

# Irish Foreign Affairs

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*“Every nation, if it is to survive as a nation, must study its own history and have a foreign policy”  
- C.J. O’Donnell, The Lordship of the World, 1924, p. 145*

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On the morning that the Libyan Government troops entered Tripoli, Radio Eireann gave a potted history of Colonel Gaddafi's career, in which it said that the Colonel had "come to the aid of extremists in many countries, including the IRA in Ireland".

Did it forget that the "extremist" IRA has for many years been a pillar of the Northern Ireland Government, giving the region the first reasonably stable and representative devolved Government it had ever had, and that it was through its "extremism" that it had arrived at that situation?

It is entirely in accordance with the nature of things that stable government should be the product of successful "extremism". The modern world came about through the success of one extremist act building on another. It was brought about through a succession of wars waged by Britain over three centuries, none of which was a war of defence against an enemy threatening to invade it.

On the day when the personnel of an irregular army entered Tripoli, that army had been formally recognised by France, the USA and Britain as the army of the legitimate Government of Libya, with the consequent downgrading of Colonel Gaddafi's Army to the status of a bunch of terrorists. But Radio Eireann continued to refer to Gaddafi's opponents as rebels and Gaddafi's group as the Government, and this usage was kept up for a number of weeks. Did it signify disagreement by the Irish Government with the recognition by the Western Great Powers of the Benghazi rebellion as the legitimate Government of Libya?

Some weeks earlier the Foreign Minister, Eamon Gilmore, had raised a difficulty about recognising a declaration of statehood by the Palestinian Authority. He said it was a precondition of legitimate statehood that the body declaring it should be in actual control of the relevant territory—and of course this territory was controlled by the Israeli military conquest and the Jewish colonisation which it fostered.

Trinity College, which gives the British view of these things (at least as far as Irish affairs are concerned), has a different take on this issue. Joost Augusteijn (a graduate of Professor David Fitzpatrick's Trinity History Workshop) has declared that the Government established in Ireland by democratic election in 1918 was not legitimate because legitimacy depends on international recognition. The mere Irish could not legitimise their own Government just by electing it, and by supporting it against the attempt of the British Government to continue governing in defiance of the will of the Irish electorate. Only foreign Governments could legitimise the elected Irish Government.

It was Ireland's bad luck that it elected its own national Government at a moment when the international scene was sewn up by the Conference of the Great War Victors at Versailles at which Britain exercised a *de facto* veto on recognition of the elected Irish Government. "Nation-states" which had not been foreshadowed by national movements—either in the form of elections or rebellions—were set up by the Versailles Conference, but the Irish nation-state, which asserted itself electorally after four generations of national agitation, elections and insurrection, was disallowed.

The Dail Government was illegitimate because no foreign Powers recognised it—the foreign Powers all acting in cahoots at Versailles deciding what to make of the world, and being respect-

ful of each other's vital interests. And it was a British vital interest that the Irish national democracy should be given the brush-off.

Within days of Foreign Minister Gilmore's assertion that actual control of territory by the Palestinian Authority was a precondition of recognising its declaration of independent statehood, the three Western Great Powers recognised the Benghazi rebellion as the legitimate Government of Libya, even though it controlled a small fraction of the territory of Libya and could not raise even a small riot in Tripoli.

At that point the matter became teleological. The rebellion itself was a hopeless venture. Left to its own devices, it would have been snuffed out in a week. But NATO decided that the Benghazi rebellion should become the Libyan State. The end was set by NATO, and NATO, which had overwhelming physical force at its disposal, could not be seen to fail to achieve such an easily achieved end as the destruction of the Gaddafi regime and the bringing of the Benghazi rebellion to Tripoli. The British Foreign Secretary said repeatedly that this end was inevitable because whatever force was needed would be deployed.

The Benghazi rebellion crept slowly towards Tripoli behind a barrage laid down by twenty thousand flights of bombers.

Ireland has a problem with foreign affairs. It begins with uncertainty about where *foreign* begins. Does it begin a few miles north of Dundalk, or does it not begin until Calais? Ambiguity about whether the Border within Ireland is or is not international has been calculatedly fostered by Britain. When it suits British purposes, the Border within Ireland is an indisputable international frontier, North of which absolute British sovereignty begins. On other occasions, Britain finds it advantageous to allow it to be supposed that it recognises an Irish national interest which includes the whole island. Irish Governments, unable to decide which is the case and to act on that decision, have been manipulated into accepting basic responsibility for what are, on an objective view, the consequences of undemocratic government by Britain of the Northern Ireland region of the United Kingdom state.

When the Six Counties were split off from the rest of Ireland in 1921 and retained within the British state, they were at the same time excluded from the British system of political democracy and subjected to a provocative caricature of democracy in a subordinate local system. This caricature blew apart in 1969 because of the tensions it created. The nationalist minority of about 40%, deprived of a democratic outlet for its political energy and affronted by being told it lived in a democracy, then sustained a war against the State for close on thirty years, as a result of which the caricature of democracy was set aside and an apartheid system favourable to the minority was set up in its place.

While that remarkable war was being fought, it was condemned utterly by Dublin Governments, often in terms which suggested that the sovereignty against which the Provisional Republicans were fighting was their sovereignty, rather than the British sovereignty which was the actual State power in the North.

They reversed the famous maxim about courtesans, and accepted responsibility for a matter in which they had no power.

This moral collapse happened in the summer of 1970 and ended the active engagement with the Northern minority which the Irish Government had begun after the pogrom of 1969, leaving the Northern minority to take its fate entirely into its own hands, and then condemning it for doing so. It did this under pressure from Britain. But, while washing its hands of the North in what was in the circumstances a very destructive way, it did not recognise the legitimacy of British sovereignty in the North—and was not strongly pressed to do so by Britain. Essentially, it went into denial about the realities of the Northern situation.

What the isolated Northern minority did during the next thirty years would have been hailed as a very remarkable achievement if something like it had happened somewhere else in the world. But in Ireland, under the rapidly increasing British influence which followed the moral collapse of 1970, it is viewed with resentment.

While the Northern minority was tending to its interests by the only means which were found to be effective, the disorientated Dublin Establishment—when it reneged on the Northern obligations it had contracted in 1969—began to sicken of itself, and it turned the history of its own Independence movement over to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to be remade.

On August 31<sup>st</sup> the *Irish Times* carried a review by Professor Eunan O’Halpin of Trinity College of a book on the Black and Tans. The review was accompanied by a well-known photograph of two Black and Tans holding up a civilian at gun-point. The caption read: “*Black and Tans: implicitly licensed to give republicans a taste of their own medicine*”.

That photographic event happened in either 1920 or 1921. In 1918 the Irish electorate had given the Sinn Fein party three-quarters of the Irish Parliamentary seats. In accordance with its election programme, the Sinn Fein Deputies did not go to Westminster and submit themselves to the authority of the British Crown. They went to Dublin and met as an Irish Parliament, calling on all other Irish Deputies to join them. The Ulster Unionists did not join them of course. Neither did the handful of Home Rulers—who went to Westminster and swore their Oaths accepting the legitimacy of British rule in Ireland.

The Sinn Fein representatives met as an Irish Parliament, the Dail, and the Dail declared itself an independent Irish Parliament and appointed its own independent Irish Government.

The Dail was, of course, self-constituted. It was not constituted by the British Parliament. And it was not recognised by any

of the Great Powers—the Powers that had defeated Germany in November 1918 and were still plundering and starving it in January 1919, when the Dail met, and for many months afterwards. In order that the victorious Great Powers might deliberate on what to make of the world, they had to recognise each other’s accomplished facts. And British control of Ireland was an accomplished fact—a fact which very few in January 1919 thought could be disaccomplished. The *Irish Times* certainly did not think so. It saw the Dail’s Declaration of Independence as a joke in poor taste.

When the Westminster Parliament met in 1919 it took no notice whatever of the fact that 80 elected MPs did not attend but set up their own assembly in Dublin and declared it to be an independent Parliament.

Joseph Devlin was returned as Home Rule MP for Belfast. He went to Westminster and made another submission to Westminster sovereignty. Devlin had been an eminent Parliamentarian before the Great War. He had recruited actively for the British Army during the War. And now he returned to Westminster and demanded that Parliament should apply its mind to the rejection of Westminster sovereignty by the Irish democracy.

And the Westminster Parliament—the first ever democratic Parliament at Westminster—just ignored him, and ignored the Irish vote. It authorised its Government to carry on governing an Ireland that had rejected it.

The Whitehall Government took no notice of the Dail for a couple of months, treating it as a trivial affair that could do nothing. But when the Dail purposefully set about governing the country, the British democracy declared it to be illegal and set about suppressing it. And so there was war between the elected and the unelected Governments in Ireland.

In British law that Dail was, of course, an illegal assembly. But Irish independence was something that there was no legal way of achieving on British terms. The British Constitution ruled Irish independence off the agenda. The Union Act of 1800 decreed that the Union should continue, not for a mere thousand years, but for ever. And the British Prime Minister cited the obligation of that eternal provision in support of the Black and Tan terror by means of which he sought not only to suppress the Dail but to break the will to independence in Ireland.

The *Irish Times* caption about the Black & Tans giving republicans (i.e., the Irish, since it is not said that the man in the photo was a republican in any other sense) a taste of their own medicine would have been normal for that paper (the British paper in Ireland) ninety years ago. Forty years ago it would not have dared to put it like that. But now it feels confident about reverting to the mode of 1921.

Professor O’Halpin, a descendant of rebels who oriented himself on British legitimacy in Ireland before returning to be a Trinity Professor, concludes his article thus:

“It is not the drunkenness or the temporary madness but the enduring sanity and balance of most of those who fought and killed during the War of Independence—Black and Tan, Auxiliary, RIC, military, Special Constabulary, loyalist, as much as the IRA—that historians need to comprehend.”

The fracas of 1919-21 should be regarded as a faction-fight, after which both sides went home and were fine fellows and saw that the others were fine fellows too and that it had been a great scrap.

There is a lot of sense in that. We don’t deny it. Indeed we

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think the principle of it could be much more widely applied.

Of course it requires a setting aside of the consideration that one lot were acting as agents of the democratically elected Government in the country, while the other lot had the job of suppressing the elected Government as agents of a Government elected elsewhere.

Professor O’Halpin sets aside democracy as not being relevant to the matter. We could go some distance with him on that road too. It is a realistic approach to the reality of things in the world today. But it should not be applied furtively and with prejudice.

The British Parliament became a democratic body in 1918, under the 1918 Reform Act, but that fact made no difference to its handling of the Irish question.

Democracy is a form of State, and the State is prior to its democratisation and gives the democracy much of its character.

We know of no clear case in which it could be said that democracy was somehow prior to the State. We think it probable that the Dail elected in 1918 would have conducted viable government long-term if the British democracy had not been determined to destroy it. The United States and Israel may present a false appearance of having been, in some sense, democratic from the outset, but both were aggressive colonial movements intent on the conquest, destruction, or displacement of existing populations in the territories they saw it as their destiny to rule, and the process of conquest meant they had to hang together in a kind of rude egalitarianism.

On the whole, however, it is clear that States are not formed by democracy, but that some States shape themselves into political forms that we call democracy. But what we call democracy is far removed from Lincoln’s famous definition: *government of the people for the people by the people*.

The British State became what we call a democracy in 1918. In 1917 the British Prime Minister (the radical Liberal, Lloyd George, who headed a predominantly Unionist Government), said:

“The whole state of society is more or less a molten mass and you can stamp upon that molten mass almost anything as long as you do it with firmness and determination” (quoted from *Contesting Democracy* by Jan-Werner Mueller, Yale 2011).

About 90 years later another British Prime Minister compared the world to a kaleidoscope that had been shaken, providing Britain with another opportunity for hyper-active intervention to ensure that the pieces fell to its advantage.

Judging by the conduct, rather than the propagandist ideology, of the major democratic states, one must come to the conclusion that democracy is incompatible with peace in the world. The great democratic Powers are the great war-making Powers. It seems as if these Powers are driven by an internal need to find external enemies to destroy. While the underlying reason may be a simple pursuit of ever-greater power, that drive for power has produced a need in the internal culture of those states to be always discovering enemies to destroy.

Irish democracy is so much in earnest about peace that it doesn’t even have an Army capable of fighting a war. It has become the fashion in the Great Power democracies to call their Armies *Defence Forces*, even though they are all shaped for the

fighting of aggressive wars. But Ireland has a Defence Force with a negligible capacity for defence against the only possible aggressor. It must therefore be judged not to be serious about peace in a world in which war is now generally accepted, *de facto*, as being the normal condition.

Contrast this with Switzerland, which shows that it is entirely in earnest about peace by being well prepared for defensive warfare. The purpose of the Swiss Army is not to impose Swiss hegemony over any neighbouring part of the world and call it peace, but to prevent the world from intruding its militarist business on Switzerland. Its great battles are the ones it did not fight. The last one was the retreat of the German Army from Italy in 1944-45, which did not attempt to go through Switzerland.

Ireland lives, without a proper Army, in a militaristic world. The reasonable expectation of a world without war was dispelled long ago. It went with the demise of the League of Nations. The United Nations was from the start a body based on Great Power dominance in a world in which war was certain.

Ireland has been living in denial about the militarist reality of the world. It lives in the shadow of the most militarist Power in Europe, and as an open society with scarcely a press of its own, it is subject to the play of the militarist culture of the world. Militarist impulses which are generated within it by the Anglo-American culture of war find no internal means of expression in the absence of any serious internal military capacity in the structure of the State, and under the irrational need to dissociate from the war that was fought successfully in the North. In these circumstances it is not surprising that British militarism is exerting an increasing gravitational pull on society.

The last Irish military event of any real consequence was the assertion of neutrality during World War 2, in the face of Churchill’s denial that Ireland had a right to be neutral when the King declared war. Britain did not avail of the right asserted by its famous war leader to use Ireland as a base of operations because British agents reported that the Irish, though lacking serious armaments, had a will to fight. In the present condition of national demoralisation, that strong assertion of neutrality has become an embarrassment to be explained away or condemned. And a fairy-tale British version of the War has become the standard view.

If Ireland had a worthwhile national intelligentsia which looked at that War from the viewpoint of the actual Irish neutrality of the time, there would be Irish histories of the War showing the bizarre diplomacy by which Britain brought it about; Britain’s irresponsibility in encouraging the Poles to refuse negotiation over Danzig by promising a military alliance, and then refusing to deliver on the promise; the mad attempt to get into war with Russia after declaring war on Germany, leaving Germany to respond to the declaration of war on it by Britain and France at its own convenience; the refusal of Britain to negotiate a settlement after it had vacated the battlefield leaving France to fend for itself, and then denouncing it for doing so, etc., until the war ends with the Soviet Union, which Churchill had never ceased to view as the main enemy, in possession of half of Europe.

The Jewish question, which present-day propaganda presents as having been a central issue in the War, hardly figured at all in the actual conduct of the War. Indeed, until the Final Solution became evident, the British position was that, after the War, European Jewry would need to be held in check by a quota system limiting their access to various institutions and professions.

During the ten years after 1945—when one would expect the moral zeal of the crusade against Fascism to be at its peak, if that had been what the war was about—Britain and France each fought two very dirty wars: the British in Malaya and Kenya, the French in Algeria and Indochina.

There has recently been some tut-tutting about contemporaneous US interrogation techniques, but the issue is only one of hypocrisy. The Americans defend torture; the British do it and deny it self-righteously.

On the day when a leader of the Libyan rebellion let it be known that he had been renditioned by the USA to Colonel Gaddafi to be tortured, BBC2 carried a brief discussion about rendition and torture between Menzies Campbell, former leader of the Liberal Democrats, and Michael Sheuer, former Osama Bin Laden Unit chief in the CIA:

Campbell: “As far as I am concerned rendition is illegal. It’s illegal in international law and it’s almost certainly illegal in the domestic law of the countries in which it is practised. And if you accept that rendition is a legitimate means of conducting the campaign against terrorism, then you’ve given away an enormous amount of your moral authority.

Interviewer: Michael Sheuer, a brief response to that: you lose your moral authority by doing so.

Sheuer: The moral high ground is where you can shoot your gun straightest from. I wouldn’t worry about international law for a second if I was in charge of protecting the US.

Campbell (Laughs)

When the job was done in Malaya and Kenya, the British torturers came home to Britain and lived normal, decent lives with their wives and families in the Cotswolds, and no doubt in Wicklow. Just like the Black and Tans. We don’t disagree with Professor O’Halpin. These professional brutes are very nice people if you get to know them as friends or neighbours.

But what should you do if you meet them in their professional capacity, and survive? Put it down to experience? Understand your little problem in the larger scheme of things? See yourself in perspective?

The practices in which Britain engaged in its wars in Malaya and Kenya were of a kind with the practices which are presented as Fascist in the entertainment/propaganda which has been the standard fare of British television for two generations. But that fact does not devalue the impact of feature films and documentaries about the “*Anti-Fascist War*” because the British actions in Malaya and Kenya, and the French actions in Algeria and Indochina, are never the subject of feature films and are the subject of mild documentaries only once in a blue moon. That is how democratic culture—the culture of a democratic state—conducts itself.

Eleven years after defeating Fascism, and after fighting two wars by methods which it is reasonable to describe as Fascist—using the term as it is used in British entertainment/propaganda about the Anti-Fascist War—Britain went to war against Fascism again. In 1956, in alliance with France and with the triumphant and triumphalist Jewish colony in Palestine, Britain invaded Egypt.

The Suez invasion was a fiasco. It had to be aborted when the USA, which was still in Anti-Imperial mode, threatened to wreck the British economy with its financial power if the invasion was persisted with. And Britannia had emerged from its two World

Wars, fought within a period of thirty-one years, as the kept woman of the USA.

The Suez fiasco is usually taken to mark the effective end of the British Empire. But the Prime Minister who launched the invasion, Anthony Eden, never apologised for it. In fact he claimed that it had been successful in its main object, which was to stop the spread of Nasserite Fascism across North Africa and the Middle East. Nasserism, he said, never regained its impetus after the shock of the invasion.

Now Eden had some credentials as an Anti-Fascist—much better credentials than Churchill. He had given the matter some thought in the 1930s. He had not come to a vision of the evil of Fascism overnight on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1939, having previously been something of an admirer of it, as was the case with so many Anti-Fascists of the war period.

But Eden, because of his Anti-Fascist credentials, misjudged the significance of Fascism. The World War was a war on Germany, not a war on Fascism. Fascism was incidentally involved because it was through Fascism that Germany broke the shackles of the Versailles Treaty and regained its independence and its strength.

Churchill was an open supporter of Fascism as the force that saved Europe from Communism in the chaos that followed the Great War. In the late twenties, when he was a senior Cabinet Minister, he went to Rome to praise Mussolini. In the early thirties he wrote that he hoped that, if Britain was ever reduced to the shambles to which the Great War victors had reduced Germany, he hoped a leader like Hitler would arise to restore it to independence and power. (It is not hard to guess who he had in mind!)

But, when Hitler restored German independence and power (which he did with the active assistance of the British Government from 1933 to 1938), he also restored it to the status of Britain’s enemy. The balance-of-power strategy, by means of which Britain manipulated European affairs, decreed that the strongest power in Europe was, by virtue simply of being the strongest, Britain’s enemy.

Fascism, though it came to play a dominant part in the propaganda of the War, after an outcome favourable to Britain came to depend on a Communist defeat of Nazism, was incidental to the genesis of the War.

