

# INC NEWS

IRISH NATIONAL CONGRESS

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COMHDHÁIL NÁISIÚNTA NA HÉIREANN

## DEMOCRACY AND REPRESSION 1939-45 & AFTER

**In the last edition of the INC periodical, we said that we would consider herein the second Global Inter-imperialist War (GIW II) of the Twentieth Century. In so doing, it will be seen that it was a fight for democracy only to a limited extent and repression remained the fate of multitudes at the hands of the main allied victors.**

GIW II began on 1st September 1939 when the third German empire (otherwise styled the Third Reich) invaded Poland, and the British empire (along with its dominions), and the French empire (otherwise styled the French Republic) then declared war on Germany. Britain and France became known as the Allies. Initially they did little to counter Germany apart a limited French engagement on the Western front. Within weeks of the German attack on Poland, the Soviet empire (otherwise styled the Soviet Union) stabbed that country in the back when it launched an assault from the East and then committed atrocities such as Katyn Forest. In November, the Soviet empire also crossed into Finland.

In April 1940, war seriously commenced in the West with a German invasion of Denmark and Norway. The next month, Germany struck at Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg and advanced into France. On 10th June, fascist Italy declared war on Britain and France.

Germany and Italy constituted the Axis

and, to one degree or another, extinguished democracy in the occupied countries. On 22nd June, France surrendered to Germany; however, Italy had made no credible incursion into France. It thus agreed to an armistice on 25th June with very limited territorial gains.

Also in June, the Soviet empire annexed the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; in addition, it seized northern Bukovina, Hertsa and Bessarabia from Romania. At the



end of September, a Tripartite Pact united Germany, Italy and Japan, which augmented the Axis. Further expansion of the Axis took place when Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria joined the Pact. In southern Europe, the Axis next attacked Greece and Yugoslavia

in 1940 and '41 respectively.

Then in June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet empire.

In December 1941, war in the Pacific broke out with the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbour in the American colony of Hawaii. The following day, the Japanese formed an alliance with Thailand. Subsequently, the Japanese threw the Americans out of the Philippines. It next proceeded to expand generally in southern Asia. Already it had been at war with China since 1937 after attacking Shanghai (some date that war from 1931 with the invasion of Manchuria).

There was, as well, the north African thea-

tre of war involving the Axis and the Allies.

Other minor belligerents, on one side or the other, included Mongolia, Iraq, Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico.

With an allied victory, democracy was restored in western and, to some extent, central Europe (Austria). Likewise, in southern Europe (Greece).

However, the result was also the establishment of dictatorships in central, eastern and southern Europe (Yugoslavia). As for Poland, in particular, whose democracy and sovereignty France and Britain supposedly went to war for, it was simply, along with others, abandoned to its Stalinist fate.

Moreover, France, the Netherlands and Britain attempted to maintain or reassert control in a number of territories - France in Algeria (freed in 1962) and Indochina (with the Americans gradually taking up the cudgels in Vietnam after French defeat and until 1975); the Netherlands in the Dutch East Indies (freed in 1949); while Britain fought counter-insurgency wars in Malaya (freed in 1957), Cyprus (freed in 1960), Kenya (freed in 1962), Aden (freed in 1967), and, along with the French, sought unsuccessfully to redominate the Suez Canal in 1956. America had retaken the Philippines in 1945, but granted independence the following year. Belgium eventually withdrew from the Congo in 1960.

Getting rid of Hitlerite nazism, Japanese militarism and Italian fascism was undoubtedly to be welcomed, but to portray GIW II as

simply a war against totalitarianism is thus a false interpretation.

An issue for the Irish in GIW II was that of neutrality, although they had to be discreetly benevolent towards the Allies for pragmatic reasons, because of the danger of a German invasion.

Unfortunately, the repetition from GIW I of Irishmen fighting in the British Army brought the same considerations. They may have been motivated in various ways, including by the notion that they were in a battle for freedom, but they were actually serving a polity that intended to defeat the Axis so that it could re-establish its empire.

One cannot but feel compassion for the Irishmen in question, yet they were once again imperialist cannon fodder and misguided in not staying in Ireland to defend their own country, especially as a British invasion was as much on the cards as a German one.

This is something that is either not understood or acknowledged by pro-British elements on the right or anti-national elements among the ultra-left.

The neutrality of the twenty-six counties was the correct stance for a state that had just emerged from colonialism, which was still a threat to it. Moreover, the state could otherwise have left itself open to devastation by the Luftwaffe as was the case in Belfast.

Irish neutrality in 1939-45 is therefore not a matter of shame, but of courage and wisdom.

*Daltún Ó Ceallaigh, Eagarthóir, INC NEWS*

## ***CLUNE, CLANCY, McKEE***

One can tell a lot about a nation from whom it chooses as its heroes and whom it chooses as its enemies.

