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West And East:

The New Phase of the War

The Ukraine War is creating new realities in international affairs and, in some cases, in domestic politics. To keep abreast of the changes, it has become necessary to disregard mainstream Western media and to consult sources sympathetic to Russia, including the Government of the Russian Federation and, to a lesser extent, the Chinese Government.

The crudeness of Western coverage of the war is undermining professional journalism. It has already lost credibility among a politically-aware section of public opinion in Ireland and across Europe, at both ends of the political spectrum.

The *Irish Times* (IT), a newspaper serving a neutral, non-NATO country, is choosing to frame its coverage in lockstep with that of the NATO Powers. Its standpoint is typified by a recent headline, "*Russia's Insane War*". But the war is only insane if you ignore the chain of events that led to it: the Eastwards expansion of NATO to Russia's borders, the US-backed *coup* of 2014, and Kiev's ultra-nationalist eight-year war against the Russian-speaking populations of the Donbass, who had been granted a measure of autonomy under the earlier *Minsk Agreement*. Neither can the Russian military's conduct across the battlefields of Ukraine be described as insane.

The War has set in motion important changes throughout the political landscape of Continental Europe. From the outset, the European Union and its Member States have sided obediently with the US—to the extent that Europe is now seen as a US satellite. It is, however, in the reaction against that subservience that interesting political developments are occurring. In Germany, Italy, France, Sweden, Austria, Slovakia and

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Scholz— the German Joker

The Irish Times editorially hailed "*New German ideas – at last*" (31/8/22) following a speech by Chancellor Scholz in Prague a couple of days earlier.

"Five years late, Germany has finally presented some EU reform plans of its own. In Prague on Monday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz argued that Russia's war on Ukraine was a moment of truth for the EU, demanding swift reforms to ensure well-known fault lines do not open further....On Monday at Charles University, the chancellor argued that overdue EU reforms – for credible foreign policy, co-ordinated defence plans or harmonised fiscal rules – all hinge on being able to make decisions. And that means shifting from unanimous voting towards majority voting."

There is nothing at all new in this. It is Scholz following the EU herd, or rather the elite that claims to speak for the herd. The Irish Times goes on to castigate Merkel and her failing was that—

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A Living Culture!

I think we can fairly say that one of the continuing strengths of Irish culture is local history. Curiosity about places, and their associated people and peoples, keeps a multitude of local groups and societies going. These bodies hold occasional public lectures and events and often produce an annual journal. In West Cork alone, I can think of at least eight local Societies that produce or have recently produced such a journal: Skibbereen, Clonakilty, Rosscarbery, Bandon, Mizen, Castlehaven, Bantry, Kilbrittain. There is also an *O'Mahony Journal*, that far-flung family being mainly West Cork-rooted, and maybe others worthy of mention.

Local historical societies can encourage the gathering of interesting and valuable information, often about people and events that have more than a local interest. Some-

times they can get the best from academic historians; at other times they can act as a check and a challenge to such historians and officially-sponsored documentarists, when they let their biases run away from them. Here of course I must mention the *Aubane Historical Society*, North Cork-based but known to make forays to Skibbereen, and, like the great poet whose poems it published lately (*Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh*), having both a local and an Ireland-wide perspective.

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Greece—not to mention the State that is refusing to conform, Hungary—opposition is growing to the Sanctions against Russia initiated by the Anglo-Saxon powers, America and Britain.

The EU's response has been led by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. An *Irish Times* editorial on the *State of the Union* address she gave in mid-September highlighted her “*emphasis on building the EU's autonomy*” (15 September). How can capitulation to the will of the US be presented as movement towards autonomy? In geopolitical terms, the only way the EU could have asserted autonomy was through cooperation, or even alliance, with Russia. The possibility of that happening was the great American fear: and that disappeared on the first day of the war in Ukraine in precise accordance with long-term US strategy.

Even the editorial writer conceded that Von der Leyen's ambition to speed up the accession of Moldova and the Western Balkans, in addition to Ukraine, into EU

membership “*will not go down well with member states*”. That point underscores the Commission President's position of political weakness—a weakness made more obvious when she issued a veiled threat to the Italian electorate against voting for the Far Right parties in the run-up to the recent Election. In the event, the Far Right parties won; the Italian electorate refused to be influenced by a liberal technocrat threatening to withhold funds. Notably, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov observed at a recent press conference at the United Nations that no previous EU leader had ever used such a tactic.

Turning to Ireland, we can be sure that the EU's disarray will be welcomed by those elements who wanted Ireland to side with Britain during the Brexit negotiations. But Ireland's place is with Europe, regardless of the ebbs and flows of politics. As a result of Brexit, the number of maritime routes running between Ireland and the Continent has jumped from twelve to fifty; the *land bridge* across England

has effectively ceased, and an electricity interconnector linking Ireland and France will be operational in a few years. These changes are to the good and should be supported politically.

The changed international atmosphere arising from the *New Cold War* as it is being called—the build-up of military tension between the West led by the US on one side, and China and Russia on the other—demands a re-evaluation of Irish foreign policy in line with the traditional stance in international affairs of the independent Irish State. A case can be made that in recent decades too much attention has focussed on Ireland's EU membership and not enough on our role in the wider international arena.

On the subject of foreign policy, this magazine would have substantial differences—as well as large areas of agreement with Irish MEPs, Clare Daly and Mick Wallace. (We supported and publicised Daly's Address at the 2022 Roger Casement Summer School). The pair have made political interventions on international subjects, ranging from the treatment of Russian nationals in Lithuania to support for Hezbollah, the Governments of Syria and of Belarus, and Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces. As Irish Members of the European Parliament, holding outspoken views in defiance of the prevailing NATO consensus, they receive a lot of media attention in China, Russia and throughout the Middle East.

In a somewhat similar fashion, two of the contributors to *Irish Political Review*, Pat Walsh (<https://drpatwalsh.com/>) and David Morrison (<http://david-morrison.org.uk/index.html>) have, through their expertise in different areas of foreign affairs, won recognition as commentators. Pat has established a reputation in Azerbaijan and Turkiye through his knowledge of British Foreign Policy in the early Twentieth Century and related matters. As a history and politics analyst, he regularly participates in media discussions in both countries.

David's website is a go-to resource for journalists and researchers interested in Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon and the Middle East. With British journalist, Peter Osborne, he co-authored an important book on Iran, *A Dangerous Delusion* (2013).

By their example, both the above-mentioned MEPs, and Pat and David, have provided food for thought on the question of making a contribution to international

affairs. In the geopolitical climate arising from the present War, that is becoming a key issue.

THE COUNTER OFFENSIVES AND THE PARTIAL MOBILISATION

The main events of the latest phase of the War are the Ukrainian counter-offensives, Russia's announcement of a partial mobilisation, the referendums in four areas of Eastern Ukraine, and the co-ordinated sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines. Getting to the truth about these events requires using reliable sources of information. Thankfully, social media channels, especially *You Tube*, provide a means of breaking the control of communications that the Western Powers have enjoyed since at least the First World War. In time of war, even in the digital age, it is never possible to have certainty as to the veracity of information in circulation, but the broad thrust of developments can still be discerned.

On the Ukrainian counter-offensives, two useful sources are a YouTube video by Brian Berletic (21 September) and an interview on the *Grayzone* website between Max Blumenthal and Scott Ritter (23 September). Both can be accessed using Google. Berletic is a geopolitical analyst living in Bangkok, who has covered the conflict from the start. An ex-US marine, he is nevertheless critical of the Western narrative and sympathetic to Russia. Similarly, Ritter is an ex-US Marine Intelligence Officer—who served as a UN weapons inspector from 1991 to 1998. Following that role, he became a critic of US foreign policy. Blumenthal, who conducts the interview and manages the *Grayzone*, is a well-known US dissident. For whatever reason, US commentators tend to be refreshingly forthright.

Berletic rejects a trope of Western commentary that, following the Kharkov counter-offensive, Ukraine is now in the ascendency. Referring to a *Washington Post* article, he shows that the counter-offensive in Kherson cost a catastrophic number of Ukrainian casualties. After the fighting the battle line in that region remains unchanged. He says that, in the successful Ukrainian advance in Kharkov, only minimal damage was inflicted on the Russians—who retreated and regrouped using the Oskil River as a defensive line. Meanwhile, he says, Russia is continuing to grind out slow progress in the Donbass.

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A Reader's Endorsement!

I subscribe to your excellent political publications for five reasons.

- Your courage in expressing such politically incorrect views at a time when the media are pushing Identity Politics.
- Your courage in expressing an alternative view to the British/American orthodoxy on world affairs.
- Your courage in standing up for Irish Neutrality at a time when the Irish media are beating the NATO drums of war!!!
- Your courage in exposing Ireland's revisionist historians and their Anglo-ophile agenda.
- Although I am totally opposed to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, they have (the Russians) legitimate security concerns in that country which we never hear aired in the Irish media. We only get the British/American outlook on world events!!

Keep up the good work *Irish Political Review* !!

Ireland: in the doldrums???

Not for the first time we wonder at the competence of the fourth estate when reporting on business matters.

The Irish Examiner (the Cork branch of The Irish Times) tells us in a headline on 1st September 2022:

"Irish factories record steep drop in production as inflation hits record levels"

Apparently, the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) shows 53 in June; 51.8 in July; and a "steep decline" to 51.1 in August!

But the PMI is an indicator of expectations that purchasing managers have of the future. So no drop in production (steep or otherwise) has been recorded. While expectations are important in manufacturing, since they determine investment decisions, a PMI greater than 50 indicates that there is an expectation of growth. The Irish PMI of 51.1 is in contrast to the rest of the Eurozone (a PMI of 49.7), as well as of Britain (46): both of which are expecting contraction.

In Ireland we are fortunate that the strongest industries here are "sunrise" industries, such as Pharmaceutical and IT, which will expand regardless of general conditions in the economy.

John Martin

Pakistan's new PM

Shehbaz Sharif replaced Khan in a parliamentary 'palace coup' earlier this year. He has been denounced as a US puppet. This has now been revealed to be untrue. At Samarkand he gave an effusive speech praising Putin for his "*wise leadership*", and held a long meeting with him. He announced a deepening of ties with Russia in all areas of trade, emphasising his intention to buy Russian gas and to re-activate pipeline and other plans made with Russia in 2017, but which Khan had done nothing to advance. The commentator Alexander Mercouris has given a full account of all of this on U-Tube (16.9.22).

India and Pakistan took interesting positions in the last Cold War, essentially using it to balance against each other. Pakistan was very much a CIA-managed military dictatorship until civilian control returned after the 'Cold War', while India, though a parliamentary democracy, always retained an alliance with Russia, especially in arms trade. This enabled it to free itself from Western (= British) control.

What is interesting in Pakistan's growing relationship with China and participation in the *Shanghai Cooperation Organisation* and the *Belt And Road Initiative* is that it borders on the Uyghur region of China and yet, as far as I know, does not make an issue of that, despite probable US pressure to do so.

Philip O'Connor

Russia's partial mobilisation of 300,000 reservists, Berletic sees as a planned initiative which will alter the balance of forces in the War—not an impulsive move by President Putin as the pro-NATO pundits are claiming. Had the Russians invaded the Donbass in 2014 following the *coup*, the accusation of impulsive behaviour might be credible. Despite the attacks on the large population of Russian speakers in the Eastern Ukraine (12 million plus), he considers that the Russians have bided their time.

As evidence for his contention that preparations for the mobilisation have been ongoing for months, he cites the pro-NATO military analyst, Michael Kaufman—whom he considers well-informed about Russian movements, and whose reports are being used extensively by Western media. In answer to Kaufman's argument that deficiencies in command and control, logistics, troop rotation etc, are apparent in the Russian military, Berletic says that the same is true for the Ukrainian forces. Indeed, the situation may be worse on the Ukrainian side, given what is known about the level of corruption associated with the Kiev regime.

Another of the claims by the NATO side that he disputes is that public opinion in Russia is in revolt against the mobilisation. He cites opinion poll results showing a solid majority of Russian voters supporting the War. The surveys were by the *Yuri Levada Centre*, a company funded by the US Government. Clearly there is a small pro-Western minority in Russia who oppose the War, but that element had its day in the Yeltsin era, a time of disintegration.

By comparison with Berletic, Scott Ritter has a deeper knowledge of military history and his army experience was at a higher level. Ritter sees the Kharkov counter offensive as the highwater mark of the Ukrainian/NATO forces. He has repeatedly stated in recent months that Russia has insufficient troop numbers in Ukraine to achieve its war aims. These are to win control of the Donbass, demilitarise Ukraine (render it a neutral state without long range missiles), and de-Nazify the Kiev regime. Speaking before the announcement of the partial mobilisation, he argued that a further 200,000 Russian troops would be needed, but he was confident that they would be provided on a volunteer basis. He will no doubt welcome the decision to call up the reservists.

Despite his belief that Ukraine is unlikely to achieve further major advances on the scale of those in Kharkov, he considers the \$53 billion of Western aid, and the extent of logistical/Intelligence support being provided by NATO, to be "*game changers*". He believes that the Ukrainian armed forces have already been effectively defeated and that Russia now faces a NATO army in all but name, which includes an International Legion comprising many highly-trained and experienced "*foreign internal defence*" forces from the US.

Ritter expresses high praise for the conduct of both sides in the Kharkov counter-offensive. He sees the Russian retreat as having been conducted with minimal losses of combatants. Referring to two tactical initiatives—causing sufficient slight damage to the electricity grid to allow for an orderly retreat in Kharkov; and bursting a dam in Zaporizhzhia that swept away all the bridges that the Ukrainian forces had used, thereby entrapping them on wrong side of the river—he says that future historians will see them as masterpieces of military art.

THE REFERENDUMS

Between September 23rd and September 27th, under war time conditions, referendums were held in Donetsk (total vote, 2,131,207), Luhansk (total vote, 1,662,607), Zaporizhzhia, (total vote, 541,093), and Kherson (total vote, 571,001). (These figures are from Wikipedia.)

The total vote, providing an overall total of 4.9 million casting their votes, indicates the size of the population in these oblasts. (Those under voting age and the substantial figure for those displaced by the War would need to be added to compute the size of the whole population.) The respective percentages for the vote to join with the Russian Federation were: 99.23%, 98.42%, 93.11% and 87.05%.

The main line of attack against the referendums on the international stage has been that they undermine and breach the territorial integrity of Ukraine. In his Press Conference at the UN on September 24th, Sergey Lavrov defended the referendums before answering any questions. He said:

"I would like to remind you about Vladimir Zelensky's interview in August 2021, during which he stated that these were not people who were living in eastern Ukraine, but rather "creatures", and

that those of its residents who regarded themselves as Russians, wanted to speak Russian and wanted their children and grandchildren to have a future, should ship out to Russia."

During questions, he was asked by a journalist from South Africa why he had signed a communique after a BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Ministerial meeting on 22nd September endorsing the UN Charter which "*so obviously contradicts the Russian Federation's actions on the ground as it relates to Ukraine?*" Lavrov's reply which gets to the heart of Russia's understanding of the legal position, is worth quoting in full.

"I will explain: the principles of the UN Charter provide for respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. At the same time, they provide for respecting the right of people to self-determination. And the apparent conflict between these two concepts has been subject to many negotiations quite a long time. Soon after the UN was established, a process was started to develop the understanding of all the principles of the Charter. And lastly, the General Assembly's Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the UN Charter was adopted by consensus. It included sections on equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and on territorial integrity.

The General Assembly came to the following conclusion regarding the interpretation of the UN Charter. Every state must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any state whose government respects the principle of self-determination of peoples and represents all ethnicities living in its territory. I will laugh if anyone here tells me that after the 2014 *coup* in Ukraine, after the bans on the Russian language, Russian education, and Russian media, after the *putschists* bombed the territories where people refused to recognise the results of the *coup*, if anyone tells me that the Kiev junta, the neo-Nazi regime that adopted laws to legalise the Nazi theory and practices in Ukraine, represents the interests of people in eastern Ukraine. It is obvious to any unbiased observer that this regime does not represent people who regard themselves as native Russian speakers and share Russian culture. I have already quoted Zelensky. He said, anyone who wants to be Russian can head off to Russia. Does this mean he represents the interests of these people?"

In response to the same question, Lavrov also said that the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, had become very active, making statements every day, on the question of the referendums. He said it was a pity Mr. Guterres was

not more active in defending the *Minsk Peace Agreements* of 2014 in the years before the *Special Military Operation*.

NORD STREAM SABOTAGE

The Nord Stream pipelines beneath the Baltic Sea have been holed by four carefully-planned explosions on September 26th. The consensus is that the action was so clinical, and so far-reaching in its international effects, it could only have been carried out by the security forces of a major Power. The damage is reported to be such that repairs will take a year, on the unlikely assumption that the political will exists to undertake that work. The pipelines were already closed off.

The sabotage had the purpose of preventing them from being used as leverage to bring about a settlement when Germany's energy crisis really hits home. It appears that whoever authorised the action intended to send a dramatic message to the German and Russian Governments and perhaps to the world.

Apart from adding to the international tension surrounding the Ukraine War, and exacerbating Europe's energy crisis, the explosions caused an ecological disaster. Despite not currently being in use, the pipelines contained significant quantities of gas, whose largest component is methane—a pollutant with more than 80 times the heating potency of carbon dioxide. *Greenpeace EU* believes that the combined leakage from the pipelines will have “*the same climate wrecking potential as 30 million tons of carbon dioxide*” (Common Dreams website). The only comparable leakage occurred near Los Angeles in 2015 when 97,100 metric tons of methane were emitted.