Fascist Spain was not threatened with Anti-Fascist invasion during or after the War. And, if Fascist Spain had not maintained an armed neutrality, but had allied itself with Germany in order to take Gibraltar, Britain would have been disabled by being cut off from the Mediterranean, and it is a virtual certainty that it would have grabbed at the terms of settlement offered by Hitler.

But Eden, being himself Anti-Fascist, succumbed to the illusion that the War on Germany was essentially a War on Fascism, and that it was therefore in order to make war on a state just because it was Fascist.

There is no strict and generally agreed definition of Fascism. But, using the term loosely—as it is used—Eden’s characterisation of Nasserism as Fascism was not absurd.

Egypt, while being nominally independent, had been governed by Britain by one means or another since the 1880s. In 1952 a group of officers overthrew the monarchy installed by Britain, declared the state a republic, and then cast around for a political system. The organising of a continuous liberation movement was tried to begin with. Then it was attempted to organise the Liberationist mass movement into a party. After that, a multi-

party system was experimented with. All of these gave rise to difficulties within the actual State, which was the officer corps of the Army. So the parties were suppressed in order to preserve the cohesion of the state, and politics came to centre on the person of Nasser, the Army man with what came to be called charisma.

Nasser established Egypt in a position of independence between the two blocs of the Cold War, and this was at variance with the plans of the Western Powers for the Middle East, which aimed at control by the West through a regional body which was no more than a Western façade. Nasser's policy was for friendly relations with both blocs. When it became clear that this was the actual position of Egypt, Western aid for a dam-building project that had actually begun was cut off. To make good the loss, Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal Company. That was the reason why Britain organised the invasion with France and Israel, describing the Egyptian State as Fascist for the purpose.

The US sabotaged the invasion. The invasion forces withdrew and Nasser survived. The pedantic scrutiny of new states to see if they were Fascist lapsed. So long as states did not touch a raw nerve of the Great Powers by calling themselves Fascist—and thereby devaluing the World War ideology of the Powers—they might organise themselves in ways that it would not be unreasonable to describe as Fascist. The word, not the thing, was what was unacceptable.

It was not surprising that the Egyptian State failed to establish a functional multi-party political system for itself and make itself what we call a democracy.

The party-system of representative government, which is what we call a democracy when the voting system is extended to the entire adult population, was not established according to a plan or principle. It originated with the small British ruling class of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was consolidated as fact between the 1720s and the 1740s, but it was not until much later that it was accepted as being a good thing, or at least a necessary thing. And, for a very long time after it was accepted as being a good thing in principle, the great majority of the population had no voting rights in it.

The principle that the Government should be established through a voting contest between a couple of parties was first asserted in the 1760s. The electorate consisted at that time only of the ruling class and its hangers-on. That continued to be the case until 1832, when the electorate was greatly increased, on the basis of a high property franchise, but still remained a very small fraction of the whole population. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a majority of men had the vote but no women. It was only in 1918 that a majority of the population got the vote.

During the century and a half before the 1832 Reform the two parties, Whigs and Tories, were parties of the ruling class. The term *ruling class* then meant something different from just controlling the central Government. There was then very little in the way of a bureaucratic apparatus of State within England. The aristocrat and gentleman ruled in their localities whether their party won or lost the election. The major apparatus of State was the Navy, whose business was conquering the world.

Until 1832 the parties were groups of ruling families. After 1832 membership organisations were formed under the tutelage of the ruling families, and the extension of voting continued over the next 80 years.

The party difference grew up within a strongly collective ruling class, which had embarked on the great enterprise of ruling the world. The interests of the two parties were identical for the

most part, their points of difference marginal, and the loss of an election was therefore no great matter.

That is how what we call a *democracy* evolved. It is said that the ancient Greeks invented democracy, but they would not have recognised *this* as democracy.

In the fully-fledged form of this kind of democracy there are great sham battles between two or three parties, which denounce each other in extravagant terms, and seem to mean it—but they then proceed to act as if they understood very well that very little depended on who won the election.

This political system is something that developed historically, not something constructed according to a principle of political science. While it was happening there was no Super-power supervising and ordering it to do this or do that. But, in its fully-fledged imperialist form, it presents this system—not as an artificial historically-evolved system—but as a natural or scientific arrangement capable of being instantly implemented anywhere, and it considers itself entitled to invade any States which do not have it.

Winston Churchill, who did not quite approve of total democracy but had to live with it after the 1918 Reform Act if he was to have a political future, reflected in the early 1920s about the limits of parliamentary democracy. He did not think it was functional if there was a fundamental difference between the political parties. The established system of Tories and Liberals had broken up under the stress of the Great War and a new party, apparently representing organized labour, had suddenly become the second party of the state. The issue was whether Labour could be drawn into the existing system, or there would be a fundamental conflict between Labour and Capital which the system could not cope with. Crisis was warded off by members of the disintegrating Liberal Party joining Labour with the purpose of taming it, but an implicit antagonism remained all through the 1920s and 1930s. This antagonism was resolved under cover of the Second World War, during which General Elections were suspended, and a minority Labour party took control of domestic policy from the demoralized Tory Party in a War Coalition while Churchill concentrated on the foreign policy of the War. The foundations of the post-War welfare state were laid during the War while electoral politics was suspended. After the War the Tories had to accept the welfare state arrangements as an accomplished fact and the superficial display of fierce political antagonism was resumed within a system that both parties supported. The rule seemed to be that, the less were the real differences between the two parties, the greater was the display of vituperative antagonism that was not only safely allowed but that was needed so that the parties could be distinguished from each other.

It must be evident that this system is unlikely to be functional in countries whose states have been destroyed by democratic imperialist action, where there are no long-established routines, and where differences are real and basic. Some of these situations will be considered in a future issue. Meanwhile let us moderate our totalitarian enthusiasm for the democratic pretensions of globalist capitalism and, like E.M. Forster, give only Two Cheers For Democracy. □

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# The Two Europes

by Jack Lane

The Editor of the *Irish Times* got his knickers in a twist (proverbially speaking) over 'Europe' when commenting on the decision of the German Constitutional Court on Germany's participation in the Greek and other bailouts. He said:

"The rationale of the ruling is straightforward—any decision imposing potential financial risk on German taxpayers will require a Parliamentary mandate. "No permanent structure based on international treaty," the Court ruled, "can be created that is based on accepting liability for the decisions of other states, particularly when they are linked to an incalculable risk." (8 September 2011).

A most reasonable position, one might think. The holding of a national government to account by a national Parliament is a keystone of democracy according to all the textbooks that I have read. However, the *Irish Times* has doubts about the virtue of this in this instance. It goes on:

"The ruling will understandably be seen by markets as adding to uncertainty about the euro group's ability to take prompt decisions on assistance to member states, not least because some of the 16 other states may also decide to follow suit in strengthening their own Parliamentary accountability."

Eh! There is a danger that others might copy this democratic accountability, it might catch on! What's going on here?

He explains:

"The prospect of decision-making being trapped in a gridlock of national legislative mechanisms is troubling and does not bode well for any other strengthening of collective economic governance coming down the tracks as part of the EU's response to the present economic mess."

Democratic accountability suddenly becomes a 'gridlock' and a 'trap', i.e., the normal democratic procedures that we all praise and love and we even go to war for same. Checks and balances are accepted as an integral part of democracy. But they now become a 'gridlock' when it comes to dealing with collective governance in Europe. Democracy must be rationed in this situation. The argument presented here is what every dictator that ever lived has used—why do people have to be convinced that what I am doing is right at every step of the way when I know what's right for them!

And then we are told:

"There is a real democratic deficit at the heart of the euro project that needs to be addressed, and the ruling does have a certain illusory appeal in that regard."

So if the Court's ruling that is based on national governments being accountable to their Parliaments is illusory as regards the 'democratic deficit', what is a better alternative?

"But the Court's defence of German national rights, specifically its veto, reinforces the inter-state, intergovernmental character of the euro rather than its European dimension."

The intergovernmental method is now *the* character and method of dealing with the Euro—the single most important issue facing the members of the EU. There is no other dimension involved. The main players have been making that perfectly clear for months and months. We have two Europes, the EU one and the Intergovernmental one for the Euro... And in this intergovernmental arrangement nation states are primary and their government's needs are each government's priority. Any other 'Europe' is for the birds.

"Far better," the Editor says "although clearly impossible for a German court, to have addressed the democratic issue by giving the European Parliament, representing EU citizens collectively, a say in such decisions."

So, all the elected governments of the Eurozone should consider sharing power about a crucial matter like the Euro with a collection of Parliamentarians who have never run anything and are not elected to run anything and whose 'citizens' turn out in less and less numbers to vote for them. No gridlock problems here, apparently! And if there cannot be agreement between the two—the elected governments and the elected Parliament—who then decides? Who has ultimate responsibility? There is hardly a need to ask. The European Parliament would then be seen for the parody of a Parliament that it is. The only real achievement of this Parliament, led by Pat Cox, was to destroy the Commission and hence *the* essential mechanism for developing a European Union.

The Commission/Commissioners are not directly elected, any more than any Government Minister is directly elected as a Minister, or any more than any ambassador is, any judge is elected, etc., etc. Yet their democratic credentials are never queried because they are appointed by elected governments, just as Commissioners are. Yet the EU was always pilloried as having a democratic deficit because of this. The Commission was a unique, ademocratic, body set up to create a new polity. This new polity could not be simply voted into existence as people cannot vote for something that does not yet exist. The Commission had to establish its authority by its sheer ability to initiate policies and get them accepted across Europe, which would eventually make the new Europe a social reality on the ground. That development is now a sideshow and no longer central chiefly because of the Parliament's achievements under Cox.

In the interview published elsewhere in this issue, Jacques Delors expresses the spirit of the Commission at its best. But the spirit is no good without the substance and the substance is gone. Delors clearly finds this difficult to accept but it is a fact nonetheless. He should take to heart the story of Humpty Dumpty. If a political structure 'has a great fall' and gets smashed up it cannot be put together again especially when another structure has taken its place on the wall—in opposition to it!

The Editor continues:

"If we say to ourselves that we need more Europe, a stronger, better Europe in the future," Dr Merkel told the Bundestag, "then changes to the treaty should not be taboo, to ensure the rules are binding." That, however, will remain taboo in Dublin."

(Continued p20)

# The Assassination of John F. Kennedy

by John Martin

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1963 President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. The evidence against the chief suspect Lee Harvey Oswald was overwhelming. Witnesses saw shots being fired from the sixth storey of the Texas School Depository Building where Oswald was employed. A Mannlicher-Carcano rifle was found on this floor. The bullet that hit the President and Governor Connally was traced to the rifle “to the exclusion of all other weapons”. The rifle was purchased in the name of A. Hidell, a pseudonym used by Oswald. Handwriting on the purchase order was identified as Oswald’s. Oswald’s palm print was found on the rifle. Witnesses saw Oswald carry a package that could fit a disassembled Mannlicher-Carcano. When asked about it by a fellow employee, he said the package contained curtain rods. But no curtain rods were ever found after the assassination and an empty package was found near the rifle with Oswald’s fingerprint and palm print.

About three quarters of an hour after the President was shot a Dallas Police Officer, J.D. Tippit was murdered. Two people saw Oswald shoot Tippit. Numerous witnesses saw Oswald fleeing the scene of the crime. 0.38 calibre shells found near the fatally wounded policeman were traced, “to the exclusion of all other weapons”, to the gun that Oswald was carrying when he was arrested a short time afterwards.

It would be difficult to conceive of a more clear-cut case. Of course, Oswald’s guilt does not preclude the possibility of a conspiracy. A year after the assassination, the Warren Commission found that there was no evidence of this. However in 1978 the House Select Committee on Assassinations disagreed. The sole basis for this disagreement was acoustic evidence from a police recording device. A scientific analysis of the recording suggested that 3 shots were fired from the Texas school depository behind the President and there was a 95% probability that one shot was fired from the famous “grassy knoll” area to the front right of the President. None of the shots were audible on the recording so the Committee had to rely on expert evidence. Since the autopsy report on the President indicated that the bullet wounds were from behind and above the President (i.e. in the general area of the sixth storey of the Texas School Depository Building) the HSCA could only conclude that the grassy knoll shot had missed.

In the years after 1978 the acoustic evidence has been discredited. Since there was no credible corroborating evidence to support this piece of evidence the theory of a second gunman has collapsed like a house of cards. After nearly a half a century the Warren Commission view still stands: that three shots were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald; one missed (most likely the first shot); a second hit Kennedy, passed through his throat and then hit Governor Connally; and a third bullet was the fatal head shot.

However, even though the evidence points to a sole gunman this does not rule out a conspiracy. It is possible that Oswald received help and encouragement prior to the assassination. But

it has to be said that if there was a conspiracy it was a little haphazard. Firstly, the weapon used was a Second World War Italian rifle, not the most modern of firearms. Secondly, the escape plan was disorganised. After leaving the building he hopped on a bus which took him back in the direction he had come from (i.e. towards the Texas School Depository). The bus stalled in traffic caused by the chaos following the assassination, so Oswald had to leave it and take a taxi home.

If there was a conspiracy it is more than a little surprising that the attempted escape was so shambolic. The co-conspirators would have risked exposure if Oswald was caught alive.

On the eve of the assassination Oswald left his estranged Russian wife his wedding ring. It seems as if he did not expect to see her again. Escape was the last thing on his mind.

Two days after Oswald was arrested he was shot by Jack Ruby. Was Ruby trying to prevent Oswald talking? And what could Oswald have revealed? Ruby ran a strip club. Inevitably in such a business he would have had connections with the mafia. At that time the mafia controlled the strippers’ union. He seems to have been in constant contact with “Union” Officials complaining that rival strip clubs were undercutting him by not using unionised labour! However, that appears to have been the extent of Ruby’s underworld connections. Ruby was an unstable character given to violent fits of temper. He was the very last person that the Mafia would consider using for a “hit”.

He also seems to have had a childish admiration for the police and tried to ingratiate himself to them, partly for business reasons. But the police seemed to have regarded him as a harmless buffoon. One police officer said at the HSCA hearing that if the Mafia had employed Ruby its personnel director should be fired.

But let’s assume it was a Mafia hit. What was the motive? If it was to silence Oswald, how could the silence of the garrulous Ruby be guaranteed? The idea does not make sense. Ruby died of cancer in 1967. So he had four years to spill the beans.

The movements of Ruby before the killing of Oswald don’t suggest a cold blooded, calculating assassin. On the morning (24/11/63) that he killed Oswald, Ruby was attending to routine business. The Western Union Office recorded that Ruby wired some money to one of his employees at precisely 11.17 a.m. He then walked to the Dallas police station which was nearby and entered through the basement. It was at precisely this moment that Oswald was being transferred from the station to the County Jail. The window of opportunity for killing Oswald was very narrow and it was by a sheer fluke that Ruby managed to slip through.

The murder has the hallmarks of an impromptu act. The police had announced the previous day that Oswald would be transferred some time after 10.00 a.m. Anthony Summers in his book



*Conspiracy: Who killed President Kennedy* (1980) thinks that the very fact that Ruby “knew” the precise time of the transfer meant that he must have had inside knowledge. But nobody knew precisely when the questioning of Oswald prior to his transfer would be completed.

At first sight it might seem implausible that two “lone nuts” committed a murder within such a short period of time. But in the immediate aftermath of the assassination the United States was seized with a sense of grief. It doesn’t seem too far fetched to suggest that such an emotional atmosphere might have affected someone like Ruby who had access to the police station and carried a gun as a matter of routine. Ruby actually thought that he would be hailed as a hero. Indeed he received telegrams from all over the world congratulating him on his act. But, of course, he had completely undermined the investigation of Oswald as well as giving the Dallas police force a Keystone Cops image because of its failure to protect the chief suspect.

It might also be said that if there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy (through Oswald) and a conspiracy to cover it up (through Ruby) the pay rates were not very good. Oswald lived on the poverty line and Ruby was permanently on the verge of bankruptcy.

There the matter might have been allowed to rest if it were not for the enigmatic personality of Lee Harvey Oswald. Norman Mailer said of him:

“. . . Oswald was a secret agent. There is no doubt about that. The only matter unsettled is whether he was working for any service larger than the power centres in the privacy of his mind. At the least, we can be certain he was spying on the world in order to report to himself. For, by his own measure, he [was] one of the principalities of the universe.” (*Oswald’s Tale: An American Mystery*, 1995)

In his teens Oswald developed an interest in Marxism as a result of publicity surrounding the Rosenberg trial. However he joined the Marines, which suggests that his Marxism was not that profound. Edward Epstein in his book *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald* (1978) thinks that Oswald may have been spying for the Russians when he was based in Japan. This author claims that Oswald had access to confidential information concerning America’s U2 spy plane and that he seemed to be living a lifestyle and socialising in a milieu above what would be expected of a marine with the rank of private. Also some of the women he had been seeing were considered way out of his league.

In October 1959—the month of his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday—he left the Marines without being completely discharged and departed for the Soviet Union via a boat from New York, then a plane from England to Finland and finally boarding a train to Moscow. The Soviets did not want to accept Oswald’s application for political asylum, but after his attempted suicide they relented. (This was not the first time that Oswald had resorted to self-harm to get his way. While in the Marines he shot himself in the arm in order to remain in Japan).

He was sent to Minsk where he worked in an electronics factory. He seems to have found Soviet life boring and in particular thought the factory lectures in Marxism were tedious:

further evidence of his superficial commitment to Marxism. He saw Marxism as a means to express his alienation from American society rather than having virtues in itself. In February 1961 he applied to return to the United States. And the following month he met Marina Prusakova. Following a whirlwind romance he married her in May 1961. It was not until June 1962, more than a year later, that the couple was allowed to leave the Soviet Union for the United States.

Edward Epstein in his book is suspicious of the relative ease with which both Oswald and his wife were allowed to enter the US. The word “Legend” in the title of Epstein’s book has a specific meaning in intelligence circles. It is a false profile given to a person to enable him to spy. In Epstein’s view Oswald was not who he claimed to be when he returned to the US but a Soviet spy. The evidence for this is pretty flimsy. In 1964 a Soviet defector called Yuri Nosenko claimed that the KGB had not handled Oswald; that the Soviet authorities thought he was nuts; and that his wife Marina had “anti Soviet tendencies”. According to Nosenko the Soviets were quite happy to see the back of them. Epstein gives some plausible evidence to suggest that Nosenko was not a genuine defector but a double agent whose object was to spread disinformation. However, it does not follow that because the Soviets wanted to convey a message to the CIA that that message was necessarily false.

The idea that Oswald could have been a Soviet agent when he returned to the US is preposterous. Firstly, and most obviously, Oswald was “damaged goods”. He had defected to the Soviet Union and had a dishonourable discharge from the Marines. Such a person was not likely to be given any access to information that would be useful to the Soviets. Secondly, Oswald did not behave like a Soviet agent when he returned to the US. He continued to subscribe to left wing publications and expand on his idiosyncratic version of Marxism to anyone who would listen.

If Oswald was—to use Norman Mailer’s memorable phrase—“working for any service larger than the power centres in the privacy of his mind”, could he have been a CIA agent? His political activities in the summer of 1963 have aroused suspicions. Oswald set up a branch of a pro Castro organisation called the *Fair Play for Cuba Committee* in New Orleans where he was then residing. Although he had correspondence with this group soon after he returned from the Soviet Union he was not active until the summer of 1963 and then only sporadically. Oswald, who was the only member of this branch, tried to infiltrate an anti Castro group. Shortly after this attempt he distributed pro Castro leaflets within a short distance of the anti Castro offices. This caused an altercation in the street, which resulted in the arrest of Oswald for disturbing the peace.

