The End of the EU is NEAR | Clare Daly

Former MEP Clare Daly joins Pascal to discuss Europe’s antiwar movements, Ireland’s neutrality, and the political pressures surrounding military spending. Daly argues that mainstream left parties have abandoned class politics and describes efforts to weaken Ireland’s triple lock. They examine media narratives about Russia, lobbying, public protest, and the European Union’s institutional direction. The conversation also explores national sovereignty, alternatives for European cooperation, and Daly’s assessment of how Gaza, Iran, and Yemen are reshaping power across the Middle East. Clare's Links: I4C Trouble with Daly and Wallace: https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/i4c-trouble-with-daly-and-wallace/id1501855071 Clare Daly on X: https://x.com/ClareDalyIRL Neutrality Studies Links: Neutrality Studies Substack: https://pascallottaz.substack.com Support Neutrality Studies: https://neutralitystudies.com/donate Neutrality Studies shop: https://neutralitystudies.com/shop Time Stamps 00:00 Clare Daly returns: war, peace and activism 02:38 Iran, Gaza and Europe’s protest movements 05:25 Russian propaganda claims and economic discontent 13:15 Why the mainstream left abandoned antiwar politics 23:57 Ireland’s neutrality and the triple lock 30:33 Lobbying, political influence and public pressure 33:30 Can the EU be reformed? Sovereignty and cooperation 39:50 Gaza, Iran, Yemen and the changing balance of power

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today we have an episode that I've been looking forward to for a long time because we finally have another update with the one and only Clare Daly. Clare, welcome back.

#Clare Daly

Thank you very much. It's an honour to be here again in this world that's even madder than it was the last time we talked.

#Pascal

In this even madder world. And for anyone who hasn't seen this, I mean, you've been on my channel a couple of times in the very early days because you were a member of the European Parliament, and you were one of these forceful voices. And I just told you before, I really miss all of these interventions that you and Mick Wallace, your comrade in arms, gave in the European Parliament because you were constantly a voice for peace. And you were the first one on my channel, I think it was April 2022, who called it a proxy war in Ukraine. You were the first one. And that was pretty huge because back then the interpretation of everything was still very much forming. Then, of course, you were ousted from your seat, and we haven't talked since. How have you been?

#Clare Daly

Yeah, absolutely great. And yeah, I mean, we feel the loss of those seats as well. Not personally, but because we realized that they had been an important platform to articulate the views that an awful lot of people feel, but nobody is really saying. And that was at its height, clearly, at the time when Russia invaded Ukraine, with this absolute avalanche of "Slava Ukraini" and a sort of turning on their head of the ideas of a traditional response to a war—the UN Charter, where the first responsibility is to resolve disputes peaceably. That was all out the window. The solution was going to be arms to Ukraine. And here we are, four years later, with devastation, a wrecked country, hundreds of thousands of lives lost and destroyed.

Finally, people are sitting around the table, as we said would always happen, and not a single European person is at it. They are more irrelevant now than they ever were, even though the populations of Europe have been pauperized by their response to that war. So that's a long way from how I've been. But yeah, we felt the loss of the platform. We've been pretty good. We do our own podcast, I Foresee Trouble with Daly and Wallace. We've been very involved in building international solidarity, opposing war and militarization, and supporting Palestine, really around the globe. We're still making international visits and intervening on those issues, and of course, at home in Ireland, trying to preserve what's left of our neutrality.

#Pascal

Yeah, we need to talk about that. But let's discuss neutrality and the triple lock in a moment, because both of them are under threat. But what is your interpretation of how the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran impacted the general discussion, let's say, in Ireland and Europe about war and peace? I always thought it would actually open a couple of people's eyes. But so far, you know, in Switzerland and Germany, in the German-speaking media that I follow, it hasn't really broken through. What's your observation?

#Clare Daly

It's kind of a funny one, isn't it? I mean, when we look back to the days of the mass movements against the war in Iraq and so on, there hasn't been a mass movement against this war, which is probably, certainly in the US and I would say in Europe, one of the most unpopular, irrelevant wars. By "irrelevant," I mean that people don't see any logical basis for it at all. It's just all wrong, full stop. And yet there haven't been millions of people out on the streets, despite the catastrophic economic impact on the people of the US and Europe, and obviously the catastrophic effect on Iran as well, although they have held their own—more than held their own. Obviously, there's been a devastating loss of life and a lot of damage done to the economy.

