
UNITY

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‘Planning no parties’

LAST week saw events to mark the 20th anniversary of the Omagh car bomb in which the Real IRA killed 29 people and injured some 220 others.

Prompted by this reminder of the deadliest single incident of the Troubles, the Rev Harold Good this week published an open letter urging Arlene Foster and Michelle O’Neill “to come together and do whatever it will take to restore our Assembly and our confidence in normal effective governance.”

Good, a former president of the Methodist Church, played an important role in the peace process including being an independent witness to IRA de-commissioning.

He warned of the danger that too many people were “learning to live with political inactivity, not realising the very serious short and long-term consequences for all of us in the absence of a locally elected legislature.”

He was confident that with leadership a deal could be done.

But is it another DUP/Sinn Fein stitch up that is required?

On August 28 Northern Ireland will have gone a record 589

By John Pinkerton

days without government – although MLAs will have been paid around £9 million during that period.

To mark that ‘achievement’ Dylan Quinn who runs a dance company in Enniskillen decided to see if he could get 589 people to take part in a demonstration on August 28 under the slogan of #wedeservebetter.

His Facebook post prompted a response from thousands of people wanting to take part.

To date 17 events are planned across the North.

There are certainly crucial issues that require urgent political leadership – especially since last month’s court ruling that civil servants had even exceeded their powers by agreeing to the building of an incinerator at Mallusk.

Not least of those crucial issues is representing the interests of the people of Northern Ireland as the UK disentangles itself from the EU. That will require more than going back to a DUP/Sinn Fein coalition.

It will mean building new sets of alliances within the North and with others from across the UK to ensure a ‘People’s Brexit’.

One that breaks away from the EU “free market” treaties, rules and institutions that stand in the way of developing an alternative social, economic and environmental policy.

An alternative that would see serious public sector led economic development and have no place in it for the privatisation disasters such as that of G4S’s mismanagement of Birmingham prison revealed this week.

The importance of that breaking free from the neo-liberal institutions of the EU was emphasised on Tuesday by the announcement that Greece has been released from direct economic management by the EU, the European Central Bank and the IMF.

The result of that management is many more years of austerity; an economy 25 per cent smaller than at the beginning of the financial crisis created by the banks; 20 per cent unemployment, driving 1 in 10 Greeks to seek work abroad; and average incomes a third of what they were.

Syriza, elected to government on a now broken promise to end austerity, confessed: “We’re not planning any parties.”

In last week's paper Niall Farrell noted that the 26 County State adhered to an active policy of neutrality during the periods de Valera's Fianna Fail was in power.

However, once Seán Lemass became Taoiseach and pursued the Whittaker economic programme of attracting foreign multinationals to Ireland the new FF leadership unsuccessfully sought to jettison Irish neutrality just like the Fine Gael "opposition". Two major international influences threatened neutrality, the EEC - the Irish Republic joined in 1973 - and the USA.

WITH the collapse of the Socialist countries the New World Order began with the First Gulf War.

Dublin allowed US military to land at Shannon en route to war.

It was a major breach of Irish neutrality.

It was a foretaste of Ireland's collusion in US imperial wars from 2001.

In this new unipolar world the Irish state became an enthusiastic participant in NATO'S 'Partnership for Peace'.

And from August 1999 till today Irish troops have been stationed in Kosovo under NATO's PfP.

The EU's Maastricht Treaty (1993) began turning EU foreign policy "groupthink" into EU Common Foreign and Security Policy.

By 1997 Irish troops were to be part of a EU "Crisis Management" Operation in Bosnia/Herzegovina.

Irish military involvement in the former Yugoslavia was as a direct result of the US and EU destabilisation tactics directed

Killing Irish neutrality

against Socialist Belgrade, which culminated in Clinton and Blair's illegal war.

But it was directly after the "9/11" atrocity in 2001 that Irish neutrality was fatally wounded.

The Republic became an accessory in the US imperial wars that continue to this day.

A Day in the Life of Shannon Airport: 12 July 2018

Edward Horgan, Shannonwatch reports: Another busy day at Shannon warport.

Particularly important the arrival back of National Air Cargo plane on contract to the US military using call-sign CMB545. It arrived this morning 12 July. I tracked its recent war supporting flights:

Tue 10 July: visited 2 bases in US. Wed 11 July: refueled at Shannon call-sign CMB535 and took off heading East. Appeared on a flight path over Pakistan indicating it made a delivery to Afghanistan, and was then heading to Djibouti.

Wed 11 July: landed at US airbase Camp Lemonier, Djibouti. 12 July left Djibouti and landed at Shannon. Refueled and took off heading west towards the USA.

The refueling of this aircraft at Shannon is important. Its final delivery point was Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. This camp is used for US special forces and drone attacks in Yemen. It was likely delivering military materials: munitions, missiles and drones to Camp Lemonier to be used against Yemen. 50,000 Yemeni children perished last year due to the war.

The other US Warplane at Shannon this morning was an OMNI Air US troop carrier N828AX using US military call-sign CMB546. It was refuelled and took off again heading towards the Middle East.

Since 2001, millions of tons of weapons of war and millions of armed troops transited Irish airspace and Shannon airport.

Irish troops served in Afghanistan from 2001-2016 under US/NATO command – although always less than 12 soldiers to avoid an embarrassing Dáil debate.

Recent Parliamentary Questions revealed Irish Special Forces were involved in these supposedly peace activities.

Ireland too became an accessory to torture in breach of the relevant UN treaty.

In 2006, the Council of Europe (not an EU entity) accused Dublin of colluding in extraordinary rendition via Shannon airport.

Some wrongly imagine the Irish state accrues financially from the US military presence.

The opposite is the case. Under the Eurocontrol aviation agreement, the Irish people have picked up the Pentagon's tab for air traffic control fees.