But I am not going to expand on our heroes, Conor Clune and Peadar Clancy from Clare, and Dubliner Dick McKee, who were brutally murdered 93 years ago. If you want to know more about their story, then Seán



O'Mahony has forgotten more than I will ever know.

Rather I want to refer to three British heroes. The three men most likely responsible for the deaths of Clune, Clancy and McKee, namely Captain Jocelyn 'Hoppy' Hardy DSO & BAR & MC, Major Lorraine 'Tiny' King MC & BAR & DCM and Brigadier General Sir Ormond Winter KBE, CBC,

MC & DSO.

We know that these three gentlemen were heroes from their glowing obituaries and the many honours awarded to them by the British state. But the British state is not alone in honouring these men; Irish people have honoured them also.

In September 2013, in Mount Argus cemetery, Dublin, a commemoration was organised by Gerry Lovett, a former member of An Garda Síochána to commemorate deceased members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary, including the notorious Auxiliary division, to which these men belonged.

This ceremony was attended by 500 people including representatives of the British Ambassador, Garda Commissioner as well as our then Junior Minister for Finance, Brian Hayes TD.

Perhaps we should learn a little bit more about these three British heroes whom Irish people have chosen to commemorate.

Captain 'Hoppy' Hardy, his obituary in 1958 assures us, was a secret donor to charity, a dog lover, a keen polo player and Rolls Royce enthusiast. He made his fortune by writing a number of novels about his deeds of derring-do. Two of these books were later made into films in the 1930s. He was captured by the Germans during one of the first battles of World War One and made 12 attempts to escape captivity before finally rejoining his comrades on the western front for one of the last battles of the war, during which he lost his leg but gained his nickname.

His comrade Major 'Tiny' King was three times married, a 6 foot tall brute who fought against the Boers in South Africa in 1901. He later joined the South African Police and Army to fight in Egypt and France in World War One.

After the war, both men, for £1 a day, joined the notorious death squad 'F Company' of the Auxiliaries based in Dublin Castle.

Michael Collins' spy in the police, David Nelligan, described Hardy as an insane, psychopath, more interested in beating prisoners to a pulp than in gaining information. Ernie O'Malley, who survived one of Major King's 'interrogations', recalled him screaming

threats, beatings to the face, strangulation and mock executions.

Both men took part in the killing of McKee, Clancy and Clune. In one of Hardy's books, 'Never in Vain', he admitted as much, while King was acquitted by court martial of these killings.

But these were not the only killings these men were involved in. While threatening the writer Pádraig Ó Conaire in Howth, Hardy admitted being accused of torturing Kevin Barry. Both men were involved in the killing of IRA man Michael Magee in an ambush at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, on 21st January 1921 and the kidnap and execution of two members of Collins' squad, Patrick Kennedy and James Murphy, also in Drumcondra, on 9th February 1921. For this, King was again tried and acquitted before being moved to Galway where he was involved in the sack of Tuam, a riot at a republican dance in Galway Town Hall and the kidnap and murder of brothers Pat and Henry Loughnane in Ardahan.

Sir Ormond Winter was a chain smoking, monocle-wearing master of five Slavonic languages and expert at cards and horses. He made his fortune by opening a racecourse in Calcutta. He was personally appointed as 'O' or head of British military intelligence in Ireland and deputy Chief of Police by Home Secretary Winston Churchill. He had a merciless and draconian reputation and is believed to be responsible for the suicide of three of his subordinates. As a young officer in England, he killed a 15 year old boy, Sidney Hawkins, with an oar because he had thrown stones at Winter's boat while rowing - a killing for which Winter was later acquitted. He was also accused of killing another man while on intelligence work in India and, in Ireland, he personally killed an IRA man in the course of an ambush. During World War One, he commanded an artillery battery in the Dardanelles and on the western front.

In Ireland, he earned the nickname 'The Holy Terror' because he claimed that he feared neither God nor Man and had a deserved reputation for ruthlessness. He streamlined and oversaw British intelligence gathering such as police informers, prisoners

seeking leniency, censorship of letters and phone calls, captured documents and interrogations such as those endured by Clancy, Clune and McKee. He organised the 'Cairo gang,' wiped out by Collins' Squad on Bloody Sunday and later the 'Igoe gang'.

After 26 county independence, he returned to England and became a member of the 'British Fascisti' in 1924, which, under Brigadier General Blakeney, became the British Fascist League in 1928. This was however, no brief or youthful flirtation with Fascism. He was a leading appeasement advocate for non-intervention in Spain in the 1930s, not because he was opposed to intervening in foreign conflicts for, in 1940 at the age of 65, he fought alongside Germany's Finnish ally in the Winter War against the USSR. Winter survived World War Two to write his biography, 'A Winter's Tale', and died peacefully aged 87 in 1967.