Proponents of the view that Oswald was working for the FBI or CIA believe that his activities in New Orleans were for the purposes of undermining support for pro Castro organisations. But this theory seems a little implausible for a number of reasons. Firstly, New Orleans was overwhelmingly anti Castro at the time. There was no pro Castro tendency to undermine. Secondly, he didn’t try to infiltrate any left wing groups or seek out such tendencies. His only contact with other members of the *Fair Play for Cuba Committee* was through correspondence with the head office in New York. Thirdly, as will be discussed later, it is not at all clear that he did undermine the *Fair Play for Cuba Committee* by his activities.

Edward Epstein's view that Oswald was trying to construct a left wing curriculum vitae for himself for the purpose of obtaining a visa for Cuba seems more likely. Oswald assiduously collected newspaper cuttings of his court appearance in New Orleans and presented them at the end of September 1963 to bemused officials of the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City. But while Epstein's theory is plausible, it undermines his overall thesis that Oswald was a Soviet spy. Why go to the trouble of constructing a left wing CV if you are already working for the Soviets?

There are a number of radio and television recordings of Oswald available on the internet. These date from his New Orleans political activities in August 1963. There is a two part radio interview conducted by William Stuckey who is hostile without being abusive to Oswald. Oswald is extremely impressive in his defence of Castro and a policy of non-intervention by the United States. It is very likely that any anti Castro activists listening to this would have been apoplectic. In part 2 of the interview, which seems to have been recorded on a different day, and was probably as a result of complaints by anti Castro elements, Oswald is confronted by an anti Castro Cuban (Carlos Bringuier) and a professional anti-communist (Ed Butler).

There is little pretence of balance and Oswald is ambushed with the accusation that from 1959 to 1962 he was in the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that this would have given most listeners pause for thought. Nevertheless, Oswald handled this devastating fact with some skill. Later when asked if he was a communist he replied that he was a Marxist but not a communist. He then gave examples of countries such as Britain, Ghana and Yugoslavia that had socialist elements, but were not necessarily communist. In the case of Britain he gave the example of socialised medicine as a socialist feature of Britain. The point he seems to be making is that a Marxist—in contrast to a communist—is not ideologically bound to a particular model or state. One could agree or disagree with Oswald on this point, but it must be admitted that it is quite a sophisticated political argument.

However, there is a famous photograph of Oswald, which suggests the opposite: that he was a political simpleton. The photograph shows him carrying a rifle in one hand and two left wing magazines: *The Worker*, which was a Communist Party or Pro Soviet publication; and *The Militant*, which was a Trotskyist or anti Soviet publication. Oswald seems to have been impervious to the profound ideological differences between the two publications.

Later in the radio discussion he makes the point that the American State distinguishes between the various political systems in the world. He gives as an example the subsidies amounting to over 100 million dollars, which the US gives to Yugoslavia. But this is a point that would not come naturally to a Marxist. It's a geo-political rather than a philosophical point. The competence of Oswald's media performance as well as its content gives the impression that he had been coached by someone working for the US State.

After the Second World War the CIA actively encouraged and sponsored independent Marxists and social democrats as a means of undermining the strong pro-Moscow communist parties in France and Italy. So although it is difficult to see how such a strategy might make sense in the United States, there was at least a precedent for such a policy. Also, Oswald was correct about

Yugoslavia. His sympathy for Communist Yugoslavia would not have been completely incompatible with US foreign policy at the time since Yugoslavia had left the Pro-Moscow Communist International in 1948. The US was trying to isolate the Soviet Union by encouraging division within the communist camp.

The mystery regarding Oswald's political influences is resolved by a reading of the Warren Commission testimonies; in particular the testimony of the enigmatic George de Mohrenschildt. De Mohrenschildt was born in 1911 in Russia. In 1922 following the revolution his aristocratic family emigrated to Poland. He served in the Polish Cavalry. In 1938 he arrived in the USA. Following the outbreak of war in 1939 Poland was carved up between the Soviet Union and Germany. Edward Epstein thinks that when the Polish State collapsed its former employees gravitated towards either the Soviet or German State. Given de Mohrenschildt's aristocratic Russian background it is more likely that he would have had German sympathies.

In his testimony to the Warren Commission de Mohrenschildt claimed to have worked for French intelligence during the war. However, it appears that the FBI suspected him of working for German intelligence. He was arrested for sketching a naval station in Texas. Edward Epstein says that de Mohrenschildt corresponded with the Japanese Prime Minister's son who was responsible for co-ordinating Japanese and German intelligence in America. These activities were an obstacle to obtaining US citizenship. They also might have made him vulnerable to US State influence after Germany lost the war.

Whatever about the murky world of espionage the handsome, aristocratic and charming de Mohrenschildt seems to have cut a dash in American high society. He became very friendly with the Bouvier family. The young Jacqueline—the future First Lady—used to call him "Uncle George".

After the war he became involved in oil exploration. This business took him all over the world. It is in the nature of this business that the exploration company must have a relationship with the State in which the exploration is done. That relationship in the case of American companies is mediated through the US State. Also the various arms of the US State would have been in a position to help win foreign contracts for American companies.

It is very clear that de Mohrenschildt had a close relationship with the CIA. Interestingly, given Oswald's radio interviews, de Mohrenschildt had visited Yugoslavia and Ghana. He told the Warren Commission that he was shot at when sketching some fortifications around Marshall Tito's villa (it seems that the Yugoslav communists were no more appreciative of de Mohrenschildt's artistic pursuits than the FBI!). When he returned to the USA in 1957 he was debriefed by the CIA.

De Mohrenschildt said at the Warren Commission that he voted Republican. Nevertheless Igor Voshinin (a member of the Russian community living in Dallas at the time) in his Warren Commission statement said that both de Mohrenschildt and his wife were pro-Yugoslavia. De Mohrenschildt also believed that a communist system might be suitable for undeveloped countries, a view which Oswald also expressed in his radio interviews.

De Mohrenschildt was one of the casualties of the fallout from the Kennedy assassination. He made a number of statements that were embarrassing to the CIA and would have as a consequence

damaged his business interests. Around the time he first met Oswald in the summer of 1962 he made contact with J. Walton Moore, who worked for the domestic contacts division of the CIA. He told the FBI that he asked Moore about Oswald. Moore, according to de Mohrenschildt, immediately replied without consulting his files that Oswald was a “harmless lunatic” (page 227, *Conspiracy: Who Killed President Kennedy*, 1980). Much has been made of this statement. It indicates that the CIA knew all about Oswald and that they had formed a spectacularly wrong assessment of his harmfulness. But it would have been amazing if a CIA agent based in Dallas was not aware of Oswald. It is doubtful that there were any other American born Dallas or Fort Worth residents who had returned from the Soviet Union. Secondly, Oswald had no violent convictions. So the assumption of his harmlessness was reasonable at the time.

A number of commentators have questioned the relationship between a wealthy and sophisticated individual in his early fifties such as de Mohrenschildt and a social misfit in his early twenties. There is no suggestion of a homosexual relationship. It seems likely that de Mohrenschildt was debriefing Oswald on behalf of the CIA. He encouraged Oswald to write down his memoirs with particular emphasis on his time in Minsk. However, it appears that there was much more to it than that. De Mohrenschildt and his wife appear to have grown quite fond of Oswald. George, in particular, enjoyed late night political discussions with him and regretted that his own children were not interested in such matters. The New Orleans radio interviews suggest that de Mohrenschildt had a quite profound influence on Oswald and Oswald, for his part, must have found it a very pleasant and novel experience to have his political views taken seriously.

The relationship with Oswald began in the summer of 1962 and lasted until April 1963 when a very significant event occurred. On the evening of 13/4/63 George and Jeanne de Mohrenschildt arrived unannounced at the Oswalds’ home with an Easter present for their child. While Marina was showing Jeanne around the apartment the latter noticed a rifle in one of the closets. Jeanne immediately remarked on this to her husband who asked, was Lee the person “who took a pot shot at General Walker”. This jocose comment referred to an unsuccessful assassination attempt a few days earlier on this very right wing Texan. It was also a reference to a conversation George, Lee and a German geologist called Volkmar Schmidt had at a party earlier that year in which Schmidt expressed the opinion that Walker was an American Hitler. George de Mohrenschildt noticed that Lee was highly embarrassed by this joke. Jeanne de Mohrenschildt by contrast denied that she noticed anything unusual in Oswald’s reaction. She said she asked what Oswald was doing with a rifle. Marina replied that he liked to shoot leaves in the park. In Jeanne de Mohrenschildt’s testimony to the Warren Commission she claimed that she didn’t think there was anything unusual about this explanation.

George de Mohrenschildt’s jocose comment was a case of “never a truer word spoken in jest”. After the assassination of Kennedy police found surveillance photos of the Walker residence among Oswald’s personal effects. Marina testified that Oswald was not at home the night of the Walker assassination attempt. Also, he left a note giving her instructions as to what she should do if he did not return that night. Ballistic evidence indicated that the bullet that missed Walker could have been fired from Oswald’s Mannlicher-Carcano. However, the damage done

to the bullet was such that experts could not exclude the possibility that it was fired from a similar weapon.

George Mohrenschildt’s evidence to the Warren Commission reads like that of a man who is wrestling with his conscience. On the one hand he says that the security services should have protected him and his wife from “even knowing” a man like Oswald and “they shouldn’t have let him come back to the United States”. On the other hand he thinks Oswald was innocent. The Warren Commission Counsel asked him about the rifle incident on 13/4/63. Remarkably, de Mohrenschildt was not asked if he mentioned this to any security service. Was the Warren Commission Counsel covering up for the CIA or was he saving de Mohrenschildt himself from embarrassment?

It is unlikely that de Mohrenschildt did inform his CIA handlers or any other state agency of his suspicions. If he had, he would have not been so insistent in subsequent years about Oswald’s innocence.

In April 1963 the de Mohrenschildts were preparing to leave Dallas and begin a new life in Haiti where George was involved in a long term geological project. Perhaps at the time they regarded the period in which they knew the Oswalds as an amusing interlude in their adventurous lives. They could not have known then that their fate had already been sealed and that they would never escape from their association with Lee Harvey Oswald.

After the assassination, George de Mohrenschildt’s business declined and he was ostracised by his wealthy friends. In particular, the Bouvier family was not sympathetic. The assassination also inflicted a heavy psychological toll on de Mohrenschildt.

It is sometimes the case that those people with only a peripheral involvement in a violent criminal act suffer the most psychological trauma. De Mohrenschildt cannot be held responsible for the assassination of Kennedy. But in his quiet moments he might have wondered what would have happened if he had behaved differently. What, for instance, would have happened if had contacted his CIA friend J. Walton Moore and suggested that the latter revisit the “harmless” part of his “harmless lunatic” description of Oswald. It might be said that it is not an honourable thing to inform on your friends. But if de Mohrenschildt had already been passing on information to the CIA on Oswald’s time in Minsk, what moral objection could there be to informing on Oswald’s recent violent inclinations? De Mohrenschildt’s friendship with the Bouvier family must have added bitterness to his inner turmoil.

But it seems that de Mohrenschildt dealt with these doubts by convincing himself that Oswald was innocent. The House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) published a manuscript that de Mohrenschildt had written entitled “I’m a patsy! I’m a patsy!” about his “dear, dear friend” Oswald. He is sympathetic to Oswald but has some unkind words to say about Jackie Kennedy:

“Jacqueline was not so beautiful. Especially, she was not beautiful inside when she married that gangster of international shipping Aristotle Onassis.”

In the 1970s Jeanne de Mohrenschildt committed her husband to a mental institution for three months suffering from severe depression. By 1977 it had all become too much. He had granted a series of four interviews to Edward Epstein, but never completed them. On the day that he received a summons to appear before the HSCA he put a gun to his head and shot himself.

It is difficult to accept that a social misfit such as Oswald could have killed the most powerful person in the United States. It is even more difficult to accept that he acted alone. And yet that is where a cold, dispassionate examination of the evidence leads. But it appears that a significant element within the American Left cannot set aside its emotional predilections and see the obvious. It views the world in terms of conspiracies perpetrated by an almost omnipotent elite against the passive, inert and impotent masses. The conspiracies can be benign or malign depending on the nature of the elite in question. A prime exponent of this worldview is the influential filmmaker Oliver Stone.

The Stone view of the world dictates that Kennedy's virtues must be embellished and if he made mistakes in the past (the Bay of Pigs) he had the *potential* to be the greatest President. Lyndon Johnson's Civil Rights record must be diminished in order to emphasise the loss to the world caused by Kennedy's assassination. And since the assassination was a catastrophe, it could only have been perpetrated by a malign elite. Stone's film *JFK* is a risible *pot pourri* of long debunked conspiracy theories. It is irrelevant that the conspiracies have no basis in reality. The ideological perspective cannot conceive of an individual acting independently of an elite.

There is no doubt that this perspective is disabling for any left wing development in the USA. One might find the Tea Party Movement repugnant, but it must be admitted that there has been no equivalent grassroots movement in recent times on the American Left.

Oswald was capable of independent action but there is less to him than meets the eye. Knowledge of the events of November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1963 tempts the reader to infuse his prior actions with a meaning that is not there. His defection to the Soviet Union and his political engagement distinguish him from other notorious killers. But in other respects there is a similar pattern. He never knew his father. His brother Robert has said that his mother considered her children, and particularly Lee, a burden. When he lived in New York as a child, a social worker discovered that he didn't attend school and spent all his time looking at television. From an early age he was alienated from society.

A remarkable feature of Oswald's personality was the unbalanced nature of his intellectual capacities. He had the ability to become fluent at Russian—a considerable intellectual achievement—and yet was barely able to write in English, possibly because of dyslexia. He was able to hold his own in a foreign policy debate on a New Orleans radio station but seemed to have no understanding of basic Marxist concepts or debates within the communist movement.

His political activity reflected his social isolation. It does not appear that he ever co-operated with anyone to achieve a political goal. His demonstration in New Orleans against American foreign policy consisted of just himself and a paid assistant. Al-

though his political activity in New Orleans was presented as being under the auspices of the *Fair Play for Cuba Committee* it does not seem that he ever submitted to that organisation's discipline or advice. His communication with it consisted of him telling them what he was going to do in its name. His inability to work with others has as its corollary that others would be unwilling to work with him. It is inconceivable that his putative conspirators: the CIA, the Mafia, the Soviets, the Cubans etc would have touched Oswald with the proverbial 30 foot barge pole.

The tragic story of Lee Harvey Oswald has its comic elements. His grand act of allegiance to the Soviet Union was met with sublime indifference by his communist hosts. He had to threaten suicide before he was allowed to stay in the Soviet Union. The United States treated his renunciation of citizenship with equal indifference and was happy to allow him to return when he grew tired of his Soviet sojourn. His brother Robert said that Lee was disappointed that there had been no reporters on his arrival at Dallas airport. The Cubans had no interest in his New Orleans heroics when he arrived at their embassy in Mexico City. His wife laughed at him when he said that he could become a senior official in the Cuban government or when he said that in the future he would be a "Prime Minister" of the USA. He couldn't provide for his children or his demanding and materialistic wife who was dependent on the charity of the virulently anti-communist Russian émigré community in Dallas.

Objectively, the assassination was a political act with political consequences. But the motivation was primarily psychological. When Oswald was caught he did not proclaim any political objective. On the contrary he denied having anything to do with the assassination. He did not want legal representation from Dallas but instead contacted John Abt, a New York lawyer who had represented defendants prosecuted under the Smith Act, which prohibited advocating the violent overthrow of the US government and was used against communists in the 1950s. It appears that Oswald wanted to present himself as an innocent victim who had been mistreated by a world whose most famous representative was John F. Kennedy.

On the eve of the assassination his separated wife refused to take him back. Perhaps the assassination was a vicarious suicide. By killing Kennedy, Oswald would bring finality to his own life. At last he would be taken seriously. It is said that nobody would have been more pleased about the thousands of books, articles and documentaries on the assassination than Lee Harvey Oswald himself. □

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## More Problems Facing Catholic Rulers: Desmond FitzGerald v De Valera on Spain

Manus O’Riordan

The article by Brendan Clifford on Desmond FitzGerald in the April 2011 issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, introducing the latter’s July 1939 article “Problems Facing Catholic Rulers”, was most enlightening in illustrating FitzGerald’s stature as a Fascist ideologue. Knowing that his son, former Fine Gael Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald, would have been excited by its republication, I was on the point of sending it to him, when news broke of the latter’s final illness. Following Garret’s death on 19 May, RTÉ re-showed an interview with him where he was asked about his father’s extreme right-wing politics, which he freely acknowledged, but then hastened to add that his father had condemned *Kristallnacht*, the Nazi German pogrom of 9 November 1938. It is only now that I have definitely established that Desmond FitzGerald had issued no such condemnation, but I must also put my hand up and blame my own faulty recall for misleading his son on that score.

Two decades ago, during the 1990s, I made a point of reading all the 1930s Oireachtas Debates—both Dáil and Seanad—on Irish foreign policy. I was indeed particularly interested in the Fine Gael Opposition contributions of Desmond FitzGerald, who had been a Cumann na nGaedheal Minister for External Affairs. Unfortunately, however, I took no notes whatsoever on the occasion of such reading. Since the late 1960s, when he lectured me on economic statistics at UCD, I had maintained a politically combative but personally friendly relationship with Garret FitzGerald. About a decade ago we had our one and only conversation about his father. We both knew and acknowledged that not alone had he been a Fascist ideologue, but he had also been a self-described anti-Semite. Garret worried that his father might therefore have been uncritically pro-Nazi. But I argued that the two previous elements did not necessarily add up and result in the third. Indeed, I told him that I seemed to recall reading, a decade previously, a statement from his father condemning *Kristallnacht*. He was much relieved and asked me to retrieve it for him, but I failed to find it. His father had lost his Dáil seat in the 1938 General Election, but had then been elected a Senator. I searched every Seanad Debate from November 1938 to 1943 for a FitzGerald condemnation of *Kristallnacht*, but there was none. It was only this September, when revisiting the February 1937 Dáil Debates on the Spanish Civil War, that I realised just how my faulty memory had played tricks on me. Desmond FitzGerald had attacked de Valera for criticising anti-Semitism in Germany, when not a single rabbi had (yet) been killed nor any synagogue burned, while Dev was remaining silent on the priests who were actually being killed and churches that were being burned in the Spanish Republic. I believed that the logic of such a FitzGerald statement would be for him to condemn *Kristallnacht* when it would occur 21 months later. But he did not. So it is I who am to blame for Garret FitzGerald having been too kind to his father’s memory in that regard.