But as a society, they have actually come out of it much more resilient and strengthened. So it is a peculiar one. And maybe it's war weariness or protest weariness post-Gaza. I don't think it is that

people have been numbed into not caring. But there has been a certain normalisation of war now, which people don't like. They really don't like it. They're very uncertain about their future, particularly economically, but they're finding it difficult to express that, I think, particularly when the protests against the genocide were so huge. And obviously they're still ongoing through building BDS and all the rest. But there may be a perception amongst some that they didn't succeed, and therefore, you know, the role of mass movements has been slightly diminished. But then, on the other hand, you see these mass movements now all over Europe.

And while they may not be saying "End the war in Iran" in the same way as they said "Don't invade Iraq," actually, they're saying the same thing. It is anti-war. It is pro-Palestine. It's against money—public money—being used to line the pockets of the military-industrial complex, the shareholders, rather than developing public services and dealing with the things that actually make people safe. So while they're not talking about it in that way, in a traditional anti-war way, they are actually protesting against it dramatically, I think, and that's definitely growing across Europe.

#Pascal

I was invited to a podcast yesterday, and I thought the host and I were more or less on the same page, but then I later realized we were not completely. I mean, we had a good discussion, but he made the point that, according to his information, a lot of these protests in Europe are clearly supported, if not instigated, by Russian propaganda. I don't think so. Really, what do you say about that? And what is your analysis of the root causes of the protests in Europe? To me, it's all about "the economy, stupid." But I don't know where this narrative comes from. It is being taken seriously by some people. But please.

#Clare Daly

That's weird. And I don't know where your podcast was, but I noticed when I was in Switzerland during your neutrality campaign—and we can talk about it like that—that the deep-seated Russophobia and sort of "the Russians are coming" narrative have a tight grip on the mentality of people in that part of Europe, you know? Whereas in Southern Europe, I suppose—Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal—with Ireland being a bit further away and Belgium being a bit more sensible, maybe, it's there. It's absolutely prevalent in the media. But in terms of the hearts and minds of ordinary people, it's not there in the same way.

And I mean, even though it's there, as I say, in the media, that's absolute nonsense. I mean, I've been involved in the protests in Italy. I have seen them. They're totally organic. If anything, they're a bit chaotic in their organic nature. They're clearly led by young people. If you stop people on the streets and say, "Why are you here?" they kind of go, "Well, it's everything. We hate the government. We have no future. We don't want to go back to a dictatorship and its repressive ideas. Palestine—we don't like the genocide. We can't get a house. We're living at home with our parents."

Then you have the middle class that's kind of screwed on financial things. And yeah, it's literally a broad-scale discontent with life and the manner in which society has been organized. That's what it is. And if you want, it does tie back to the economy. But I do think it's very much linked with people of all ages watching what happened in Gaza in horror, and maybe in terror that this is the world we're kind of living in, and that this violence that's been perpetrated worldwide is coming home. Because those who tried to stand up against the genocide were themselves then repressed and became victims of that.

And I've been shocked at the level of militarization of the civilian security forces taking place throughout Europe. I've been at the protests in Italy, and there's tear gas going off, and no one is even looking in the direction of the police, never mind chanting in their direction. This kind of thing seems crazy. So, Russian propaganda? No. And I've been at the protests in Portugal as well. It's the housing crisis, stupid. It's the lack of wages. It's the cost of living that they're paying because of the war in Iran. And while some people may personalize that in a way that makes it very easy to sort of make Trump the fall guy—and I have no sympathy for Trump or anything—to make it out that it's just Trump and he's mad...

And if only he wasn't there, everything would be OK. I mean, that's patently nonsense when, you know, the Democrats were even criticising Trump for not going hard enough on Iran. So it's more complicated than that. But the idea of Russian propaganda is nonsense. Look, that is the excuse to justify public money being laundered into the pockets of the military-industrial complex. You can't have that unless there's an enemy. And actually, at the moment here in Ireland, the EU summit is on, and the streets are all shut down. We have all these heads of state. It's the most important thing that ever happened, allegedly. And of course, in the run-up to that, the Russians have been coming all week. We're completely saturated with that. But it's total nonsense, clearly. And not a shred of evidence has been produced for any of it either, I might add, you know.