If Irish people have this year chosen to honour the auxiliaries, the torturers, child killers and Fascists and ignore the Volunteers, the drapers, seed merchants and printers, then so be it. In doing so, they bring no dishonour on the reputation of McKee, Clancy and Clune. We do not possess the power to dishonour the reputation of these three gallant Irishmen; rather we have only dishonoured the reputation of our own generation. McKee, Clancy and Clune laid down their lives so that we may be free and so that other men are free to wear the uniform of a respected and unarmed police force or hold office in and draw a salary from a government they helped to create. Let me conclude by stating that, so long as it is more politically expedient to honour the men who fought to deny us our freedom, than it is to honour those who died to achieve it, our revolution is unfinished.

*Paul McGuill, Rúnaí, INC*

## IRISH NEUTRALITY LEAGUE 1914

James Connolly chaired a public meeting of the Irish Neutrality League in the Antient Concert Rooms in what is now Pearse Street.

On 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1914, in response to the public meeting in the Mansion House organised by John Redmond launching the recruitment campaign to encourage Irishmen to join the British army to kill Germans. Connolly and the INL sought to build a campaign to bring together all those opposed to Irish participation in the war that would "prove historic in the annals of this country".

Since the period 1914-18 did prove to be historic, it is worth taking time to look back at Ireland's history to explain how the Irish Neutrality League called that meeting in October.

While this article will focus on historical origins, the immediate beginnings of the INL came out of a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1914 chaired by Thomas Clarke, along with James Connolly, William O'Brien, Arthur Griffith, John MacBride, Seán MacDermott, Thomas MacDonagh, Patrick Pearse and Joseph Mary Plunkett.

This created two committees, one to develop contacts with Germany and the other to

promote public and clandestine recruitment in opposition to the war, out of which grew the foundation of the INL with Connolly as President.

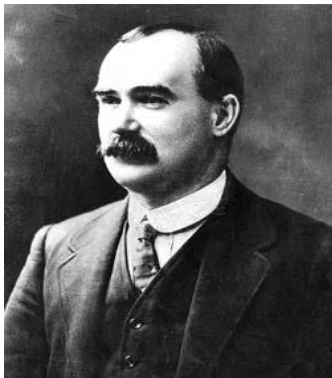
The committee in question consisted of Thomas Farren, Seán T O'Kelly, Arthur Griffith, Countess Markievicz, Seán Milroy, William O'Brien, Francis Sheehy-Skeffington and J J Scollan. It was this body that organised the public meeting in the Ancient Concert Rooms.

British State repression made the continuation of such an open public organisation as the INL impossible and many of those involved turned their attention to secretly organising the 1916 Rising against the British Empire and imperial war.

The first person to advocate Irish neutrality was Theobald Wolfe Tone in a pamphlet *The Spanish War*, which was his first political pamphlet written in 1790. In it, he put forward the case that when in that year it looked like the Spanish Empire and British Empires were about to go to war over a trade dispute on the north-west coast of America, Ireland should remain neutral. He stated that the Irish "should then look to our resources, and scorn

to sue for protection to any foreign state; we should spurn the idea of moving a humble satellite round any power, however great, and claim at once, and enforce, our rank among the primary nations of the earth. Then should we have what under the present system we shall never see, A National Flag, and the spirit to maintain it."

In historical terms, this was a major shift in ideology. For hundreds of years, wars in Ireland had not been wars seeking national independence, but participation in English-based civil wars. Tone, like many of his generation, was inspired by the enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, comprised of the same values that inspired the American and French Revolutions. The historic nature of this pamphlet, in its advocacy of Irish national independence and neutrality, was clearly recognised by the generation that supported the Irish Neutrality League when the pamphlet was republished by Cumann na mBan in 1915. That historical continuity was continued when the Peace and Neutrality Alliance republished it in 2006 to mark the 10th anniversary of PANA's foundation.



PANA is publishing a pamphlet on the Irish Neutrality League in October 2014 at a time when there is a virtual orgy of celebration of Irish participation in the Imperialist war of 1914-18 on the part of the Irish ruling political caste. PANA is again seeking to emphasise that, in advocating the right of the Irish people to have their own independent foreign policy, with positive neutrality as its key component, pursued through a reformed United Nations, we are not licking it off the stones, but are reflecting values deeply rooted in our history linked to Tone and Connolly.