Revisiting Desmond FitzGerald’s Dáil speech on Spain nonetheless underlines how it constituted the most intellectually vigorous one made from the Fine Gael side. But no less intellectually vigorous was the reply of Éamon de Valera, who held the

post of Minister for External Affairs, in addition to being President of the Irish Free State Executive. That debate is indeed worth re-visiting. The occasion was the enactment of the Spanish Civil War (Non-Intervention) Bill. In the debate on the Second Stage of the Bill, which commenced on 18 February 1937, there were two Fine Gael amendments. The first was from Professor John Marcus O’Sullivan, formerly Cumann na nGaedheal Minister for Education, demanding that the Dáil should decline to give a second reading to the Bill “*until the Government have broken off diplomatic relations with the Caballero Government in Spain*”. He argued:

“Here is a quotation from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance, Deputy Hugo Flinn. I take it from the Government organ—excuse me, the Fianna Fáil organ. At Gort, on Sunday, 2nd August, 1936, we had this contribution from the Government Benches:

‘Systems of Government in parts of Europe were in a state of flux. They had dictatorships in Russia, Italy and Germany, and at the present time in Spain the struggle was concerned with an attempt to change the system of Government. There was a struggle going on between Fascism and democracy. Fianna Fáil had no use for Fascism.’

I give that to the President as a gloss on his ‘isms’. According to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance, the struggle in Spain is a struggle between ‘isms’—between Fascism and democracy... I wish to make it quite clear from the start that I am convinced now, and have been convinced for months, that the civil war aspect is the less important aspect of that particular struggle. It is, if the President likes, a struggle between ‘isms’, between Communism and Religionism, I suppose it might be called. That is what it is essentially, and that is why we thought last November, and in the questions put to-day to the President, that he might avail of the opportunity given him to make clear, at least to the people of this country, and to any other people that may be interested in our views, what our attitude was towards this struggle between ‘isms’ in Spain. What is the Government’s policy as regards this struggle? ... When refusing our motion last November, the President said: ‘*Our line has been in accord with the general line taken by States in circumstances like these.*’ He knows well that there are two striking exceptions. How does he get over these exceptions? Germany and Italy have accorded recognition to Franco, according to the President, but they have accorded recognition from clear and immediate political motives.”

The second Fine Gael amendment was from Paddy Belton, leader of the Irish Christian Front—the mass pro-Franco support organisation—who demanded that the Bill should be denied a second reading “*until the Government has formally recognised the Franco Government in Spain*”. Belton argued:

“President de Valera can get up in this House and say that the fight in Spain is a fight between two ‘isms’, but the Cardinal Primate of Spain, a dignitary of the Catholic Church, the Church to which the President and I belong, and the Church, therefore, to

which we should give respect and credence, does not say that it is a fight between two *'isms'*. He says it is a fight between Christ and anti-Christ that was started and is being waged on Spanish soil. Does the President deny it? If he does, here is the pastoral written by the Cardinal Primate of Spain. Here is the original in Spanish with an endorsement to myself signed by the Cardinal himself in Pamplona. President de Valera, in substance and in fact, by his statement here to-night, has said in effect that the Cardinal Primate of Spain is a liar."

Dev was provoked to intervene and point out that what he had actually said was:

"I am anxious that we should play our part in trying to shorten this conflict in Spain by preventing the export of arms to the combatants and also by preventing recruitment for the various sides who are fighting out in Spain, a fight which, for most of them, at any rate, is not the sort of fight that we think it is, but is a fight for one *'ism'* against another."

The debate continued on the following day with the following contribution from James FitzGerald-Kenney, formerly the Cumann na nGaedheal Minister for Justice:

"Here you have got the fact that in this State there have been certain steps taken, certain sums of money have been collected in the churches and sent out to one side in Spain. Certain sums of money have been collected outside the churches by the Christian Front, and these moneys have been sent to Spain. A certain number of men have gone out from this country; and more are endeavouring to go out from this country. These men, with very insignificant exceptions, have all gone out to fight for General Franco and the Catholics. All the money that has been collected has been sent out. This Bill stops that... Precisely the same issue is being fought out in Spain now to save Christendom as was fought out in the times of the Crusades. What does this Bill do? It is designed to prevent persons from this country going out to fight on behalf of Christendom... There is no difference between the young Irishmen who at present go to fight for Christianity in Spain and the Crusaders who went from all over Europe to fight for Christianity in the Holy Land. There is no getting away from that. These are the plain, simple facts, and I wish the House would bear these facts in mind..."

The Fianna Fáil Minister for Education, Tom Derrig, responded:

"I would remind Deputy FitzGerald-Kenney, when he talks about the Crusades, that no doubt very many fine and splendid knights went to the Crusades, but that a great many of them began to fight for other things before they came back again, and a great many of them forgot the reasons for which they went there in the first instance. The Deputy has to go back a very long way in history. Surely there must be some period nearer than the Crusades to which he can point as an example of what would be the right thing for a small nation like ours to do in the present emergency. When the Opposition Party take on themselves the cloak of Christianity, and when Deputy McGilligan tells us that he speaks for the Irish Hierarchy, I am tempted to remind him that, during the Great War, one of the great nations which have now declared war on Communism, and which apparently is exercising its powers to the fullest possible extent to destroy Communism, not only within its own frontiers but wherever it may exist,

permitted Lenin and Trotsky, the two apostles of Communism, to enter Russia, and they subsequently created that State. The illustration may be of use in recalling to the House the fact that when great nations go to war, though they may hold the banner of Christianity very high, as they did in 1914, when some of the Irish newspapers that are telling us now what our duty is, on the ground of Christianity, were telling Irishmen and were largely responsible for Irishmen going out in thousands to fight for Christianity, for Catholic Belgium and the rest of it—am I not right, Sir, in recalling to the House and to the country that these great nations who talk a great deal, or who allow others to talk for them, when they are at war, about how they are out for Christianity, are a great deal apart from Christianity and that very little Christianity is in their ideas? They are out simply and solely for their own political interests, for the expansion of their territories, for the increase of their influence, and, generally speaking, getting their place in the sun... I have questioned the basis on which the alternative action recommended is suggested. We are told that there is something extraordinary about our having sent a diplomatic representative to the Government of Spain. It is even pretended that the representative, who is now on the borders of Spain, is accredited specifically to the Caballero Government. The experts in international procedure and international law, naturally, would not like that the country should be made to realise that our ambassador was sent in the first instance to the Government at Madrid in 1935. Is it the position that, every time there is a change of Government, the ambassador has to be withdrawn? The only possible position is the position to which the President has already agreed, that when an insurgent party are indisputably in control of the greater part of the territory of the country, have the support of the inhabitants, and are endeavouring to function as a Government in the usual manner, then the question of their recognition comes up. The precise moment may be a matter of opinion but, at any rate, international procedure, the procedure of diplomacy, is well recognised in this matter. That has always been the principle. None of the 27 nations represented on the Non-Intervention Committee have withdrawn their diplomatic representatives."

Desmond FitzGerald's substantial intervention included the following arguments, as he also sought to distance himself from some of the crudities of Belton's approach:

### **Desmond FitzGerald's intervention**

"Germany and Italy have withdrawn their representatives from the [Spanish Republic's] Valencia Government... It is clear to me since the present [Irish] Government came into power that their policy in external affairs has been, roughly, to be dragged at the tail of what I would call the pink liberalism of Europe... The Minister for Education indicated a doctrine which to me is appalling and nationally disgraceful. Towards the end he said that we are speaking on this matter, and taking the line we are taking on it, because a general election is coming on; that we have no policy and want to appear as the champions of Christianity. That is a dastardly and blackguardly statement and I will say nothing more about it. When we were the Government for ten years, never at any time in any statement to the world did we suggest that we as a Government represented Christianity, solely represented it, and that the opposition to us was opposition to Christianity or to Catholicism. That was never done. When this Government came into power, one of its first acts was that President de Valera got on the end of a wireless to announce to the whole world that now in this country we had a Christian Government set out to create

a Christian order, meaning that the Government which had gone out of office had not been such a Government, but that his was. That, of course, was a despicable thing to do. It was a subordination to ends, in that it was clearly, maliciously, without any charity, and with dishonesty, purporting to tell the world that it was incumbent upon a Catholic to support his Party, his venal Party, and that failure to give it support was itself something contrary to Catholicism... A movement has been started called the Christian Front. I will speak perfectly frankly. I think that what should have been done, but the attitude of the Government made it difficult, was that President de Valera and Deputy Cosgrave, representing the two big Parties in this country, should have been invited to participate in that. Because that was not done, I personally have had nothing to do with the Christian Front... What I am trying to do is to point out the absolute injustice of the remark made by the Minister who has just spoken. I merely wanted to point out that against one's own inclinations, rather than that there should be any suggestion that we were trying to subordinate the religious to the political motive, we have kept aloof..."

**"The doctrine of the Minister for Education is that we are like a sort of poor relation at a feast; that at the League of Nations or at any international committee our business is to go there and to keep our mouths shut; to be very thankful that we are given that very artificial honour of being there, to have no feelings in the matter, and to say "Yes" when the socialistic, pinkish, liberalistic statesmen of Europe decide what suits their interest. I remember that some time ago President de Valera made a speech which was applauded by all the Communistic, liberal, pinkish papers in Europe. If I remember rightly, he actually implied criticism of the Nazi Government in Germany and their treatment of Jews. In so far as the action of the Nazi Government in Germany towards Jews is unjust, I disclaim it and approve of what President de Valera said. But just notice. When it was a matter on that occasion of the pink liberals and Communists in Europe wanting an opportunity of hitting at Germany, they all applauded President de Valera and President de Valera was very quick to give what was required. In the case of Abyssinia there was the same position. A terrible Fascist enemy had to be denounced, and President de Valera was not merely a tacit assenter to the doctrine of sanctions [against Italy], but he was an active advocate of it. It was not a question of tacit assent. Now, in this case I have not heard—do not think I am in any way trying to justify or to draw the veil over any injustices that may have happened in Germany or making any plea for them—but I have not heard of the murder of any rabbi or the burning of any synagogue. I am not saying that the absence of these things means that justice was not outraged. On that occasion President de Valera felt it his duty—his soul could not keep quiet—to denounce what was happening in Germany. As far as Spain is concerned we have no such action...."** (my emphasis – MO'R)

"When we accredit a representative to a Government the Minister for Education says that that in no way implies that we approve of the policy of that Government. That is quite true. However, it implies one thing—it means that we recognise the Government as the moral person of that State; that we recognise that that Government exercises authority received from God which is binding on the conscience of the people of that country. That is what we are doing by sending an accredited representative

to the Caballero gang in Spain. What do we ask? We ask that we should cease to have an accredited representative there. As for the talk about his function being to assist our nationals there, he has not been in Spain, and does not propose going there, since it was dangerous to be there. I think he had left on holidays beforehand, but there was some member of the staff there who got out as quickly as possible. I cannot say if it was with the assistance of the British Government or not. Since that time the British representation that remained there, and that was not in such a hurry out of the place, has acted for our nationals. Consequently, I feel about the situation in Spain that it is an absolute scandal that we should have continued to have a representative with the so-called Government there. I cannot see any grounds why he should be there. That Government does not control the major part of Spain; it controls the smaller part, and it is not an elected Government—not that I put the enormous value on "elected" that the Government Party does. That Government does not exist for the promotion of the common good of the people in Spain. All intelligent judgment indicates clearly that if that side should win in Spain, instead of promoting good human life for the people it would institute an order or disorder which is absolutely contrary to what good human life requires. Therefore, on no ground whatever should we maintain a representative with that Government, or recognise it as an authority with binding force over the consciences of the Spanish people."

### **"That the right side should win"**

"This Bill proposes to extend the operation of the criminal code. It is a serious matter. To do that it requires to be justified. There has been no attempt to justify it. I am not misrepresenting the President, but he purports to know the secrets and the hearts of those gallant young men in Spain who are fighting for order, for a noble and an ancient Spanish tradition, who have risen up in arms in defence of that tradition; these splendid young men who wish to maintain the historic and the true religion of Spain, knowing that defeat means its overthrow. The President says that with most of those fighting in Spain it is only a matter of one 'ism' against another 'ism'. We have said that that is not true. If you like, it is the fight of Catholicism or Christianity against Atheism. The word 'ism' means a sort of creed which is contrary to right reason. When the President said that most of those fighting in Spain are fighting for one ideology that is contrary to right reason against another ideology that is contrary to right, he is perpetrating a diabolical libel on splendid young men who have risen to fight for things they hold dear. That is a thing I resent. Some of my own friends, distinguished Spaniards, have been killed or brutally murdered for standing for all that is admirable in the history of Spain. The President purports to know that they are only fighting for some 'ism'. The President says that the all-important thing is that this war in Spain should end quickly. That is not the all-important thing to me. The all-important thing to me is that the right side should win in Spain. I admit that in considering this we have to take into account contingent circumstances, and the argument that intervention brings the danger of the fight in Spain extending to Europe. One might argue as to whether it would be better to have the right side beaten in Spain rather than have the war spread to Europe. Personally, as one who recognises war in itself as an essential evil, knowing also that in certain circumstances there comes greater good from the right to resort to war, and knowing that on no account should we assist in the overthrow of religion, or the overthrow of truly human order, to be supplanted by order that is contrary to humanity, it seems to me

that an argument could be put up that, even if it meant the war extending beyond the realm of Spain, we might take certain action to bring about victory on the right side there. That is an argument to put up. What are the facts of the matter? The facts are that there was a movement to make Spain Communistic or Anarchist, and that that brought about the present situation..."

### **Liberal pink propaganda**

"It is a regrettable thing that in this country there has been, for years past, a general tendency to wander away after what I call the socialistic, liberal pink propaganda of Europe. When Dollfuss, as the legitimate authority in Austria, doing his duty by his people, took action against the machine-gun emplacements in Vienna, manned by the Socialists, I remember words in this House, from the Labour Party, I think, indicating strong disapproval of the crime of Dollfuss in governing and in putting down organised crime in his own country. A couple of years ago when the miners in the Asturias—because Catholics became members of the Spanish Government—rose up and dynamited and burned churches, the whole liberal Press of Europe made an outcry against the crime of the Spanish Government in taking action against those gentle dynamiters and murderers. But now, when those Asturians and their allies have done acts in Spain that really one can hardly bear to contemplate, when they have murdered, destroyed and outraged all over the country, we find there is not a word to be said against it. Every excuse that can be brought forward is made for them. Yet our own Government and our own President indicated strong disapproval of what was happening in Germany. As I say, I am not for one moment going to defend injustice in Germany or anywhere else. It was quite all right at that time to indicate disapproval, but now the best interests of our diplomacy require that he should pretend to be unaware of what is happening in Spain..."

"Also, I think the very person we are sending, by reason of his activities, to which I have referred before, is the wrong man to send. I have pointed out here before, and President de Valera took his usual shelter of drawing on his unlimited resources of virtuous indignation to dodge meeting the point, that there is every reason to believe that the man we are sending there has himself acted as a go-between in order to get assistance from the Russian Government through Russian agents in Italy. That is the man we are choosing, most appropriately, as one might say, to represent us to the so-called Government in Valencia... Ever since President de Valera came in I know myself—and I saw it in the officials, and I knew it in myself—that when you go into these international assemblies where these Liberal-Socialist-Communist pinks and reds are always ready to applaud splendid Christian sentiment—hatred of war, love of disarmament, objection to aggression and all the rest of it—a man who is guided solely by personal vanity will always try to win the applause of that crowd. For myself, I have nothing but contempt for it. I quite agree that what I stand for and what the Irish people stand for is something which is discordant with the general view of European statesmen, with the general point of view of the European Press, and, if you like, with the general point of view of the modern mind, but if this country has anything to distinguish it from other countries, it is only that it has inherited a tradition which has something of the eternal in it, that it does stand for things that transcend the mere superficial matters that occupy the minds of modern statesmen, that we have an order of values and that we recognise certain values as transcending infinitely other considerations..."

### **De Valera's reply**

De Valera's reply was made on the same day:

"I have no doubt whatever that the Irish people are as convinced as the Government is convinced that the best thing that could be done in the interests of the Spanish, and in the interest of the thing we hold dear, would be to let the Spanish people settle this matter for themselves. I, for one, have no doubt in what way they will settle it for themselves—none whatever. If I were a Spaniard speaking in Spain I would wish to see every single foreigner out of my country, because foreigners, when they come into a country as representatives of big Powers, have, as we know to our cost in this country, a knack of trying to stay there. I believe, therefore, that the best thing that could be done in the interests of Spain is to keep the foreigners out. When you read what the Cardinal Primate of Spain said about the origin of that war, and the immediate causes of it, you find that he talks of the foreign tyranny, because he is a Spaniard and he does not want the foreign tyranny there. I have no doubt whatever that if the Spanish people are left to themselves they will settle this question in the right way. It is for that reason that I am strongly in favour of the non-intervention policy, as I am also in favour of it from the point of view of what is the proper attitude for our country, considering that what we do other nations will do, and that the amount of assistance we can give is relatively small while the harm that could be done by the other countries is relatively great. Consequently, I think that our going into this matter would be bad for ourselves, bad for Europe and bad for Spain..."

"They (the Opposition) would like to have headings like this in the evening papers: *'The Government Accused of Sympathising with the Reds'*. They pretend to be anxious about the honour of our country, and the effect that our attitude will have on other peoples; and yet they have constantly, for two days now, tried to herald it to the world that this Government are Communist or in sympathy with Communists. They tried it before internally in this country; the Irish people saw through them, and the Irish people will see through them to-day as they saw through them then. I am asked what are my views. Where have I at any time, in any place, in public or in private, expressed any sympathy whatever with Communism? I have said in public that I detest Communism because I believe that it means the breaking up of the social order as we understand it. I have always said that I believe Communism did not accord with the nature of man—with man's ideals. I expressed those views years ago. I did not have to wait to express them now. I expressed those views then and now, and I believe in them. I also believe that Fascism, even if not equally bad, is bad. It is, perhaps, not equally bad, but it is a desperate alternative, and I hope that this country will be saved from having those alternatives as a choice. Everything we have done as a Government has been directed to seeing that this country would not have such a choice. Thank God that, so far, anyhow, we have been successful, and I believe that if the policy we stand for is continued there will be no stage at which this country will be faced with the alternatives that they have in Spain at the present moment."

### **The Non-Intervention committee**

"We have been honest in this matter. There has been nothing that the Government has done that it could not stand over everywhere. As members of the Non-Intervention Committee, anxious to get non-intervention adopted by all the States, we naturally had to do our utmost to take up a position which would enable us to be genuine advocates of non-intervention. If we start intervening, obviously there is no use in our asking other people



not to intervene. When the volunteers were going out from here I, for one, felt that it did to a certain extent damage our influence in getting the policy of non-intervention adopted. But other nations were doing it, and the agreement at that stage had not reached to volunteers. The agreement had only reached to war material. It is said, and I admit, that the agreement with regard to war material was not fully kept. To the extent to which it was not, we regret it. Any effort of ours was directed to press that it would be kept, and, in regard to this agreement in so far as volunteers are concerned, everything that we can do to see that it is kept we will do. One of the things that we must do, if we are going to press on other people to keep it, is to keep it ourselves, and that has been our attitude in regard to the position in the past..."

### **A fight between communism and fascism**

"I said:

'All the nations of Europe are represented on this Non-Intervention Committee. I am anxious that we should play our part in trying to shorten this conflict in Spain by preventing the export of arms to the combatants, and also by preventing recruitment to the various sides who are fighting out in Spain, a fight which, for most of them, at any rate, is not the sort of fight that we think it is, but is a fight for one 'ism' against another.'