At the centre of the international fallout from the attack are two questions: who is responsible? And, at a more practical level, will it be possible to collect evidence to show who is responsible? Efforts to blame Russia very quickly fell apart when it was pointed out that the pipelines actually belong to Russia and Moscow could easily cut off the supply by simply turning off the taps. The obvious perpetrator is the party with most to gain from the action: Washington.

Many social and mainstream outlets could be quoted in building a case against the US, but a particularly useful source is the *Global Times*, a Chinese daily associated with the *People's Daily*. Articles, especially editorials, in

that newspaper are known to reflect the thinking of the Chinese Government. What the Chinese are thinking as the war in Ukraine escalates is an unanswered question of the present time.

As might be expected, the authors of an article on the Nord Stream outrage are somewhat tentative and circumspect. The lack of hard evidence is acknowledged, as is the need for remaining open-minded. But there is no mistaking whom the Chinese suspect. An article headed, “*Cloud of suspicion hangs over Europe on Nord Stream leaks*”, notes a tweet from former Polish Defence Minister Radek Sikorski simply saying, “*Thank you, USA*”, and a video clip that went viral of Joe Biden saying, “*If Russia invades, then there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.*” The authors quote a Chinese blogger asking who would want to sabotage EU-Russian energy cooperation and giving the answer as the US. They end on a cynical note quoting a Professor at the China University of Petroleum. His view is that the US is “*reaping the benefits of higher gas prices, and it is also possible that some US companies may buy Russia-originated gas, liquefy it, and sell it to European buyers for a profit*” (*Global Times*, 28 September).

An editorial on the following day, while keeping within the bounds of careful diplomatic language, contains the following paragraph:

“The ill-fated destiny of Nord Stream 2 pipeline itself explains quite a few issues. The major, mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation program between Russia and the EU, has met firm opposition from the US since day one. From repeated verbal threats to many rounds of sanctions, the US has shown its firm stance—it won't stop until it messes up the Nord Stream 2” (*Global Times*, 29 September).

TWO PRESS CONFERENCES

In attempting to make sense of the Ukraine War and its latest developments, two recent Press Conferences are important: Vladimir Putin's briefing to journalists at a meeting of the *Shanghai Cooperation Organisation* in Samarkand on September 16th; and Sergey Lavrov's answers at the office of the UN in New York on September 24th, mentioned above. The full course of these conferences can be viewed on the Internet, but the texts of both constitute important documents relating to the history of the War. Both will be reproduced in our sister publication, *Irish Foreign Affairs*, in due course.

In a nutshell these Press Conferences testify to the solidity of the Russian position. They provide a glimpse of what a multi-polar world would be like. Three statements stand out from Putin's answers. Regarding the success of the Ukrainian counter offensive, he was quietly confident that it would fail to alter the course of the War. Asked whether Russia's military strategy would be changed, he said:

“No, the plan will not be adjusted. The General Staff takes real-time decisions in the course of the operation and some are considered a key, the main goal. The main goal is to liberate the entire territory of Donbass.

This work continues despite the attempts of the Ukrainian army to launch a counter-offensive. We are not stopping our offensive operations in Donbass itself. They continue. They continue at a slow pace but consistently and gradually, the Russian army is taking more and more new territory.

I must emphasise that we are fighting not with a full army but only with part, with contracted forces. But, of course, this is linked with certain personnel parameters and so on. This is why we are not in a rush in this respect. But essentially, there have been no changes. The General Staff considers some objectives important and others secondary but the main task remains the same and it is being carried out.”

Another topic he expanded on was the deal brokered by *Türkiye* [Turkey] and the UN to get grain and fertiliser to countries experiencing famine conditions.

“We have no doubt that we will sell our goods; we sell them now and will continue to sell them in the future as there is great demand for them in the markets. The point is that if things continue this way, they will not reach the poorest countries. You have probably heard about 300,000 tonnes of Russian fertiliser stuck in European ports; our companies are saying they are ready to provide it for free—just unblock and release it, and we will donate it to the poorest countries and to developing markets. But they are still holding it, and this is absolutely astonishing.

They do not want Russia to earn money—but we are not making a profit by giving away fertiliser. I just do not get what they are doing. What is the purpose of all this? There has been so much talk about providing help to the poorest countries, but exactly the opposite is actually happening.

I have the impression—and this is particularly true for European countries—that these former colonial powers are still living in the paradigm of colonial philosophy, and they are used to living at the expense of others. They still fail

to get rid of this paradigm in their daily policies. But it is time to draw certain conclusions and act differently, in a more civilised manner.”

Putin also provided an extremely well-informed analysis of the cause of the European energy crisis. Being a large subject in itself, this must remain for another day. Suffice to say that he considers that the crisis was already underway long before the commencement of the War, as a result of overly hasty efforts by the Europeans to “*completely close down the hydrocarbon energy programme*”. Incidentally, Putin was adamant that he supports the green agenda.

The other Press Conference was given by Sergey Lavrov and we have already quoted from it. A further statement he made is worth noting. Responding to a second question from the already mentioned

South African journalist, he spoke about the balance of the UN Security Council [UNSC] as follows:

“I pointed out that the issue concerns exclusively the enlargement of the UNSC through the addition of Asian, African, and Latin American representatives. It would be ridiculous to speak about adding more Western countries for several reasons. Aside from the fact that all of them are hostile towards Russia and China, can any Western country, if made a permanent UNSC member, add anything new to its work? No. They are all acting on the instructions of the US, including Germany and Japan, which have officially announced their aspiration to become permanent members. Just take a look at what they say and do.”

A question underlying the War is whether the US consolidates its position as global hegemon or whether we see the emergence of a multi-polar order.

unanimity is only reflecting “*the reality of Europe*”. This means that the EU/Europe has a reality and a *Demos* more developed than that of the nations of the Member States. But nobody has yet died for the EU/Europe!

His rejection of unanimity in favour of majority voting among states is in effect an attempt at overriding national interests. That may work in the case of some Member States sometimes but is not guaranteed overall. Majority decisions in such cases can only be obtained on mundane or spurious issues or on the lowest common denominator among the states but it is not sustainable when fundamentals are at stake.

Mr Scholz’s political judgement may be assessed by the unique contribution he made to the present war situation in Ukraine. At a Press Conference in Moscow on 15th February he laughed when Putin explained, again, that it was the genocidal policy of the Kyiv *coup d’etat* Government towards the Donbas Russians that was the problem and which had not been resolved by the *Minsk Agreement* after eight years, an agreement of which Germany was the most prominent signatory.

It is not wise for a German Chancellor to laugh about genocide in any context. In this situation doing so could hardly be more provocative and ill-judged and was the final straw for Putin. Merkel would have considered it far “*beyond the necessary*” to do this. But what would she know?

Eight years of war by a Government formed following a *coup d’etat*, and the deaths of over 10,000 in the Donbas—initiated by a curtain raiser, the burning to death of dozens in a Trade Union Hall in Odessa on 3rd May 2014, should indeed merit the UN definition of genocide which says:

“In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.*”

Mr Scholz should have noted this before he laughed.

Jack Lane

Scholz— the German Joker

continued

“During her crisis-filled four-term run Angela Merkel held Europe together like few of her peers—but little more. If politics is the art of the possible, Merkel rarely pushed to achieve anything beyond the necessary.”

What a failure—to have done what was necessary during a series of crisis that involved half a billion people! Can Scholz or anybody seriously believe that the EU is in better shape by those who are now doing more than is necessary!

The crucial ‘new’ policies announced by Scholz, as the editorial rightly pointed out,

“...hinge on being able to make decisions. And that means shifting from unanimous voting towards majority voting.”

The majority is always right – right? But a majority of what?

Majorities make sense and are effective when and where there is a pre-existing, longstanding consensus on fundamentals by all who do the voting – a *Demos*. Democratic voting, which is essentially conservative, is based, by the winners and losers, on consolidating that pre-existing *Demos*. But does the EU have this? Unless one is blind, deaf and in a coma that is plainly not the case. Divisions between the Member

States are increasing and only coincide when of particular interest to each. In other words it has become an intergovernmental arrangement like many other such arrangements across the world. There is more than a single *Demos* in play.

The EU, like Europe itself, consists of national entities and the *demos* of each, and it is only in these contexts that majorities—and minorities—“*live and move and have their being*”.

But Scholz is on another planet called Europe/EU and sees majority voting as the silver bullet to solve the alleged problems it faces. He says:

“To prepare the EU for a further wave of enlargement, “swift and pragmatic action” is needed on shifting from unanimity towards decision-making by majority votes – in particular on foreign and fiscal policy. “Where unanimity is required today, the risk of an individual country using its veto and preventing all the others from forging ahead increases with each additional member state,” said Mr Scholz. Anyone who believes anything else is in denial about the reality of Europe.” (Irish Times 30.8.22.)

Mr Scholz here denies the legitimacy of national interests as a “*risk*,” a nuisance, a “*fault line*” as the *Irish Times* puts it and

A Living Culture!

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I would say that *Dúchas*, the new Duhallow Historical Journal, has emerged in an energy field that Aubane created. Aubane is special, after all; it's no surprise if other people decided there was need for a more conventional kind of Duhallow historical journal. But the energy of Aubane is seen, for example (if I'm not mistaken), first of all in the handsome Gaelic script used for the Irish version of the Preface, and more generally in the temper and tone that is largely maintained throughout the issue, and which seems to put even contributors who are often otherwise inclined in their most positive and constructive mood.

There are various articles in *Dúchas* about local writings, from the oghams, through Gofraidh Fionn, through the poets/scribes of the 17th/18th/19th centuries, to J. G. O'Keeffe and Hanna Sheehy Skeffington (about mid-20th century). The articles on Sheehy Skeffington (by Margaret Ward) and "*The War of Independence: the fighting men of Donoughmore*" (by Eamonn Duggan) are without frivolous academic nonsense, serious in tone and informative. There's an interesting autobiographical piece by a recent immigrant from South Africa (Samantha Kay Sobotker Meyer), resourcefully finding her bearings in Duhallow.

Pádraig Ó Riain, though a senior academic, takes the trouble to write accessibly about the local saints; however, the content of what he writes is another matter—not everyone will be happy with the account he gives of the most interesting Duhallow saint, the formidable and fiery Saint Latiaran (but more about this in due course).

Two of the articles (by Dónal Ó Catháin and Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin) are written in Irish, and two others address, respectively, the language shift in Knocknagree at the turn of the twentieth century (Aogán Ó hIarlaithe) and the learning of Irish at the present time (Máire Ní Iarlaithe). Opening the volume with some thoughts on "*Changing names, cultures and populations in Duhallow*", Bernard O'Donoghue of Cullen and University of Oxford comes round to Douglas Hyde and the lecture he gave in 1892 on *The Necessity of de-Anglicising Ireland*. Hyde, he observes, explained

"that this was not 'a protest against imitating what is best in the English people, for that would be absurd, but rather to show the folly of neglecting what is Irish'. This prescribes roughly what happened generally in Duhallow in this past generation. I suppose any reduction in the variety of the social mix is a loss. But Hyde's ideal has been fulfilled in ways he would not have dared to hope. The ambitions for the restoration of the Irish language... had some considerable success. But the regaelicising of Ireland made spectacular progress in the later twentieth century in the field of music, and Duhallow and Sliabh Luachra were at the celebrated centre of that".

The outstanding article in the issue is by Con Houlihan on "*The History of Cullen Pipe Band*". This is local history at its best; effective use is made of local poetry and political and sporting context while telling this very rich tale (there is even Elizabethan context: when Donncha Ó Dualaigh in 1987 re-enacted Dónal Cam O'Sullivan Beare's march from West Cork to Leitrim, as he crossed the Blackwater near Millstreet he was serenaded by the Band, "*positioned on the Cullen side of the river*").

The local, all-Ireland and international doings of the Band are told with lively detail.

"As part of attempts to improve North-South relations in Ireland, McNeillstown Pipe Band, from Portglenone, Co. Antrim, came to Cullen on 5 April 1997... Memorable events (in 2001) included a parade on 5th Avenue six months before the fall of the Twin Towers... In 2003, one of our pipers, Margaret Houlihan, became the first ever woman in the world to win an A-grade major solo piping event."

One can't really call this a warts-and-all portrait because there are not many warts, but the midnight parade must be mentioned:

"One of the band's first outings was an ill-considered midnight parade in Cullen. As most of the members were farmers, practice would not normally start until around 10 p.m., after the day's work had been finished. One evening, with great progress being made in a session in Dinneen's hall, one bright spark suggested they play up through the village. Completely oblivious to the fact that midnight was approaching, they played up and down Cullen. Every dog in the place began to howl and every sleeping child woke up crying. The following morning,..." (readers can imagine the rest).

The editor observes that "*both local authors and university academics were invited to contribute*" to this first issue. A danger for a journal like this is that it may sink under a weight of academic tedium. Even Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin, who begins well (freely using the Aubane edition of Gofraidh Fionn), needs to be warned about

this. However, having brought his account of the Irish-language writers down to about 1900, in the next episode he will quickly come to the stonemason Domhnall Ó Conchubhair, author among other things of a lament for Parnell and a poem on Latiaran and Lasair and Inghean Bhaoith, the three sister-saints of Duhallow, and these ought to give the account a further boost.

Latiaran was the saint who every day used to come to the forge in Cullen and take a burning ember in a fold of her dress, which would not be damaged in the slightest, to start the fire in her cell. One day the smith praised her lovely white feet, and Latiaran, falling into the sin of vanity, looked down at them, and... Ó Conchobhair's poem is good, especially when he gets to the forge scene, but the finest poem on the topic is surely Mangan's *The Romance of Lateeran* (republished in *The Dubliner: the Lives, Times and Writings of James Clarence Mangan* by Brendan Clifford). The first verse is as follows:

"Long ages since at Cullen, lived a smith, morose and sullen,
Yet his forge was still a full one, with good work;
His fire was always glowing, and his bellows loudly blowing,
And his cloud of smoke still showing, thick and murk."

(Incidentally, in a book called *The Rambles and Reveries of an Art Student in Europe*, author not given, published in Philadelphia in 1855, Edgar Allen Poe is accused of having plagiarised several of his metres from Mangan (pp. 38-40). Specifically, he is accused of taking the metre of Lateeran unacknowledged for his world-famous *The Raven!* I don't know whether this is true, but it is certain that when Poe said no one else in the world had ever done anything like his Raven, he was wrong.)

Pádraig Ó Riain, as mentioned earlier, takes some pains to write so that non-specialists can read him. But some local commentators may criticise him harshly for not offering even a verse from the marvellous Mangan, and for mentioning Domhnall Ó Conchubhair only in a footnote. Ó Riain says that name *Latiaran* is derived from *Lugh-tighearn*, "Lord Lugh", namely Lugh the long-armed god of the *Tuatha Dé Danaan*, and celebration of the saint's feast-day (now July 24) may once have been connected with the old celebration of the feast of *Lugh-nasadh* at the beginning of August.

The pre-Christian Lord Lugh, in other words, has been christianly adopted as a Saint Lady Lugh. But why the sex change? And is this why the name is distorted? Or could it be embarrassment about origins?

Hardly that, because there happens to be a male Saint Luchtighern, connected with the Tomfinlough Church in Clare (and he also has connections with the Killeedy region bordering Duhallow), who has kept his name undistorted to the present day. Saint Lord Lugh — quite openly: that’s how much Gaelic Christianity was at ease with its pre-Christian heritage!

I had no idea of what Latiaran could possibly mean until I got to the forge scene in Ó Conchobhair’s poem, where the smith flatters her, and she looks down at her lovely white feet, whereupon the ember held in her dress burns through the cloth, she screams in horror, apologises to God, and then confronts the smith:

“A Taidg mill-iarainn, mo cíac! mo cráidteacht!
Mar íarla riam fá iad do čeardcan;
Mar dearcas rem ré tú, ’ sméirle čiar-duib,
Mar čloiseas do člaon-čus bréagač briačrač!
“You, Tadhg Ruin-Iron! My sorrow! My scourge,
that ever I came through the door of your forge;
that ever I saw you, you swarthy black rogue,
or listened to lies in your false-mouthed brogue!”

The first great English propagandist who concerned himself with Ireland, Giraldus Cambrensis, professed to be shocked at the vindictiveness of the Irish saints.—Well, they tended not to turn the other cheek, that’s true. Latiaran continued:

Ní call dom mallačt ná eascaine ġuide duit,
Tá daor-breit čeana is geasa dá druim ort,
Gan staon, gan strus, abfus ná fall ort!
Gan séan, gan sliocht, gan sult ná greann duit!
Gan čaraid, gan céile, ná aon tsaġas áruis!
Ač aindeis’ an tsaogail ’n aġaid an lae ag g’báil duit!

Seo tuillead a čuirim i dtuigsint ’s i ġcéill duit,
Ná leomfaid duine dá čliste ded céird-se
Cur suas san ionad ’nar scuiris na grásta
Óm anam-sa, ’ čuirptiġ čuiriciġ čáimiġ,
Ná úird dá mbualad, ná fuaim inneona,
Ní čloisfear gohuain Lae ’n Luainsa treosan!”
I need not condemn you or call down a curse:
the judgment upon you cannot be made worse —

no rest, no support, and no peace upon earth,
no luck, no descendants, no fun and no mirth!
No friend and no wife, not a house nor a bed,
but all the world’s miseries heaped on your head!