James Connolly, who chaired the meeting of the INL, had always made it clear he was a republican because he was a socialist. He clearly linked the cause of Irish national inde-

pendence with the creation of an Irish Republic with socialist values. In doing so, he came into conflict with socialists who saw socialism being achieved within the British Union, the most prominent being William Walker. In his debate with Walker, Connolly states: "for the propagation, universally, of our ideal of a true internationalism there is only required the spread of reason and enlightenment amongst the peoples of the earth, whereas the conceptions of internationalism tacitly accepted by our comrades of the ILP [Independent Labour Party] in Belfast require for it to spread the flash of the sword of militarism and the roar of a British 80-ton gun." \* The 19th century version of Walkerite socialism was clearly continued in the concept of 'Humanitarian Imperialism' as advocated by the British Labour Party that supported the wars in Iraq, Syria and Libya and built and supports the use of nuclear weapons, the ultimate British 80-ton gun.

Connolly, in the Irish Neutrality League, was bringing together all the progressive forces in Ireland - socialists, republicans, pacifists and feminists - that opposed the imperialist war of 1914. The Irish Neutrality League did not have a long life, but its core ideology of uniting all those opposed to the imperialist war and in promoting Irish independence and neutrality, like Tone many decades before, sought to construct an alliance for a republic.

The Irish Neutrality League may have been short-lived. But it did build a new linkage between the IRB, and Irish socialists led by Connolly, to oppose the imperialist war of 1914-18. It is a collaboration that needs to be rebuilt to oppose the imperialist wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

\* *Socialism and Nationalism*, Desmond Ryan, Sign of the Three Candles, Introduction by Desmond Ryan.

*Roger Cole, Chair, PANA*

**SAOIRSE AONTACHT SÍOCHÁN**

## 25 YEARS A-GROWING



Robert Ballagh Artist

Without question, Ireland in the late 1980s was a very different country. For a start, the war in the north was raging with occasional overflows into the south, all of which caused tragic levels of pain, injury, death and destruction. It is worth remembering that, at the start of the conflict, the southern establishment, despite promising that it would not stand by, did precisely that, and in order to protect its cosy little set-up – namely the 26 county state – turned its back on the plight of its nationalist neighbours in the north. This resulted in feelings of abandonment amongst vulnerable nationalists who understandably set about defending themselves.

Tragically, this development set in train the cycle of violence that was to continue for decades. The response by the southern establishment to this violent situation was to marginalise those nationalists who had opted to resist oppression. Many politicians and commentators were convinced that a successful resolution to the conflict from their point of view would be served by simply denying spokespersons from named organisations what Margaret Thatcher called “the oxygen of publicity”. The Irish government’s response was the introduction of the most draconian political censorship in Europe – Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, namely the banning of interviews with spokespersons from named organisations including Sinn Féin.

The strict application of Section 31 would have been bad enough, since under the order only a censored version of the most important story of the day could be told by RTÉ. In fact,

it is no accident that all the important programmes dealing with Irish issues, like the cases of the Birmingham Six, the Dublin-Monaghan bombings and the Gibraltar killings were made by British, not Irish, TV companies. But the all-encompassing situation was far more serious than that. Encouraged by an in-house thought police, the atmosphere in RTÉ became so corrosive that anything that could be judged nationalistic was kept off the airwaves. This extended to items as “dangerous and subversive” as Paul Robeson singing the ballad “Kevin Barry”.

It was to counter such shameful and guilt-ridden attitudes that a group of concerned citizens gathered together in 1989 to found the Irish National Congress with the goal of promoting peace, unity and justice in Ireland. Much excellent work was done by the INC during these difficult years. For example, in 1991 the INC supported the national campaign to ensure that the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Rising would be properly celebrated in the face of official resistance by the government of the day. The Congress also helped organise “The Cullyhanna Inquiry”, which played a significant part in exposing the malevolent role of the British Army in the north. Another undertaking was the assistance provided to communities along the border in their efforts to reopen the border roads that had been closed by the British army.

The INC also organised a determined defence of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution, which, even if it failed to prevent change, at least ensured an acceptable compromise. However, most important in an historical sense was the work done by the Congress in preparing the ground for the peace process and the present political dispensation. It is worth recalling that when John Hume and Gerry Adams began discussions on a possible peaceful way forward they were viciously attacked by sections of the southern establishment. In response, the INC arranged for many supportive initiatives, which included demonstrations, rallies and a peace petition. Over a period of 10 years, I served as Chairperson of

the INC and I was fortunate to make many good friends and colleagues during that eventful time.

A partial listing of some who served on the National Executive gives an indication of those who became involved in the INC. Caitríona Ruane was later appointed a minister in Stormont, Nora Comiskey was elected president of the 1916-1921 Club, Richard Greene was elected as a Dublin councillor, Nicky Kelly was elected as a councillor in Arklow, Patricia McKenna was elected as an

MEP, Finian McGrath was elected to Dáil Éireann, and Mary Lou McDonald was elected to the European Parliament and then to Dáil Éireann. Today, even though the situation has changed quite dramatically from the dark days of the 1980s, I remain convinced that a non-party political organisation like the Irish National Congress has a significant part to play in achieving peace, justice and unity in Ireland.