Is there any Deputy so dull as to equate that statement to the statement which has been repeated here despite the fact that last night, the first moment it was uttered by a responsible Deputy on those benches opposite, Deputy O'Sullivan, when he tried to misrepresent this, I immediately said that what he said was not what I said. The first thing I did was to ask for the report. Here it is as it came in, and last night I read out that statement as I have read it out now. Yet, because it was good in order to misrepresent the attitude of the Government, it was used continually through to-day's debate. It was first used to show that it was my view that the fight in Spain was a fight for one 'ism' against another, and that was all there was to it. Later, it was used by Deputy FitzGerald—I was not in the House, but I was told it was used by him—to suggest that I thought the people who were fighting in Spain were fighting for one 'ism' against another. The plain meaning of that is opposed to either of these two views. It is clear to be seen that what I was referring to was the people whose recruitment from outside Spain was taking place—the people who come from Italy, the people who come from Germany, the people who come from Russia, and the people who come from France. Is there anybody in this House who denies that I was right when I said that if these people go into Spain, it is for 'isms' they go in, and there are very few of them who are going in, in my opinion, simply because it is a question of Christianity. I believe, and I do not care who contradicts me, that the majority of the recruits who went into Spain, whether they went from Italy, from Germany, from Russia, or from France, went in there to fight out a fight between Communism and Fascism..."

### **The Irish Representative in Spain**

"Back in 1935, long before the general election in Spain and the subsequent happenings which brought about the present civil war, it was proposed to us to enter into diplomatic relations, and we entered into diplomatic relations with the Spanish people, with the Spanish State, with the Spanish Republic. At that time the President, I think, was President Zamora. Everybody who has paid any attention to these matters and certainly anybody who has been Minister at any time knows, full well, that when diplomatic relations are entered into between two States, these diplomatic relations continue with changes of Government—sometimes

even with changes of régime. These relations continue with no new accreditation whatever... What is the position of the States of Europe to-day with regard to Spain? The fact is that they continue as we are continuing our diplomatic relations with the Spanish State, with the Spanish people. That means when a State is in a state of flux, and you are not sure where you are, you deal with the Party in power who can deal with your citizens. Practically all the States of Europe, with the exception of Germany and Italy, have followed that rule... Is anybody going to tell me that Germany or Italy changed except directly because of the fact that they wanted to have in Spain a régime that corresponded with their own? If we are going to do our best to get the policy of non-intervention accepted it is quite clear that we ought not to put ourselves out of court, so to speak, in advocating that course by taking a step of that kind. That is my answer in connection with our steps about the Non-Intervention Agreement. What have other States done? There are some exceptions. There are States who have representatives at the seat of government in Valencia, but the majority of the States in Europe have their diplomatic representatives at Hendaye in France, a place on French soil and in close proximity to the Spanish Border. They have their representatives there because of the fact that they wanted to be able to be in touch with the two Parties in Spain in order to safeguard whatever interests they had in that country—to safeguard any interests of their own nationals or any other interests they might have. Now what is the position of our representative? (Note: See [www.leopoldhkerney.com](http://www.leopoldhkerney.com) for Éamon Kerney's website on his father, Leopold H Kerney, Irish Minister to Spain 1935-46 – MO'R). Our representative was in Spain and got ill there some time about, I think, the 7th July. The revolution did not break out until about the 18th July. Our representative got seriously ill, and it is very mean for an ex-Minister for External Affairs [Desmond FitzGerald] to suggest that a man who is in that responsible position left that position in Madrid through cowardice. I was not here when that statement was indicated and I make full apologies to the ex-Minister for External Affairs if I am wrong, but it was suggested, I am told, that this representative of ours left his position in Madrid through cowardice. He had been ill and he left Madrid, because of illness, actually before the revolution broke out..."

The Fianna Fail Minister for Defence, Frank Aiken, interjected: "It was Deputy FitzGerald made it. I heard him..." Dev continued:

"I had not time to look the matter up. If I am wrong, I shall withdraw, but I want, as Minister for External Affairs, responsible for the Department, to say that no member of our Department was guilty of any such misconduct. As a matter of fact, our representative was extremely ill. He had to stay for a considerable time in Spain before he could be removed. He came to convalesce in this country and he was here from August. The office in Madrid was kept open to serve our nationals long after the time which we here thought was safe. It was kept open so long as it was at all possible to help our nationals. A short time ago, having convalesced—I think it was on the 29th January—our Minister left here. For what purpose? Because, in the Department of External Affairs, we got letters from heartbroken parents telling us that their children, who were under age, had left without their knowledge or consent to fight in Spain—some on one side and some on the other. They asked us if we could do anything to bring these people back. We sent our Minister to join the other representatives—in this case at St. Jean de Luz, as I told the House—to see

whether he could not establish contact with both sides and ascertain what could be done to bring those people, who were under age, back and get them released from any obligations they had entered into there. That is the ‘recognition’ and that is the act that has been misrepresented without a single question as to why it was done. An inquiry could have been made. A simple question could have been put to me as Minister for External Affairs any day as to why the Minister for Spain had gone back or if there was any reason why he should be going back at this time. He left this country on the 29th January—long before this agreement to prohibit recruiting was arrived at. When he was well and able to perform this work for our people, he was sent there to establish contact with the two sides. Deputies on the opposite bench know as well as I do what the usual procedure is and what the meaning is of representation and accreditation. Yet, they come along and deliberately misrepresent this action as a step by us, at this particular time, to indicate to the world and to the Communist Government of Spain that we, the Irish Government, support them. If they have any cause at heart, it is very hard for that cause to be aided by such tactics. Everybody knows that there is no such thing as direct accrediting to the present Caballero Government. It is a choice, when you come to a certain stage, of what instrument or what organ of a particular country you can use in order to safeguard the interests which you may have in that particular country. That is why, as a rule, it is *de facto* Governments that are recognised. It is only *de facto* Governments that can do the work. It is only to *de facto* Governments you can appeal to do things. Governments that are not *de facto* Governments are unable to do these things and, if recognised, it is always a gesture—a gesture of partisanship. Whatever might be our views on the matter, I considered that if we were to be effective in that Non-Intervention Committee, it was our duty, so far as we could, not to take up a position of partisanship. Does that mean that we do not understand what way the Irish people feel about this matter? I have indicated long ago that we do. I have no doubt about it. I am perfectly certain that, once it became clear, as I think it is now, that the triumph of one side meant the furtherance of Communism in Europe, it was impossible for the Irish people to have views except in one direction...”

### **A revolt against an elected Government**

“That is the position with regard to our representative in Spain. He is in touch, so far as he can be, with both sides in order to serve the interests of our people who are there on both sides. The statement of the Parliamentary Secretary—Hugo Flinn—has been brought in to try to make it appear that, from an early date, our sympathies were altogether with one side in Spain. I asked one of the speakers to-day if he would give me the date of that statement. I was anxious about the date because I was aware that most people here—whatever side they were on—were, at the very beginning, as confused about the happenings in Spain and what was really the issue there as I was. I confess I was confused about the situation because, so far as I knew up to that time, there had been a Government elected in Spain and there was a revolt. That is as it seemed to me, and that is as it appeared, I think, to most people. What was behind the revolt, what were the causes that led to the revolt, I did not know. I tried to find out as soon as I could. It was not unreasonable that anybody, in the early stages of the trouble, should have thought that, in Spain, it was a fighting-out of the fight which was fought elsewhere—a fight between Fascism and Communism. Therefore, I asked when this statement was made. I was told it was made in August and that the report was taken from the *Irish Press*. I thought that it might be

worth while to read the report to see exactly what the context was and what the Deputy was talking about when he made this speech. This is, I think, the paragraph that is referred to:

‘Systems of government in parts of Europe were in a state of flux. They had dictatorships in Russia, Italy and Germany, and, at the present time, in Spain. The struggle was concerned with an attempt to change the system of government. There was a struggle going on between Fascism and democracy’.

Where? Was not the Deputy clearly talking about the position in Europe as a whole? ... That was on August 3rd, and the revolution broke out some time about the middle of July. ‘*Fianna Fáil had no use for Fascism*’. *Fianna Fáil* has no use for Fascism, and it is perfectly true to say that *Fianna Fáil* has neither any use for Communism, and Deputy Flinn did not say so because he would know perfectly well that if he did say so he would be telling something which was not true...”

### **Causes of the present disaster**

“Now, the Irish people at the beginning of the trouble were confused, as many other people were confused, as to what the issues were. Deputy Belton read for us a considerable amount from the translation of the Cardinal Primate's pastoral. The people in Ireland, whether they were here on these benches or throughout the country, found it very difficult, in view of the statements that were made and the publicity given to them, to know exactly what was happening in Spain, and why. Deputy Belton has read a large portion of this pastoral, but there is a section of it which I think it would be very well for our people to read, because of its lessons, and I hope they will read it all... I very sincerely hope that they will. There is a part of it which I would like to read, because it conveys to us very important lessons, and it is well for us and for every other country to take stock and to heed the warnings that are contained in this pastoral. The section that I propose to read is headed ‘*Causes of the Present Disaster*’. The greater part of this has to deal with the principal cause, namely, that of Communistic propaganda, and the foreign tyranny which the Cardinal pointed out Spain was at that time suffering from. In this part the Cardinal says:

‘To these we can add our present rigid economic system, which has refused to yield to the just demands of a working class, whose standard of living is far below the level of that of the rest of Europe, thus making the workers an easy prey to false propaganda.’

... Now, I have read that because it is only fair that when you are quoting from a document of this kind you should give the whole picture and not a part of it. I would say that if we ponder on some of these paragraphs we will ask ourselves many a question, and if we answer them rightly I believe that we can save this country from ever having to face the torments which Spain is at present facing. It was precisely because I believed fundamentally in these ideals, in the fact that at the time there was no realisation on the part of those who were well-off of the conditions of the working people, that I for one did not want to see Communism getting in this country allies which it need never have.

### **Papal Encyclicals**

The whole policy, to which I objected when on the opposite benches in 1931, was to force into the ranks as allies, even if they did not accept the general principle, to force into the ranks

supporting Communism with which they had no interest, but supporting it because they were open to the same attack as the Communists were open to, those who had only one idea, that is, national aspirations. An attempt was being made to drive them in as allies of the Communists. The same thing was done by those who were not ready to listen and to give full weight to the legitimate demands of the working people who were looking for proper conditions. I opposed the attitude which at that time was being pursued by the previous Government. I said:

‘You are going to do a damnable thing when you do that, to drive in as allies to them and for something for which they have no immediate concern, those who have objectives of a national character, or those who have objectives of a legitimate social character’.

If I had read out at that time, without saying where I got it, some of the passages either from [the Papal Encyclicals] *Rerum Novarum* or *Quadragesimo Anno*, it would have been said that I was sympathetic with Communism. What we were trying to do was to get those people to realise that human beings have a right to get the opportunities to live a decent life... I know the position of Communism, properly called. I know well the position, and whatever we are trying to do, at any rate, we are trying to remedy these evils and not to turn a blind eye to them, or to try by force to make the pretence that those who are looking for their legitimate rights and legitimate liberties are necessarily Atheistic and Communistic. Now, we stand here with this policy before this Parliament—the policy of non-intervention. The object of this Bill is to give effect to it as far as we are concerned. No matter how much you may try to bring in this other question of recognition or not, the question is: Are you going to support the policy of non-intervention or not? There is going to be a vote on that issue...”

James Coburn of Fine Gael heckled: “Is the President supporting Caballero?” and Dev replied: “No. I have no use for him. Will that satisfy the Deputy?” He then continued:

“I have tried to prevent the misrepresentation of our people and the misrepresentation of our Government in this matter. I have been given here a paper—the *Irish Catholic*—and its policy, apparently, is to suggest that the 204,000 affiliated members of the Irish Trades Union Congress are tacit supporters of Communism. Is there anyone here, or anybody in the country, who is going to believe that? Yet it is that that is being taken abroad and reprinted in the [Vatican newspaper] *Osservatore Romano* for its readers to judge from it as to what is the position of the Irish people in regard to Communism—that the workers in the Irish Trade Union Congress, if you please, are Communistic. Is there anybody here who believes that? In 1931 the Deputies on the opposite benches, when they were here, went out on a programme to try to get re-elected on the basis of the necessity of combating Communism, and there were reports taken around in private; but when we got into office and got hold of those reports and brought them in here, I exposed these reports in order to show that they themselves bore evidence that there was no serious threat of Communism in the country at the time. Of course, however, if you are going, for Party reasons or for other reasons, to try to drive in and class as Communists the 204,000 members of the Irish Trades Union Congress, and if you are going to class as Communists those who do not agree with your particular views about the national position, then, of course, you can very rapidly increase the number of Communists—and I would suggest that it is a very dangerous thing to do...”

## A creation of a foreign people

“I have already suggested that when foreigners, representatives of the big Powers particularly, come into any country, you will find that they generally come there with some ulterior motive, and that it is much easier to get them in than to get them out. They are trying their new machines; they are trying their latest methods, and I, for one, wishing well to the Spanish people, and desiring to see Spanish independence continued, would like to see every one of them outside the territory of Spain. If somebody says to me: ‘It is not the end of the conflict we want to see, but to have it settled in the right way’, I say it will be settled as the Spanish people want it settled or it will not be settled at all, because if you put in a Government by foreign aid, although it may be established for a time in Spain, do you think that if it does not correspond with the feelings of the Spanish people it is going to last? Do you not know perfectly well that it is the will of the Spanish people that is ultimately going to determine what form the Government is going to take? It may, of course, take some time. Foreign forces may enable a certain group or clique to hold sway in Spain for a while, but is there anybody here who thinks that such a Government is going to last? Having confidence, as I have, in the national spirit of the Spanish people, in the ideals—and the religious ideals at that—inspiring the Spanish people, I have no doubt, for one, how this contest is going to be ultimately finished by the Spanish people. As I say, it will be the Spanish people, if they are going to remain independent, unless they are going to be completely subjected by an outside Power, who will settle this trouble themselves. If I were a Spaniard, I would hate even to get my freedom with foreign aid, because I would hate to have it in the mouths of that part of my nation which I wished to have loyal to me afterwards, ‘*Oh, you are the creation of some foreign people*’. Somebody has said that, at any rate, they should be glad to get help. We are all glad to get help. Unfortunately, we accept help very often too willingly from outsiders. When we get bitterly into a fight, we are very willing to accept aid from outside. We jump into the pit and we do not always think of how we are going to get out of it. There is no doubt in my mind—whatever might be said about getting equipment and arms from outside—that the Spanish people will be better served if they can be liberated and are allowed to establish a stable Government by their own arms and their own votes. In so far as we can do it, our aim in dealing with other nations will be to allow these nations to settle their problems for themselves, even though we may have an interest in them. Let me say that I am not uninterested or that I am not indifferent to the conflict in Spain. So far from being indifferent, I am very interested. My views may not be the same as other people's views. I hold these views, however, and I do believe, holding these views and wishing that one side definitely should triumph, and wishing to see a stable Government established in Spain, that the best contribution we can make is to get outsiders to take their hands off the Spanish conflict. That is the policy I stand for. I have no doubt whatever the Irish people will agree with me notwithstanding all that may be said to misrepresent the position of our representative in Spain at the present time. The Irish people are content to allow this Government in accordance with the general policy of non-intervention, to choose the time when intervention on our part will be legitimate and effective.”

On 24 February the Bill was passed by a Dáil vote of 77 to 48. De Valera established that his anti-communist credentials were as good as anybody else's and that he preferred Franco to Caballero. (Note: Although often referred to as “*the Spanish Lenin*”, Largo Caballero was not in fact a Communist, but a

Socialist Party leader, and was persistently criticised for his ultra-leftist demagogy by the Spanish Communist Party itself, until he was dismissed as the Republic's Prime Minister in May 1937 and replaced by Juan Negrín). But Dev did far more than that in the stand he took in February 1937. The British Government secretly but actively supported the Franco revolt and turned a decidedly blind eye to the decisive military support he was receiving from Hitler and Mussolini. The espousal by "perfidious Albion" of "Non-Intervention" was primarily designed to sabotage the far less significant Soviet aid going to the Spanish Republic and to thwart International Brigade recruitment in its defence. De Valera's concept of Non-Intervention was very different from Britain's. Dev's objective was to minimise the German and Italian intervention and, by seeking to thwart Irish volunteering—in a context where the 200 going to the aid of the Spanish Republic under the Irish Republican Congress leadership of Frank Ryan were so greatly outnumbered by the 700 supporting Franco—to prevent the Fascist O'Duffy from recruiting still more cannon-fodder. In that context, Dev's stance was indeed a profoundly anti-Fascist one, which yet again roundly defeated Fine Gael Blueshirtism. Yet, it is the fashion of Irish academia to vilify Dev as "soft" on Hitler and to slander Ryan himself as "working for Fascism", to quote the words of Professor Des Bell of Queen's University Belfast who, with his QUB colleague Fearghal McGarry, has been behind a "docudrama" to this effect being filmed in Belfast this September. (See [www.albavolunteer.org/2011/09/ryan-slanted/](http://www.albavolunteer.org/2011/09/ryan-slanted/) for my refutation of McGarry's 2002 biography of Ryan). In that context, therefore, as today's Irish academia continues to vilify Leopold Kerney, in flagrant disregard of the libel action that he had won in 1953 against the British intelligence operative and UCD Professor of History, T Desmond Williams—see <http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/> for my review of "Leopold H Kerney, Irish Minister to Spain, 1935-1946" in the first, April 2008, issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*—it is particularly heart-warming to re-visit and read de Valera's vigorous vindication of his Minister's good name against that earlier, February 1937, character assassination of Kerney that had been deployed by Desmond FitzGerald. □

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### **A new Athol Books publication**

#### ***Northern Ireland: What Is It?***

#### ***Professor Mansergh Changes His Mind***

by Brendan Clifford,

Athol Books 2011 A Belfast Magazine, No. 38.

This book is called *Northern Ireland: What Is It?* It might also have been called, *Northern Ireland: What Is It For?* After all, there must have been good reason to establish such a perverse system of government in a society so divided. Or perhaps *The State Of Northern Ireland* would have been to the point. The ambiguity of that title also goes to the heart of what this book is about: the governing arrangement established by Britain and the trouble it has caused. The 1920 Government of Ireland Act described itself as providing for the "good government" of an area broken off from Ireland—but the forms it set up made bad government inevitable. In a sense "Northern Ireland" was a time-bomb planted by stealth with the detonation coming some fifty years later.

But why was this done? What was "Northern Ireland" for? That is a question which has never been considered.

This book considers what was established in Northern Ireland and why. The why is important. It had—and continues to have—to do with the handling of the bit of Ireland which broke the

### **The Two Europes (continued from p 7)**

Now why is it taboo in Dublin? After all the wonderful benefits of the EU that the *Irish Times* had never tired of telling us of for decades—why is a new treaty taboo? The only new Treaty that is on the cards is one that will allow the Eurozone governments on an intergovernmental basis to deal with the Euro. That is what is happening at the moment but the more they act state by state the more they come into conflict with the EU! But the *Irish Times* and the Euophiles have become so dependent on browbeating people about the recent Treaties that they have never had to deal openly and honestly with the substantial issues and therefore they just see another Treaty, that they will have to sell to the public with the usual trickery. They are clearly suffering from Treaty fatigue and no wonder.

It's time the *Irish Times* and the other Europhiles acknowledged some 'great simplicities' and dropped all the rhetoric and unthinking mantras about 'Europe'. The EU as such is dead/dying. A new intergovernmental Europe is emerging to deal with the Euro and this new arrangement will not go away whether or not it secures the Euro.

A choice has to be made about which Europe we are dealing with and what attitude to take to them. Just jabbering on about 'Europe' will no longer suffice. Spades have to be called spades.