And furthermore, this let me clearly explain:
no man of your trade will dare ever again
to establish his forge where you scattered
the grace
from my soul, you corrupted and wicked
scab-face!

No sledge will be struck and no anvil will sound till Doomsday — not here or the district around!”

When I saw how the saint addressed the smith, *A Taidg mill-iarainn* “Tadhg Ruin of Iron”, it struck me what the first part of her own name, Lat / iaran or Lait / iaran ought to mean. Surely this is a variant of the Irish word *lot* or *loit*, which according to Dinneen means: “act of spoiling, impairing, ruining, injuring, wounding; harm, damage, destruction”. Whatever her pre-Christian form (and like her sister, *Lasair*, meaning “flame”, she was surely a fiery being), and whatever the circumstances of her transformation, it appears that Latiaran in her christian manifestation is *Saint Ruin-Iron*, who will not let the trade of smith be practised in her domain.

I am not claiming this as some kind of discovery! I don’t think I’m the first, or the thousand and first, person to interpret the name like this. (Domhnall Ó Conchobhair did so, I believe, and he has signalled as much to his listeners or readers.) Maybe Pádraig Ó Riain would not accept this obvious derivation. But it cannot have failed to occur to him (in passing he notes how Gobnait of Ballyvourney has a name connected with *gabha*, “smith”), yet he never mentions or discusses it.

Ó Riain, however, has made a genuine effort to communicate. We now come to an academic who has made no effort at all: Dónal Ó Catháin, author of an extensive article on Gofraidh Fionn (Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh — ‘*Ard-Ollamh Ereann le dán*’). When I read this article first I was puzzled, because right at the beginning he mentions my own book in a footnote. He then proceeds to the question of Gofraidh Fionn’s descent.

Ó Catháin notes that Gofraidh himself claimed to be descended from a poet called Dálach, who was himself a pupil of the master poet, and afterwards important saint, Colmán Mac Léinín of Cloyne. And Ó Catháin then proceeds to state, in so many words, that this testimony is in conflict with the various genealogies which say that the Uí Dhálaigh of all Ireland are derived from a certain Dálach of the Meath/Westmeath Uí Dhálaigh line, who lived much later:

“Ní aontaíonn fianaise an dáin leis na ginealaigh éagsúla, áfach, ina ndeirtear gur shíolraigh Dálaigh uile na hÉireann ó Dhálach mac Fhachtna, duine de shliocht Mhaine, a mhair i bhfad ina dhiaidh sin. Tharlódh gur scríobhaí den ainm sin ó Dhíseart Tola i gContae na Mí a bhí i gceist”. (Dúchas, p. 41).

Now, the fact is that in my edition of *Gofraidh Fionn* I leave this idea in ruins, beyond repair. There are NO genealogies which say that the Uí Dhálaigh of all Ireland

are descended from anyone in particular! The most comprehensive genealogical writer, Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh, says nothing about Gofraidh Fionn’s people, the Uí Dhálaigh of Munster. Those who do say something about the Uí Dhálaigh of Munster (specifically the compilers of the *Book of Munster*) identify them as an early offshoot from the royal line of the MacCarthys, which is compatible with the testimony of Gofraidh Fionn.

In an appendix to *Poems to the English / Dán na nGall*, I say all this rather plainly. People who choose to write on this topic need to engage with my evidence! Ó Catháin professes to have engaged with me, because he quotes the relevant pages of my book, and then he says dismissively that I haven’t taken account of *An Leabhar Donn* (a somewhat earlier source than those I quote): “Ní chuirtear fianaise an Leabhair Dhoinn san áireamh sa phlé sin, áfach” (p. 42).

This is a case of a man who can’t be bothered to know what he’s talking about. Because, if he ever chances to look at the relevant columns of *An Leabhar Donn* (the Institute of Advanced Studies has put them online — Royal Irish Academy Manuscript 23 Q 10, folio 36 recto, column 5, and folio 36 verso, column 1), he will find they’re exactly what Mac Fhirbhisigh has, with minor variants. Once again there is no claim to trace the Uí Dhálaigh of all Ireland, just “*muintear Dhálaigh*”. The main line of the northern Uí Dhálaigh is traced at length, then the two Bréifne lines, and some details are given about key ancestors. Nothing whatever about Munster.

I couldn’t work out what Ó Catháin thought he was doing, until I checked out a PhD thesis of his that he cites, on the Munster Geraldines as patrons and authors of Irish literature (*Gearaltaigh Dheasmhumhan mar Phatrúin agus mar Údair i Réimse Léann agus Litríocht na Gaeilge*). This thesis was completed in UCG in 2016. And one finds that his article in *Dúchas* consists of chunks of his PhD thesis, reproduced verbatim.

It was doubtless annoying to find that the line of argument in an opening section of what he wished to recycle had been destroyed in a recently-published book. What are we to do about that? Well, we can try putting up a bold front, pretending it hasn’t happened!

I must say, though, that Ó Catháin has refrained from transferring to *Dúchas* the most absurd idea in his thesis, his own original contribution to the mountain of nonsense about the ancestry of Gofraidh Fionn. This is where he says there is extra evidence in

a poem of Gofraidh's (*Tá fianaise áirithe breise le fail ó fhilíocht eile Ghofraidh...*, Thesis, p. 183) that he is related to the Westmeath Uí Dhálaigh. The so-called evidence is as follows: Gofraidh tells us that his grandfather was called Tadhg; there was a Westmeath-branch poet called Aonghus Ó Dálaigh, who died in 1309, and whose father was Tadhg; therefore... this Aonghus could be Gofraidh's father!!!

The limits of disrespect for the professional knowledge and personal self-respect of Gofraidh Fionn, the poet who composed *A Cholmáin mhóir mhic Léinín*, could hardly stretch farther than that! Ó Catháin, to be fair to him, doesn't understand this. He is so proud of his absurd notion that on the next page of the thesis (p. 184) he sets it out in a genealogical diagram. But the readers of *Dúchas* have been spared this idea and this diagram, which makes me think that perhaps after all I have had some limited influence for good.

Earlier in the thesis Ó Catháin has a section on the remarkable *Gearóid Iarla* (Gerald, 3rd Earl of Desmond), who is credited with composing about 40 poems in Irish. Here is one of the most fascinating and intriguing figures in Irish literature, above all of the literature subsequent to the English invasion. He needs to be considered together with Gofraidh Fionn, and I have a lot to say about him in my *Gofraidh Fionn* edition. Ó Catháin has a couple of sentences that leap out on page 172:

"Cé nach bhfuil filíocht Ghearóid ar ardchaighdeán Ghofraidh Fhinn, mar shampla, is léir óna chuid filíochta go raibh oiliúint nár bheag faighte aige mar fhile Gaelach agus gur chaith sé dua áirithe leis an oiliúint sin. Mar a dúradh thuas, áfach, i gcás Gearóid, cé gurb é a chumas mar fhile a bhíonn á phlé ag scoláirí de ghnáth, go minic ní luann siad an ghné is tábhachtaí de shaol fileata Ghearóid .i. go raibh fear dá stádas san ag cumadh filíochta in aon chor sa cheathrú haois déag.

("Though Gearóid's poetry is not on the high level of Gofraidh Fionn's, for example, it is clear from his poetry that he had received considerable training as a Gaelic poet and that he had made some hard effort as a trainee. As we said above, however, in Gearóid's case, though his poetic ability is what scholars usually discuss, often they never mention the most important aspect of Gearóid's life as a poet, i.e. that a man of his status was composing poetry at all in the 14th century.")

Here the man is beginning to think! If he had kept firm hold of these insights and built upon them, he could have produced a very valuable piece of work. Unfortunately, Ó Catháin was in manifest terror of the academic authorities, and his intelligence remained caged. Neither with Gearóid Iarla

nor with Gofraidh Fionn can he make real personal contact. Working with a narrow idea of patronage (and failing to understand that the poet, and not just a major poet like Gofraidh Fionn, always had a far wider perspective than the patron), Ó Catháin spends much time trying to figure out who Gofraidh might mainly have been "working for". In the end, he's reduced to saying that Gofraidh clearly had various patrons and that he spent much of his life going from patron to patron: "Is léir go raibh pátrúin éagsúla ag Gofraidh agus gur chaith sé cuid mhaith dá shaol ag dul ó phátrún go pátrún" (Thesis, p. 198).

From all I can see, Ó Catháin has managed to miss the obvious fact that a poet of this calibre (above all when he had the rank of "Chief Professor of Poetry in Ireland") had to keep a school. And the school had to have a fixed abode. It could not be with the MacCarthys of Kerry at one moment, next month or next year with the O'Briens of Thomond, after that with the FitzGerald of Limerick, and so forth. The school would have been stable.

Gofraidh's school would have been in Duhallow, near Clara, the hill that he says he never abandoned. This was O'Keefe territory, and the O'Keefes would have remained his primary patrons. However, during the very long school holiday periods (longer even than the universities have nowadays) he would certainly have visited other patrons and possibly stayed for extended periods with some of them. But no patron would ever have had Gofraidh's mind "in his pocket". He was a member of a great all-Ireland order of men of art whose roots went back beyond Christianity, and he was aware of the fact. (His awareness is shown, for example, in his elegy for his son Eoghan, where he compares his own sorrow to that of the famous druid Cathbhadh and remarks on an *conclann fear n-ealadan*, "the likeness of men of art".)

In summary, the editors of *Dúchas* need to find a way of telling their academic contributors: please, do NOT recycle your PhD thesis verbatim! By all means mine it for information and ideas, but recast the expression completely to communicate with a wider audience. Academic authors might also be encouraged to engage in some degree with ambitious recent works on their topics, not just pretend they don't need to be noticed. Such pressures on someone like Dónal Ó Catháin can do nothing but good.

However, I must end by recalling once again the excellent articles on the Cullen Pipe Band and other matters, and wishing well to *Dúchas*, this promising newcomer in the local history field.

John Minahane

Available from Athol Books:

The Contention Of The Poets, an essay in Irish intellectual history, by John Minahane. 72pp. ISBN 0 9522582 4 2. Sanas Press. June 2000. €10, £8

Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh, Poems to the English/ Dán na nGall (304pp). Translated, Introduced and Edited by John Minahane. ISBN 9781 903497 92 0 €25, £20 paperback. €35, £30 hardback.

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The Poems of Geoffrey O'Donoghue/Dánta Shéarfraidh Uí Dhonnchadha an Ghleanna, with Ireland's War Poets 1641-53 translated and edited by John Minahane (first full collection of Geoffrey O'Donoghue's poetry in Irish with translations into English; also includes a collection of Gaelic poetry of the period of the Confederate Wars of the 1640s with an account of that conflict as seen through the work of the major poets of the era). 302pp. ISBN 978-1-903497-49-4. AHS. 2008. €24, £20

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James Clarence Mangan: Anthologia Germanica. 72pp. ISBN 0 85034 098 5. October 2001. €6, £5

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Sean O’Faolain and Canon Formation

Part 7

The Men who funded ‘The Bell’

It is always interesting to see *the angle* taken by various writers/biographers and journalists because it really does inform their work. There is no doubt that the biography of Seán Lemass written by Michael O’Sullivan (1994, Blackwater Press, Dublin) is much less informative and scholarly than that written by Professor John Horgan (1997, Gill & Macmillan Ltd, Dublin). The latter was written as a PhD thesis and supervised by a fellow Kerry historian and former Senator, Professor Joe Lee, and has all the hallmarks of good research and obvious clarity which rounds out the shape of the life being examined. But Horgan, of course, was a Labour Party politician and was therefore not free from his own prejudices, so care always has to be taken by the reader. And he was appointed, after his academic career had ended, as Ireland’s Press Ombudsman from 2008 until his retirement in 2014.

The shocking killing of Noel Lemass, Seán’s big brother, had a massive effect—not only on Seán, but on his parents and the rest of his family, friends and colleagues. All the more when it was so totally needless, as the Treaty War was officially declared over around May 1923 with the ceasefire now in operation. But bad blood still stirred the minds of some people and more especially those who were in power—especially those in the Criminal Investigation Division (CID).

O’Sullivan (a journalist and former Editor of *Magill* magazine) in his book suggests that Lady Lavery, after Michael Collins’s death wrote to Emmet Dalton (whom Sullivan also points the finger at regarding the death of Collins) and wound him up by telling him that Noel Lemass was reading the mail of Michael Collins and even interfering with it. To what purpose Noel Lemass was doing this—O’Sullivan doesn’t speculate. And really anyone who would give credence to the musings of an “infatuated” and “witless woman”, as O’Sullivan called her would need to be given a good kick up the er ... pants.

Horgan is more targeted on the individuals involved, but the name that was top of everyone’s list was the Director of CID—Joseph McGrath himself. Obviously he was not one of the men outside MacNeil’s Hardware Shop, at the corner of Exchequer and Drury Street in Dublin, that abducted Noel Lemass in broad daylight, but he almost certainly gave the order.

That kind of operation has State authority written all over it.

And then, despite pitiful pleadings in *The Freeman’s Journal*, Noel’s parents got nowhere. After being openly snatched, he had to be ‘held in secret’ somewhere because there was not sight nor sound of him from that fateful June day until his body was found dumped in the late September or early October in the Dublin Mountains. He had been shot twice to three times and bore all the hallmarks of torture with broken limbs and missing fingers.

His funeral was described by *The Irish Times* on 17th October 1923 as “*ranking with some of the largest seen in the city in recent years*”. The hearse was preceded by the Connolly Pipers Band and followed by members of Cumann na mBan, Women’s Citizens Army, Sinn Féin Clubs, Prisoner’s Defence League, many recently released prisoners, representatives of various bodies and numerous well-known Republicans including George Noble Plunkett (father of Joseph Plunkett), Constance Markievicz and Maud Gonne.

A year later, a memorial cross was erected at the spot where his body was found. It read simply: *Captain Noel Lemass*. A letter to *The Irish Times* in July 1996 let readers know that the original memorial had been badly damaged by vandals over the years, and a complete replacement cross was put up to mark the 75th anniversary of the death of Noel Lemass, and around 250 people attended the ceremony at the spot in 1998.

The inquest into the squalid assassination of Noel Lemass was held at “*Rathmines Town Hall on 15th October 1923. The Coroner, Dr. J.P. Brennan*” asserted that the business of the inquest was “*to find out, if possible, who killed Noel Lemass*”. There was huge media interest and the State was represented by barrister J.A. Costello and among the many witnesses called was “*General Eoin O’Duffy founder of the Blueshirts*”, as Michael O’Sullivan stated in his book. As the latter was to write: “*It*” (the inquest) “*failed in its terms of reference*” For all those involved this was not unsurprising.

Horgan accepts that:

“Burying the memories of the Civil War was not always an easy task but Lemass succeeded to a greater extent than many of his contemporaries... Nevertheless the memories were not buried so deep that they did not occasionally surface, sometimes with near volcanic intensity. Lemass’s composure in the Dáil in the face of political taunts and jibes was legendary, but there were occasions when even his iron self-discipline slipped. In 1948, freshly in opposition, he nailed his colours to the mast with deeply felt eloquence, rejecting the suggestion that the Republic of Ireland Bill, which the Dáil was then discussing, was a natural extension of the Treaty.

...On behalf of those who fought with me, those friends who died or who were broken or exiled in opposition to the Treaty, I am going to deny that assertion with all the vehemence I can... I am to be taken as accepting now the very contention I fought against all my life... Sergeant O’Brien, my friend and comrade in 1916 and 1922, was shot down from behind a hedge.”

(The footnote for this quotation is given by Horgan from the—

“*Dáil Debates*, vol. 113, col. 452-4 Nov. 1948. This reference is to the ambush by Free State forces during the IRA action in Ennis-corthy in which O’Brien was killed.”)

Lemass was here making clear that the Treaty was no “*stepping stone*”, as our revisionist historians and politicians now like to see it—especially Taoiseach Micheál Martín TD, Fianna Fáil, whose grasp of the history of his own party could do with reading this biography of one of its greatest Taoiseachs.

“Almost two decades later, as Taoiseach, he was unexpectedly provoked by a sally from James Dillon and warned the Fine Gael leader, ‘white-faced with anger that he would never succeed in getting him to debate the Civil War’”.

A medical doctor in the Department of Health—

“Dr Paddy Fanning, who had been a contemporary of Lemass in the O’Connell Schools... told acquaintances in private on a number of occasions that he had been responsible for getting Lemass to shake the hand of at least one of the people who may have been implicated in his brother’s murder – Joe McGrath.”

It happened at a race meeting in the early years of Fianna Fáil’s first period in government, and afterwards the two became great poker-playing partners with Paddy—Joe’s son, later being put into the Senate by Jack Lynch in 1969, even though as Horgan had to admit Paddy “was an infrequent attender and even more infrequent speaker”.

After Joe McGrath left politics in somewhat “controversial circumstances”, the Free State Government “entrusted to his private company, *Irish Hospital’s Trust*, the running of the hospital sweepstakes, which became the foundation of a substantial private fortune”. Horgan makes a very interesting admission about the amount of monies that McGrath gave to Fianna Fáil during subsequent General Elections, because he has the amount of monies at hand and they really were quite substantial.

He added that of course McGrath could have been giving other contributions to Fine Gael and other parties but he does state “these records are not available”.