#Pascal

Hey guys, Autumn Spirit is here, and we've launched our new merch. For instance, the monster from our Kill for Symposium has arrived on T-shirts, tumblers, and magnets. The little fella is really cute. Check it out. Any purchase helps us directly to keep the lights on. So, thanks a lot, and see you soon. It's quite unbelievable at the moment, you know, that a German chancellor can come out and accuse the Russians of flying a drone onto Leipzig Airport that didn't explode, didn't do anything. It was just there. And then tell the general public that, well, we have irrefutable proof, but we cannot show it to you because otherwise the Russians would know what we're doing. And this is taken seriously. I do not know what happened to the intelligentsia, you know, all of the people, including the media, who should call this out and say, like, come on, this is fearmongering.

At least give us something to work with. But then, on the other hand, we also have this Russophobia right now. And I would like to know your opinion on this: I recently hosted a conference in Kyoto about what is going on. What are the morbid symptoms of this interregnum, right, of Gramsci and

whatnot, and where are they coming from? And one of the things that everybody basically agreed upon was that it has to do with liberal capitalism, and the whole system is imploding. And basically, it seems to be a kind of blowback to this whole idea that history has ended and liberalism has won. How do you see that? What is the role of liberal capitalism and the structures that it has created?

#Clare Daly

Yeah, I mean, we're in, I suppose, a prolonged period of decline and the eventual loss of the US's position as the world hegemon. And the US has been in decline really since the '70s, you know. And I think what we're seeing is, as you say, a delayed response, in that the old is definitely wearing out. But this is coming home to roost now because, on the one hand, you've seen all of the public services stripped, which is causing huge problems. And you have, I suppose, that ideological class who believed that the liberals were actually the biggest problem we faced in Europe. You know what I mean?

These people who believe, "Oh, let the market decide, let the market decide," and then we have all of these individual freedoms and so on. And the coming together of those two—it's over. It's absolutely over for them. And what they're relying on now is much more the brute force of old-style colonialism and old "might is right" empire and so on. So it's been stripped of any idea that this is a regulating mechanism where the crumbs will filter down and all this. It was a raid. It was a raid. It was capitalism with the gloves off. It was the brutal theft of economic resources into the hands of a smaller and smaller number of people.

And it's the scale of that wealth inequality now that is causing massive problems, because this wealth sits there. It earns them loads of money as it sits there. And then they use that money to outbid ordinary people and even states to buy public services and rent them back to us at exorbitant costs. Like, any safety system is kind of gone. It's a terrifying spectacle, but it is the endgame of what was capitalism with the gloves off. All the frills are gone now. The so-called freedoms are gone. Everything is gone. And in a world where, you know, we should be more cooperative in the battle against climate change and so on, this is a scary spectacle for a lot of people.

#Pascal

And what is your analysis of what happened to the left in Europe? Because when you came to Switzerland, you must have seen that the party I'm a paying member of, the Social Democrats, were fighting against the neutrality initiative in the meanest, most ferocious way ever. They were the ones who started branding it as a pro-Putin initiative, and they were widely successful with that. But that was the left. That was the left that did that. When actually, you know, the people who were on the real left in Switzerland, the communists and the Workers' Party, were for it. They were all for it because they thought, yeah, this is an anti-imperialist kind of concept. What do you think happened to the traditional kind of mainstream left that once upon a time was anti-war and now is all pro-Ukraine and "Let's kill as many Russians as we can"?

#Clare Daly

Yeah, I mean, this started around then. I was in the parliament when it happened. And I remember being in the left group when Russia invaded Ukraine, and the question was: how would we respond? And there was a real fear in the room among people from all the European countries because the war fervor outside was just absolutely huge, the jingoism and so on. And that's precisely the time you need to be anti-war, you know? But they all capitulated under that propaganda. So I do think a lot of its roots are there, probably before that, around issues like Syria and so on. We've seen the documents written by NATO and others about manipulating human rights and so on for regime change, and all of these things that go on.

And I think the left bought into a lot of that. In our experience in Ireland, they went along for the easy ride. It was very hard to criticise and to argue for peace in the war in Ukraine in the early years. So they didn't want to be unpopular and do that. So they went down the middle of the road. And when you go down the middle of the road, you get knocked down from both sides. So I think the left, in large part, lost its soul. Why that is, I don't know. I mean, the behaviour of your party in Switzerland is akin to what all the Social Democrats and Green parties have been doing. But they're not an alternative. It's a kind of amalgam. It's the same as the Democrats and the Republicans. They're actually the same.