In the new Europe every country has to be able to define what it wants and have the confidence to pursue it with the others as well as it possibly can. Nobody can do that for Europe anymore and there will be nobody to mediate. That went with the Commission.

If any new Treaty is put forward as an alternative to the EU and for a specific purpose—governments working together to secure the Euro—then it should and may have a chance of succeeding. But it has to be a Treaty against the EU. That is what it will be anyway, and should be, but will the *Irish Times* even say this and support it on that basis? Not likely.

The *Irish Times* would regard that prospect with horror, quite naturally. Its whole raison d'être since its foundation has been that the country was/is not capable of running its own affairs. It will not therefore state the alternatives clearly but carry on with the notion that there is something called 'Europe', (something that is at best now a ghost and at worst a nightmare); but for them there has to be something that will save the country from itself—even if it's only a mirage. Once they could rely on the 'grand old dame, Britannia' but that's not really on anymore.

It would be nice to think that there is a form of horizontal European politics as was the aim of the European project. But that is no longer the case. The politics of Europe have become vertical and national. We are all on our own. Get used to it. The Vatican is probably the only substantial horizontal political force at present in Europe! □

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Imperial State: an Ireland which had to cope with seeing a national minority misgoverned across the Border.

Professor Nicholas Mansergh was a historian, constitutional expert, and part of the inner ruling class of Britain. He wrote a book on Northern Ireland in 1936 which correctly described the constitutional form while misconceiving its politics. In 1983 he altered his opinion of "Northern Ireland" and endorsed an academic description of it as an Irish 'state', setting a trend picked up (continued p29)

# Starving the Germans: the Evolution of Britain's Strategy of Blockade During the First World War – Part Three.

by Eamon Dyas

## Maintaining the line

Having assured itself of the efficacy of its Boer War strategy of “blockade” which involved a combination of a number of features, viz., the wide interpretation of ‘continuous voyage’; the treatment of food as absolute contraband; and the pressurisation of neutral ports to comply with its strategy, the British Admiralty set itself two tasks: to bring its internal “culture” up to date by modernising the 1888 Manual of Naval Prize Law, and ensure that it protected its future freedom of manoeuvre from infringement by any evolution in international maritime conventions.

As far as the first task was concerned the Admiralty approached the author of its original 1888 Manual, Thomas Erskine Holland, Professor of International Law at All Souls College, Oxford. The result appears to have been something called the 1903 *Confidential Manual*. Professor Holland had close connections with the British armed forces generally as the following year he compiled on behalf of the War Office *A Handbook of the Laws and Customs of War on Land*. I have not been able to get hold of a copy of the Admiralty's 1903 *Confidential Manual* compiled by him or even a sight of any review of it so am unable to ascertain the extent to which Professor Holland may have accommodated the changes that British naval experience during the Boer War required. However, from some of Professor Holland's public statements during the Boer War it would appear that he was much in sympathy with British actions despite the fact that they infringed his own rules as laid down in the 1888 *Manual*:

“To the Editor of The Times.

Sir, - Questions of maritime international law which are likely to give rise not only to forensic argument in the prize Courts which we have established at Durban and at the Cape, but also to diplomatic communications between Great Britain and neutral Governments, should obviously be handled just now with a large measure of reserve. Lord Rosebery has, however, in your columns called upon our Government to define its policy with reference to foodstuffs as contraband of war, while several other correspondents have touched upon cognate topics. You may perhaps therefore be disposed to allow one who is responsible for the *Admiralty Manual of the Law of Prize*, to which reference has been made by your correspondent ‘S,’ to make a few statements as to points upon which it may be desirable for the general reader to be in possession of information accurate, one may venture to hope, as far as it goes.

Of the four inconveniences to which neutral trading vessels are liable in time of war, ‘blockade’ may be left out of present considerations. You can only blockade the ports of your enemy, and the South African Republics have no port of their own. The three other inconveniences must, however, all be endured – viz., prohibition to carry ‘contraband,’ prohibition to engage in ‘enemy service,’ and liability to be ‘visited and searched’ anywhere except within three miles of a neutral coast, in order that it may be

ascertained whether they are disregarding either of these prohibitions, as to the meaning of which some explanation may not be superfluous.

1. ‘Carriage of contraband’ implies (1) that the goods carried are fit for hostile use; (2) that they are on their way to a hostile destination. Each of these requirements had given rise to wide divergence of views and to a considerable literature. As to (1), while Continental opinion and practice favour a hard-and-fast list of contraband articles, comprising only such as are already suited, or can readily be adapted, for use in operations of war, English and American opinion and practice favour a longer list, and one capable of being from time to time extended to meet the special exigencies of the war. In such a list may figure even provisions, ‘under circumstances arising out of the particular situation of the war,’ especially if ‘going with a highly probably destination to military use’ – Lord Stowell in the ‘*Jonge Margaretha*’ (1 Rob., 188; c.f. Story, J., in the ‘*Commercen*’ (Wheat., 382), the date and purport of which are, by-the-by, incorrectly given by ‘S.’ It would be in accordance with our own previous practice and with Lord Granville's despatches during the war between France and China in 1883, if we treated flour as contraband only when ear-marked as destined for the use of enemy fleets, armies, or fortresses. Even in such cases our practice has been not to confiscate the cargo, but merely to exercise over it a right of ‘pre-emption,’ so as to deprive the enemy of its use without doing more injury than can be helped to neutral trade – as is explained by Lord Stowell in the ‘*Haabet*’ 2 (Rob., 174). As to (2) the rule was expressed by Lord Stowell to be that ‘goods going to a neutral port cannot come under the description of contraband, all goods going there being equally lawful’ – ‘*Imina*’ (3 Rob., 167); but innovations were made upon this rule during the American Civil War which seem to be demanded by the conditions of modern commerce and might well be followed by a British prize Court. It was held that contraband goods, although *bona fide* on their way to a neutral port, might be condemned if intended afterwards to reach the enemy by another ship or even by means of land carriage – (‘*Bermuda*’ (3 Wallace); ‘*Peterhof*’ (5 Wallace). A consignment to Lourenço Marques, connected as is the town by only 40 miles of railway with the Transvaal frontier, would seem to be well within the principles of the Civil War cases as to ‘continuous voyages.’

2. The carriage by a neutral ship of enemy troops, or even a few military officers, as also of enemy despatches, is an ‘enemy service’ of so important a kind as to involve the confiscation of the vessel concerned, a penalty which, under ordinary circumstances, is not imposed upon carriage of ‘contraband’ properly so called. See Lord Stowell's luminous judgments in ‘*Orozembo*’ (6 Rob., 430) and ‘*Atlanta*’ (ib., 440.) The alleged offence of the ship *Bundesrath* would seem to be of this description.

The questions, both of ‘contraband’ and of ‘enemy service,’ with which our prize Courts must before long have to deal will be

such as to demand from the Judges a competent knowledge of the law of prize, scrupulous fairness towards neutral claimants, and prompt penetration of the Protean disguises which illicit trade so readily assumes in time of war.

Your obedient servant, T. E. Holland

Oxford, Jan. 2

(Published in *The Times*, 3 January 1900, p.6).

Holland's claim that blockade does not come into the equation in terms of British naval experience in South Africa is mere sophistry. As we have seen, although the Boer Republics did not possess their own ports, the port upon which the Boer civilian population relied, Lourenço Marques, had been subject, in effect if not in name, to a British blockade. What is significant is that Holland gives his *imprimatur* to the British treatment of Lourenço Marques and the advanced use of the doctrine of 'continuous voyage'. It is not then an unreasonable assumption that his 1903 update of the Admiralty's *Manual of Naval Prize Law* would reflect these revised beliefs. It's an interesting sidelight on history that Professor Holland, on being appointed to the Chair of International Law at Oxford, used the subject of his inaugural lecture, Alberico Gentili, the sixteenth-century Italian jurist and convert to Calvinism (and later to Anglicanism) who had been recruited by the head of the Elizabethan secret service, Sir Francis Walsingham, to teach post-Reformation England the nature of law and provide the country's first foray into the formulation of a legal code purporting to act as international law. Not only was Gentili Holland's precursor in the Chair of International Law at Oxford but they had both, in their respective periods, been employed by the Admiralty in the latter period of their careers. During his time as Professor of International Law at Oxford Holland was also instrumental in ensuring the revival of Gentili's reputation among English jurists as the father of English international law.

As the twentieth century opened with the prospect of maritime law being increasingly the subject of international debate in the aftermath of British naval behaviour during the Boer War and the advent of the Russo-Japanese war, the British sought to ensure that their interests were protected in any outcome from such a debate.

We see now that Britain's naval position prior to the arrival of the Liberal Imperialists consisted of a belief in the use of blockade (surreptitiously or openly implemented), the adherence to an advanced interpretation of 'continuous voyage' which ignored the rights of neutral shipping and neutral ports, the interception of neutral ships thousands of miles from the theatre of war, a belief in the validity of imposing a food embargo on the enemy's civilian population, and the pressurising of neutrals to ensure that their ports succumb to the British terms of blockade.

Despite the subsequent fluctuations in public posturing generated by political, diplomatic, and inter-forces rivalry this position remained the core of Britain's naval strategy from 1899 right up to, and beyond, the war on Germany in 1914. While other aspects of naval warfare were also introduced into this strategy it is important that this should not provide a distraction from this central fact. Otherwise any possible rational understanding of the period is reduced to incomprehension. This is particularly the case when it comes to the confusion surrounding the Second Hague Peace Conference of 1907-08 and the London Naval Conference of 1909. These two conferences spanned a signifi-

cant political change in British politics. When the Second Hague Peace Conference opened in 1907, the Liberal Unionists' influence on government, although strong, did not have complete hegemony. By the time the London Naval Conference opened in 1909, Asquith had replaced Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister and Liberal Imperialist influence was paramount despite the continued presence of representatives of the Liberal social radical wing in the Government.

### The Second Hague Peace Conference, 1907

The period between the Liberal election victory in 1906 and the arrival of Asquith as Prime Minister in 1908 was one which saw a mixture of liberal policies vying for ascent. The party came to power on the twin policies of disarmament and social improvement. But the party also had a significant fault line between those who had supported the energetic prosecution of the Boer War and those who felt that the war should never have been fought. Across this fault line the liberal policies of social improvement found adherents on both sides. However, the Liberal Imperialists were not mere adherents to a view which justified the Boer War and left it at that. They saw the Boer War as a wake-up call to British preparedness for the next stage in its history. The war had shown the country to be unprepared for an enemy which was sophisticated, resourceful and European by instinct. Although Britain won, it had been a close run thing and the Liberal Imperialists were determined to ensure that the country could defeat a similar enemy when the next test arrived. To this end the Liberal Imperialists were prepared to sacrifice the social improvement policies of the party if that was what the situation required. But of course the element in the Liberal Party which did not share the perspective of the Liberal Imperialists and were more committed to the issues of disarmament and social improvement still had to be taken into account. Consequently the behaviour of the Liberal Imperialists, even when they gained the ascent after Asquith became Prime Minister in 1908, can only be understood in the context of this struggle with the continuing, though diminishing, influence of the social Liberals.

The Second Hague Peace Conference in 1907 opened at a time when the Admiralty had taken into its "culture" the lessons from its successful Boer War strategy. It also happened at a time when Campbell-Bannerman was Prime Minister and the Liberal Imperialists, though exerting strong influence in the cabinet, did not have things entirely their own way. This is the observation of results of that conference by the Hon. J. M. Kenworthy and George Young:

"The pious resolutions that they produced were necessarily compromises between various international and national ideals and interests. But in the main there were two opposing forces – on the one side a loose association of public movements demanding the prevention of war, expressed through politicians, publicists, and jurists – on the other the political and professional responsibility for warlike preparation, which was expressed through a close alliance of realist politicians with naval and military experts. The first of these – the pacifist camp, was weakened by having no very general definite programme for war prevention and by having as leaders politicians who were also personally responsible for war preparation. The British pacifists, looking forward to a political horizon on which the storm clouds were already gathering, and ignorant of the automatic *déclanchements* arranged by secret diplomacy, were inclined to concentrate on postponing formal declarations of war by preliminary procedures

and on prohibiting the more odious weapons.”

(*Freedom of the Seas*, by Lieut.-Commander The Hon. Joseph Montague Kenworthy, M.P. and George Young. Published Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., London, [1928], pp.56-57)

The British pacifists in this instance were of course those liberals who did not share the Liberal Imperialist agenda and penchant for secret diplomacy. Kenworthy and Young were perfectly right in stating that the pacifist liberal element had no clear idea of what they wanted from the conference while the Liberal Imperialist camp were operating to a clear agenda. Nonetheless, the situation was not so clear-cut. Despite the fragmented nature of that body of opinion that fell outside the Liberal Imperialist perspective among the British contingent, these elements generated sufficient complications to ensure that the Liberal Imperialists did not have things completely their own way. It was not just the divide between pacific liberals and imperial liberals which ensured the failure of the Hague conference. The Liberal Imperialist agenda was also complicated by the persistence of the invasion scare lobby as well as the fact that others at that time perceived British interests in terms of a naval policy based upon the vulnerability of British food supply in the event of war. The attempt of those ‘pacifist’ delegates to reflect such diverse political expressions in the wider liberal party threatened the aggressive war policy of the Liberal Imperialists in general and the army and naval perspectives on how to interpret the aggressive war policy in particular.

The conference was convened at the initiative of the United States as a follow-up to the First Hague Peace Conference of 1899. It had originally been proposed that the conference be held in 1904 but it was delayed because of the Russo-Japanese war. By the time it did open in 1907 its agenda reflected the growing international concern with naval issues. The British being eager to preserve their naval superiority and the US concerned for the fate of its seafaring trade and access to markets in the event of a European war. The timing of the conference (15 June to 18 October 1907) was to Britain’s advantage. Any restrictions or curtailments in armaments agreed by the conference ensured that she would retain the initiative recently gained by the introduction in 1906 of the technically advanced lighter, faster and more heavily armed Dreadnought class of cruiser-battleship. Also, the success of the Japanese fleet against the Russians ensured that Britain would have at least a partial ally in these matters in the form of the USA. Just as the British were eager to ensure that they maintained a war-winning supremacy over the German navy in Europe, the Americans were also getting concerned about the growth of the Japanese navy and the potential challenge that might pose to its own desire for supremacy in the Pacific. Consequently, prior to the opening of the conference, Grey and Roosevelt’s efforts to deal with the developing military situation by setting limits of one kind or another on the future growth or development of battleships never became part of the conference agenda as Germany made it clear beforehand that it could not accept such a restriction on its future plans. Germany argued that the existing situation left the British navy four times as large and infinitely more technically advanced than the German navy and reserved the right to develop its navy in ways that ensured the protection of its commercial interests – an instinct that had been heightened by the experience of its commercial shipping at the hands of the British Navy during the Boer War.

Although US and British interests coincided in their attempts

to retain naval hegemony over their respective *bêtes noires*, the US and Britain shared another area of interest which was based on their mutual interpretation of the international law of blockade. However, both countries faced both ways on the subject depending on whether they were belligerents or neutrals in any conflict:

“Upon this subject the United Kingdom has a divided interest. When neutral, her trade suffers by blockades. As she desires freedom from seizure at sea of all neutral goods (whether contraband or not), so also she would wish that all neutral goods should be allowed to proceed unimpeded to their destinations. But when the United Kingdom is a belligerent, her interest as the strongest naval power changes, and one of her weapons is blockade of her enemy’s ports and exclusion from them of commerce of every kind. This second interest has, thus far, outweighed the first, and the instructions of the British delegates to the last Hague Conference declared that the United Kingdom’s

‘absolute dependence on the possession of sea power for security makes it imperative for her to maintain intact the weapon of offence which the possibility of effectually blockading an enemy’s coasts places in the hands of a nation having command of the sea.’”

(Kingdom Papers, Volume II, No. 20, *Capture at Sea: Contraband and Blockade*, by John Skirving Ewart, K. C. Published McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, Ottawa, June 1914, p.249)

The US of course shared this dual perspective but the fact that Britain, the possessor of the world’s overwhelmingly superior navy, entered the Conference with the “*imperative for her to maintain intact the weapon of offence which the possibility of eventually blockading an enemy’s coasts places in the hands of a nation having command of the sea*” ensured that there could never be anything like a significant outcome from the Hague conference as far as the rights of neutrals were concerned. Britain, which was more often a belligerent than a neutral, always viewed its primary objective as the protection of its aggressive role as the belligerent. But even in protecting the rights of the belligerent it did not follow that in those rare cases where it was itself a neutral, Britain’s interests would necessarily suffer. As the most powerful naval presence in the world Britain had the means of ensuring that, whatever the circumstances, it could, by imposing its will on any protagonist, ensure that damage to its interests was kept to a minimum irrespective of its status as belligerent or neutral in any ongoing conflict. It did this in the Franco-Chinese war of 1884-85 and later in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05.

During the Second Hague Peace Conference, the essential thing that the British Admiralty sought to protect was the right of capture at sea. This had become the central area of contention between the Liberal Imperialist and Admiralty bloc on the one hand, and the Radical ‘pacifists’ on the other. The Radical ‘pacifists’ viewed the conference as an opportunity to push the pacifist agenda and saw the opportunity of abolishing the practice of capture at sea as part of that agenda. The British Admiralty had already expressed its unanimous opposition to any proposal which had the effect of diminishing the rights of the British Navy to capture property at sea as such a concession would make a nonsense of its central strategy of commercial blockade.

Thus, when the following proposal was presented to the Conference by the United States it was inevitable that it would be

vetoed by the combination of the British Admiralty and the Liberal Imperialists:

“That private property of all citizens or subjects of the signatory Powers, with the exception of contraband of war, shall be exempt from capture or seizure on the sea by the armed vessels or by the military forces of any of the said signatory Powers. But nothing herein contained shall extend exemption from seizure to vessels and their cargoes which may attempt to enter a port blockaded by the naval forces of any of the said Powers.” (Ewart, op. cit. p.153)

Twenty-one countries voted in favour of the proposal, including the United States, and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Greece, Belgium, Switzerland, Bulgaria, and Romania among the European countries. Eleven countries voted against it, namely, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Japan, Spain, Portugal, Montenegro, Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Salvador. So it came to pass that this reasonable proposal, which would permit non-contraband goods to be shipped by sea without fear of molestation or capture during war, was thrown out as a result of Britain’s objection. Although she was not the only nation objecting, Britain’s weight could have swung it if she were so inclined. According to Lord Loreburn (Robert Threshie Reid who was Lord Chancellor and one of the non-Liberal Imperialists in the Cabinet at the time), the French expressed a readiness to agree to the proposal if the others would consent. Essentially this meant Britain taking the lead. If she had consented, then her new allies France, Russia and Japan would have consented and the other objectors would have come into line. Ewart was not alone when he concluded that “*the United Kingdom is in large measure alone responsible for its non-acceptance*” and many in the Liberal Party and abroad shared this opinion.