All in all, Joseph McGrath was a very successful businessman and was involved in many of Ireland’s top enterprises of the time. He died at his home in Cabinteely House, in Dublin in 1966 and Horgan says that there is “a photograph in *The Irish Times* which showed a deeply pensive Lemass at his graveside”. The house “was donated to the state in 1986, and the land developed as a public park”.

Maurice Harmon, in his biography, ‘*Sean O’Faolain: A Life*’ (1994, Constable, London), allows that ‘*The Bell*’ backers were Joe McGrath—who put his own appointee, Eamon Martin, onto the Board of the magazine, but gets it wrong by saying that it was Martin who was the brains behind the Sweepstakes.

It really was McGrath: who was so successful in all his many adventures. J.J. O’Leary—he of the 90 foot yach—is fleshed out for me, in that I was unsure where his beginnings were: except in the Civil Service. But actually:

“he worked as a young man with Barry Fitzgerald in the Land Commission. They left on the same day. Fitzgerald went into acting. JJ went to Fleet Street, became a printer’s devil, became acquainted with Lord Northcliffe, came back to Ireland

and bought Cahills which had the only large scale letterpress in Dublin”

—and was incredibly successful at making the whole thing into a very profitable business. Naturally Barry Fitzgerald became a name in Hollywood but always stayed with JJ when back in Dublin.

So Sean O’Faolain was very lucky in those people who brought into his idea of ‘*The Bell*’, and I find it interesting that they came from the Free State origins which fed into his thinking very well.

And, as he admitted himself—at a time of dire Wartime paper shortage, the paper for the magazine was sourced from England—this was serious business.

He was really never the romantic “gunman” that so swayed Elizabeth Bowen in the 30s. In fact, in his autobiography, O’Faolain said that being the son of a RIC constable made it impossible for him to be successful in the IRA during the War of Independence. He always felt that they—his IRA colleagues—thought him to be a spy: and now I would ask were they really that wrong?

He certainly never took part in any ambushes and claimed to be a bomb-maker in various *secret locations*.

Transitioning from plain old *Jackie Whelan* all through his Cork University days to the more esoteric Sean O’Faolain was a plan well executed. He wanted out of Cork in ways that only now make sense. He went from being a travelling salesman for the Educational Company of Ireland to being a teacher in England and, when he was neglected for the Professorship of English in UCC in favour of Daniel Corkery—a bitterness developed that shaped his world view.

He was always positioning himself for the next opportunity—he was going to be a “man of letters” and remake Ireland into his own *narrow image*—no matter that this was the ambition which he attributed to the great scholars, Corkery and Stockley.

His canon of Irish writing would be a ‘cancel culture fest’, and indeed so it came to be.

There is a very straight line from O’Faolain to our former Laureate for Irish Fiction 2018-2021, Sebastian Barry, and now to Colm Tóibín for 2022-2024.

I have read their profiles given in interviews and nearly wept. If one looks for our great novelists like Canon Sheehan or Charles Kickham, one would be looking in vain. Professor W.F.P. Stockley, Department of English wrote a marvellous essay about Canon Sheehan in his ‘*Essays in Irish Biography*’, 1933, and now today we are blessed with Brendan Clifford of the Aubane Historical Society who not only wrote ‘*Canon Sheehan, A Turbulent Priest*’, but is actually getting the Canon’s books back into print again. Also there has been a publication of ‘*The Collected Letters of Canon Sheehan of Doneraile 1883-1913*’ edited by James O’Brien, (2013, Smenos Publications, England).

Greatness will out even in this literary wasteland of a place called Ireland.

Julianne Herlihy. ©.

To be continued.

Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin: *Aislingí / Vision Poems*. With translations by Pat Muldowney, Introductory material by P. Dinneen. Also: *Conflicting Views Of Ireland In The 18th Century: Revisionist History Under The Spotlight* by B. Clifford. Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin: *Collected Writings, Vol. 1*. 336pp. Index. ISBN 978-1-903497-79-1 AHS, 2013, €27, £23.50

The Graves At Kilmorna: a story of '67 by *Canon Sheehan*, Introduction by *Brendan Clifford*. Appendix of extracts from Canon Sheehan's other novels. 296pp. ISBN 1 903497 78 4. AHS, 2013, €24, £20

Canon Sheehan: A Turbulent Priest by *B. Clifford*. €6, £5

A Millstreet Medley by various authors, including *Canon Sheehan* and *Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin*. 44pp (A4). April 2002. ISBN 1 903497 10 4. May 2003. €6, £5

Launch And Public Meeting

Friday, November 11th at 7pm

The Teachers’ Club, Parnell Square, DUBLIN

“The Kilmichael Ambush, the historians and Eve Morrison's defence of Peter Hart”

A presentation by *Niall Meehan*

**Attend in person
or, to receive a Zoom Link for the event, contact:**

jacklaneaubane@hotmail.com

The Morrison Report

NATO's wars on Yugoslavia and Libya

NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg never ceases telling us that it is a purely defensive alliance and that Russia had nothing to fear from its advance eastwards after the end of the Cold War despite promises that it wouldn't.

He seems to have forgotten that it made war on Yugoslavia in 1999, mounting a 98-day bombing campaign, as a result of which over 500 civilians were killed. This action was not a defensive response to one of its member states being attacked by Yugoslavia, nor was its military action endorsed in advance by the Security Council. As such, NATO's action constituted aggression against the state of Yugoslavia.

At that time, Yugoslavia consisted of two republics – Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo was an integral part of Serbia, but with an overwhelming Albanian majority that favoured separation from Serbia, and a Serb minority that opposed separation.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK) was engaged in a military campaign for an independent state and Yugoslav armed forces (police and army) were trying to suppress that campaign, in the course of which it was alleged they engaged in widespread killing and ethnic cleansing of Albanians, bordering on genocide.

The ostensible reason for NATO's bombing was to prevent or at least reduce this.

(*)

One fact alone explodes the myth of widespread killing of Albanian civilians by Yugoslav forces. That is the fact that up to mid-January 1999 the KLA were responsible for more deaths in Kosovo than Yugoslav forces. We have that on the authority of no less a person than the UK Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, who told the House of Commons on 18th January 1999:

“On its part, the Kosovo Liberation Army has committed more breaches of the ceasefire, and until this weekend was responsible for more deaths than the security forces. It must stop undermining the ceasefire and blocking political dialogue.”

Widespread killing and ethnic cleansing of Albanians began with a vengeance after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) began on 24th March 1999 – in other words, NATO intervention caused a humanitarian catastrophe, with Kosovans pouring over the borders into Albania and Macedonia.

(*)

Prior to the bombing, the Yugoslav Government had been summoned to a Conference in Rambouillet in February 1999. With the threat of NATO bombing hanging over its head, it accepted proposals for the near independence of Kosovo within the Republic of Serbia, the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo and a NATO force in Kosovo to supervise implementation. However, the proposed agreement also specified that the NATO implementation force was to get “unimpeded access” throughout Yugoslavia, not just in Kosovo. Understandably, Yugoslavia refused to sign up to this complete surrender of sovereignty to NATO – and, as a result, it was bombed by NATO.

Had this clause been absent from the proposed agreement, it is likely that Yugoslavia would have signed.

Henry Kissinger's said of the text Yugoslavia was asked to sign:

“The Rambouillet text, which called on Serbia to admit NATO troops throughout Yugoslavia, was a provocation, an excuse to start bombing. Rambouillet is not a document that an angelic Serb could have accepted. It was a terrible diplomatic document that should never have been presented in that form.”

After 78 days of bombing, an agreement was reached with the Yugoslavia along the lines proposed at Rambouillet, but without NATO forces having unimpeded access throughout Yugoslavia – which

lends weight to the view that the presence of such a provision in the Rambouillet text was to make sure that the Yugoslav Government wouldn't sign up to it, so that NATO an excuse to bomb.

(*)

NATO troops (mostly US and UK) entered Kosovo after the agreement but, according to Amnesty International, “by the end of August 1999, an estimated 235,000 Serbs and other minorities had left Kosovo and those who remained were concentrated in enclaves and pockets, frequently guarded by KFOR”.

The agreement that brought the bombing to a halt was enshrined in Security Council Resolution 1244, passed on 10th June 1999 by 14 votes to 0 (with China abstaining). This reaffirmed “the commitment of all UN Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia”.

The territorial integrity of Yugoslavia was sacrosanct to the international community, wasn't it? There could be no question of an independent state of Kosovo, recognised by the international community, could there?

Today, 26 out of the 30 NATO member states have recognised Kosovo as an independent state. Only Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain have not done so.

NATO's war on Libya

NATO also had a hand in the destruction of the Libyan State.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee published a report in September 2016 into NATO's military intervention in Libya. It said:

“The result was political and economic collapse, inter-militia and inter-tribal warfare, humanitarian and migrant crises, widespread human rights violations, the spread of Gaddafi regime weapons across the region and the growth of ISIL in North Africa.”

NATO can claim credit for this success.

[For more on this, see *Irish Foreign Affairs* 15/3, September 2022]

David Morrison

27 August 2022

Number 2, Part One

The Brian Murphy osb Archive

Sean McGarry—outline of his life

Evidence for the life of Sean McGarry is hard to come by. He died on 9th December 1958 but his obituary tribute in the *Irish Independent* does not record the date of his birth. He was survived by five sisters and three brothers and was said to be a native of Dundrum, County Dublin. His wife and a son predeceased him but he was survived by one son and one daughter (*Irish Independent*, 10 Dec. 1958). The obituary notice outlines, and stresses, McGarry's political career as an Irish republican. McGarry, himself, speaking in the Treaty Debates on 3rd January 1922, declared that—

"I have worked in the Republican movement for twenty years. I am a Republican to-day and I will be a Republican to-morrow. I vote for the Treaty as it stands".

He added that "*the man who, twenty years ago, taught me to be a Republican was James Connolly*". However, as Sean McGarry enters the historical narrative more clearly, in the years before the Easter Rising of 1916, he does so as a member of the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) and as a close associate of both Tom Clarke and Sean MacDermott.

One of McGarry's early political memories was of hearing about Tom Clarke from Dr. Patrick McCartan in Belfast, and of his surprise, when he met him in 1907, that he was much younger than expected.

Clarke was born in 1858 (McGarry, *Life of Clarke*, p.25). At that time McGarry was Manager of *The Republic*, an advanced nationalist journal, which was printed at the Republican Press in Belfast and edited by Bulmer Hobson. It only enjoyed a brief life, running from December 1906 until May 1907, and published 23 issues (Carty, *Bibliography of Irish History*, 1912-1921, Dublin, 1936, p.29).

McCartan was in regular contact with McGarry at this time and informed John Devoy on 17th June 1908 that he would get McGarry to look up some old newspapers on his behalf (Patrick McCartan ('Shane O'Neill') to Devoy, 17 June 1908 in William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan (eds), *Devoy's Post Bag, 1871-1928*, Vol. 11, 1880-1928, Dublin, 1953, pp 363,364).

McGarry was fully in accord with the plans of Clarke and MacDermott to create an IRB organisation that was not only separatist in political outlook but also prepared in military terms to make separation from Britain a reality. With that intention, he played a prominent part in the founding of *Fianna na hEireann*, the para-military organisation for boys, in 1909. McGarry, himself, recalled that, following visits of Countess Markievicz to Tom Clarke's shop, he was asked by Clarke to accompany the Countess to a school in Brunswick Street and to assist her in getting boys to enrol for the Fianna.

Markievicz, herself, acknowledged the part played by McGarry in the setting up of the Fianna. Having noted that she had been influenced by Bulmer Hobson to imitate the boys' organisation that he had set up in Belfast, she recorded that, when she first met Hobson,—

"he was associated with Dr McCartan and Mr Sean McGarry. These three associated together, and always to be found at certain times at Tom Clarke's shop. They took me under their wing and educated me, giving me books on Ireland to read, and explaining to me all the intricacies of such simple things as organizations and committees" (Jacqueline Van Voris, *Constance Markievicz, In the Cause of Ireland*, Massachusetts, 1967, p.73 citing Eire, 18 August 1923).

The first meeting to enrol boys took place on 16th August 1909 at 34 Camden Street. At this meeting Bulmer Hobson was elected President of the Fianna; Patrick Walsh and Countess Markievicz were appointed Honorary Secretaries; and the Committee was made up of Sean McGarry, Helena Molony, Con Colbert and others (Van Voris, pp 69,70).

Markievicz's biographer observed that:

"primarily through Bulmer Hobson and Sean McGarry, the IRB had watched the Fianna's growing strength with interest and from that year on secretly directed Fianna policy" (Van Voris, p.89).

She concluded that, after the founding of a separate John Mitchel IRB circle within the Fianna in 1911, it was "*no longer*" the Fianna of the Countess. The influential presence of McGarry within the Fianna

organisation also ensured that the Fianna came under the influence of Tom Clarke rather than that of Bulmer Hobson. This was certainly the view of McGarry, who maintained that Clarke sent boys to be enrolled in the Fianna and effectively controlled the organisation.

McGarry was also closely involved with Tom Clarke and the IRB in the formation of a Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers on 14th November 1913 and the planning of the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers on 25th November 1913. McGarry, although not a member of the Provisional Committee, stated that it was the intention of Clarke and MacDermott to contact people from "*different aspects of national life including the Labour movement*", in order "*to prepare a provisional executive that would be a cross section of the people*" (McGarry, Clarke, p.18).

McGarry also asserted that it was agreed that "*no prominent member of the IRB should accept office*" and, therefore, the decision of Bulmer Hobson to allow his name to go forward as Honorary Secretary was not approved of by Clarke. These differences between the IRB mentality of Clarke and Hobson and their supporters were exacerbated when, on 16th June 1914, Hobson supported Redmond's proposal that twenty-five of his nominees be added to the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers.

McGarry was with Clarke, when news of Redmond's effective takeover of the Volunteers was announced. Clarke, he reported,

"regarded it from the beginning as cold-blooded and contemplated treachery likely to bring about the destruction of the only movement in the century which brought promise of the fulfilment of all his hopes" (McGarry, Clarke, p.19).

During Clarke's life, McGarry continued,

"he had many, very many grievous disappointments but this was the worst and the bitterness of it was increased by the fact that it was brought about by a trusted friend" (Ibid.).

McGarry observed that, in consequence of Redmond's nominees securing a majority position in the Volunteers, it was the IRB element that was forced to split off and leave the organisation when crucial decisions were taken over the approach to the Great War. In particular McGarry was referring to Redmond's speech at Woodenbridge (20 September 1914), which pledged the Volunteers to support the British war effort in Europe, and the

decision of the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers to repudiate Redmond's policy on 24th September 1914.

McGarry also recorded that internal differences in the IRB ranks were made worse, at this time, when Clarke disagreed with Hobson over Roger Casement's mission to America and to Germany, which began at the end of June 1914. McGarry reported that Clarke was "*dead against Casement going to Germany*", and felt that Hobson and Eoin MacNeill were responsible for this initiative (McGarry, Clarke, p.21). McGarry also added the interesting information that Clarke, in order to counter Casement's activities, was the person responsible for sending Joseph Plunkett on a special mission to Germany in the early months of 1916.

McGarry recounted that Plunkett was to inform the German authorities that Casement was incorrect in telling them that "*there would be no rising here unless the Germans landed an army*". Acting on these instructions, Plunkett made it absolutely clear that "*the possibility of a German invasion was not even considered and that there would certainly be a rising*" (McGarry, Clarke, p.21).

He did, however, request some arms and did secure the promise of a consignment of rifles and ammunition. McGarry, whose view obviously reflected those of Tom Clarke, was in no doubt "that Germany did everything that she promised so far as she was able" (McGarry, Clarke, p.22). When Plunkett returned to Dublin, shortly before the Rising, he brought with him some photographs of the agreement between Casement and the German Government for the formation of an Irish Brigade. McGarry enlarged these films and added, somewhat dismissively, that "this was all Casement's efforts in Germany achieved" (McGarry, Clarke, p.21).

When War was declared in September 1914, McGarry was appointed a member of the newly created *Augmented Executive* of the IRB, which was designed to ensure "*that arrangements for a rising should take definite shape*" (McGarry, Clarke, p.20). Tom Clarke and Sean MacDermott were the most influential members of the committee. A meeting, representing several strands of Irish nationalism and including members of the Labour Party, was held in the library of the Gaelic League headquarters in Parnell Square. Other members of the committee were Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Eamonn Ceannt, Joseph Plunkett, and Sean T. O'Kelly. Also present were James Connolly and William O'Brien, representing Labour; Arthur Griffith, representing his Sinn Fein party; and Major John MacBride (O'Broin, *Revolutionary Underground*, p.156).

The *Irish Neutrality League* was formed

to act as a public front for this organisation, with James Connolly as President and Sean T. O'Kelly as Secretary, but it was suppressed by the Dublin Castle authorities within a few months.

At about the same time, 3rd December 1914, *Irish Freedom*, the monthly paper of which Sean McGarry was the manager, was banned under the terms of the *Defence of the Realm Act* (DORA). McGarry had been involved with the paper since its inception in November 1910 and was totally committed to its policy of "*complete and total separation of Ireland from England*".

From the outbreak of the World War, the paper, which became increasingly under the influence of Clarke and MacDermott, had urged its readers not to participate in England's war with Germany. It argued cogently that England's war aims were influenced more by Imperial and naval priorities than any concern for little Belgium. For that reason, after details of its contents were debated in the House of Commons, it was suppressed.