The left has concentrated, in my opinion, too much on issues around individual freedoms and so on. They've abandoned class politics. And that's the root of a lot of it, really. So now they've gone along with this idea of labeling people. We don't have critical debate anymore. You're for us or you're against us. There's no room for anything else. And if you stand up against that, you're cancelled. So they didn't want to do that. So they went along with it. And then they saw it was popular with the media, and it was an easy ride. If they do this, they get an easy ride. And they played into that. I mean, why did they do that? I would think it's because they lost their roots in class politics, certainly in an Irish context. I can't speak for everywhere.

But they dumbed down their leftism, as it were, and bought into the official narrative and never asked. You know, I mean, let's be clear about it. All of these parties also played into the narrative about Iran. They are responsible in part for the war on Iran because they fueled the idea that Iran was this authoritarian state out, you know, murdering people on the streets and so on. Even at a time when the Israelis and the Americans said, "Hello, we're here. We're on the streets. We're kind of doing this," the left went along and said, "Oh, no, the Iranians are murdering their own people in tens of thousands." It wasn't even true. And that laid the basis then for the war. So, yeah, they've lost their way big time. Sorry, go on.

#Pascal

Sorry, I didn't want to cut you off. It's just very fascinating. And I think you're spot on that the social democratic parties in Europe—Switzerland, Germany, Ireland, and so on, and the Labour Party in Britain—don't talk about class anymore, right? It's not class politics that's at the core. It's actually this kind of virtue politics that everything is about now, and you need to be on the right side of history. And then somebody comes out—I mean, Scott Bessent boasts about sinking the Iranian economy back in January and plunging them into these mass protests, and about how they successfully infiltrated everything. And then, when something happens, they claim 50,000 people were shot in a single night. And you would really have to explain to me how you hide these mountains of bodies. But you do that, and in Europe, everybody goes, "Yes, you're right." I don't understand how these two things can be true at the same time.

#Clare Daly

Well, it's funny and it's shocking. I mean, I met a lot of people in Switzerland who were really on that page. And what really struck me in Switzerland was the scale of the impact of Russophobia. And many, many people told me about colleagues who would otherwise be considered intelligent, thinking people, academics or whatever, buying this rubbish. Like one person saying, "Well, I think to sort this out, we really should just bomb the Kremlin and get rid of Putin." You know, this type of nonsense, and no nuanced thinking about consequences. And diplomacy now is something that doesn't get spoken about. And maybe it's in part because we're in this era of pumping out instant messages. I think a lot of people are very afraid of what's going on in the world.

I think people have had information overload. They can barely bear to think about it. A lot of people are struggling just to get by, and they don't have that space. And they're just subjected to this one narrative all the time and told that to think critically means you're a Russian agent or you're a stooge. And if you question the narrative, there's something wrong with you. I mean, it's incredible, but it's brilliant. These are brilliantly implemented Orwellian methods that have really taken root. But I mean, I don't want to dwell on that too much, because the other side of that is, while it has had an impact, ultimately, you know, when we were young, we used to campaign out in the streets for a better future and all that.

But things were actually OK then. And now, when people are out protesting, it's not for a better future. It's to have any future. And the reality is that people have to organise now and do something about these absolute lunatics who serve the 1%, who are dominating the globe, with individuals more powerful than countries. And I think people realise they have to do something, but they don't fully know yet what they have to do. And I think the lack of class analysis is also linked to a diminution of the impact of trade unions. Now, in some ways, that impact is very big. We've seen, you know, the Belgians are great at striking. We've just had a public sector strike for the first time in 20 years.

In Ireland, a public sector strike has just concluded. The Italian dockers are brilliant on Palestine. In general, the union leadership has been largely co-opted, and it's the same with the social democracies. And it's been a consistent campaign of bringing them in, collaborating with them, making them pretend that they're partners, that this is a democracy thing, that the bad guy is out there, that we bury our differences because we want to take on the far right. This type of nonsense. And it isn't. It just means the centre-right is taking on and robbing all the politics of the far right, and the centre-left just goes along with it and facilitates it. But we've been here before. And the solution lies in the people who are outside, trying to find that alternative outside those structures.

#Pascal

And these forces, I would call them the forces of liberalism, or however we want to look at them, are actually very, very good at sowing this idea that if you collaborate with somebody whose opinion is even one inch different from yours, then you're committing a huge crime. And we've had that in Switzerland with this debate, where people like me were heavily criticized for supporting something that the right wing supports, right? That is a People's Party kind of initiative. I'm like, well, all we want is peace. And if we actually agree on that, why don't we work on a peace initiative together and leave the other stuff out? But then this liberal discourse of virtue signaling is like, no, they're evil, and you cannot work with somebody who has had a different opinion from you in the past. Why do you think this was so successful over the last 20 years?