From the viewpoint of the Liberal Imperialists this proposal would have restricted the ability of Britain to pursue an effective blockade policy in any future war with Germany. The right of Capture at Sea was critical to British naval plans. Any internationally agreed policy which permitted non-contraband goods free transit across the oceans and access to enemy ports would have made the British idea of blockade ineffective. The traditional interpretation of contraband was restricted to those materials which aided or contributed to the military efficiency of the enemy. Britain, on the other hand, as its successful naval strategy during the Boer War showed, wanted the freedom to define contraband according to its own perception of the enemy and the enemy’s needs. The extent to which any internationally agreed list of contraband could accommodate what Britain thought necessary in terms of imposing an effective blockade was problematic. As Britain showed during the Boer War, within its terms of blockade, such an exercise would certainly demand the inclusion of foodstuffs but such an inclusion on any internationally agreed list of contraband would undoubtedly have met with objections from the likes of the US (which at this time was already exporting significant quantities of food, beef and grain to Europe) as well as Germany (itself heavily dependent on food imports). Rather than find itself in the position where it was compelled to show its hand in the inevitable public horse-trading of what materials could or could not be included under the category of contraband, it sabotaged the U.S. proposal.

The sabotaging of the U.S. proposal was done in a very conscious way and resulted from the combined actions of the

Foreign Office and the Admiralty delegates:-

“During the sessions of the Hague Conference, however, the British delegation, under Sir Ernest Satow, took up an intransigent position on the ‘right of capture’, refusing to yield ground to the reformers; it claimed that the practice was inseparable from commercial blockade.” (*Left-Wing Opposition to Naval Armaments in Britain Before 1914*, by Howard Weinroth. Published in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1971, p.102).

According to his entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Sir Ernest Satow was a surprise appointment as British delegate to the Hague Conference and owed his posting to the anxiety of the Foreign Office (effectively meaning Sir Edward Grey) which had concerns about the other two government delegates, Sir Edward Fry and Lord Reay being able effectively to defend British national interests. The Foreign Office had reason to be concerned. Neither Fry nor Reay was ‘on message’ as far as the Liberal Imperialist agenda was concerned. We will hear more of Fry later. As far as Reay was concerned, his intent to bring something positive from the Conference in terms of advancing the Liberal radical position very quickly came up against the Admiralty delegates:-

“Lord Reay, one of Britain’s delegates to the [Hague] conference, bemoaned (in a letter to Campbell-Bannerman) the sad fate of the representatives of a Liberal government reduced to impotency by the obduracy of the Admiralty experts who were prepared to argue that even a small marine collier of 100 tons might be classed as an auxiliary man o’ war. Bannerman sent on this *cri de coeur* to the Foreign Office, but all was in vain. Lord Reay’s estimate of the situation was correct.” *The English Radicals’ Campaign for Disarmament and the Hague Conference of 1907*, by A. J. A. Morris. Published in *The Journal of Modern History*, the University of Chicago Press, vol. 43, no. 3, September 1971, pp.389-390).

So well did he fulfil his role that Satow managed to get the ratification of any agreements arrived at during the Conference deferred to a later conference of the maritime powers (what came to be known as the London Naval Conference) – something that, in effect, provided the Liberal Imperialists with a second line of defence against any unwelcome commitments and, as will be shown, was, from their point of view, a fortuitous move.

The tragedy of the defeat of the proposal by the combined efforts of the British Admiralty and the Liberal Imperialists is that what was being proposed not only had the support of the Radical wing of the Liberal Party but commanded widespread support across the British political divide and offered the most significant means of avoiding the coming war before the actual event in 1914.

“‘If I were a German,’ said Mr. F. E. Smith, in the House of Commons on April 21, 1909, ‘I would never be content, so long as the right to destroy private commerce exists, until my nation had a Navy which would make it impossible for that power of destruction to be exercised. If we could go to Germany and say we had abandoned this practice which jeopardises the commerce that she, as a strong nation, is entitled to protect, and if in spite of the removal of that risk she still continued to build ‘Dreadnoughts’, the position of this country would be a very different one. If we had withdrawn from the right to destroy the commerce of our



rivals, and in face of that Germany continued to expand her Navy (which on that hypothesis, could only be for the purposes of aggression), I should not shrink from any sacrifice. Until we have made that offer and given that guarantee of our good faith, we are not entitled even to feel surprised that Germany should feel as justified in protecting her Mercantile Marine as we in protecting ours.'

At the Hague Conference the German delegates supported the abolition of capture, and the British delegates opposed it. On the other hand, the British delegates favoured the prohibition of floating mines, and the German delegates opposed it. Why should not each Government withdraw its opposition, and conclude a convention with the United States, introducing these two improvements into the naval warfare of the future? . . . for it is demanded by the spirit of modern commerce, as it is furthered by the growing strength and complexity of international trade. Brougham, an old Radical, Sir Henry Maine, an old Tory, and Cobden were strong supporters of this reform, which has been accepted and endorsed over and over again by important Chambers of Commerce. The late Marquis of Salisbury and Lord Avebury were of the same opinion; Earl Loreburn, Lord Morley, Mr. F.E. Smith and Sir John Simon (the Solicitor-General) are with us, and Professor Brentano, one of the ablest advocates in Germany of a friendly understanding with England, regards this international guarantee of private property at sea not only as a good thing in itself, but also as a most excellent way to quell the suspicions of his own countrymen, great numbers of whom have undoubtedly entertained the feeling attributed to them by Mr. F. E. Smith, and have therefore acquiesced reluctantly in the financial sacrifices demanded of them by the German Admiralty.'" (*The Six Panics and other essays*, by Francis Wrigley Hirst. Published Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1913, pp.131-132).

Later Lord Birkenhead, at the time he made this speech Frederick Edwin Smith was the newly elected Conservative Member of Parliament for Birkenhead. Like that of so many in his position, his rational view of Germany was turned on its head in later years; at the start of the war he was put in charge of the Government Press Bureau with specific responsibility for the censorship of newspapers. He served as Attorney General and Solicitor General prior to being Lord Chancellor at the end of the war and before going on to be Secretary of State for India. Before the war, in 1912, he was a leading supporter and activist in the Ulster Unionist cause. The fact that his rational position in 1909 with regards to Germany had been very consciously and deliberately sabotaged in 1907 and continued to be sabotaged from then onwards makes it extremely difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Liberal Imperialists were intent on war at all costs.

As stated earlier, both Britain and the U.S. possessed different interests depending on whether they were belligerents or neutrals in any particular international conflict. During times when either was a belligerent they sought to constrain the rights of neutral shipping to an absolute minimum but during conflicts where they were a neutral their trading interests demanded a wider protection for neutral shipping. However, because Britain had an extensive Empire which it vigorously defended with the most powerful navy in the world, considerations of the neutral position did not preoccupy the British Government as much as it did the U.S. War was a state of existence for Britain whereas the U.S. was a novice in the game and the position of belligerent was a role that Britain was far more used to than the U.S. This was reflected in the U.S.

sponsorship of the proposal at the Second Hague Conference which sought to provide the highest protection of non-contraband trade for neutrals. It viewed the forthcoming war between Britain and Germany with apprehension as such a war threatened its growing trading relationship with Europe. Hence its energetic defence of the rights of a neutral country's non-contraband trade. Conversely, the British Liberal Imperialists viewed the forthcoming conflict from the perspective of the belligerent – and indeed as the only belligerent capable of imposing an effective disruptive regime upon the world's trade routes. It is therefore not surprising that, in pursuit of their perception of British interests, the Liberal Imperialists sought to restrict the rights of neutrals during the forthcoming conflict, even to the extent of encroaching on the traditional areas of non-contraband neutral trade.

Thus, from the point of view of the Admiralty it was imperative that nothing be agreed at the Hague Conference that would impede its ability to impose an effective economic blockade on Germany. On the other hand the Radical delegates, like Reay and Fry, unaware of the secret scheming, carried on as if the Liberal Party electoral mandate for pacifism and reduced military spending continued to have a legitimacy. In such circumstances, despite the best efforts of the Admiralty, the outcome of the Second Hague Peace Conference was inevitably going to pose some sort of problem for the Liberal Imperialist agenda.

### **The door left ajar – the International Prize Court**

As far as the Liberal Imperialists were concerned the devil was in the detail of what was considered to be the main achievement of the Conference. In this instance the Admiralty delegates failed initially to pick up on the implications of a proposal to which it agreed; the Government was then forced to embark on extensive and elaborate diplomacy in order to regain the lost ground. The Second Hague Peace Conference ended with thirteen conventions agreed by all the countries attending the Conference. These Conventions were relatively anodyne with the exception of Convention XII - the proposal to establish an International Prize Court. At the time of the Conference each naval power had its own national Prize Court whose function it was to arbitrate on all contentious issues surrounding the seizure of Prize (ships and cargos) on the open seas during periods of international conflict. The limitations of this arrangement due to the tendency of each national court to favour its own nationals in the event of a dispute had been the cause of complaint, particularly among neutral nations, for some time. Under the Hague agreement, the national Prize Courts were to continue in existence but the proposed International Prize Court was intended to function as the ultimate court of appeal in the event of protagonists failing to agree on the status of goods seized by belligerent powers. The Court was also to be given the authority, under certain rules, to over-ride decisions of national Prize Courts. Outline proposals for this were introduced to the Conference by Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, the German delegate with the British delegate, Sir Edward Fry, producing his own proposals. Sir Edward Fry was an octogenarian jurist who had been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and First Plenipotentiary British delegate to the Conference by Campbell-Bannerman. At this time he was in the latter stage of his career and, as a Quaker, more inclined to the "pacifist" camp of the Liberal Party. The result of the efforts of von Bieberstein and Fry was that a committee was formed to work out the final proposals which eventually became Convention XII. Although Britain signed up to this Convention, it delayed ratification to a later date. As one of the countries whose delegates

significantly contributed to the making of Convention XII Britain could not really dissent but the Liberal Imperialists soon realised that it represented a mistake – a mistake that had the potential to impair its ability to prosecute its future economic war on Germany.

Convention XII provided for a Prize Court consisting of fifteen judges appointed by the participating countries to sit for a term of six years. Eight of the judges were to be directly appointed by the eight recognised naval powers (Germany, the United States, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and Russia) and these countries had a permanent right to appointment. The other seven positions were to be filled on a rotating basis by the remaining signatories. As for its areas of jurisdiction:

“According to Article 3 of the Convention [XII – ED], judgments of national prize courts could be brought before the International Prize Court when they affected the property of a neutral state or individual, or affected an enemy ship captured in the territorial waters of a neutral state when not made the subject of a diplomatic claim by the latter, or affected enemy property when a claim alleged the seizure to be in violation of a treaty between the belligerents or an enactment by a belligerent captor. The appeal against the national prize court judgment could be based on the ground that it was erroneous either in fact or in law.

A belligerent government could not bring suit before the International Prize Court. But pursuant to Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention an appeal could be brought by a neutral state if the national prize court judgment injuriously affected its property or that of its nationals or if the capture of an enemy vessel was alleged to have occurred within its territorial waters. A neutral individual could appeal if the national prize court judgment injuriously affected his property, subject to the reservation that his national government might forbid him to bring the case before the Court or undertake proceedings in his place. The subject or citizen of an enemy state could appeal if the national prize court judgment injuriously affected his property on board a neutral ship or when the seizure was alleged to be in violation of a treaty between the belligerents or an enactment by the belligerent captor. Persons belonging either to neutral states or to the enemy deriving their rights from and entitled to represent an individual qualified to appeal who had taken part in the proceedings before the national court, or persons who derived their rights from and were entitled to represent a neutral power whose property was the subject of the decision, could also appeal. Article 51 made it clear, however, that an appeal to the International Prize Court could only be brought by a contracting power or the subject or citizen of a contracting power, or when both the owner and the person entitled to represent him were equally contracting powers or the subjects or citizens of contracting powers.”

(*The Law of the Sea*, by Francis A. Boyle. Published in Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law, Vol. 76, April 22-24, 1982, pp.135-136).

The new and innovative feature of Convention XII was that it permitted both neutral and enemy individuals (although not enemy governments) to sue in the International Prize Court under its terms of jurisdiction. This created the unique precedent of the rights of individuals to appear before an international tribunal on their own behalf and departed from the existing legal premise that only states could properly be considered the subject of public international law. However, it was not this innovation that was

the cause of Britain’s rethink of its commitment to Convention XII.

In instances where there existed an international treaty between two or more states the terms of these treaties had to be taken into account by the International Prize Court in forming a judgment on a contentious issue. In those cases where no such treaty covered the issue under contention the International Prize Court was instructed to provide a judgment in accordance with “the general principles of justice and equity”. This meant that the Court was given the powers of interpretation over a wide area of possible issues including what could and what could not be defined as contraband in times of war.

It was the authority to define contraband and the implication this had for defining a legitimate blockade that soon became an issue for the Liberal Imperialist government. Such authority in the hands of the International Prize Court could potentially impair the British navy’s ability to prosecute its war on Germany in the way that its strategy of economic warfare required.

“Due to the composition of the Court, the Anglo-American judges would be in a minority and therefore the United States and Great Britain ran the substantial risk that the Anglo-American viewpoint on certain aspects of the law of prize would be replaced by the Continental tradition. Hence Great Britain adamantly insisted that the international law of prize be codified into a treaty before it ratified any Prize Court Convention.” (ibid. p136).

The terms by which the International Prize Court was to operate also had the potential to impinge upon the legitimacy or otherwise of an actual blockade. Investing the right of the International Prize Court to define what was legitimate prize and what was not legitimate prize inevitably brings into play the question of blockade during times of war. A blockade must be recognised as a legal blockade if the prize (cargo, part cargo or ship or ship and cargo) confiscated as a result of its imposition is deemed to have been seized by legitimate means and, conversely, if the blockade is interpreted as an illegal blockade then all goods confiscated in the course of imposing it are deemed to be illegally gained. It was this that occupied the attention of the Liberal Imperialists at the end of the Campbell-Bannerman premiership and the start of Asquith’s succession in 1908.

### **Slamming the door – the London Naval Conference of 1908-09**

Initially, because the Liberal Imperialists could influence but not control events, the implications of signing up to the arrangement for the International Prize Court were not apparent. When the Hague Peace Conference opened in June 1907 Campbell-Bannerman was the Prime Minister and although the Liberal Imperialists constituted a powerful presence, there remained a significant radical Liberal element within government. Included among these was Robert Threshie Reid (Lord Loreburn) who had been appointed Lord Chancellor by Campbell-Bannerman in preference to Haldane in the wake of the Liberal party landslide victory in 1906. He had become increasingly uneasy at the direction of British foreign policy in the aftermath of Asquith becoming Prime Minister in 1908 and was critical of the government’s policy of aligning the country with France and Russia, advocating instead a policy of *rapprochement* with Germany, and

“In advance of the Hague Peace Conference of 1907 he urged the cabinet to champion immunity from prize law of goods at sea, publishing his ideas in a book entitled *Capture at Sea* (1905, reprinted 1913). These efforts were scorned by the Admiralty and the Foreign Office . . . (DNB entry)

The combination of the Lord Chancellor and Sir Edward Fry meant that the pacifist wing of the Liberal Party had a significant, albeit not dominant, input in the end result of the Hague Conference. The month after the end of the Hague Conference, in November 1907, Campbell-Bannerman had his fourth heart attack and from then on Asquith began to take increasing control of the country. Although he did not replace Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister until April 1908, Campbell-Bannerman’s continuing ill health meant that he had been forced to devolve increasing responsibility to Asquith from November 1907 onwards. As soon as he could, Asquith set about using his increased influence in government to stifle what he saw as the dangers to British interests inherent in Convention XII of the Hague Conference.

Asquith had plenty of time to organise his opposition as Britain, although signing up to the Hague Conventions, was permitted, along with a number of other nations, to defer ratification of the agreement. This gave the Liberal Imperialists time to work out a damage-limitation strategy. It was obvious that Britain could not unravel what had already been agreed upon and that any strategy had to work within the broad terms of Convention XII in order to neutralise its potential for doing mischief to British interests. The answer was to call another conference. So, before signing up to the Conventions of the Second Hague Conference, Britain called another international conference – the London Naval Conference. This is how Charles H. Stockton, the United States’ delegate to the London Naval Conference, explained this development:-

“It was natural that Great Britain, much as she desired a prize court of impartial bias, hesitated to sign the convention with its governing generalities and vague expressions of benevolent equity. Any court constituted by the convention would have been composed of judges, a large majority of whom would have been appointed by states whose geographical conditions, national interests and traditional doctrines would place them as members of a school opposed to much in theory and practice to that adopted by Great Britain, inherited by the United States of America, and from which Japan had drawn her text books and authorities. As a result of this situation and for the purpose of evolving order out of the chaos, the British government on 28 February, 1908, sent a circular note to various powers inviting them to join in a conference, the object of which should be to arrive at an agreement as to what were the generally recognized principles of international law referred to in the second paragraph of article 7 of the prize court convention. It became more and more evident that the greater the uncertainty was the more dangerous and unsatisfactory might become its decisions.

“In its call for a conference, the government of Great Britain stated, that the rules by which appeals from national prize courts would be decided affected the rights of belligerents in a manner which would be far more serious to the principal naval powers than to others, and consequently His Majesty’s Government at first communicated only with the governments of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain and the United

States of America. To these powers the Netherlands were added as the home of The Hague Conferences and the seat of the proposed international prize court, thus making ten powers in all.”

(*The London Naval Conference*, by Charles H. Stockton and Charles S. Sperry, report to the Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law, 23-24 April 1909, and published in the proceedings of that body, p.63).

There was a long run-in from the calling of the Naval Conference in February 1908 to its intended start date on 1 October 1908 and even that was postponed until 1 December with the first actual session only taking place on 4 December on Sir Edward Grey’s home turf in the Foreign Office. By this time of course Asquith was Prime Minister and in a position to exert more control over developments. The British purpose in calling for the London Naval Conference in February 1908 was to constrain the authority of the proposed International Prize Court in a way that ensured the court, if it ever materialised, would have no opportunity to define the nature of contraband or legitimise the Continental doctrine of blockade.

The two British naval delegates to the Naval Conference were Rear-Admiral Charles Langdale Ottley and Rear-Admiral Edmond John Warre Slade. Both these men were advocates of the naval economic blockade strategy. Rear-Admiral Ottley in a letter written to Reginald McKenna, the First Lord of the Admiralty, on the day after the opening of the Conference assured him that he was well aware of the Admiralty position on the subject. According to Ottley the issue of the economic strangulation of Germany was:-

“constantly under investigation during the whole three years I was D.N.I. [Director of Naval Intelligence – ED], and Admiral Slade tells me he had given particular attention to it since he succeeded me. . . . throughout the whole period that I was D.N.I. the Admiralty claimed that the geographical position of this country and her preponderant sea-power combine to give us a certain and simple means of strangling Germany at sea.” (Rear-Admiral C.L. Ottley, Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, to Reginald McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, 5 December 1908. Quoted in Marder, op cit p.379)

Ottley and Slade were well aware of the potential danger posed to this strategy by the existence of any independent international court with the authority to define contraband and the nature of a legitimate blockade. But the British were not taking any chances and to this end specifically itemised in advance of the Conference those areas which it wanted to “clarify” with the threat that unless it got its way “*it would be difficult, if not impossible, for it to carry the legislation necessary to give effect to the convention*”:

“The questions which the British Government were particularly anxious to have considered and upon which they were desirous that an understanding should be reached ‘were those as to which divergent rules and principles have been enforced in the prize courts of different nations. It was therefore suggested that the following questions should constitute the programme of the conference:’

(a) *Contraband*, including the circumstances under which particular articles can be considered as contraband; the penalties for their carriage; the immunity of a ship from search when under

convoy, and the rules with regard to compensation when vessels have been seized but have been found in fact only to be carrying innocent cargo;

(b) *Blockade*, including the questions as to the locality where seizure can be effected, and the notice that is necessary before a ship can be seized;

(c) The doctrine of continuous voyage in respect both of contraband and of blockade;

(d) The legality of the destruction of neutral vessels prior to their condemnation by a prize court;

(e) The rules as to neutral ships or persons rendering 'un-neutral service' ('*assistance hostile*');

(f) The legality of the conversion of a merchant vessel into a warship on the high seas;

(g) The rules as to the transfer of merchant vessels from a belligerent to a neutral flag during or in contemplation of hostilities;

(h) The question whether the nationality or the domicile of the owner should be adopted as the dominant factor in deciding whether property is enemy property.