*Robert Ballagh, Artist*

## Death of Ian Paisley

The litany of tributes which were peddled in the media following the death of Rev Ian Paisley was emetic. A long-standing tradition in this country is that if one can find nothing positive to say about a political foe at the time of eternal parting, such parting should go without comment. However, on the occasion of Ian Paisley's passing it would be an insult to those on this island who suffered discrimination and injustice as a result of this man's religious and political intolerance. Ian Paisley was a malevolent, nasty, sectarian bigot who, for decades, led loyalism and unionism up an anti-Catholic cul-de-sac and then this religious ogre stood by as the lumpen rabble of loyalism, energised by Paisley's virulent bile, engaged in a campaign of discrimination, sectarianism and random murder of Catholics for decades. Ian Paisley has poisoned generations in the north and polluted the good name of Protestantism and along with his malignant apostles of hate disgorged a torrent of sectarianism and fomented an anti-Catholic jihad over the past 40 years. These islands are more at ease on his passing.

There has been a mixed reaction to the death of Paisley. The former leader of the Alliance Party and Munster MEP John Cushnahan has expressed surprise at the reaction by some politicians and commentators on Paisley's death. Mr Cushnahan said of Dr Paisley "his political career was punctuated with nakedly sectarian acts and deeds and the destruction of many political initiatives and moderate leaders of unionism who were engaged in genuine attempts to bring peace and

stability to the province". This view expressed by John Cushnahan encapsulates precisely the engineered removal of prime minister Capt Terence O'Neill by Rev Ian Paisley in 1969.

Following the formation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association which was set up to influence public opinion on the lack of civil rights for Catholics in the north, Northern Ireland Prime Minister Terence O' Neill, despite fierce opposition from within his own party, looked favourably on the introduction of more moderate policies, which included 'one man one vote' for all in the gerrymandered local elections. This political accommodation of Catholics was regarded as appeasement of nationalist violence and enraged the virulently anti-Catholic Ian Paisley who conspired to 'rid Ulster of this Lundy'. Calls were made for O' Neill to resign. Although not yet prepared to fall on his own sword, sinister forces within loyalism were about to give the final push. If political pressure alone would not force O'Neill to stand aside, then a few strategically placed bombs might, especially if the IRA was believed to be responsible.

A decision was taken by a coalition of loyalist organisations under the control of Dr Paisley to attack Belfast's electricity and water supplies in an attempt to cause maximum political damage to O' Neill, who would be unlikely to survive the consequences of these bombings if they were shown to be the work of republicans. The first target was Castle-reagh electricity substation, which was bombed by members of the UVF and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers. This resulted in

much of Belfast being plunged into darkness. The following day Ian Paisley's newspaper the *Protestant Telegraph* reported, "This is the first act of sabotage perpetrated by the IRA since the murderous campaign of 1956 ... the sheer professionalism of the act indicates the work of the well-equipped IRA. This latest act of terrorism is an ominous indication of what lies ahead for Ulster ... Loyalists must now appreciate the struggle that lies ahead and the supreme sacrifice that will have to be made in order that Ulster will remain Protestant".

Four days later the loyalist co-conspirators changed targets and, confident that nationalists were the primary suspect, bombed Belfast's main water supply at Dunadry, and two weeks later another explosion destroyed the pipeline between the Silent Valley reservoir in the Mourne Mountains and Belfast. A further four explosions on pipelines carrying water supplies from Lough Neagh to Belfast quickly followed, all reportedly carried out by nationalists. Capt Terence O' Neill knew he could no longer survive and resigned just days later. O'Neill later said that the explosions "literally blew me out of office". Dr Paisley and his propaganda 'newspaper' the *Protestant Telegraph* had successfully removed the elected leader of Northern Ireland in 1969 and immediately set out to destabilize Captain O'Neill's successor Major James Chichester-Clark.

In 1999 Ian Paisley, in his capacity as First Minister, used parliamentary privilege to implicate a brother of the three Reavey brothers who had been murdered by the UVF in south Armagh, in the Kingsmill atrocity. Speaking in the House of Commons – which prevented the comments being legally challenged – the DUP leader read out the names of 20 individuals he claimed were involved in various republican attacks, among them Eugene Reavey. Following a thorough investigation into these allegations by both the PSNI and the Historical Enquiries Team, they were found to be untrue. Despite calls from the families of those wrongly named in parliament, Dr Paisley consistently refused to retract these allegations. Not surprisingly, Dr Paisley was careful not to repeat the charges outside Parliament as they would most certainly be subject to libel action.