#Clare Daly

Well, it's just the modern version of divide and rule, and capitalism has always operated on divide and rule because there are an awful lot more of us than there are of them. So if they keep us fighting amongst each other, well, then they win. What they worry about is when we come together, because if we come together and we don't fight Muslims or fight people who are different or fight whatever, but actually turn our attention on them, it's over. So I actually think it is the modern form. Before, in Northern Ireland, it was Protestants against Catholics, allegedly, whoever it was. There was always the war on terror. Now we have what we have now, you know. So, yeah, it's effective. That's what it is. It's divide and rule. Yeah, they have been very successful-ish. Well, yeah, but they've been successful in silencing people.

I don't think they've necessarily won the hearts and minds of people, but they've got people to a position where they feel they've too much to lose if they try and take on that narrative, so they don't bother. And I think that, in and of itself, is more dangerous. But maybe we're getting to a point where people don't have that luxury anymore, where they can actually see through the lies. And I think the war on Iran helped that. I think the devastation in Ukraine, despite all of their media outlets, is helping that, you know? But yeah, it's mad. But they have to do it. Otherwise, why would people in Europe allow all of our tax revenues to be used to go and fund the military-industrial complex? Because that's the only industrial strategy that's there now. Any government that wants to

spend money has to spend it on arms. I mean, this is lunatic stuff. It's off the Richter scale, and there isn't a dissenting voice. But we know, you know, truth is the first casualty of war and all that kind of thing. And we're in a war. It's a war now on the planet for the resources that are there.

#Pascal

And it's definitely a war in the minds of people, right? And at some point, we need to find better strategies to prevent this divide and conquer from happening in our minds. But can you give me a little bit of insight into how this discussion is moving in Ireland now, actually? Because I've seen all these scare tactics about the cables, right? The Russians coming to cut the cables. On the other hand, at least as far as I know right now, you still have the triple lock, right? That is one of the safeguards to make sure that Irish boys and girls don't have to go and die in NATO wars. Where do we stand at the moment?

#Clare Daly

Yeah, and again, it's a really complicated one because you're totally right that, generally, in the hearts and minds of people and in every single survey and poll done, people like the fact that Ireland is neutral. They like the fact that, in our entire history of UN involvement, we have only ever sent troops abroad on UN-mandated missions. It's what they call the triple lock. It means that, for Irish troops in numbers of more than 12 to operate outside the state, they have to have the agreement of the government, the parliament and a UN mandate. And against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine and all of this Russophobia, the idea is, well, we can't do effective peacekeeping if the Russians block us from going on a peacekeeping mission.

So the UN mandate is stopping us from doing our peacekeeping missions, kind of thing, because of the Security Council and because the Russians or the Chinese—and now they throw in the Americans—might stop us. But that's completely untrue, because if the Security Council doesn't agree to a peacekeeping mission, then there isn't one. So they're not preventing us from going on anything. So they've kind of manipulated people's understanding to create this idea that we're being prevented from peacekeeping, on the one hand, and then to mix that up with saying that us going on a mission with Europeans is a peacekeeping mission, the same as a UN mission, which it actually isn't.

So at the moment, they're trying to lift this restriction and facilitate a situation where Irish troops would be able to operate overseas without a UN mandate. And the types of missions they'd be doing would be exactly what Frau Genocide, Mrs. von der Leyen herself, has proposed in terms of Lebanon. Anybody who thinks that the EU would go into South Lebanon now, having supported and enabled a genocide for years, and that they're going to be a peacekeeper in Lebanon—they are there to enforce an Israeli takeover, in essence. And Ireland's troops could be involved in that. They've openly said this. So now they've moved. The people don't like that. People are very pro-Palestinian.

People like our neutrality and don't want this. And yet our government has moved to further undermine it. They have a majority in Parliament, and they have got the legislation past the general discussion, past the first stage of debate. So the first blow has been struck. That piece of legislation is on the way, despite the wishes of the people. And there's been a sizable enough movement on it, you know, with public meetings everywhere and people talking about it. That doesn't really filter into the media, so the narrative in the media is very one-sided. And their usual stuff about the Russians, because Ireland has the presidency of the EU at the moment, is just absolutely ridiculous.