Three other papers, *Sinn Fein*, *Ireland* and the *Irish Worker*, were suppressed on the same date. DORA, the Act chosen to take action against these papers, effectively created a court-martial process that became the chosen weapon of Dublin Castle to counter the activities of McGarry and his republican colleagues.

Sean McGarry played a significant part in the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa, the revered Fenian figure, that took place on 1st August 1915. Even before the body of Rossa arrived in Dublin from America, he travelled with Kathleen Clarke, the wife of Tom, to receive the remains at Liverpool. He then accompanied Mrs. O'Donovan Rossa and her daughter, Emily, to Dublin (see Kathleen Clarke, page 57). The funeral arrangements were carefully choreographed by the *Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee*, which was controlled by the IRB element that was loyal to Tom Clarke. Sean McGarry acted as Editor of the finely produced booklet: '*Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa 1831-1915, Souvenir of Public Funeral to Glasnevin Cemetery*' (Dublin, 1915).

McGarry was assisted in his editorial role by Brian O'Higgins, The O'Rahilly, Eamon Daly, Pdraig O'Riain and W. O'Leary Curtis. McGarry also acted as Financial Secretary to the *Reception Committee*, which was composed of members of the *Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee*. Clarke was listed as President of the Reception Committee and Sean MacDermott was listed as Vice-President, adding, in a statement of defiance, "*In Mountjoy Prison under the 'Defence of the Realm Act'*".

The funeral ceremony and the Souvenir

Booklet served, not only as a propaganda message for the IRB, but also as a call to national regeneration. The Booklet contained, not only Pearse's oration at Rossa's graveside, but also articles by James Connolly, explaining why the Citizen Army honours Rossa, and Arthur Griffith. The pass to the graveside was also issued in McGarry's name, signed in Irish and as representing the Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee (Clarke, *Revolutionary Woman*, p. 102 for photo).

Sean McGarry also contributed an article to the Souvenir Booklet on *Na Fianna Eireann* (Sean McGarry, '*Na Fianna Eireann*', Booklet, pp 16,17). He recalled that—

"about five years ago Na Fianna Eireann was started, in a very modest way, in Dublin, and since then has spread in a wonderful manner throughout the country".

With confidence McGarry added that—

"the effects of the training in Fianna on the boys who will form the next generation of the men in Ireland cannot be overestimated" (McGarry, p.16).

McGarry was absolutely clear that the Fianna were preparing for a coming military encounter. He asserted that,

"if the effect of the training of the Fianna is such on the individual who shall estimate the effect on the nation, when the hundreds of boys who are now in the different corps come to take their place in the National fight?" (McGarry, p.17).

McGarry concluded that, believing in the cause and "*fired with a love for Ireland*",

"we can look forward with confidence to that day which is surely coming; when the final struggle for the consummation of the hopes of Rossa and the others will take place. We know that the boys of the Fianna will be in the forefront of the fight, and we know that the boys of another generation will recount their deeds with the same pride as the boys of to-day recount the deeds of the Fianna of Fionn" (McGarry, p.17).

McGarry's central role in the O'Donovan Rossa funeral indicated that he was a leading figure in the IRB group which was committed to Tom Clarke, rather than to the official President of the IRB, Denis McCullough.

Piaras Beaslai acknowledged McGarry's position, when, writing of the return of Michael Collins to Dublin at the end of December 1915, he recalled that—

"other prominent IRB men with whom Collins was intimate were Tom Clarke, Diarmuid Lynch, Sean McGarry and Tom Ashe" (Piaras Beaslai, *Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland*, Vol. 1, (Dublin, 1926), p.80).

McGarry's own reflection on Collins records that he first met him in late 1915 and that "*they became friends immediately*"

(McGarry, *Collins*, p.3). He added that, after Collins had taken up work at Count Plunkett's Kimmage estate—he eventually was appointed *aide-de-camp* to Joseph Plunkett—they met regularly and that Collins was a frequent visitor to the McGarry home at 37 Philipsburg Avenue. Like all those involved in the advanced nationalist movement, they met in the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League in Parnell Square, Dublin, and at the many Volunteer activities. McGarry, however, was not a member of the Military Council of the IRB which made detailed plans for the Rising in the early months of 1916.

Despite not being a member of the Military Council, Sean McGarry was actively involved in the Easter Rising (24 April, 1916) and, being close to both Clarke and MacDermott, was able to chronicle the changing emotions in the days surrounding the Rising. He recalled that "*McDermott called to my office on Wednesday in jubilant mood*" (McGarry, *Clarke*, p.22).

McGarry recorded, that on that day, 19th April, MacDermott was confident that things were going well and that MacNeill had "*agreed to everything*".

Confidence rapidly turned to confusion and doubt. McGarry identified three factors that contributed to this change of mood: firstly, the deaths on Friday night, 21st April, at Ballykissane pier, County Kerry, of the three Volunteers who had been sent by Tom Clarke to make radio contact with the Aud, the German arms ship; secondly, the arrest of Casement on Saturday, 22nd April; and, thirdly, the publication in the *Sunday Independent*, on 23rd April, of Eoin MacNeill's announcement cancelling the order for the Irish Volunteers to mobilise.

The arrest of Casement provoked Clarke to say to McGarry that "*they should never have let him go to Germany*" (McGarry, *Clarke*, p.22).

The countermanding order of Eoin MacNeill on the Sunday was the final blow for Clarke. McGarry, who, for security reasons, was staying with Clarke in Sean O'Mahony's hotel (Fleming's Hotel, Gardiner Street) as a bodyguard or *aide-de-camp*. He sensed that Clarke was crushed, weary and crestfallen. He recorded that Clarke regarded MacNeill's action as "*the blackest and greatest treachery*" (McGarry, p.23; Kathleen Clarke, p.73).

McGarry himself left Fleming's Hotel on Sunday morning, 23rd April 1916; attended Mass at St Agatha's Church; bought the *Sunday Independent* and returned home. There he found Michael Collins (McGarry, *Clarke*, p.23). On reading MacNeill's

countermanding order, McGarry recalled that there was a "*death like silence*" in the house (McGarry, *Collins*, p.3).

Both of them ate breakfast in silence and went to Liberty Hall. A decision was then taken by the Military Council to postpone the mobilisation of the Volunteers until Monday, 24th April. McGarry stated that he "had been mobilised by Plunkett for special work in connection with wireless". (McGarry, *Collins*, p.3). It was for that reason that he entered the General Post Office on the first day of the Rising.

McGarry was engaged in various activities both inside and outside the Post Office. On the instructions of James Connolly he took some men, including Michael Collins, to erect a barricade across the lane from Princess Street to Abbey Street (McGarry, *Collins*, p.4).

McGarry was particularly concerned to defend the conduct of Tom Clarke in the GPO against the allegations that he was "*harassed and excited*", which were made by Frank O'Connor in *The Big Fellow*. McGarry maintained that Clarke was cool and business-like and "*gave his orders decisively and as calmly as if he were in his own shop*" (McGarry, *Clarke*, p.24). He also instanced how Clarke had silenced critics of McNeill's actions prior to the Rising by telling them that "*the fight is on, forget it now*".

When the GPO was evacuated, McGarry was ordered by Clarke to stay behind with O'Rahilly to clear up the building. He then made his way to Moore Street, where the remnant of the Volunteers had made their last stand. Clarke was quiet. McDermott, with much anguish and bitterness, declared that "*we have to ask the lads to give up themselves and their guns—to surrender*" (McGarry, *Clarke*, p.24).

After the surrender, McGarry sat next to Collins in the Rotunda Gardens, while they were interrogated by the British troops (McGarry, *Collins*, p.4). McGarry recorded that Captain Lee Wilson ordered Clarke, MacDermott, Collins and others to be strip-searched. He also commented that Collins resolved to deal with the man later, if opportunity arose. (Wilson was shot later.)

On leaving Richmond Barracks for internment, McGarry was separated from Michael Collins by Detective Inspector Bruton of the Dublin Metropolitan Police detective division, the G-men. Bruton played a prominent part in the surveillance of republicans both before and after the Rising (McGarry, *Collins*, p.6).

On 4th May 1916, McGarry was convicted and sentenced to death. However, his death sentence was commuted to eight years' penal servitude (*Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook*, Easter 1916, Compiled by the *Weekly Irish*

Times, p.62).

On the same day, Joseph Plunkett, William Pearse, Michael O'Hanrahan and Edward Day were executed. Sixteen other men were also sentenced to death on that day, but had their sentences commuted to ten years.

McGarry, along with the other sentenced prisoners, spent some time in Portland and Dartmoor prisons before being transferred to Lewes Prison in early 1917. Eamon de Valera was elected Commandant of the prisoners in Lewes, and Piaras Beaslai, who was himself a prisoner, noted that among the prisoners were Sean McGarry and Diarmuid Lynch, "*two leading IRB men who had been in close touch with Tom Clarke in the arrangements for Easter week*" (Beaslai, *Collins*, p.149).

McGarry, in a discerning appraisal of the Easter Rising, with special reference to the role of Tom Clarke, concluded that

"it is not for us who were the contemporaries of those seven gallant men who signed the proclamation in 1916 to apportion greatness nor indeed to say if any of the seven signatories were great. But, if one may hazard a guess, it is that history will write Tom Clarke as a great Irishman—great in his love for Ireland, great in his faith in her destiny, great in his purpose, great in his achievement and great in his death" (McGarry, *Clarke*, p.26).

McGarry and the rest of the sentenced prisoners were not released until 16th June 1917. They were not, therefore, involved in the initial stages of the creation of a republican movement that was committed to the ideals of the Easter Rising. The first steps to revive the Irish Volunteers and the IRB took place without them, as did the election of Count Plunkett for North Roscommon on 3rd February 1917. However, the election of Joseph McGuinness for Longford on 9th May 1917 did have ramifications inside the prison walls at Lewes. McGuinness was a prisoner in the jail at the time of his nomination and many IRB prisoners thought that his candidature for a seat in the House of Commons did not accord with IRB principles.

McGarry spoke strongly against McGuinness contesting the seat and even proposed that he "*should publicly repudiate his candidature*" (Beaslai, *Collins*, p.153). Some IRB men, among them Diarmuid Lynch and Piaras Beaslai, were in sympathy with McGarry's view but others, including Thomas Ashe and Harry Boland, were in favour of McGuinness standing. Finally, after McGuinness had been formally presented as a candidate, the IRB took a united stand in his support.

McGarry, like many of the sentenced prisoners, played a major part in the formation of the new post-1916 republican movement, when they returned to Ireland in June 1917. In August 1917 he attended a meeting at the Keating Branch headquarters at 46 Parnell Square, which was designed to plan a new constitution for the Irish Volunteers.

Others present included Eamon de Valera, Cathal Brugha, Thomas Ashe, Michael Collins, Diarmuid Lynch, and Richard Mulcahy. At about the same time McGarry was involved in the important steps that were taken to continue the revival of the IRB. A new Supreme Council was chosen, with Thomas Ashe as President, Diarmuid Lynch as Treasurer, and Sean O'Muirthille as Secretary. McGarry was among the other members present, who included Alec McCabe, Joe Gleeson, Pat McCormick and Michael Collins (Murphy, *Pearse*, p.90).

The death of Ashe on 25th September 1917, following his imprisonment and hunger-strike, radically changed, not only the IRB, but also the mood in the entire country. Sean O Murthuile, the Secretary of the IRB, noted that Sean McGarry succeeded Ashe as Chairman of the Supreme Council and,

"in accordance with the IRB constitution became the head of the Irish Republic, the IRB not having yet been superseded as the Government of the Republic"(Sean O Murthuile memoir, Mulcahy papers, UCDA, P7a/209, p.64)

A new constitution was drawn up to take into account the changed situation created by the Easter Rising. Michael Collins and Diarmuid Lynch (Treasurer) were mainly responsible for this new constitution and, together with McGarry, "*constituted the executive of the organisation*" (O'Donoghue, Foreword to Lynch p.viii; and Lynch, *IRB*, p.32).

There was a conscious effort to redress the divided counsels in the IRB at the time of the Rising. Clauses 20 and 21 detailed specific regulations for the declaration of war and Clause 31, while making provision for a Military Council, placed limits on its powers (Lynch, *IRB*, p.33).

By the end of 1917 there were some 4,000 members of the IRB, based in some 350 circles and each circle was designed to form "*a nucleus for a Volunteer company*" (Murphy, *Pearse*, p.95, citing Sean O'Murthuile, secretary of the IRB). Such was the organisation over which Sean McGarry presided.

It was the aim of the IRB to exercise as much influence as possible over the coming conventions of Sinn Fein (25-26 October)

and the Volunteers (27 October). McGarry related that he was asked by Collins to consult with Griffith and to promise him the support of the IRB, if he wished to stand as President of the new Sinn Fein Party, which now had a republican constitution (McGarry, *Collins*, p.1) Griffith, however, declined and insisted that de Valera was the man of the moment. Some IRB men were elected to the Sinn Fein executive, among them were Collins and Diarmuid Lynch.

The IRB also secured a strong representation in the new Volunteer organisation that emerged after the Convention of 27th October 1917. While the leading figures, de Valera as President and Cathal Brugha as Chairman of the Resident Executive, were not in the IRB, many of the other leading officials were. Among them were Sean McGarry, General Secretary; Collins, Director of Organisation; Lynch, Director of Communications; and Richard Mulcahy, Director of Training and

later (March 1918) Chief of Staff (Murphy, *Pearse*, pp 94,95; Mulcahy family memoir, pp, 43-45).

McGarry, in his capacity of Secretary, was responsible in 1918 for attempting to implement the official Volunteer policy of court-martialling the officers and men who had not taken part in the Easter Rising. This led him to write to Eoin MacNeill on 2 February 1918 informing him that "if you should wish to submit to court-martial in connection with your position relating to Easter Week (1916) events, my executive are prepared to receive your statement and make the necessary arrangements" (Michael Tierney, ed. F.X. Martin, *Eoin MacNeill: Scholar and Man of Action, 1867-1945*, Oxford, 1980, pp 266,267). Nothing came of this rather bizarre request, although MacNeill's son, Niall, did attend a court martial process.

(To be continued)

Difficulties With Fascism

"China is watching. China invaded the South China Seas, and not a single thing was done about it. They've militarised it and very little is being done about it. And they're brutal at home to their own people and we have done nothing about it.

"I simply say that the rules and the lessons that we've learned from Ukraine we should have learned in the 1930s. If you appease dictators who are hell-bent on invasion and destruction, then you lose the freedom that we actually fought for. And that is what this is all about."

That was the former Leader of the British Conservative Party, who campaigned for the election of the present leader, Sir Ian Duncan Smith, in the Commons Ukraine Debate on September 24th.

What Duncan Smith says about Russia and China is the truth, in the sense that it is the case that the English-speaking world must destroy them both again if life on Earth is to be worth living for that world.

Its sense of truth is entirely subjective. What is true is what it feels to be true. And what it feels to be true is whatever serves its aggressive purpose of the moment.

Actual 'truth' in the myth-making history sponsored by the English-speaking world is that in the 1930s it appeased powerful Fascist dictators who were hell-bent on dominating the world and destroying civilisation.

It is a fact that there were Fascist dictators in Europe in the 1930s. They had arisen out of the ruins of European civilisation, which Britain in the moment of its victory over Germany and Turkey had destroyed.

Britain did not allow Europe to evolve. In 1919 it broke it up into a series of nation-states with weak national foundations, and required them to be governed by democracy—which was then a newly-invented political system, whose dynamic was an antagonism of political parties, which was subversive of authority.

Authority is necessary to the conduct of a State, and in search of it many states became dictatorships. (In Britain itself government by party conflict was suspended in 1931 and was replaced by National Government until 1945.)

And, since the new states were not the product of a nationalist development, and were thrown together by outsiders, many of them became fascist in search of national cohesion.

The strongest of these fascist dictatorships was the German. Defeated Germany was plundered by those who had defeated it, its population was starved by a Food Blockade for eight months after it surrendered, in order to make it to make a false confession of war-guilt, and it was systematically stripped of all sources of political authority.

Democracy did not flower in the resulting vacuum. It became a dictatorship.

The dictatorships were not powerful States hell-bent on conquest. They were comparatively weak States which had taken on dictatorial form for internal reasons. And Germany was the weakest of them. It was a disarmed state, surrounded by armed states, and was forbidden to acquire an Army, a Navy or an Air Force.

Hitler, having built up a strong national movement, was elected to Office in this unarmed state. He was formally subject to the authority of the British and French Empires under the special laws imposed on Germany by the Versailles/League of Nations authority.

The powerful bully, whom Britain “*appeased*” in the hope of leading it into peaceful ways is a fictional creation after the event, but British statesmen and historians somehow manage to believe it.

Hitler was not “*appeased*” by Britain: he was “*empowered*” by Britain.

In the 1919/20, Britain had prevented France from dividing Germany into three or four states, to ensure that it could not take revenge for the humiliating treatment to which it was being subject.

Germany, which had long been accustomed to living in a number of states, was apparently willing to revert to that mode. But Britain would not allow that, because it would restore France to a dominant position in Europe. And, in the 1930s, Britain helped Hitler to break the Versailles system without even consulting the League of Nations.

To begin with it made a Naval Agreement with Hitler. Four years later it put the cap on it by giving him the Czech armaments industry. And then, having helped Germany to become a regional Great Power, it decided to declare war on it over a trivial issue: the anomalous position of the German city of Danzig within the Polish Corridor but not under Polish sovereignty.