Paisley paid scant regard for people's reputation, integrity, privacy and safety in what was an affront to both democracy and the presumption of innocence. The Historical Enquiries Team apologised to the mother of the Reavey brothers for security force treatment of the family in the aftermath of the shootings. David Cox, the head of the team looking into troubles-related deaths, also confirmed that the men were "innocent victims of senseless sectarian violence". Paisley's persistent refusal to issue an apology to victims of his words rendered him a social, religious and political pygmy.

Agreeing to share power with nationalists at the end of his political career did not undo the carnage his bitter words, actions, hatred and bigotry promoted in the previous decades. Paisley's contribution to political and religious life in the north has been malignant and malevolent. People suffered and died on both sides of the divide because of his words and it would be immoral and cowardly to endorse the bogus tributes aid to this repulsive individual.

## SCOTLAND THE BRAVE?

On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014, Scotland became one of the few nations on earth to vote against an offer to peacefully become an independent nation. While the vote was close, 44.7% yes and 55.3% no, it was not as close as Quebec's similar rejection of independence in 1995. Other subject nations such as the Palestinians, Kurds and Catalans may look upon the Scottish vote with disbelief and even resentment. However, the Scottish electorate were subjected to enormous psychological and emotional pressure to vote yes. The President of the European Commission, Manuel Barroso said that Scotland would not automatically become a member of the European Union. The legal validity of effectively expelling 5 million people who had been fully paid up citizens of the European Union since 1973 was not explored by him in depth. The English Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne and the Bank of England claimed that Scotland would not be permitted to keep the 'pound'. Even though a more accommodating arrangement was allowed with the newly in-



dependent Irish Free State after a bloody war of independence in 1922.

Some could accuse the Scots of buckling under the pressure and 'bottling it' at the last minute, as opinion polls showed support for independence growing from 39% in December 2013 to 51% by September 2014. However, the crucial factor in the defeat of the independence referendum seems to have been the last minute offer by the three main English parties of greater devolution of power to Scotland (devo max) if the Scots voted no to independence.

This offer is unlikely to quell future demands for independence as no matter how much power is conceded it will never be enough for those who seek full independence, while it may further widen the chasm of resentment with England, which sees Scotland as having too many powers already. A vote for Scottish independence may have hastened the break-up of Britain and assisted the struggle for Irish unity. The current debate on greater regional devolution also offers an opportunity to Irish republicans and nationalists who should seek the maximum amount of financial autonomy possible in order to cut the financial apron strings with Westminster. Any void in revenue should aim to be filled either by subvention from the EU, domestically generated revenues or efficiencies achieved from shared services with the Republic. Developing a separate six county consular presence abroad initially with missions to encourage trade, tourism and investment in Brussels, Beijing and Boston may enhance an international identity separate from Britain. The north should also seek to develop cultural, linguistic and symbolic policies which emphasise an identity separate from Britain's.

Rather than ending the debate the vote on Scottish independence has shifted the paradigm of Scottish politics away from a debate on devolution and on to a debate on independence. Future Scottish disillusionment may lead the SNP to play a role in Westminster similar to that played by Irish nationalists in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century whereby they would act as kingmakers for any future British coalition

government.

*Paul McGuill, Rúnaí, INC*

**RECLAIM THE VISION OF 1916**

A group of concerned individuals has established "Reclaim the Vision of 1916—A Citizens' Initiative for 2016," in order to reassert the political principles and objectives that animated the 1916 Rising and to show their continuing relevance for Ireland today.

In 1916, the Proclamation of the Republic declared the right of the Irish people to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies. They wanted to realise this in a sovereign, independent Irish democracy that would have the welfare of all the citizens as its guiding principle. This vision has never been achieved, and the Irish people have borne the consequences of this failure.

We believe that the 100th anniversary of the Rising presents an opportunity to open a meaningful dialogue among the citizens about the principles of 1916 and how they can be applied to the task of building an Irish democracy in the 21st century. In a genuine Republic, the people would have full control over their own lives; the common good would be at the centre of decision-making; and all citizens would reap the benefits of a fully human society.

Reclaim the Vision of 1916 intends to organise three national events: a National Parade of Celebration on Sunday, 24 April 2016; a National Seminar in the spring of 2016; and a significant publication. It is hoped that many individuals and groups throughout the country will affiliate to the Initiative and participate in the national events, as well as organising their own activities. We invite those who are interested in joining with us in this project to contact us now, and we wish to co-operate with those who share our concerns and are organising their own events.

The Citizens' Initiative has set out its ideas and aspirations in a Proclamation for a New Irish Republic together with a Political Statement. Alongside the programme outlined above, we want to encourage wide discussion and debate about the ideas contained in these documents.

