

# THE IRISH TIMES

## War in Europe – Russia’s assault on Ukraine

Sat, Mar 5, 2022, 00:11

Sir, – As writers, we are appealing to everyone who speaks the Russian language. To people of all nationalities. To those who are native speakers. To those for whom Russian is their second or third language.

Today the Russian language is being used by the Russian state to ignite hatred and justify the shameful war against Ukraine. In Russian, the official media keep repeating endless lies that are creating a smoke screen around this aggression.

Russian people have been fed lies for many years. The independent sources of information have been almost entirely destroyed. The opposition leaders – silenced. The state propaganda machine is working with all its might.

In this situation it is critical to reveal to the Russian citizens the full truth about the Russian aggression against Ukraine. About the suffering and losses of the Ukrainian nation. About civilians being targeted and killed. About the danger to the whole European continent. And possibly to the whole of humanity, given the fact of nuclear threat.

Please, use all possible means of communication. Phones. Messengers. Emails. Reach the people you know. Reach the people you don’t know. Tell the truth. If Vladimir Putin is blind and deaf, maybe the Russians will listen to those who speak the same language.

This wrongful war should be stopped. – Yours, etc,

VLADIMIR SOROKIN,

SVETLANA ALEXIEVICH,

LYUDMILA ULITSKAYA,

DMITRY GLUKHOVSKY,

VICTOR SHENDEROVICH,

MARIA STEPANOVA,

SERGEI LEBEDEV,

LIZA

ALEXANDROVA-ZORINA,

SASCHA FILIPENKO,

ALISA GANIEVA,

VIKTAR MARTINOVICH,

MAXIM OSIPOV,

ALEXANDER GENIS,

LEV RUBINSTEIN,

ALEXANDER

ILICHEVSKY,

MIKHAIL SHISHKIN,

BORIS AKUNIN,

and in support

HERTA MÜLLER,

(Germany/Romania);

ELFRIEDE JELINEK,

(Austria);

OLGA TOKARCZUK,

(Poland);

JM COETZEE,

(South Africa/Australia);

MATHIAS ENARD,

(France);

NURUDDIN FARAH,

(Somalia/South Africa);

PANKAJ MISHRA,

(India/England);

JUAN

GABRIEL VAZQUEZ,

(Colombia).

Sir, – All nations offering tangible or moral support to Ukraine now need to be prepared for a long economic war to address the tyranny of the Russian dictatorship.

While the outcome remains fluid, the military might of Russia is likely to trigger a bad result for Ukraine in the short term in the form of some sort of settlement heavily weighted in favour of Russia because of the negotiating leverage of its bombs.

All democratic countries need to signal to Russia that we are in this war for as long as it takes, and convey to their citizens to be prepared for such a long haul, which will be costly. The centre must hold and never buckle. The free world has never been as united, and on foot of this unity our leaders need to state publicly that the economic, cultural and sporting sanctions will be reconsidered only when the integrity of Ukraine is restored in full, with war reparations paid by Russia.

We should never waste a crisis. Russia's malign activities have been disrupting the West, seeking to undermine the free world while its dictators subjugate its own citizens and those of other countries like Belarus. – Yours, etc,

JOSEPH M DODDY,

Dublin 14.

Sir, – Here we are on the island of Ireland facing westward to the Atlantic Ocean with no air or naval cover to protect us while still clutching that cherished ideal called neutrality. Looking eastward, we have been made aware that war is an ever-present reality. We should wise up. – Yours, etc,

RICHARD RODGERS,

Malahide,

Co Dublin.

Sir, – When there is a chill in the air, we have taken to use the term Baltic. Perhaps it would be prudent to rethink that particular description. – Yours, etc,

FRANK BYRNE,

Dublin 9.

Sir, – No right-thinking person wants the conflict to widen but militarily the West has warned Vladimir Putin the line is drawn at Nato's borders. This verifies Volodymyr Zelensky's assertion to the world last week: Ukraine stands alone.

Doesn't the West want this conflict contained because its real priority is the fear of the economic fallout that sanctions on Russia may bring upon the global economy? It seems so.

The West never considered the consequences of supping with the devil when Mr Putin and his oligarchs were asset-stripping Russia and those billionaires began pumping cash into its economies? Did Joe Biden during his eight years in the Obama White House? Or Boris Johnson, when mayor of a London flush with Russian money? Who could deny Mr Putin's crony capitalism when the West ignored his 2008 invasion of Georgia and 2014 annexation of Crimea? At least now we see sanctions to strip Mr Putin and his oligarchs of their own assets. It is about the economy, isn't it?

Meanwhile in Ukraine, it's not about the economy. It's about democracy and self-determination; things not found in any marketplace but tangible enough to die for. Volodymyr Zelenskyy understands this and accepts this. For him there will be no plane to safety and suitcase full of dollars. Remaining in Kyiv, he has galvanised his fellow citizens and inspired the diaspora to return. This is genuine political leadership not seen in decades. – Yours, etc,

BRIAN FALTER,

Ballyshannon,

Co Donegal.

Sir, – The need to increase defence expenditure over the next number of years in order to give the Defence Forces the required capabilities to adequately defend the State is clear to many. Whether we remain neutral and are prepared to spend to defend that neutrality, or enter into defence arrangements with other European countries, where costs and capabilities may be shared, is a discussion we urgently need to have. Threats facing the State have evolved and changed, and so must our defence and security policy. – Yours etc,

CONOR HOGARTY,

Blackrock,

Co Dublin.

A chara, – I suggest that in solidarity with Ukraine, the Tricolour be replaced with the Ukrainian national flag for the upcoming St Patrick's Day celebrations. – Yours, etc,

DAVID COLLINS

Ennis,

Co Clare.

A chara, – If we need any more proof of Vladimir Putin's madness, it is the bombing of a nuclear plant. – Is mise,

SEÁN O'KIERSEY,

Blackrock,

Co Dublin.

Sir, – In your editorial “Halting the flow of dirty money” (March 3rd), you write “Ireland has been very successful in attracting foreign investment” and “we need to publicly fund best-in-class tax and regulatory regimes”.

A haven is a place of shelter. I am sure I am not the only one to see the glaring contradiction in the above statements. What on earth does anyone think all this cash is doing here? – Yours, etc,

DAVID McCARTER,

Hillsborough,

Co Down.

Sir, – Surely, in criticising Yuri Filatof, the Russian ambassador, is it not in order to consider that any deviation from the Putin line could result in him being posted as a chief food-taster in the Kremlin? – Yours, etc,

MICK O’BRIEN,

Springmount,

Kilkenny.

Sir, – Trevor Troy urges us that “while we are still free, we should stand with the other free nations of the West and join Nato” (Letters, March 4th).

If, as is usually assumed, free media constitute a vital pillar of a free nation, then The Irish Times’s recent transformation into an uncritical recruiting agency for Nato disqualifies it from such a status.

The absence of a rational critique of Nato – described in the Guardian a few days ago by Ted Galen Carpenter of the conservative Cato Institute as “arrogant” and “tone-deaf” – either in your letters or opinion pages is unworthy of a news outlet with claims to democratic accountability. – Yours, etc,

RAYMOND DEANE,

Dublin 1.

Sir, – The photos on the front page of Tuesday’s and Thursday’s Irish Times were powerful. The former showed an infant and mother sheltering in a hospital, and the latter an elderly woman crying outside a debris-strewn house. What a dreadful time to be either young or old, wide-eyed or war weary. – Yours, etc,

MARY FOGARTY,

Balbriggan,

Co Dublin.