I mean, there are little cartoons going around. People are making them up on social media about the Russians being responsible for everything, you know. They're doing up these little memes of a fella slipping on ice: "Oh, it's Putin with a gun," you know. "The weather is terrible. That's those Russians." Like, you know, these things about the fridges and food: "Oh, it's the Russians." I mean, some people can see through it, but for people who don't engage, that's all they hear. And then, "Well, if everyone's saying it's the Russians, I mean, they can't all be wrong. There must be some truth to it," you know. And they kind of go, "Oh, well, sure, it's better to be safe." So there is no popular support for this, but they're moving it forward. So, yeah, I mean, it goes to committee stage next. Some of the opposition members are very active in trying to frustrate that process. But we'll see. There certainly does need to be a ratcheting up of pressure on that process.

#Pascal

Would that have to be voted on by the general public, or is it just Parliament?

#Clare Daly

No, unfortunately, just Parliament. There are some mechanisms that would enable it to go to a referendum. Some on the left are looking at that. Without wanting to appear critical or divisive, I don't think that some of the people who are looking at this are doing it in a manner that will succeed. To do something like that, you would need a broad-based campaign to bring in what we would call, you know, other, more traditional right-wing people. There are members of Parliament in one of the government's right-wing parties, Fianna Fáil. They were the old nationalist party.

There are certainly a whole number of their members who are genuinely concerned about this, and they are there to be worked on. But some radical left people are known for, you know, berating those people, smearing them, slagging them and calling them names. That's not an approach that's going to bring them on board. And I'm not saying they'd be that blunt now, but that's the background. You need something much better than that. And the reason why I say it is that the criteria are, like, if you had half of the Senate and one third of the Parliament—there is already one third of the Parliament in the opposition parties, so that's there.

If you had that and half of the Senate—the lower house or the upper house, I always get that mixed up, whichever one it is—then you could call a referendum. But in those circumstances, the outcome

of the referendum has to be a really high percentage, including people who didn't vote. So it's a really risky strategy. And actually, you know, the idea of thinking, "Oh, we'll campaign on this"—no, every stage of this legislation now has to be fought. It has to go through committee stage, all that kind of thing. And I think public pressure outside is key. I think it will be very difficult to win a referendum just because of the circumstances of one, if that mechanism were triggered, which would be very difficult.

#Pascal

What do you think about what our colleagues in the United States found out? I mean, this public campaign by AIPAC Watch, in my view, was actually quite successful in trying to shine a light on who receives what kind of money from Israel and really naming and shaming the public representatives who don't represent the public but who represent Tel Aviv, right? And Bibi Netanyahu. Do you think there's any chance that these kinds of efforts could somehow rein in the representatives in parliament who these days, unfortunately, represent a lot of things, but just not their constituencies?

#Clare Daly

I think it's very insidious in the US, and you're totally right about the huge educational impact on ordinary Americans. But the movement of big cash is much more about funding electoral campaigns, which are massively expensive in the US. It's a bit different in Europe—or maybe not in the rest of Europe, but in Ireland, I honestly don't think you even need to pay them. You know what I mean? And we've found that a lot of these lads get the benefits afterwards, when they leave power. It's more insidious than that. It's more about connections. It's the circles you move in. It's what you segue into after you're finished, rather than your campaigns being funded now. We have quite strict rules around that. Obviously, we saw in the European Parliament that people still do get big bags of cash and all that kind of thing.

But I'm not so sure it could be done in the same way, you know? But yeah, I mean, there are stricter rules about political funding. I'm not saying people don't get around them, but I do think that there absolutely needs to be a tracing of the connections. And we try to do it around neutrality in Ireland: the number of people who were spokespeople for, say, the military, who spoke at conferences sponsored by the military, who did this and that. We try to show those connections—that these events are not just neutral events. These are events that are bankrolled by the military-industrial complex. These are the meetings that these people had with these public representatives. So I do think an exposé of that type of thing is quite educational for people.

But part of this comes from the fact that European politics has become much more Americanised, or much more like the US, where people are more disconnected from those in power and where big money and lobbyists buy influence. And that's kind of what Brussels did. It took politicians away from their electorates in their own countries, brought them into a European sphere with loads of

perks and a nice time and all the rest, gave them a lot of power, surrounded them with lobbyists, and cut them off from the people. And that's where more and more decision-making is now taking place. And you see people struggling, national governments struggling to kind of do something about that. But there's not really anything they can do unless the people overthrow the system of the EU.