The Proclamation for a New Irish Republic states that:

*We affirm that the only solution to this failure and crisis will be found in a sovereign, independent Irish democracy that puts the common good at the heart of government and where sovereignty rests with the people and democratic power is exercised by them.*

*We want Ireland to develop a culture that fosters and encourages independence of thinking and action. We recognise that there may be differences between us about how our vision can be implemented, but we insist that everyone who believes in the democratic right of the people to govern themselves should support our shared struggle for a better society for all.*

*In such a democracy, the common good would come before the freedom of capital and the markets or the pursuit of private profit. The wealth of the country belongs to the peo-*

*ple, and the natural resources, industries, and services must be utilised in the interests of all the people and subjected to their democratic control.*

At the end of this Initiative, we hope that there will be a deeper understanding of the need for a real Irish democracy and what that would mean, and that as many people as possible will have been drawn into the circle of discussion, thinking, and participation.

Reclaim the Vision of 1916—A Citizens' Initiative for 2016 will be officially launched at a public rally in Dublin at Easter 2015. We will be contacting the widest range of individuals and groups to discuss these ideas and to see how we can work together to ensure that the centenary of the 1916 Rising is properly celebrated.

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## NEUTRALITY UNDER ATTACK

For the generations born in Ireland since the end of the second World War, it is understandably difficult for some of them to envisage the state of public opinion on the issue of Irish neutrality during World War II. Over recent years, there has been much comment, mostly of a critical nature, on the morality of our policy of neutrality between 1939 and '45. There are some who even regard Ireland's stance as not so much neutral but pro-Nazi. However, to draw definitive conclusions on World War II from the perspective of the 21st Century is to read history backwards.

During the war years, the fallout from partition following the Anglo-Irish conflict was still vivid in the public mind, seeing as how it was just 17 years since the guns of the Civil War had fallen silent and, for both sides in the bitter internecine bloodbath, the British were still the common enemy. The decision of Dáil Éireann, not just Mr de Valera or the government, to remain neutral, in all probability avoided an outbreak of a second civil conflict here. Critics ignore the fact that all political parties in the Dáil, along with public opinion outside, favoured the policy of neutrality. Indeed just one TD, James Dillon, voiced disap-

proval of our neutrality. Even those Dáil members who were strong supporters of the allied position, and there were many, voted to remain neutral. Furthermore, proposals from prime minister Churchill in 1940 for the offer of a united Ireland as a quid pro quo for Irish entry into the war was rejected by Mr de Valera. Our sovereignty and independence were not for sale.

Despite our position as a non-belligerent neutral state, Ireland did not introduce a prohibition on her citizens opting for foreign enlistment, before or during the war, nor did Ireland introduce conscription into its armed forces. Those who joined the Irish Army had free choices. Furthermore, those who had a conscientious objection to our neutrality, or those who didn't wish to be left out of the fight for liberty, had other options open to them. This policy of Irish neutrality could be regarded as Mr de Valera's finest hour.

Despite this neutrality, almost 5,000 Irish soldiers deserted their posts during World War II, many of whom joined the British army. In pardoning these soldiers, Mr Shatter praised those who deserted the Irish army and attacked Ireland's policy of neutrality.

While acknowledging the role of these deserters made in opposing Nazism, they nonetheless abandoned their posts at a time of national emergency in Ireland. Desertion is a crime under military law in every army in the world, including the British army, which itself had executed in excess of 300 deserters (28 of them Irish) during the Great War, and pursued relentlessly those who had abandoned their posts during the World War II. British army deserters were subject to courts martial and imprisonment yet the Irish government applied different standards to those who deserted the Irish army. It seems that those who left Ireland undefended in time of war are now to be regarded as victims and heroes. What message does this send out to those soldiers who remained loyal to the state in its hour of need?

The actions of these deserters imperilled our sovereignty and safety. British prime minister Winston Churchill said he had "come to close quarters with Mr de Valera" over the Treaty Ports and the Irish Army was duty bound to uphold and defend the neutrality of this state, a neutrality endorsed by Dáil Éireann. The British War Cabinet had considered violating Ireland's neutrality and seizing, by force, Irish ports if it suited Britain's interests. With a threat of British invasion looming, for Irish soldiers to usurp the authority of the state by deciding unilaterally to enlist in that belligerent British army, while still a member of the Irish Defence Forces was unpardonable and unforgivable. It begs the question, if the British had re-invaded Ireland, would those Irish deserters who joined the British Army be part of that invading force or would they have deserted instead, again. Former Minister for Defence Alan Shatter did Ireland, and history, a disservice by honouring these men who dishonoured their oaths. Of course, the subtext of Mr Shatter's pardon was to undermine Ireland's World War II neutrality. I doubt he will ever be feted in a liberated country as Éamon de Valera was in India, nor that his reputation



will rest as securely as does that of de Valera's amongst the nations liberated from colonial rule

