliveroo's French home page for one month.

The ruling may reverberate outside France as the gig economy, built largely upon digital apps and self-employed workers, faces a number of court challenges that may redefine working conditions.

Under French law, employee status grants rights, including unemployment benefits, social security and pension contributions.

A Classy Story!

"A story that was told to me by Roy Jenkins on the occasion of Oxford's refusal of an honorary degree to Margaret Thatcher... Meeting Jenkins in the lobby of the House of Commons, Harold Macmillan said,

"Terrible business, Roy, this insult to the Prime Minister by our old University, terrible. You know it is really a matter of class. The dons are mainly upper middle class, and they can never forgive Mrs Thatcher for being so lower middle class. But you and I, Roy, with our working class ancestry, are above that kind of thing".

Anthony Kenny, Balliol.

Contributed by **Niall Cusack**

ELECTION continued

a young Eleanor Marx "went quite wild" with joy, but Friedrich Engels urged the Fenians to learn from their amnesty and election campaigns and—

"abandon their conspiratorial tactics and the staging of minor coups in favour of practical activities which, though seemingly legal, are far more revolutionary than anything they have done since their unsuccessful insurrection".

The Home Office vainly attempted to keep Rossa in ignorance of his candidature amidst rumours of a rescue attempt. In Chatham, Rossa's companions debated his tactics, if brought before the House of Commons. Some urged that he should assert his nationality by speaking in Irish. Rossa, like Mitchel, interpreted his election as a momentous rejection of "foreign rule". There were exuberant celebrations, involving bands and blazing tar barrels, although the windows of some opponents were also broken.

Lord Kimberley, the former Viceroy, remained unimpressed, believing that Irish unhappiness was the result of the national character, as illustrated by this By-Election: The Tipperary ruffians have elected as their member, the rowdy felon. "Donovan Rossa, a most fit and proper representative of them". Lamenting "what a descent from Grattan and O'Connell, or even Wolfe Tone and Emmet", he predicted that the British would now witness the power of the IRB, as it marshalled the nationalist community. Kimberley feared Gladstone was deluded if he believed in a speedy reconciliation between Ireland and England.

An undischarged felon was presumed dead in law, which disqualified Rossa from taking his seat. Following T.P. Gill's advice, T.P. O'Connor of Laffana, along with Thomas Mackey of Templemore, a clerical student, nominated Charles Kickham for the next round, without obtaining the consent of the IRB leadership, which considered their point made.

William Hurley, a wealthy butter buyer who had been elected Chairman of the Tipperary Town Commissioners on several occasions, was an IRB sympathizer and participated in both elections. In February 1870 these Commissioners, led by "the chairman", proceeded to vote for Kickham. Anticipating success, supporters

lit bonfires on Slievenamon, but Kickham lost by four votes, having abstained from electioneering because of his distaste for parliamentary politics. Elections were expensive and the Fenian activists needed American help to settle their debts.

Dublin Castle was reluctant to agree to a further amnesty, as the IRB had not disbanded. Its membership was greatly reduced, but better organised. In December 1869 spymaster Samuel Lee Anderson wrote to Sir Thomas Larcom that the IRB had been—

"...wonderfully stimulated by the release of the prisoners' and Rossa's victory. The leaders, learning from past mistakes, had become 'very determined' and exercised 'amazing secrecy'. Members were thoroughly vetted and feared retribution, if indiscreet. Although Dublin Castle had recruited two informers, they could learn very little. Anderson did not anticipate an immediate insurrection, but the tenant right agitation had revived Ribbonism and 'sedition has become, one might almost say, the religion of the people'..."

(Extract from "Soldiers of Liberty" by Eva Ó Cathaoir. Lilliput Press 2018.)

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Organised Labour!

"Amazon beaten by workers in fight for unionisation in New York."

(BBC-UK-1.4.2022)

Amazon will be forced to recognise a trade union in the U.S. for the first time in its history. Workers at a warehouse in New York voted 55% in favour of joining the Amazon Labor Union.

"The group is led by former Amazon worker Chris Smalls, who made his name protesting against safety conditions at the retail giant during the pandemic. Mr Smalls' victory marks a major defeat for Amazon, which had fiercely fought against unionisation." (ibid.)

"However, in Alabama, where Amazon was facing a separate union drive, the company appeared to have fended off activists in a tight contest in which challenged ballots could yet overturn that result."