When Hitler early in 1939 proposed the transfer of Danzig to East Prussia, Britain offered Poland a Military Guarantee which seemed to put the British Army at the disposal of the Poles for war with Germany. France did likewise. Hitler invaded Poland. Britain declared war on Germany but did not attack Germany while it was attacking Poland. France did likewise. They just declared war on Germany and brought about a general condition of unsettlement in Europe, and left it to Germany to make the going in the war that had been declared on it.

The Parliament of the European Union has adopted a motion saying that Russia started the Second World War.

Well, it won the Second World War, and that was the problem. But it did not start it.

A World War is not an easy thing to start. Only Britain, with its world Empire and its world-dominating Navy, had the means of starting one. And Britain started one by using the Danzig anomaly as a trip wire, and then declaring a war on Germany which it did not intend to fight itself. It hoped to bring in the United States to fight it, but “*the Yanks always come in two years late*”. It was the Russians that were brought in. And it was the Russians who “*saved civilisation from barbarism*”, as the saying used to go.

The Russians, in the course of defeating the barbaric Power that was trying to destroy civilisation, found themselves in Central Europe. And, since the War to destroy Russia had been launched from central Europe, the Russians established control over that region as a safety measure.

What the Russians did in 1939 was negotiate a non-aggression treaty with Germany after Poland had refused to make an agreement with the Russian Government against Germany.

Poland had the most successful Army in the late 1930s. It had defeated Russia in war in 1920, and as a result had extended its territory into the Ukrainian regions of the Soviet Union. It also had colonial ambitions in Africa. And it had its own form of National Socialism—devised by Josef Pilsudski, who James Connolly had looked on as a kindred spirit.

Although it had defeated Russia in war in the days when the Russian Army was commanded in style by Leon Trotsky, and even though the general opinion was that the military capacity of the Russian Army had been destroyed by Stalin’s military purges, Poland still looked on Russia as a dangerous enemy and refused to enter an agreement with it against Germany.

Pilsudski made an agreement about borders with his fellow national-socialist, Hitler, in 1934. The Weimar democracy had refused to recognise the Polish border laid down by Versailles as legitimate. Hitler recognised it. But the Danzig anomaly was left over for future settlement.

Early in 1939 Hitler suggested that the time had come for a final settlement. He proposed the transfer of Danzig to East Prussia and the building of an extra-territorial road across the Corridor to establish a land connection between East Prussia and the rest of the German

state. At that juncture Britain (and France) offered Poland a *Military Guarantee*—the use of their Armies.

Pilsudski was dead. His follower, and successor, Colonel Beck, rejected the German proposal and accepted the British and French Guarantees—thereby establishing a military encirclement of Germany.

Poland in 1939 refused to make an agreement with Russia against Germany, or with Germany against Russia. It relied on Guarantees by Britain and France which proved to be illusory.

The military encirclement of Germany was a provocation. It was also an illusion.

The provocation of military encirclement might also have been a deterrent if it had been reinforced with military preparation. Hitler saw that Britain was not preparing for battle in alliance with Poland. He reasoned that Poland would find itself isolated if he tested his new Army in war with it. That marked the beginning of the rise of Germany as a Military Power.

The Polish Army was a victorious Army resting on its laurels.

The German Army, thanks to Britain, was in the course of construction out of the non-existence imposed it by Versailles and the League. It had no tradition. It directed itself by the most modern theory of which—which it learned from British theorists of tank warfare.

It had everything to gain by acting and everything to lose by standing still. The British strategy against it was, by use of its Empire, to re-impose the Blockade which had been so effective in 1914-19.

Russia—seeing Germany being directed east, and being rejected by Poland as an ally against Germany, and being put on the long finger by Britain—made a non-aggression agreement with Germany, which was published, and a secret agreement that, if the Polish State collapsed, Russia would re-occupy the territory taken from it by Poland in 1920.

The Polish State collapsed in a few weeks.

Britain and France let their Declarations of War on Germany stand, but tried to get into conflict with Russia in Finland early in 1940. Russia, for the protection of Leningrad, extended its territory into Finland early in 1940. The Finns, though governed by a kind of Fascist regime, made a settlement with Russia before the Anglo-French armies could be deployed in their support.

Britain then set about breaching Norwegian neutrality in order to stop the supply of

Swedish iron ore to Germany. But Germany got in first with an extemporised invasion force into Norway. And, while the British were recovering from that escapade, Germany responded to the Anglo-French Declarations of War on it. It attacked the Armies deployed against it in France and disrupted them in little more than a month.

German Armies followed the disrupted French Armies as they retreated. The French Government—democratically elected—having declared war on Germany and lost, made a settlement. Britain condemned France for treachery because it did not keep on fighting to the last man.

Britain took the remnant of its Army home. It did not need to make a settlement because the dominance of the Royal Navy meant that it was secure on its island; and it fostered terrorist action in France to prevent things from settling down there.

Mainland Europe was Fascist in one way and another, except for Poland—which was no longer a state—and Sweden, which maintained friendly relations with Germany.

Britain could keep Europe on a war-footing with small-scale operations, but if Germany was to be defeated, it would have to be another country which would do it. America was appealed to, but was deaf.

Then, as everybody used to know, Fascist Europe attacked Russia, and Russia destroyed it.

By destroying Fascist Europe, Russia became a World Power.

In 1945 there were only two independent Powers in the world: Russia and America. The world consisted of Russia and America. And Russia and America were deadly enemies.

That was “*the post-1945 established order of the world*”, which we often hear about nowadays. But sometimes what we hear about is “*the post-Cold War order of the world*”. And they are very different things indeed.

*

The German invasion of Russia was three-pronged, targeting the three major cities: Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. It captured one of them: Kiev. On the way towards Kiev, it stirred up a revival of Ukrainian nationalism.

Ukrainian Nationalism first arose as a political force in 1918. When the Tsarist State fell, the nationalists declared Ukraine a nation and formed an independent government under German protection, and launched great pogroms against the Jews. The main Jewish population existed in the Ukraine and Poland,

and it was seen as the immediate enemy.

Ukrainian nationalism failed to establish a national regime in 1918. It was a minor force within the territory of the Ukraine, not able to hold its own against Anarchism and Bolshevism. It went into decline as the Ukraine was given a political structure within the new Russian system.

The founder-leader of Ukrainian Nationalism, Simon Petliura, went into exile in France—where he was assassinated as a Jew-killer by a Jew. The French Government found the assassin Not Guilty, apparently on the ground the Petliura needed killing. That was an unprecedented event at the time, but it seems that it set a precedent.

The German Army took little more than a week to reach Lwow (now Lviv):

“A Ukrainian militia with blue and yellow armbands was quickly recruited, and a thousand Jewish hostages were arrested. Then, on July 2nd and 3rd [1941], with the connivance of the SD [a branch of the SS], ‘Aktion Petliura’ was organised, the symbolic revenge for the murder of the Ukrainian Hetman by a Jew in Paris in 1926. Jews were killed in the prisons, the streets, and in the sports stadium. It was a reprisal action, but seventy-three of the victims were declared to be officials of [the Russian] NKVD, while a further forty were denounced by Ukrainians as NKVD helpers.

“Carried out in all the hysteria of liberation, this killing of 7,000 people had a strong resemblance to the Kovno and Jassy pogroms which preceded it by only a few days. Nor was it a novelty in Lwow—The last Lwow pogrom had been in 1918 and the instigators the invading Poles” (Gerald Reitlinger: *The Final Solution*, 1971 edn., p243).

The Wehrmacht entry to Lwow was accompanied by “*a group of Ukrainian collaborators which included the well-known extreme nationalist, Stepan Bandera*” (ibid).

Kiev was taken, following a siege, on September 19th. A few days later, as the Germans were settling in, the centre of the city was blown up. A great massacre of Jews, which became known as *Babi Yar*, was launched as a reprisal: 33,000 Jews were taken from the city, and in the course of a couple of days were killed and buried in a depression nearby. Others—Jews, Communists, Russians—were added later.

“The Kiev massacre has remained, both for its immense scale and its lack of concealment, the most remembered incident in the German extermination of Soviet Jewry” (ibid, p248).

BBC Radio 3 broadcast Shostakovich’s *Symphony No. 13*, known as the *Babi Yar Symphony*, some time ago. The announcer

wondered why it was not heard more often. It was inspired by a poem by Yevgeni Yevtushenko, “*a young poet seemingly unafraid of Soviet criticism and Shostakovich was impressed by his openness*”.

Yevtushenko’s point, as far as I recall, was that no monument had been erected at Babi Yar, and there should have been.

The Soviet regime had preserved a large part of the Jewish population of the Ukraine by moving it eastwards, out of reach of Germans and Ukrainian nationalists, as part of industrial population which was being re-located for war purposes. If it did not single out Babi Yar for commemoration after the War, I assume this was because Jewish victims were a small part of Soviet victims; because anti-Semitism persisted in the local population, despite the defeat of Germany, and it would not have been politic to affront it unnecessarily; and because, after the regime had made the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine possible by providing it with both a populace and armaments, it had to take account of Arab sentiment and also to curb Zionist ideology within Soviet affairs.

Anyhow a monument was erected and Shostakovich wrote a symphony.

The reason why the BBC had not played it more often can have had nothing to do with Kremlin discouragement. I assume it is because it was not popular. Programme music on a massacre can hardly be catchy—not like Beethoven’s symphony on a journey into the country in Springtime, or Shostakovich’s own celebration of Leningrad in the War (No. 7). Also it is not really a symphony at all, but an orchestral setting of a series of verses by Yevtushenko.

Volodymyr Zelensky, the Russian Jewish actor who has acted himself into the position of being the Ukrainian nationalist war leader of this generation—the successor of Petliura and Bandera, both of whom were assassinated as anti-Semites—has circulated a picture of himself before the monument at Babi Yar—honouring the dead who were killed and buried there to the satisfaction of the Ukrainian nationalists of that generation.

It has been reported that the road from Kiev to Babi Yar is called Bandera Way. I cannot confirm that it is, but it would not be in the least surprising if it was. Ukrainian nationalism has its source in nationalist anti-Semitism. If Europe coheres around it, a great re-evaluation of received values will have to be undertaken.

Brendan Clifford^o

Pelosi in Armenia

After her spectacular expedition to Taiwan recently, Nancy Pelosi has continued her 'stir up trouble' world tour with a visit to Armenia. It should be noted that both anti-China Taiwanese and anti-Turkiye/Azerbaijan Armenians represent large voting populations in her Congressional District, California's 12th. Crucial Mid-Terms are coming up and Pelosi has no problem swaggering about the world in pursuit of votes. *To Hell with the consequences* is Nancy's mantra because she will do what she thinks is right and what will get her votes.

It was said that Pelosi's visit to Taiwan was an independent act in defiance of the President and was purely about votes. But Biden's statement about defending the island against a Chinese invasion (of its own territory) shows it was a double-act and about much more than mere votes. The same is likely to be true of her visit to Armenia.

Pelosi's visit comes in the aftermath of the most serious outbreak of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan since the end of the Second Karabakh War in November 2020. Over 200 soldiers were killed in just over a day in clashes along the border between the two countries. Who fired the first shot hardly matters but it seems clear, by the high level of casualties sustained by Azerbaijani border guards, that some kind of Armenian mining operation was interrupted.

Azerbaijan's forces were rushed to the scene and a full scale battle developed, which spilled over into territory that Armenia regards as its own. The large number of Azerbaijan Special Forces and officers who died suggests this was an emergency situation, rather than a planned invasion — as alleged by Yerevan. However, there were certainly artillery and drone strikes then directed at Armenian forces stationed on the Armenian side of the border.

There are reports that some advanced positions were occupied by Azerbaijani forces but, because of the failure to delineate the border, it is still not clear where the border really is. Since 1992 it has consisted mainly of military lines and Yerevan's obstructionist behaviour in concluding a settlement with Baku, nearly 2 years after the end of the war, has obviously contributed to the uncertainty.

Nancy Pelosi came to Yerevan to sup-

port Armenia and declared Azerbaijan an aggressor.

Is she aware that Armenia has not fully withdrawn its armed forces from Azerbaijani territories, as stipulated by the *Trilateral Agreement* of November 10th, and continues with military activities within the territories of Azerbaijan, including the planting of landmines. Recently, a massive number of anti-personnel mines, produced in Armenia in 2021, were found in the Lachin district of Azerbaijan. These were obviously planted in the last few months, before the Armenian withdrawal. Surely mining the territory of a neighbouring state is an act of aggression, if not war?

In essence, the continued conflict that is occurring between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces is a result of Yerevan's failure to conclude a sustainable peace settlement, based on the provisions of the *Trilateral Agreement* signed in November 2020. Armenia signed that Armistice to avoid complete defeat, but ever since it has been resisting the reality of the result of that war, in which it was thoroughly defeated. While such instability persists along the border, and in Karabakh itself, as a result of the Armenian obstructionism, periodic conflict and death is almost inevitable.

It is within this difficult and turbulent situation that the Speaker of the US Congress has decided to intervene. Her intervention can only be seen as both reckless and provocative.

For the last three decades the United States has been careful to present a position of relative neutrality in the Southern Caucasus. It is understood that there is a powerful Armenian lobby in the US that asserts itself in Congress periodically, and that the neutrality is by no means equitable. US Presidents, as part of their duty, have been at pains to restrain the Armenian tendency, which is detrimental to American national interests in the region.

However, President Biden decided to cross the red line of previous Presidents by recognising the event known as the "*Armenian Genocide*", and that now can be seen to have started unravelling the US policy of generations. For one thing he was pushed the Turkish world, which traditionally looked West, since the time of Ataturk, to start looking East again.

Pelosi began her intervention with a tweet that laid down where she believed Armenia and Azerbaijan lay in the world conflict that Washington has helped to provoke and escalate in Ukraine:

"Our Founders chose democracy over autocracy on Constitution Day 1787. For generations, we have protected and defended that choice. Today, from the US to Ukraine to Taiwan to Armenia, the world faces a choice between democracy — and we must, again, choose democracy."

What is "*democracy*"? It appears to be what the US says it is. It is no longer a form of government but a US policy.

What the US describes as "*democracy*" is inherently expansionist and destructive. It is intolerant of anything that is not acceptable to the US and its interests. Washington regards any part of the world that chooses not to be governed in a way the US thinks it should be governed as an aberration that needs to be rectified. And it believes that it is the duty of the US to rectify it.

In the rectification process functional States are destroyed (Iraq, Syria, Libya etc.) because it is better for the US that there should be ungovernable chaos in a country rather than *undemocratic* government.

Democracy therefore has nothing to do with the wishes of people, it is what the US wants of a country.

In the Southern Caucasus, the US would prefer a unstable, chaotic Armenia to a strong, independent Azerbaijan. Armenia is ripe for US grooming and exploitation, Azerbaijan is not. That seems to be the problem the US has with Baku.

At the Museum of Contemporary Art in Yerevan, the Speaker of the House began her speech by referencing a large painting behind her: "*This picture is an episode of Christian Armenia's struggle with the Persians*". Did she really mean Persians/Iranians or just Muslims?

In her statement in Yerevan Pelosi was clear about whose side she (and Congress?) was on:

"We strongly condemn those attacks... This was initiated by the Azeris and there has to be recognition of that."

The United States, Pelosi said, was listening to Armenia about what its defence needs were and Washington wanted to support the country which was engaged in what she described as "*a global struggle between democracy and autocracy*".

Further tweets emphasised Pelosi's strongly partisan approach:

"This afternoon, our delegation met with Speaker Simonian to reiterate Congress's commitment to strengthening the U.S.-Armenian relationship and convey America's support for Armenia following Azerbaijan's assault on its territory."

"Today, I delivered remarks in Yerevan... to make it clear that America stands with Armenia. In the ongoing battle against autocracy around the world, we will always support democracy and freedom."

"Today, our delegation met with Armenia MoD Team Minister Suren Papikyan to convey America's support for Armenia's security. On behalf of the United States Congress, we condemned Azerbaijan's attacks and spoke about the need for peace and security."

Armenians are ecstatic at this clear US intervention on their side. An interview on the Armenian channel *CivilNet*, with Eric Hacopian, the important Los Angeles Armenian-American, is illuminating.

Hacopian stresses that Pelosi is the second most powerful person in the United States, after the President. She came to Yerevan in her official position as the Speaker of the House of Congress. She is not a transient figure but the favourite "*daughter of American establishment*". It is therefore a "*humungous event*" and a "*huge development*" for Armenia. Pelosi is a "*World wide figure*" since she visited Taiwan and shook China.

Hacopian believes that the United States is taking advantage of Russia's weakness to return to the Southern Caucasus in force. It is a "*brilliant power play*" on Washington's behalf. The US, Hacopian suggests, forced Baku into a ceasefire after stiff Armenian resistance and "*Blinken labelled Azerbaijan as the aggressor*".

The US sensed that "*the Armenian mood was moving against Russia and the CSTO after Russia's betrayal*" and the Kremlin's friendship with Baku. This was the chance to bury the CSTO and take advantage of the situation.

With regard to "*Russia's betrayal*", a prominent Russian had told Hacopian that Putin was intent in undoing the "*200 year Russian presence in the South Caucasus to please Baku*". The Armenians presumably understands that the Russian State had made it possible for them to have a state and a substantial presence in Karabakh through its process of colonisation of the region with Christian Armenians and the displacement of Muslim population to form a frontier buffer.