There has been much unfair criticism of Mr de Valera for his expression of condolence to the German Ambassador to Ireland, Herr Hempel, on the death of Hitler. Having adhered to an overtly strict policy of neutrality throughout the war, a policy which covertly supported the Allies, Mr de Valera applied a strict policy of adherence to protocol, which obliged him to offer the condolences of the Irish people on the death of Herr Hitler. Ireland's wartime neutrality was more theoretical than actual. Significant co-operation with the Allies, which included the possibility of putting the Irish Army under British command in the event of a German invasion of Ireland, and a policy of interning German airmen who landed in Ireland, was agreed by Dev. These are hardly the actions of a Nazi supporter or a friend of Hitler. To further enforce his unyielding belief in our neutrality and sovereignty, Mr de Valera's government introduced internment of IRA members for the duration of the war to prevent IRA attacks in Britain.

Claims that no representative of the President of Ireland called to the US embassy to express sympathy on the death of President Roosevelt in 1945 are incorrect. Following President Roosevelt's death, Mr de Valera had arrangements made for a commemorative service to be held in the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin. The US Ambassador, Mr David Gray, refused to attend. Mr Gray also refused to receive the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Joe Walsh, at the US embassy.

Despite such a flagrant diplomatic discourtesy, Mr de Valera adjourned Dáil Éireann and ordered all flags to be flown at half mast as a mark of respect to the late US President. The British press pre-1939, however, which was very representative of most strands of British society, including royalty, expressed British government policy of appeasement of

the Nazi regime in the 1930s, as exemplified by Neville Chamberlain's 'peace for our time' agreement at the Munich Agreement, but at that stage much of the British press was also publicly supportive of Hitler and fascism.

In 1933, Lord Rothermere, owner of the *Daily Mail* and close friend and supporter of both Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, congratulated Hitler on the invasion of the Sude-tenland and campaigned for the African land confiscated in the Versailles Treaty to be re-turned to Germany. He also wrote an editorial entitled 'Youth Triumphant', which was used as propaganda by the Nazis. Indeed, the *Daily Mail* of the time campaigned against admitting Jewish refugees fleeing pogroms in Eastern Europe and supported Oswald Mosley's fascist Blackshirts and encouraged appease-ment of Nazi Germany. In 1938, Lord Beaver-brook of the *Daily Express*, then the most widely read newspaper in Britain, also ex-pressed open sympathy with both the Nazi regime and Mosley's British Union of Fascists, writing to congratulate the Reich's von Rib

entrop on his appointment as German for-ign minister, and swearing the loyal support of all Beaverbrook newspapers.

With Irish soldiers now serving under Brit-ish command in Mali, and some in govern-ment calling for debate on Ireland's 'moral imperative' to participate more fully in EU battle groups and even the embracing of NATO, Irish neutrality is once again under the spotlight. This time from within. The Irish Ar-my is not an imperial army. It was born out of the struggle for independence from British rule. It is an army which has proudly and hon-ourably served on peace-keeping missions under a United Nations mandate and 84 of its soldiers have given their lives on these missi-ons. Óglaigh na hÉireann have served wher-ever required in the world in a selfless and heroic manner for more than 50 years, not as a predatory army but as peace-keepers, acknowledged worldwide for their impartiality and professionalism, and are a source of pride to Ireland.

*Tom Cooper, Cathaoirleach, INC*

## BRUTON'S REACTIONARY REVISIONISM

In July 2014, former Taoiseach, John Bruton, opined that the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent War of Independence were "completely unnecessary" in the light of the Home Rule Act of 1914. He expanded on this view in an article in *The Irish Times* the follow-ing month.

To begin with, he confused the position of O'Connell on repeal of the Union with Home Rule; the first would have restored the inde-pendence of the Irish parliament abolished in 1800, while the second would have only en-tailed a degree of devolution to an Irish as-sembly.

As for Home Rule, he displayed a political naïvety, which is not untypical of some other commentators as well. He trusts that the Brit-ish would have gone ahead with Home Rule after the Great War's end, as promised, in some form or other. In fact, he states that such rule not only would have been "irre-versible", but could have led on to dominion status. (Some pundits have actually asserted that there was no difference between Home

Rule and the Irish Free State, even though, while the latter was short of a republic, it was still considerably in advance of the former, as demonstrated by 26 counties at least leaving the United Kingdom and so ending the Act of Union of 1800 in respect of over three-quarters of the island.) Britain's historical rec-ord of equivocating on Home Rule, even on paper, between 1886 and 1914 is blithely ig-nored by Bruton. Indeed, even the statute only came about when the Liberal Party began to rely on Irish nationalist votes at Westmin-ster in order to stay in power.

The Rising and Anglo-Irish War did not scupper Home Rule; rather did the falseness of Home Rule proposals make certain the armed struggle of 1916-21.

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