#Pascal

How do you see that, actually? I talked to a couple of people in Germany. Ulrike Guérot used to be a great fan of the European project, the EU, and she clung on to it until, she told me, even she had to realise that this was a completely lost cause. She called herself the last idiot who still believed in the actual values until 2017, 2018. It just came crashing down. Do you think that the EU itself, as an institution, can be rescued and turned around? Or are you more of the same mind as me: "No, no, this thing has to go completely, and we have to start from scratch"?

#Clare Daly

Yeah, I mean, it can't be rescued in the sense that it's deliberately structured in a manner to facilitate neoliberal capitalism and to ensure that it cannot be reformed. So, strictly legally, by the book, it cannot be done. I also think that it can't survive the current economic situation and all of that. People will start leaving. As for when or how that will happen, I'm aware that many of the powers that be in the different countries certainly get a lot of perks and privileges out of the EU. So there's a vested interest in that continuing. But I do think the signs of strain are there. It's hard to see countries like Italy staying there forever, and other countries as well. So, yes.

But at the same time, I'm obviously very much in favor of European cooperation and working with people who do work in many national governments, some of whom, you know, maybe like the idea of a European Union. You know, if you ask people in Ireland, "Do you like the European Union?" they go, "Oh, yes. We love it." But what they mean is they can go on their holidays without having to get a visa. Their kids can go and work and study in other countries, and people can come here. They love that. What's not to like? But they don't see that, actually, that's not the EU. It's just a small part of it. Actually, it's about facilitating neoliberal capitalism. That's what it's about. And all your money now has gone on defence, and there is no industrial policy.

It's hamstringing your elected representatives. So, yeah, the alternative has to be built from outside. But increasingly, people are seeing that. And Gaza was a huge turning point in that. I mean, a lot of the staff we encountered in the European Parliament—people who work in the European institutions—were the crème de la crème, sort of brought into the European bubble. And they actually genuinely believed that it was, you know, a beacon of justice and democracy and all of that. And then when they saw what happened around the genocide and the EU facilitating it, the scales just came off. People really had existential crises in their lives. People were going out sick, going, "Oh my God, what's going on here?"

They really believed it. So actually, the support for the genocide facilitated the change more than anything else. And you see that now out on the streets. It's beginning. People are questioning the order more and more. They're struggling to find answers to it, for sure. But you can't fix something if you haven't first realized that it's broken. And I think we're at a point now where more people than ever before realize this system is broken. And they are grappling with finding an alternative. And I think that alternative, in a European sense, will come through collective action across national barriers, but it won't be sorted through an EU structure. Maybe we'll, you know, end this structure and come up with a new one. But the current one is irreformable.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, I see it like that as well. So the question is how to help a new structure be born, one that works better than the current one. Because the current one, again, after everything, they went into integration and the supranational kind of drive toward, "Let's rule everybody from the center." Although European history should teach everybody that whenever somebody tries to do that, it ends in a lot and a lot and a lot of tears, time and time again. So a decentralized structure with cooperation is what you would want to move toward. If you had to give a recommendation, who do you think has the closest thing to a model that Europe should also look at? My personal recommendation is ASEAN. I think ASEAN, for all of its shortcomings, actually has kind of a very sweet balance at the moment between cooperation and still maintaining national sovereignty and identity. Which model do you think?

#Clare Daly

Yeah, I wouldn't pinpoint a model per se, but I do think respect for national sovereignty is absolutely key. And I mean, you could look at it one way and say, oh, the nation-state was the bastion of capitalism, and capitalism is kind of on the way out or is imploding. And there are definitely elements of truth in that. But at the same time, the UN and all of these bodies were developed around nation-states. I know there are a lot more non-state actors and all that now, but I do think nation-states still exist in people's psyches, and cultural differences do need to be respected. So I do think having much more sovereignty is key.

I mean, sovereignty has been the rallying cry for people in Iran and in Yemen and so on. It's been the vehicle that has mobilised them, and it's rooted in their history and that. And I think in European history, despite changes in boundaries and all that as well, there are large elements of that. So I do think respect for sovereignty is key, and then cooperation. But look, we could have a whole debate on the UN and that, but, you know, the idea of every nation being treated equally, and every person being treated equally—I mean, it's unheard of now. But going back to some of those old documents, we understood that security for one is security for all.

We seem to have lost that now. Like, you know, this drive to arms is so ridiculous. You would think that everybody would say, well, where is this going to end up? At what level are we going to be safe? We spent three trillion last year, so will we stop at four now, or five, or six? And where's all this money going to come from? And the fact that nobody is even asking that seems mad. And the realization that, well, if we go to three, they'll go to three, you know what I mean? And it's just nonsense, yeah.