Pelosi's visit to Yerevan was "*meant as a humiliation of Russia*", according to Hacopian. Not only that, it was "*meant as a humiliation of the EU*". Hacopian argued that —

"The Americans have imposed their war on the Europeans, who really want to end the war in Ukraine, and made them take a tremendous hit to their economies".

He suggested that the US may have been displeased with the EU and Von der Leyen flying to Baku to conclude its gas deal with Azerbaijan. This was consorting with the enemy at a time of war. Hacopian suggested that Washington was signalling its displeasure by not going to Baku and now expressing solidarity only with Armenia.

CivilNet also interviewed Lawrence Broers of Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs). Broers argued that the recent outbreak in hostilities represented a "*qualitative escalation*" of the conflict on Baku's part "*to intimidate Yerevan into a settlement*".

In Armenia there had been a "*decline in perceptions of Russian security guarantees*". Since the Ukrainian counter-offensive near Kharkov, Russian military might was seen to be "*not what was thought it was*". Broers noted that Azerbaijan has been a successful operator of the emerging multi-polarity — non-aligned but friendly to both Russia and the West.

Azerbaijan was very important to Russia's war effort in Ukraine and its larger Eurasian project according to Broers. It had growing leverage with the EU, due to the crisis in energy supply and Brussels interest in promoting the Peace Process as a form of soft power. The region was likely to be "*in a dynamic of serial escalations/ ceasefires*" for the foreseeable future.

It is perhaps no surprise that the *Trilateral Agreement* of 2020 has now become a target for the US to undermine, as Washington considers it Putin's achievement. *Pax Americana* will be preferable to *Pax Russiya* for Yerevan. The US is providing a potential means of escape from its commitments under the Armistice Pashinyan that signed up to.

The EU, which is now seen as captured by Baku, is worthless for the Armenians except as a cash cow. But Washington, with its vast amounts of money it spends on allies, and its Himars, is the Real Deal.

It should be noted at this point that, while both Armenia and Azerbaijan have been careful to maintain something of a balance between West and Russia, they have gone about it in very different ways. Armenia, bent on unsustainable territorial expansion at the expense of its neighbours, has found itself, despite independence, an economic and military dependency of Russia as a

result of its expansionary adventurism. However, it has a pro-Western element in Yerevan, represented by the Colour Revolution of the current Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, and a powerful US and French diaspora that prefers a Washington orientation.

According to al-Jazeera on 18th September:

"Pelosi... said she found it interesting that Armenia was unsatisfied with the response from the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation. A senior Armenian official expressed unhappiness last week with the Russian-led military alliance's response to Yerevan's request for help. "We are very dissatisfied of course. The expectations we had were not justified," parliamentary speaker Alen Simonyan told national television, likening the CSTO to a pistol that did not shoot bullets."

There could be considerable conflict within Armenia if Washington does what it did in Kiev in Yerevan.

In the Rand Corporation's 2019 statement, *Extending Russia: Competing from Advantageous Ground*, which is very much the US blueprint for its geopolitical policy, there are six suggested Measures for stretching Russian resources:

- Measure 1: Provide Lethal Aid to Ukraine;
- Measure 2: Increase Support to the Syrian Rebels;
- Measure 3: Promote Regime Change in Belarus;
- Measure 4: Exploit Tensions in the South Caucasus;
- Measure 5: Reduce Russian Influence in Central Asia;
- Measure 6: Challenge Russian Presence in Moldova."

In its *Geopolitical Measures* chapter, under Measure 4, on page 117 of the document, after discussing the possibility of the US detaching Georgia and Azerbaijan from the Russian sphere, it is stated:

"...the United States could try to induce Armenia to break with Russia. Although a long-standing Russian partner, Armenia has also developed ties with the West: It provides troops to NATO-led operations in Afghanistan and is a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace, and it also recently agreed to strengthen its political ties with the EU. The United States might try to encourage Armenia to move fully into the NATO orbit. If the United States were to succeed in this policy, then Russia might be forced to withdraw from its army base at Gyumri and an army and air base near Yerevan (currently leased until 2044), and divert even more resources to its Southern Military District."

Eurasia.net, a US and UK funded on-line news service, pushes this Washington narrative in an article published on 15th September entitled, *For Armenians: CSTO Missing in Action*:

"Many pro-Western Armenians have called for the country to leave the CSTO. "If Armenia does not show determination now and does not get out of the deadlock of the CSTO-Eurasian Union-trilateral statement of November 9, 2020 [the Russia-brokered ceasefire that ended that year's war] and does not take a step toward becoming part of the United States-France-European Union civilized system, then [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan and [Azerbaijan President Ilham] Aliyev will devour Armenia," wrote Artur Sakunts, a human rights activist and chair of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly of Vanadzor, in a September 14 Facebook post."

Protestors have started to appear on the streets of Yerevan, demanding the withdrawal of Armenia from the CSTO. If that were done, Armenia would be wholly dependent on the US for its security. We can be pretty sure if Pashinyan does this he will have had assurances from Washington about Armenia's future protection.

Washington sees Armenia as a formal ally of Russia in the CSTO, with a giant Russian base on its territory, and operating close relations with Iran, against its ally, Israel. And yet this is all of no consequence to the United States. Why? Because the US sees the Armenians as not being serious. It is believed that they can be easily turned once the Dollar is flashed and promises are made about territory.

The Azerbaijanis are a different kind of people: honour and principle seem to be a part of their make-up. They have good intentions toward wider humanity and engage in honest, straightforward relationships for mutual benefit. They are not so easily bought.

Azerbaijan has maintained a balance between Moscow and the West by being a good neighbour to Russia at the same time as allowing Western business, particularly in the energy section, to have access to its resources and market. There are also a number of projects involving assistance to European countries, including the Vatican, in cultural and economic spheres operated by the Aliyev Government. Baku is the most Western city east of Vienna.

It can be presumed that Washington's courting of Yerevan is not just a move to detach Armenia from the Russian sphere but also to send a signal to Baku. That sig-

nal would be that Eurasian development—like that being pursued by Azerbaijan with Russia, Turkiye, Iran and China in Samarkand, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit—displeases Washington. When Washington is displeased it can get up to no good in a country. It has a wide range of NGOs etc. funded for the purpose of "*democracy promotion*" in all but a few countries. It is very interested in "*oppositions*" and their cultivation as State destabilisers on the road to utopian democracy.

Washington's mission could be described as "*Democracy or Bust!*".

Both in Armenia and Azerbaijan "*bust*" is a much greater likelihood than the development of US-style democracy. That is not because Armenians and Azerbaijanis are unsuited to democracy. It is just that they are not islands off the coast of Europe or in the middle of the Atlantic/Pacific Oceans where such ideal states can be constructed over centuries and from which the rest of the world can be safely lectured to about its failings, in the knowledge that it will continue to fail and never achieve the gold standard democracy of the USA or UK.

I am pretty sure that most people in Azerbaijan would know the result of a "*democratic revolution*" or Colour Revolution—having seen one in Armenia lately, and witnessed one 30 years ago that resulted in crushing defeat in the First Karabakh War. Elchibey was an honest, decent man, by all accounts, with democratic pretensions: but running a functional state in the South Caucasus was beyond him.

One of the most ridiculous and hypocritical aspects of Pelosi's intervention has been the view that Armenia was the victim of an attack on its "*sovereign territory. An attack on Armenia proper with civilians targeted*".

The United States has great double standards when it comes to dealing with Azerbaijan.

Section 907 of the *Freedom Support Act 1992* is a curious piece of United States Law. It bans any kind of direct US aid to the Government of Azerbaijan. This ban made independent Azerbaijan the only post-Soviet state not to receive direct aid from the United States Government it provided to all others to "*facilitate economic and political stability*".

The Act was sought by the Armenian

lobby in the US, and was passed in response to a blockade Azerbaijan imposed on Armenia, after separatists in Karabakh declared independence and union with Armenia and organised an armed insurgency against the Government of the State.

That insurgency led to the ethnic cleansing of over 750,000 people, and the killing of around 20,000 Azerbaijanis. The UN Security Council passed four Resolutions against Armenia for this, but the US Congress still decided to punish Azerbaijan for it.

After 9/11, with national security demands paramount, the US Senate adopted an amendment to the *Act* that provided the President with the ability to waive Section 907. All Presidents have done so since then, including Biden, who had criticised President Trump for operating the waiver during the recent War in 2020.

The ending of the waiver is a prime target for the Armenian lobby after their success with the Genocide statement. Some restrictions have been re-applied to Azerbaijan by Congress since the War in 2020.

Armenia invaded and occupied nearly 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's sovereign territory for three decades. The force that Washington condemns Azerbaijan for using, and says has no place in the world, is the only thing that liberated this territory after reliance on US diplomacy failed miserably.

There was only one side which targeted civilians in the recent 2020 war and that was Armenia, which bombarded the civilian populations of Azerbaijan with Russian missiles, killing around 100.

Kiev is fortunate that Washington has not applied the same morality it has to Baku. In the Ukraine Washington has lavished the most abundant finance and military supplies on an ex-Soviet state, defending its Soviet borders against separatists.

It has marshalled the entire Western world behind something that is only one stage short of a world war.

It demands the destruction of entire economies, people's livelihoods and futures, for the sacrifice necessary to win the war.

For Mr. Biden and Mrs. Pelosi it is the same old story: "*Muslim lives Don't Matter*."

Pat Walsh

Kiss Me, Hardy!

There was plenty of energy—gas and electricity—during the 1950s but very little money to buy it. Most houses and flats would have a single fireplace to heat up the entire accommodation. Bedrooms had no heating. Even newly built Council Houses had a single fireplace in the living room.

In Northern Ireland the new housing splurge had the single fireplace, to be used to burn coal that would heat the water tank for hot water. Without a fire there was no hot water. There was also no heating in the bedrooms and nowhere to plug in an electric fire, nor a connection for a gas fire.

Middle-class homes in London also had very little heating. If you were a member of the CPGB and were working class, that's how you met the middle-class when they held meeting in their lounge. An electric fire might be turned on for half an hour. The more hardy might take off their overcoats as a sign of manners.

Central heating was discussed but that was mainly to do with America. It was thought of as too pampering and would turn people into ashy pets (dogs and cats that lay too near a coal fire).

On the subject of America, the few who had TVs were scornful when they heard that Americans had something called a remote control. They said it was the road to absolute laziness.

Heating was not something people might campaign about getting. You just had to be hardy, and, if you weren't, you could make yourself hardy. A dedicated group of workers in the Belfast shipyard swam during their lunch break (dinner break) in the icy winter waters, even when it was sleeting. Some of us apprentices joined them. You stripped down to your underpants and dived in. Coming out of the water you just put your clothes over your wet body, and opened a couple of shirt buttons to show that you weren't shivering, which you weren't, but were feeling a rosy glow. There was no summer swimming only the hardening winter swims.

In London the least heating was in the bedsit. The early 1950's was the epoch of the Irish migrant, mostly young men. The room might have a gas fire or an electric

fire. To use the electric fire for any length of time had a prohibitive cost. The gas fire warmed the front of the person but the back was cold. You might wear an overcoat indoors, over your work clothes during Winter but, if you were rural Irish, you wouldn't wear it outdoors in Winter as you could be thought of as a weakling or a big girl.

Some just wore their pyjamas under their clothes all Winter, but they were few. There were very few baths in bedsit land. There were local bath houses run by the Council where you could have your weekly bath, if you didn't fancy washing yourself down in cold water. That suited those whole idea was to harden up.

The usual uniform for the rural Irish was the navy blue suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. West Coast men wore bellbottom trousers. These lads were referred to as *bog trotters*, by some of the other Counties, and were credited as being able to see in the pitch black. But the so-called *bog trotters* said there were no bog to trot were they came from, for the earth only grew stones.

I visited the bedsit of a friend of mine from Tyrone and found him sitting in front of a gas fire with his overcoat on. We were supposed to go out to a meeting of the Connolly Association but he said the meeting room would be as cold as the grave, and he couldn't be seen wearing an overcoat.

We had just spent a very cold day on a building site, in the open, five storeys up. He was of the hardy brigade, and copied the Southern Irish in his choice of a navy blue suit, white shirt and red tie. Suddenly he said, referring to the gas fire.

"I'm puttin' shillin's down its gub when I should be puttin' pints down mine."

He then broke open the gas meter to make it vomit up its *shillin's*, as he said. He then had a quick shave in cold water and put on his suit, shirt and tie, polished his shoes, and we were off, saying he'd find another bedsit before the landlord came round to empty the gas meter.

It was down to the nice warm pub, cigarette-clouded pub with the nicotined ceiling, wearing only a suit in the dead of Winter and not a word about freezing in the bedsit. The meter-breaker was a Tyrone

man but was greeted with:

"Hey, Donegal?"

It was better for the Northern accent to be mistaken for a Donegal one, or you'd be asked for the Six Counties back. In NI they were all Orangemen (no Orange women?), and most didn't think there were Catholics up there. Getting too many demands to hand back half a dozen Counties could only be countered with:

"No, it's you who should hand back the 26 counties."

This brought silence as some pondered if this might be best, as they had been driven into England anyway through lack of opportunities for work, and England provided them with work.

If you weren't keen on playing cards or darts you could shape the silver paper out of your cigarette packet to make it aerodynamic: that would stick to the nicotine on the ceiling. There were hundreds of them in some Irish pubs in London.

But wearing an overcoat in such an environment made the drinkers wonder if you were English, middle-class, or just a big girl.

At one table might sit a man with half a dozen empty pint glasses with more full ones to be drunk, donations by the drinkers who just been given jobs, by him, on a building site. He could be a ganger-men, recruiting for the concrete-gang, or someone recruiting carpenters or steel fixers. It was fatal to wear an overcoat. Sometimes one would relent, but he had to see if your hands were hardened and calloused and that you weren't a *latchico*, that lazed around on a building site while others did the hard work.

There was a certain pride in labouring work with some older men kitted out with moleskin trousers, heavy wooden clog-like boots with a steel rim running all the way around the sole. They carried their own spade which was shined to a mirror and they could shift tons of earth a day.

Very little was known about young Irish women and how they survived in the big English cities, working in hospitals and factories. The young Irish man only met them at Irish dances. They were generally known as *Biddies* and if they didn't measure up in looks and slimness then they were *missing a pair of horns*.

It was surprising how male-dominated society was among the Irish migrants. The Connolly Association had very few women in it and there was no effort to recruit any. Most meetings were entirely male.

It was much the same at Sinn Fein meetings in London. Those who wanted

females at political meetings joined the CPGB or the Young Communist League, which many CA members were also part of. Those who weren't members just went along with the all-male meetings.

The *British Union of Fascists* also had their Irish members who might hit the pubs sometime in order to discuss what they believed in. They had sharp intellects and went easy on the drink. They seemed well versed in fascist economics and kept well away from the race issues. They were a mysterious young group, well in control of themselves, wearing only the traditional navy suit in Winter and making a point of shaking hands to prove they also had hard and calloused hands.

They were very hard to combat on building sites, with their gift of oratory at meetings. One I came across managed to wreck the communist-led organisation on one site with his collaboration with the management, who in the end give him an office he could sit in and ponder, whenever he wanted break from the heavy shuttering work that he helped to do as a carpenter.

He made no secret of his work with the management, said he wasn't an informer on the workforce and seemed to be an early advocate of *workers' control*. When one member of the Works Committee advocated dropping a breeze block on his head from a height, I knew we had lost control.

We knew he came from Cavan, despite the anglicising of his accent—news of which was spread among the Irish workers, who didn't like that kind of duplicity.

But that didn't help, at the next meeting the workforce voted out the Works Committee with nothing to replace it other than Maguire, the fascist. It was redundancy for us, as the workforce weren't going to strike on our behalf.

His whole idea now was to prevent the organisation of militancy on-site and the setting up of Works Committees. He, as a shop steward, ran the site in accordance with Union policy of no contrary site organisations. The Amalgamation Society of Woodworkers were so grateful they made him a full-time Trade Union official, despite his fascist sympathies. Later we heard he had died at the age of 36. The *British Union of Fascists* organised the nearest thing to a State Funeral with Sir Oswald Mosley speaking at the graveside.

Other than that it was still bog-trotting along Kilburn High Road in the navy suit in winter and freezing secretly in the cold bedsit and working hard on the building site. There was no way of being kissed hardy by a young Bidy in macho-land.

Wilson John Haire

The Government's Paying Your Bills

Austria's Government wants to subsidise energy bills, with households paying only 10 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) for the first 2,900 kWh they use every year

"*Servus!*" I must pick up in this week's newsletter where last week's left off: The question of how best to deal with Europe's rising electricity and gas prices, a crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. By week's end, Europe's leaders are expected to have decided upon which measures will be implemented continent-wide to dam rising prices. Suggestions include a levy on energy companies' profits, measures to reduce demand for energy, and a price cap at which European companies could buy Russian gas. Europe is also considering decoupling electricity and gas prices and reforming the merit order system for ranking available sources of energy.

Domestically, the Austrian government has already intervened twice to soften the blow of rising energy bills on consumers, as I explained last week, including a package of one-time bonuses worth €500 per adult and €250 per child due to roll out in October. Last week, the government also afforded *Wien Energie*, the country's largest energy provider, a €2 billion line of credit to keep it solvent and help it deal with major price fluctuations in the European energy market to which it is particularly exposed.