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters' (IBT), new president, Sean O'Brien has pledged his powerful union will step up the pressure on Amazon and mount its own efforts to unionize the company after workers in New York voted to form the company's first US Union.....

In an unprecedented move, the country's military officers have voted overwhelmingly to seek affiliation to the umbrella union group ICTU, in order to gain proper representation at national pay talks.

The 85% vote in favour of the move by RACO (Representative Organisation for Commissioned Officers) members will put further pressure on the Government

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LABOUR

Comment

ISSN 0790-1712

VOLUME 40 No. 5

CORK

ISSN 0790-1712

1869—

Election of O'Donovan Rossa

(Extract from "Soldiers of Liberty" by Eva Ó Cathaoir, Lilliput Press 2018.)

During the Summer of 1869 James F.X. O'Brien heard about the Tipperary By-Election from Denis Caulfield Heron, the Liberal candidate. This eminent Catholic barrister enjoyed the support of the clergy and was on good terms with the Fenians, having defended O'Brien and others. The *Nation* considered him much the best candidate, who would also promote tenant right.

In Nenagh Peter Gill of the *Tipperary Advocate* "suggested that O'Donovan Rossa ought to be put forward", which struck James F.X. O'Brien as "a very good idea". Mitchel had previously urged the running of abstentionist candidates in the *Irish Citizen*, but Rossa was nominated rather late. O'Brien believed that the Fenian ethos, so prevalent in Tipperary, could provide a spectacular demonstration in favour of amnesty.

Peter Gill advised that Daniel O'Connell, an enthusiastic Irish Republican Brotherhood member who farmed 120 acres near Toomevara, should be asked to help. O'Brien and O'Connell contributed £6 to start a fund for election expenses in the *Irishman* and O'Connell toured the county to rally supporters. Rossa needed to be nominated immediately, so O'Brien did not consult Kickham, the senior leader in Tipperary, who disapproved of such tactics. Fr. Patrick Lavelle of Partry, acting as Heron's go-between, offered to donate £500 to the *Ladies' Committee* on condition that Rossa would withdraw, but O'Brien refused.

Patrick Mackey, the first IRB 'centre' of Templemore, was an agent for Power's Distillery. Detained during the

habeas corpus suspension until June 1866, when Sir James Power provided bail for him, Mackey was ill, but supported Rossa's candidature. Thomas Condon of Clonmel, another influential Fenian, canvassed eagerly. Kendal and Patrick O'Brien, affluent natives of Cullen, Co. Tipperary, became guarantors for the election expenses, which forced them to sell some of their land. The barony of Clanwilliam, with the town of Tipperary at its centre, favoured Rossa decisively.

Thomas Ryan, a tea dealer and "prominent member of the Dublin amnesty committee", provided striking placards, which were posted throughout the county recommending **O'Donovan Rossa as the man for Tipperary**. The constabulary considered Ryan "very mischievous", but a magistrate advised that worse posters would be put up, if these were removed. The DMP stated that Ryan was "an enthusiast in politics", who mixed patriotism with business, facilitating him to sell three times more tea than before.

Violence was common during open balloting and "farmers were taken out of their beds in Templemore and Borrisoleigh and forced to swear that they would vote for 'Donovan Rossa'." Some voters were intimidated, others hesitated between Heron and the political prisoner. The turnout was low and only 2000 of the 12,000 men entitled to vote did so. Rossa won by 103 votes on a memorable occasion when the people, rather than the landlords or the Catholic clergy, dictated the outcome.

Addressing Rossa's supporters, Peter Gill pronounced Tipperary "the foremost county of Ireland", which had asserted the rights of the common man. He stressed the need for reform and intimated that a revolution might follow if their demand was refused. Gladstone could demonstrate that his desire for reconciliation was genuine by liberating Rossa. If the Fenians were not freed, Gill promised:

"...that we will go from county to county, and from borough to borough, wherever there is a vacancy, and wherever they want to give promotion to a barrister or aspirant, we will meet them there, and we will have Luby in—we'll have O'Leary too, and we'll have Denis Dowling Mulcahy (enthusiastic cheering); and before we have done we will have the materials of a real Irish Parliament.

John Martin compared this victory to the historic Clare Election of 1828, which had resulted in Catholic Emancipation. He stressed that it was futile to expect "security of tenure and fair rents" from an English Parliament. The *Nation* believed that the electors of Tipperary had focused international attention on Ireland. In England

Irish Political Review is published by the IPR Group: write to—

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Bray, Co. Wicklow or

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