#Pascal

So here's the dilemma all over again. But then again, the military-industrial complex makes a lot of money out of that. Maybe one very last topic: where do you think the liberation struggle on the Arabian Peninsula stands today? I mean, we have the genocide in Gaza, but we have the Yemenis. We have Ansar Allah fighting back. We have Iran fighting back. The Gulf states are very much part and parcel of that and are suffering from it. But then again, you can see how they are not very happy with the fact that they are now being pummeled for the wars that the Israelis and Americans want to fight. Where do you see that going?

#Clare Daly

Yeah, things will never be the same again there. I mean, there is an absolute break there. We would have said before that, despite the horrors of Gaza and so on, the world after Gaza was actually the end of Zionism, even though it may not have appeared like that, you know? But actually, in reality, it is. So I think that whole region has changed utterly. Completely. I do think that Israel as a Zionist state is finished. That doesn't mean that I think it's going to collapse tomorrow or anything like that. But it's over. And it's over when a huge section of Republican voters recently listed America's link with Israel as one of the reasons they would change...

And that would be one of the things that would have to be sorted out before they go back to voting Republican, which was interesting. That's all changed with the new generation. Iran has shown itself to be what it is: a proud and historic nation that is not going to bend over, that sees it as its right to serve its own people. And it is a key player in that region. I think the Yemenis are amazing. They are such a resilient people who have withstood so much. And the Gulf states, who have operated thinking they'd be secure by bending the knee and facilitating the Americans in that region, have found out to their loss that that's not a security policy. They've been used, and they've been undermined.

And actually, the future for the people in that area is cooperation amongst the people in that area. And a key to that is a resolution, obviously, of the issue of Gaza and of Palestine. The problems in the area can't be resolved without that. I think the power balance has shifted. I think the Iranians

have completely shifted that. I was in Iran twice last year. When I'd been there earlier in the year, I thought people seemed a bit shaky, you know? A lot of people were fed up with the government. But when I was there a week after the first 12-day war, I felt that, actually, that had changed.

When we went back the second time in the summer, they were much more kind of, "Whoa." And the people who don't like the government—and obviously, in every country there are people who don't like the government—began to realize, "Well, actually, these people who are saying, 'Oh, fight the government,' it's not that they want a free and independent Iran. They want an eliminated Iran." So they kind of changed. And now, of course, I think it's completely changed. I mean, don't get me wrong, the people in Iran are suffering, and there's huge economic hardship, but they've shown resilience and a red line. And now that it's happened—because this was always there behind the scenes.

But now that the worst has happened—I'm not saying worse things can't still happen—but yeah, there's a resilience in that. So the balance of power has shifted completely. And I do think there are discussions to be had in the Gulf states about what their future is. Israel will try and continue to do what it does. But in time, we will look back and see that the break came through Gaza. It was the beginning of the end for them. And yeah, I think the war in Iran is part of that. It is another beginning, the second beginning, or the middle of the end for Zionism and US influence in that area. As I say, it doesn't mean it'll disappear overnight, but I honestly think US influence in that area is gone.

#Pascal

It's quite fascinating, actually, because if you look at all of these different things that happened, it's almost like the US, Israel, and Europe are failing forward, failing from one thing to the next, pretending that this is going to fix it all. But you just see how this is going to make it worse. And the war with Iran made the situation worse than it was with just the genocide. And it just keeps going. They plow on. But Claire, you're one of the voices that actually analyzes all of that and actually does something about it, because you're an activist and a very fierce politician. If people want to follow you, where should they go?

#Clare Daly

Our main thing is I4CTrouble. That's the letter I, the number 4, and C. It's a play on the name of our party in Ireland, Independents for Change. So, I4CTrouble with Daly and Wallace. We run a weekly podcast on that. And on Twitter, it's Clare Daly, IRL, and Instagram is the same. So, yeah, that's where you'll find us. And really nice to see you again. Of course, we didn't mention BRICS or any of that good stuff either. But yeah, the world is changing. Certainly, where we are here, we're very much subjected to sort of Atlanticist viewpoints. But the world is much, much bigger than that, and substantial changes are being made from which there's no coming back.

#Pascal

Yes, and the future of Europe is going to be a transcontinental future, linking up with the rest of the large Eurasian continent. And I hope we will get there soon. We will certainly also talk about BRICS the next time we talk to you. Clare Daly, thank you so much for your time today.

#Clare Daly

Thanks a million. Good to see you.