Now the government has agreed upon an even more robust form of intervention in the domestic energy market, one grandees in the conservative People's Party (ÖVP) were pushing its leader, chancellor Karl Nehammer, to implement in July: a cap on electricity prices. Back then, Nehammer was opposed to such a measure, with sources close to the chancellor telling the Austrian tabloids that the cries to bring a price cap into force were opportunistic on the part of ÖVP state governors fearful of losing their jobs and eager to be seen to be doing something. Evidently, Nehammer took a look escalating energy bills and crumbling polling figures and abruptly changed his mind.

The electricity price cap will, according to initial reports, function as follows. The government plans to subsidize people's annual energy bills such that they will only play 10 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) for the first 2,900 kWh they use—80 percent of an average household's yearly use. Anything above that will be subject to market rates, which currently range from anywhere between 18 and 72 cents kWh depending on one's supplier. That cap will apply to all households irrespective of how large the property may be or how many people live there, a fact that has begotten criticism from the Chamber of Labor who sees this as unfair. The cap is projected to save the average household 500 Euros per annum.

The price cap was approved by cabinet on Wednesday. It will become Austrian law by October, come into effect in December, and remain on the books until mid-2024. How much this will cost the state over the next two years remains unclear. The government in Vorarlberg is concerned the 10 cents cap won't help residents in their state (in which case, they're crying over nothing, for it means people in Vorarlberg are already paying less than 10 cents per kWh). Subsidizing the market may also discourage individual consumers from saving energy and do nothing to bring down the price at electricity is bought and sold. This price cap only covers the electricity market; nothing has yet been announced regarding what the government plans to do about gas.

That the government has managed to agree an electricity price cap at all, however, is a sign of two things. First, that in spite of the internal chaos with the governing ÖVP, the axis between the ÖVP-controlled finance ministry and Green-run energy ministry is working well in a time of crisis. Second, that between his intervention to save *Wien Energie* (as he might frame it) and introduction of the electricity price cap, finance minister Magnus Brunner is becoming very well placed to step into the chancellor's shoes, should his role as ÖVP party leader become available following regional elections in Tyrol, Lower Austria, and Salzburg.

Bis bald!

**The Vienna Briefing
Liam Hoare**

<https://viennabriefing.substack.com/p/austria-electricity-price-cap/comments>

Does
It
Up

Stack
?

Cabinet Luxury Cars

All fifteen Cabinet Ministers are now to have luxury cars. Up to 2011, there had been full-time Garda protection for Ministers which at that time cost about 6 million Euro a year. Up to now, the annual cost of the pool of drivers for the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Foreign Affairs Minister and Minister for Justice has been about 2.5 million Euros a year.

Now protection by specially trained Garda drivers will be provided to all fifteen Cabinet Ministers: together with luxury cars—a large number of Mercedes, Audi, BMDs and Lexus cars have been acquired and about 40 additional Gardaí have been allocated: and they have been trained in the use of fire-arms and in high-speed driving, so that Ministers can be protected from the citizenry.

The Taoiseach and the Tánaiste have made a point of telling us that all this extra security is as a result of a joint review by the Department of Justice and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris. None of them is able to tell us of the cost of the new protection, or even the approximate cost! Surely, under Public Procurement guidelines, quotations were sought from the providers of the cars? Not a word about it.

The reason given for all this expenditure of millions of euros per year is that there have been a series of hostile and aggressive protests outside the homes of Cabinet Ministers.

This sounds like a very lame excuse. Facing down a protesting group by using a luxury car and a Garda chauffeur is hardly likely to diffuse a situation. And why do protesters do their protesting outside a Minister's home? Most likely it is because this Minister is not prepared to meet the protesters at Government Buildings. Or that the Minister is not doing his/her job by not providing homes for homeless taxpayers or not providing hospitals for sick people.

Or is it that Ministers are afraid?

Perhaps this is it. Because we are all afraid at times these days and it will not help us to have 70 Gardaí taken from us, to protect Ministers who, along with pay of 103,000 euro a year minimum, already have their own luxury cars.

Oops, I nearly forgot, they will now all pocket the value of their own cars which they will sell off.

Also the Ministers will from now on not have to tax or insure their cars.

Ministers are there for the money and the power. Sitting into a car with a chauffeur lifts a TD up into a new level, far above ordinary people. I once heard a Minister boast that he had not had a Driving Licence for years. (Well, why should he when we were providing him with a car and a driver?)

Another Minister complained to me, while patting his ample shirt fronts, that he and his wife had to carefully watch their weight because they were invited out to dinner four or five times a week and often for lunch also. So, *'tis tough at the top!* It is a long long way from Sir John Gray of Dublin 1816-1874.

Sir John Gray

Dublin's O'Connell Street has a monument to Charles Stewart Parnell at one end and a sculpture of The Liberator, Daniel O'Connell at the other end, near O'Connell Bridge. In between is a statue of Sir John Gray who, it can fairly be said, did more for the people of Dublin than any of the other worthies.

Gray was born in Claremorris, Co. Mayo into the Protestant ruling class. And so he was educated in Trinity College, Dublin. He went on to Glasgow University and qualified as a Physician and a Surgeon. Back in Dublin he became Political Editor of *The Freeman's Journal*, and he later became owner of the Journal.

It was a nationalist newspaper and Gray became a campaigner for such causes as the dis-Establishment of the Church of Ireland, reform of the land laws, and Repeal of the Act of Union—all causes not normally supported by Protestants.

He helped to establish the Tenants' League and he was sentenced to prison—along with Daniel O'Connell whose causes he supported.

He was elected an Alderman in Dublin Corporation in 1852 and he pursued a policy to improve public water supply and sanitation. It had been discovered in

London that cholera disease was spread in drinking water. Gray worked hard in London politics to get an Act of Parliament passed—the *Dublin Corporation Waterworks Act*—so as to enable a waterworks to be built on the Vartry River.

The Act was passed in 1861 and work on the giant engineering project began in 1862, i.e. within months. Whereas today it takes years just in the planning stage. Gray was a man of action and while the Act was going through Parliament, he himself bought the necessary land with his own money, so as to prevent speculators profiting from it, and when the Act was passed, he transferred the land to Dublin Corporation at cost price.

It took six years to build the Waterworks and the water-mains including a tunnel nearly 5 kilometres long. The new waterworks was completed in 1868 and greatly improved sanitation in Dublin city and reduced the cholera disease.

Sir John Gray was knighted for his great work. He died in 1875 and he is buried in Glasnevin cemetery.

How many politicians today, far wealthier than Sir John Gray would give their money and energy to do so much good for the public health?

Michael Stack ©

Launch And Public Meeting

Friday,
November
11th at 7pm

The Teachers' Club
Parnell Square, DUBLIN

“The Kilmichael Ambush,
the historians and
Eve Morrison's defence of
Peter Hart”

A presentation
by
Niall Meehan

Attend in person
or, to receive a Zoom Link
for the event, contact:

jacklaneaubane@hotmail.com

ORGANISED LABOUR continued

Patricia King

The first female General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Patricia King, has announced she will step down from her role.

Ms King told a meeting of the union umbrella body's Executive Council that she has decided to leave the role within months. She had already completed the seven-year term for the position.

Ms King became the first woman to serve in the position of General Secretary of ICTU when she took up the post in 2015.

She is a former Vice-President of SIPTU and was also a Vice-President of Congress.

Ms King was a full-time official with SIPTU for over 25 years and the first woman to serve as a national officer of the union when she was appointed vice-president in May 2010.

She has represented workers in the

public and private sectors and was a lead negotiator in the Croke Park and Had-dington Road agreements.

Ms. King played a leading role in the Irish Ferries dispute in 2005 and 2006 and was involved in negotiations that led to the establishment of the National Employment Rights Authority.

Ms King is expected to remain in her post for several weeks, until a successor is appointed. The position will be advertised in the coming days.

(Irish Independent, 21.9.2022)

Ukraine's war on unions

On 19th July 2022, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted Draft Law 5371, which abolished labour rights for 94% of Ukrainian workers. This law introduces extreme liberalisation of labour relations; it discriminates against employees of all micro, small and medium sized enterprises, and deprives them of labour and union protection.

The Trade Unions of Ukraine actively opposed the promotion of this anti-labour draft law for two years. Despite numerous warnings from the International Trade Union Confederation, the European Trade Union Confederation, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) regarding the inconsistency of this draft law with the principles and norms of European legislation, the ILO Conventions, as well as the conclusion of scientists and experts, the Parliament of Ukraine has adopted it.

Among the consequences of the adoption of such a law will be massive violation of workers' rights and further departures of the most qualified economically active segment of population from Ukraine.

Surely if the Ukrainian Government is receiving billions in aid from the European Union it should be stepping to the demands of the EU law and workers' rights and not acting like a country set in a Victorian mind-set.

PAUL DORAN, Dublin 22
(Irish Daily Mail, 11.8.2022)

Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback · Biteback

Free Derry Wall

Eamon McCann's attempt to claim the Free Derry Wall as some kind of monument to identity politics should not be allowed to go unchallenged (Dissident republican attempts to hijack Free Derry corner slammed by veteran civil rights campaigner, Belfast Telegraph, 5 September).

McCann is quoted by Allan Preston as follows:

"Down through the years, Free Derry Wall has been used to express solidarity with struggles for civil rights elsewhere, in Palestine, Yemen, Kurdistan, etc., as well as among women, the gay community, people of colour and transgender people."

Surely the Free Derry slogan signifies more than "*the international dimension of the fight for civil rights*". Is it not a reminder of the defence of the Bogside, an event—effectively an insurrection—that inspired the North's nationalist community to revolt against the injustices of the perverse system of government imposed by Westminster?

While stating that "*nobody has the right to claim the Free Derry Wall for his or her political group or ideology*", he proceeds to do just that for his own ideology, a rehash of US identity politics.

Far better to see the actions of Northern nationalists in their full historical context. The international dimension may have been important to some political activists. It seems safe to assume that for most of the people involved in the creation of Free Derry, it was a marginal factor.

Dave Alvey
Irish Political Review Group
Belfast Telegraph, 13.11.22

1922 continued

had been used. If they allowed things to become stabilised in the present form, and allowed vested interests to be solidified, they would find it very hard to make the country what it ought to be.

He appealed to Ministers to take advantage of the present opportunities to modify the circumstances which had bound the country to the economic and social system, which was imposed for the purpose of maintaining the hold of another and alien civilisation upon the people of this country.

It was necessary to direct their minds to the facts underlying the causes which led to the political revolution. He believed it was possible within the Constitution, faulty as it was, to grow and develop on lines which would mean the re-establishment of the commonwealth in which humanity had the first place, and in which property would be placed in its proper position.

They would have to fight very hard against the tendency of international financial interests to get hold of the country.

He asked the Minister of Finance particularly to see how easy it would be to do nationally what the bankers did in their own interests, otherwise the finances [*sic.*] would draw the noose and strangle them.

Mr. Johnson said that he desired that those living in the North-Eastern corner of Ireland should be represented in the Senate, and that Labour representatives from that corner should also get an opportunity of being put in the Senate. He strongly urged that on the President.

(*The Irish Times*, October 26, 1922)

Social Freedom— “Incubus of Capitalism” (*The Irish Independent*, October 26, 1922)

Mr. Johnson said they could, he believed, make the Constitution what they willed. While they had achieved, or might achieve, through the instrument of the Treaty and the Constitution, political freedom, that was merely a sound unless they used it for social, economic, and cultural freedom.

He was afraid they were not going to use political freedom for these ends, and they were likely to forget that greater effort was still required to free themselves

from the incubus of capitalism and all its accompaniments.

He appealed to Ministers, members and the public to take advantage of the present opportunities to modify the circumstances which had bound the country to the system imposed to maintain the hold of another and alien civilisation on the people.

The more progress they made towards prosperity the greater would be the temptation for the financiers to get hold of them. If they were not careful they would find their necks in the noose and be strangled.

(*The Irish Independent*,
October 26, 1922.)

Did we need a Constitution?

Whether or not the Irish Free State would have a written constitution was the subject of some debate when the *Irish Free State (Saorstát Éireann) Bill* was introduced to the Provisional Parliament by President Cosgrave. The Labour leader, Thomas Johnson, remarked:

“There is no compulsion—so far as I can read in the Treaty—for a Constitution—a written Constitution—to be established at all... It would be wiser, I suggest, to leave the enactment of a Constitution until there is something like quietude in the country... I submit that it would be enough, in so far as any obligations that have been entered into, to re-enact, re-affirm, or ratify—whichever phrase you like—the Treaty itself, and let the Constitution grow out from that and thereby flatter our neighbours by following their own practice, in allowing the Constitution to develop by custom and usage”

(Dáil Éireann debate, 18.9.1922.)

Another reason put forward not to adopt a written constitution was that constitutional conventions between members of the British Commonwealth were evolving and there was likely to be an Imperial Conference on the matter before long. The Labour leader also objected to the manner in which the Provisional Parliament was being described as a “*constituent assembly*” when in fact it was not acting of its “*free volition*” and thereby at liberty to adopt a constitution. He compared it to re-establishing Poyning’s Law.

(Dáil Éireann debate, 18.9.1922.)

Battle of Kinsale?

“Mr. Sean Milroy said they were putting the finishing touches to this international contract. When the present stage was finished Ireland would have discharged her part of the contract, and would have achieved the greatest triumph in her history since the Battle of Kinsale (*sic*).

“The constitution was a great monument to the two great men who had passed away. [Collins and Griffith.] The names of these two men would be blessed by future generations.” (*The Irish Independent*, October 26, 1922.)

“[Sean Milroy] He did not believe that there would be any action on the part of the British Government to jeopardise the Constitution. But they must look beyond its passing through the British Parliament, and look forward to the equitable carrying into effect of questions that would arise under the Constitution.

“He wanted to use it not as a means of further estranging one section of the Irish people from another, but of bringing together those people in the North-East who were estranged from them, so that there would be unity and good will among all sections.” (*The Irish Times*, October 26, 1922.)

Dorothy Macardle

“The enacted Constitution was something unique among the Constitutions of States—a strange medley of good and bad, wise and preposterous, as the circumstances of its origin and framing might have led observers to expect. It contained clauses, drafted in Ireland, of a fine, advanced and democratic character, worthy of a nation with an old tradition of just laws, and, intermixed with these, the British injections, provisions destructive of sovereignty, restrictive of liberty, insufferably humiliating to any people with a claim to nationhood.

“The best feature of the Constitution as a whole was the ease with which (subject only to the Treaty) it could be amended: it could be amended by ordinary legislation within a period of eight years. It remained a document with which, given wisdom and courage in the Administration, something could yet be done.

“For the moment what was outstandingly apparent was that the Constitution fastened the Treaty by iron rivets upon Ireland and preserved the prerogatives of the Crown.

“Bonar Law was satisfied. While this Constitution was being enacted in Ireland he was taking over the reins of power from Lloyd George. He assured the Irish Ministers that the Conservative Party would put no obstacle in the way of ratification of the Constitution as enacted. He would do all in his power to make it a success.” (Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic*, Corgi Books, 1968, p.728.)

“The Constitution of the Free State was drafted and adopted in 1922, in the immediate shadow of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, while a civil war was being fought over it. But it does not seem that the Treaty

continued on page 26



LABOUR

Comment

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100th Anniversary

Free State Constitution 1922

The Irish Times, Thursday, October 26, 1922

CONSTITUTION PASSED

NO DOUBT ABOUT ENGLAND'S GOOD FAITH

WHAT IRELAND HAS WON

ROAD TO FULL DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LIFE

"The country is yours for the making. Make it."

With this quotation from a speech by the late Mr. Arthur Griffith, Mr. Kevin O'Higgins closed a reasoned appeal to the Provisional Parliament yesterday to pass the Third reading of the *Free State Constitution Bill*. The appeal was successful.

What had been won?

Mr. O'Higgins summarised what Ireland gains by the Constitution as follows:-

It puts into the hands of the people the making, the moulding, the amending, or the repealing of their own laws.

It gives Ireland full fiscal control.

It gives the people power to develop in peace towards the fullness of national life.

Despite superficial symptoms to the contrary Mr. O'Higgins believes that the people appreciate that fact, and that Ireland will travel along the road to peace, progress and reconstruction. He believed that the new British Parliament would fulfil its part of the bargain. The Government has no misgivings on this point.

Labour Party

Mr. Thomas Johnson described the

Constitution as a "great achievement", which gave the country power to control the lives and fortunes of its citizens for 999 days out of a 1,000; and Mr. Gavan Duffy admitted that it secured the big things of the Treaty.

The Six Counties!

In closing the debate, Mr. Cosgrave made a reference to Northern Ireland. If the country were run, he said, on the basis which, he believed, was the intention and hope of every member of the House, the people of Northern Ireland would be impressed by the solid work that was being done. That would be the best way to

bring them into the Free State. (*The Irish Times*, October 26, 1922.)

The *Free State Constitution Bill* received a Third Reading in the Provisional Parliament yesterday. It is ready for ratification by the Imperial Parliament. [Westminster]. (*The Irish Times*, October 26, 1922.)

Great Achievement— Labour's View of what has been Gained

Mr. Thomas Johnson expressed the view that the Constitution did not embody all the liberties for Ireland that were contained in the Treaty. The full national demand would probably have to be worked for, if not fought for, for quite a long time.

He was however, willing to admit that under the Constitution the country had power to control the lives and fortunes of its citizens for nine hundred and ninety-nine days out of the thousand days of the life of the citizen, and that was a great achievement. He believed that they could make the Constitution what they liked, and that they could grow through it into complete and absolute independence if they so willed.

It was now possible to change the habits of thinking and the social practice and economic environment to which the people

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