In 17 years it has cost us €50 million.

Although the fallacy spread by successive governments was that if Ireland refused to allow the US military to use Shannon as a base, US multinationals would leave our shores.

Dell's departure with the loss of 1,900 jobs in 2009 from Limerick, which neighbours Shannon, exposed this lie.

Multinationals' bottom line is profits: Dell had a better offer in Poland.

Despite opinion polls consistently showing a high percentage of support for neutrality the establishment parties when in government disregarded their views.

Movement for Peace betrayed

The Greens, Labour and certain Independent TDs, while in opposition, had opposed Irish collusion in US wars, but once at the cabinet table betrayed the movement for peace and dramatically weakened it.

The people were disempowered and as our complicity in imperialist war didn't appear to impact Irish lives, it meant politicians and the media could easily ignore our bloody involvement.

In 2008 Labour's Eamon Gilmore carried out another sinister act of betrayal after the Lisbon Treaty had been rejected.

On RTE's main evening news Gilmore said Labour would not support a Lisbon II referendum.

Days later Gilmore met the US ambassador and assured him that Labour would indeed be backing a re-run of the referendum.

Chelsea Manning and Wikileaks revealed this in a batch of secret US embassy dispatches they exposed.

This incident reveals not just the duplicity of bourgeois politicians, but how US imperialism's interests dovetail with the EU.

The Lisbon Treaty in particular bristled with neoliberal and military clauses: not least, proposing Permanent Structured Cooperation in military & security (PESCO); subsuming NATO's Western European Union *including its mutual defence clause* and making the European Defence Agency, the arms procurement entity, an integral part of the EU.

EU President Juncker Jean Claude in 2016 called for an EU "security union with the end goal of establishing a European army".

The EU Parliament echoed that

EU propagating the arm industry as "normal business"

In the EU the arms industry is presented as a 'normal' business and 'defence' as a top priority. EU President Juncker's 2016 'Statement to the Union' pointed the way: "All Commissioners have been asked to look for ways to contribute to the strengthening of the armament industry in their own field of action."

Arms companies were given access to EU funding opportunities, in order to support "competitiveness" in this sector.

The European Defence Action Plan (November 2016) proposed an increased use of EU Structural Funds and Regional funds to encourage "regional clusters of excellence" in "defence".

The arms sector became a priority supporting an "industry-led European Defence Skills Alliance" and making use of EU funds including Erasmus+, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport!

The Dublin government went a step further offering arms manufacturers the Irish army to test weaponry.

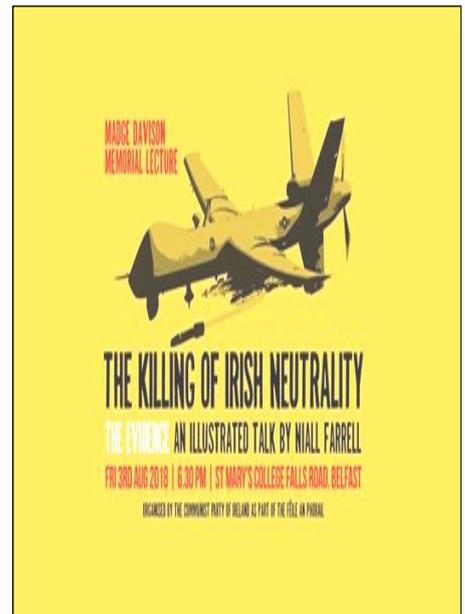
Thanks to state grants the South is a hub for US, British, French and Russian arms manufacturers, plus native ones too. In 2012 there was €2.3bn in arms exports.

call: the EU should upgrade its military to be able to use "its full potential as a world power".

But this will come at a serious financial cost.

Under PESCO the Irish state will have to increase its defence budget from 0.6% of GDP to 2% annually – in cash terms that is from €960m to €3bn.

At a time when the Republic is suffering crises in health and housing that money could be better spent.



Irish complicity in EU and US imperial adventures is more than just a moral or a public finance issue.

Marx and Engels when discussing the liberation of the British working class concluded it could not be free while Britain oppressed the Irish people and indeed other nations.

In other words, Irish neutrality, the breaking of our links to US and EU militarism, is essential if we are to achieve Irish Freedom.

US military at Aldergrove

US warplanes land regularly at Belfast's International airport. There is a need for more focus on the role of Aldergrove in imperialist wars. This can be done if peace monitoring of warplanes transiting the airport takes place. There are two useful websites for this task: www.flightradar24.com & www.flightaware.com

The US call sign is CMB.

#58

Niall Farrell is Public Relations Officer for Galway Alliance Against War

Bodenstown 2018



United Wolfe Tone Commemoration, 2018, Sunday 19 August. Organised by the Peadar O'Donnell Socialist Republican Forum.

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Peace Conference in Tipperary

WorldBEYONDWar, in collaboration with *Shannonwatch*, is organizing a Peace Conference in Cloughjordan Eco-village, Tipperary, on Saturday the 8th of September, to investigate many aspects of war and militarism in relation to international law and conventions.

At "Global Governance: The Force of Law, or the Law of Force," expert speakers and panelists will address vital topics such as: Practical Protests and Legal Actions; The Role of Women in Peace; Transforming the Role of the Military from War to Peace; The Dangers of an EU Super-State, and need to dismantle the new Iron Curtain; Ireland's Role in International Affairs; Ireland, Europe and Neutrality; Shannon and the Law; and finally Law vs War.

Multiple opportunities for networking and collaboration between antiwar organizations, activists, and experts will be offered throughout the event to propel discussion into action.

Later on this year the First International Conference against US/NATO Military bases will be held in Dublin from November 16th to 18th.

More information on World-BEYONDWar events at: www.facebook.com/



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