The British Government further stated that unless some agreement should be arrived at with respect to most of the topics just mentioned that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for it to carry the legislation necessary to give effect to the convention unless they could assure both houses of the British Parliament that some more definite understanding had been reached as to the rules by which the new tribunal should be governed."

(Stockton and Sperry, op. cit. p.64)

The London Naval Conference ended on 26 February 1909 with the plenipotentiaries of Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Austria-Hungary and the Netherlands signing the *Declaration Concerning the Laws of Naval War* (popularly known as the *Declaration of London*). The Hague Convention for the establishment of an International Prize Court is only mentioned once in the entire declaration and that is in the prelude to its seventy-one articles. The vast majority of these articles constitute an endorsement of the Anglo-American doctrine and a defeat of the Continental doctrine of blockade. There was however, one area where general agreement emerged on an issue that did not suit British Admiralty interests.

### **Failing to close the door - contraband and 'continuous voyage'.**

The one critical area where the Anglo-American doctrine failed to get its way was in the area known as 'continuous voyage'. As was explained earlier this was the departure from existing international norms and first introduced by the United States Navy in its blockade of the Confederacy coast during the Civil War. Before the United States Navy flouted it, the traditional understanding was that any ship carrying a cargo from one neutral port to another was immune from capture irrespective of whether that cargo would then be onwardly transported to the enemy. The practice introduced during the American Civil War was based on the movement of the cargo rather than of the ship carrying that cargo. Consequently, if a belligerent suspected that a neutral ship was carrying a cargo ultimately destined for the enemy it could be intercepted and the cargo confiscated despite the fact that the ship was travelling between two neutral ports. Again, this is the observation of an American delegate to the London Naval Conference on the outcome of the discussions surrounding the issue of 'continuous voyage':

"A great element in the matter of contraband is the question of destination. This not only makes or unmakes conditional contraband but also brings in the question of continuous voyage, one of the most troublesome of questions connected with contraband and concerning which there was probably the most radical difference of opinion. This matter has been called by the British delegation the British doctrine of continuous voyage; but its use and development during the Civil War has made it more of an American doctrine.

Applied to foodstuffs and fuels it is also a matter of great difficulty of enforcement as such cargoes when imported in bulk into neutral countries go at once into the common stock of those countries and are not earmarked for the use of an enemy beyond neutral borders. This difficulty cannot be said with respect to the doctrine of absolute contraband, the character of such warlike stores, for war alone, and for special national service oftener, gives a distinct clue to its destination. As a general compromise upon the subject the doctrine of continuous voyage was accepted for the first time by several nations in connection with absolute contraband, while given up by us and others with respect to blockade and conditional contraband. The free list was also formed and accepted and other concessions added to on both sides as part of this general compromise."

(Stockton and Sperry, op. cit. pp.73-74)

So, although Britain and the U.S. managed to get several nations to agree to the principle of the Anglo-American doctrine of 'continuous voyage', this was only achieved as part of a compromise that the principle would only be applied to absolute contraband and anything that came within the definition of conditional contraband would be excluded. For this reason the distinction between different types of contraband became extremely important in how the doctrine of 'continuous voyage' was to be applied in practice.

The Second Hague Peace Conference had pursued the idea of distinguishing different types of contraband in an effort to protect the rights of neutrals. This was based on the possible use that certain goods could be put to by an enemy in times of war. Thus, "Absolute Contraband" was deemed to include obvious things like arms of all kinds, explosives, gun mountings, armour, military clothing, etc. These were goods that had an immediate military value to the enemy and therefore would be subject to immediate capture and the seizure of the ship carrying such cargo. According to the Declaration this was also the only category of contraband which could be subject to the doctrine of "continuous voyage". There was then the second category of "Conditional Contraband". These consisted of goods that were "susceptible of use in war or for peaceable purpose, that are to be treated without further notice as contraband of war when destined for the enemy's forces." The list of these items was given in Article 24 and includes such things as foodstuffs, forage and grain, clothing, footwear, horseshoes, harness and saddlery, barbed wire, fuel and lubricants, etc. In case of any misunderstanding the definition of "foodstuffs" was given in the body of the report as any kind of material that offers human sustenance:

"In the running commentary of the general report an explanatory statement was agreed upon that foodstuffs include products necessary or useful for sustaining man, whether solid or liquid..." (Stockton and Sperry, op. cit. p.72)

There was a third category called the “Free List” which included materials that under no circumstances should be considered contraband of war and these materials were guaranteed the freedom of the seas. However, “foodstuffs” (or “products necessary or useful for sustaining man, whether solid or liquid”) were not considered part of the “Free List”. This left foodstuffs open to embargo in the event of a belligerent believing that such a cargo was destined for the enemy forces or government agencies. While “foodstuffs” remained outside the doctrine of “continuous voyage” it only retained this status as long as a belligerent accepted that it was not destined for the enemy armed forces or government agencies. If a belligerent believed that a cargo of such material was destined for the enemy armed forces or government agencies it then became subject to the doctrine of “continuous voyage”. In other words, if a belligerent believed that the foodstuffs being carried in any ship was destined for enemy military forces or the government of the enemy, even if that ship was registered in a neutral country, was travelling from a neutral port to deliver its cargo to another neutral port, it could still be subject to capture and the cargo impounded. But of course it was impossible to distinguish the destination of foodstuffs in this way. Within a short time of the Declaration British political discussion had already begun to open the prospect of such an application of contraband to foodstuffs and this exposed differences of opinion between the American and British view of things:

“Articles 33 and 34 discuss and define the destinations which make the article carried conditional contraband. Article 35 was framed to exclude the question of continuous voyage from being applied to conditional contraband. A curious endeavour has been made recently in England to read into this article a doctrine that foodstuffs are to be considered conditional contraband when bound for the enemy country without regard to enemy forces. This would make food contraband if bound to a commercial port for the ordinary civilian population. The wording of the article as shown by the general report was to prevent conditional contraband being liable to capture if bound for other than enemy territory, or in other words preventing the application of continuous voyage to conditional contraband bound for neutral ports. If the country at war, however, has no seaboard, a cargo bound to the enemy forces using an intervening port or seaboard country under article 36 is liable to seizure, as the neutral port of destination in this case is construed to be an enemy port, being the only sea approach existing.”

(Stockton and Sperry, op. cit. p.74).

So, already, in 1909 (when the above was written), the Americans were aware that British political discussion on the subject had produced public statements that “foodstuffs were to be considered conditional contraband when bound for the enemy country without regard to enemy forces” and this “would make food contraband if bound to a commercial port for the ordinary civilian population.” As the Americans argued, such a sentiment makes no distinction between the civilian and military use of foodstuffs and thereby dissolves the application of “conditional contraband” to food – the distinction between “conditional” and “absolute” contraband being determined by whether or not such material is destined for use by civilian or military end-users. By this sleight of hand food could be re-defined as “absolute contraband” (the movement of any material from the “conditional” to the “absolute” category being permitted to any belligerent during times of war) and thereby become susceptible to the application

of the doctrine of “Continuous Voyage”. In those circumstances foodstuffs became open to capture by a belligerent if heading from a neutral port to another neutral port. This, of course was consistent with the way the British had treated foodstuffs during its “blockade” of Delagoa Bay during the Boer War and, as we will see later, is in fact what happened early in the war when the British, without any evidence, impounded American ships carrying grain into the neutral port of Rotterdam on the basis that the cargo was ultimately destined for the German military. The consistency of the British position between the Boer War and the First World War is inescapable.

The *Declaration of London*, the final agreed outcome of the London Naval Conference, showed that Liberal Imperialists had only partially retrieved the situation. While it managed to effectively nullify any freedom of interpretation of contraband by the proposed International Prize Court and prevented it having any kind of negative impact on Britain’s freedom to exercise its version of economic warfare, it was compelled in the process to define, too closely for comfort, what constituted different types of contraband. And, more importantly, it had to concede the principle of non-application of the doctrine of ‘continuous voyage’ to Conditional Contraband. Crucially, this meant that foodstuffs, under the *Declaration of London*, could not be subject to the doctrine of continuous voyage and that fact alone would prove a significant impairment to the ability of the British Navy to impose a starvation blockade on an enemy. It was this critical element that imposed the death sentence on the *Declaration*. There was no way now that the Liberal Imperialists could permit the ratification of the *Declaration* without abandoning the central strategy of a starvation blockade on Germany when the war came. While they could not express open hostility to the *Declaration* the Liberal Imperialists at the same time now had to ensure that it would never be ratified. How they managed to do this, without revealing their hand during its entire Parliamentary process, is something that will be explored in the next part.

(To be continued) □

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### **A new Athol Books publication**

#### ***Northern Ireland: What Is It? Professor Mansergh Changes His Mind***

by Brendan Clifford

(from p20)

by a medley of other academics. This book takes a look at those writings and takes issue with their approach, which fitted in with the new Oxbridge project of "Re-Writing Irish History". History-writing has become a political project. If war is a continuation of politics by other means, it might be said that politics is a continuation of war by other means. Britain may have lost in 1922, but the war is not over yet.

"Northern Ireland" is clearly continuing to serve the purpose for which it was set up.

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# The Agadir Debate – A Centenary of Some Consequence

by Pat Walsh

One hundred years ago the Agadir crisis that nearly led to world war occurred. It didn't lead to world war and a debate about it took place in the British Parliament. In the course of that debate certain things emerged that, if they had been acted upon, may have resulted in history taking a different course. They weren't acted upon and we are still living with the results.

The debate over Agadir was about Morocco but it was also about something much bigger. It was about the secret relations that Britain was forming with France and Russia which were resulting in the dividing up of Moslem North Africa and Asia as part of a developing relationship being established to wage war on Germany (and the Ottoman Empire).

The Agadir debate was a moment of opportunity to expose and cut off these relationships – an opportunity that was not subsequently taken. It is therefore forgotten since it sits rather uncomfortably with how history has had to be written ever since.

It has a hero – John Dillon. But one would be hard pushed to find mention of it in any accounts of Dillon's life or that of his party, the Irish Parliamentary Party. The hero held his tongue soon after and the world went on to catastrophe.

The hero helped bring about the catastrophe with his colleagues and they were subsequently cast into the dustbin of history. But since their reappearance on the stage of history there has been no attempt to remember the day when one amongst them might have made a difference – if he hadn't sacrificed the future of the world for Irish Home Rule.

## The Agadir Crisis

The Treaty of Madrid in 1880 established Morocco's right to sovereignty and the right of the European Powers to practise free trade within it (That was as opposed to the right of one of the European Powers to take Morocco for itself and exclude the others).

However, under the *Entente Cordiale* of 1904 Britain secretly conceded the right of France to create a 'sphere of influence' in Morocco – which was short for a gradual annexation at the right moment – in return for France's recognition of England's 'free hand' in Egypt.

This arrangement between Britain and France was part of a general division of North Africa between these two powers and Spain (which was also promised a part of Morocco) and Italy (which earmarked Libya for itself).

The Kaiser, having got wind of what was afoot, demanded, on a yachting trip in the area, that the European Powers uphold the Treaty of Madrid which they had signed up to and continue to allow German trade in the region. In Algeiras during 1906-7 the other European Powers isolated Germany and formalised their penetrations into North Africa, although assuring Germany that her trading rights would go unhindered.

France's intention was to conquer Morocco and make it a colony with British acquiescence. In 1911 there was a small rebellion in Morocco against the Sultan. The French helped the Sultan defeat the rebels and then used the opportunity to occupy Morocco militarily.

Germany had a small gunboat in the area, the Panther, which needed refuelling and repairs. It docked at Agadir and this caused an international incident.

Britain immediately claimed that Germany was trying to establish a coaling base in Agadir for its ships. It was a principle of British naval policy that other nations should not possess coaling bases at strategic points which would threaten Britain's dominance of the seas.

Asquith called an emergency meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence on 23 August 1911 and began to activate plans for a war on Germany. According to the Naval Assistant Secretary to the Committee, Captain Maurice Hankey, those assembled

"were reminded at the outset that the expediency of sending an expedition to the Continent had been treated as a matter of policy which could only be determined when the occasion arose by the Government of the day".

By the end of the session, according to Hankey, the meeting accepted that there was a threat from Germany and that Britain's interests were best protected by participating in a war on the continent.

Brigadier General Henry Wilson gave a presentation of the military plans he had made with the French to put a British Expeditionary Force of 100,000 men on the left of the French lines. According to Hankey,

"from that time onward there was never any doubt what would be the Grand Strategy in the event of our being drawn into a continental war in support of France".

Conceived by the War Minister Haldane and pursued with enthusiasm by Henry Wilson, this plan remained in place without revision until the war in 1914. The conversations between the British and French General Staffs were not revealed to the rest of the British Cabinet until 1912 and it was only in August 1914 that Parliament became aware of them.

Edward Grey learned an important lesson in the Moroccan crisis of 1911. That lesson was that if Germany clearly perceived in a crisis that there was a direct risk of an Anglo-German war, Berlin would back down. In the Agadir crisis Lloyd George had delivered a clear public warning to Germany and Berlin had replied at once that she was not seeking a permanent presence on the coast of Morocco. The crisis was soon resolved and Europe remained at peace. The lesson Grey apparently learnt was that if a war was desired at a future point England's position should not be made so clear to Germany.

## Guilty Little Secrets

The immediate cause of the House of Commons debate on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1911 was a press exposure of some of the secrets of the 1904 *Entente*. In the autumn of 1911 two Parisian newspapers, *Le Temps* and *Le Matin*, published the secret articles of the 1904 Anglo-French *Entente*, which revealed that England had

agreed to the occupation of Morocco by France. The debate was introduced in the following way: "*I beg to move that the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government be now considered.*"

However, the Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey, who presented himself to the Commons to explain his foreign policy, opened with the statement that although the House were debating foreign affairs in general he was going to restrict himself to speaking solely about the Agadir incident.

Grey, however, did make reference to certain suspicions that were arising with regard to secret commitments that had been made with the French.

By 1911 suspicions had begun to rise amongst the Gladstonian rank and file of the Liberal Party that something was going on behind their backs. On 8 March, 1911, a Radical member, Mr. Jowett, asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons if "*any undertaking, promise, or understanding had been given to France that in certain eventualities British troops would be sent to assist the operations of the French army?*" The Under-Secretary had replied, "*The answer is in the negative.*"

Hearing this sheepish reply, John Dillon said:

"I say that there is a very uncomfortable feeling among many honourable members that there is a secret alliance with France or some 'understanding' which is not known to the Members of the House." (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 March, 1911.)

A few days later in a debate over increased Naval Estimates Dillon exposed the great secret of Liberal Imperialist Foreign Policy and where, he believed, it was leading:

"Mr Dillon said that the Government must not suppose that the figures in the division that night any more than on the last Monday night really showed the state of feeling either in the House or in the country, but there was hanging over the House a dominant issue which had made the Irish Party - and he believed the majority of the Radical party - resolve that they would do nothing which would in any way weaken or discredit the Government until that great issue was disposed of. Although it was a bitter dose, they were prepared to swallow measures which if they were free they would oppose to the bitterest extremity... The Two Power Standard was now a commonplace expression. A more insolent and aggressive and provocative proposition never was laid before the civilised world than the Two Power Standard. What was the origin of the Two Power Standard? It was invented against Russia and France, but since then there had been established an *Entente* with France and an agreement with Russia. The result, however, was not to get rid of the two Power Standard or any diminution of armaments. The Russian agreement was spoken of as a great instrument of peace, but there was immediately an unparalleled jump in the armaments of this country. They were now told they must have the three Power Standard, because the Opposition had declared that there was no safety unless they prepared against the Triple Alliance. Did they propose to fight the Triple Alliance single handed? Was not language of the kind used by the Opposition calculated to convey the impression that was what they were preparing for? (Ministerial cheers). What about France? He thought that one of the glories of the British Government was that it formed the *Entente* with France.

Mr ARTHUR LEE - It is not the same as an alliance.

Mr DILLON said that was so, and some members of the House had a very uneasy feeling that there was a secret alliance with France... The charge that the honourable member made against the Government was of yielding to influences which no Liberal Ministers ought ever to yield. They came down to the House and on misleading information, induced their Party by promoting a scare to agree to expense beyond all necessary requirements. Ministers had said that Germany had recently and surreptitiously entered upon a policy of acceleration in order to get ahead of England and set the country on fire, and the 'i's were dotted and the 't's were crossed by the Opposition... All that occurred showed Germany, in this particular matter, had acted throughout in perfect good faith, and that it was impossible to acquit the British Government of having acted in a provocative manner. It was no wonder that the German Government should be suspicious and hostile to them. The only party who had the right to complain in the whole course of this transaction was the German Government." (*Freeman's Journal*, 17 March, 1911.)

Arthur Lee was the Unionist spokesman on naval affairs. In 1905, when a Lord at the British Admiralty, he said in an after-dinner speech, widely reported in the German Press, that he would have no hesitation in destroying the German Navy before even bothering to declare war. (And it was common knowledge in Royal Navy circles that Admiral Fisher intended to "Copenhagen" the German fleet - a reference to Nelson's bombardment of Copenhagen and destruction of the neutral Dutch fleet in 1807.)

The important point in Dillon's intervention was that after the alliances constructed with France and Russia the traditional Two-Power Standard that Britain maintained was no longer justifiable. This was the standard by which Britain deemed it necessary to retain its command of the seas by having superiority over the fleets of the next two greatest maritime powers.

The understandings with Russia and France gave the Triple Entente battleship strength of four times that of Germany. But the Liberal Party did not see it this way because they did not know - or did not want to know - that the understandings were, to all intents and purposes the alliances of a war coalition. So Dillon's incisive questioning of the need for soaring Naval Expenditure was not taken up and no opposition of real consequence emerged on the Liberal benches to what was being done.

There is a clue to the reason for this in the first part of Dillon's speech. The "*dominant issue*" Dillon referred to, which prevented more vigorous opposition being mounted to the Naval Estimates, was the Parliament Act, which was to open the way for Irish Home Rule. In the conflict with the Unionists there was a general drawing together of the disparate elements within the Liberal Party and the Irish Party, which enabled the Liberal Imperialist coterie to continue their policy that led to war. And this process of doing "*nothing which would in any way weaken or discredit the Government*" accelerated with the introduction of the Home Rule Bill.

I have read in some Liberal accounts, written after the Great War, the argument that the Lloyd George Budget, which stirred up the inter-party conflict, was a lot of bluster aimed at creating a diversion for the Liberal Imperialist war designs. Maybe that is taking the conspiracy aspect of it all a little too far. But Asquith

surely must have realised that his Radical Chancellor was creating a handy smoke screen in which he could get on with the business that he was conducting behind the backs of his party.

### John Dillon, the lost saviour?

In November 1911, before the Home Rule Bill, John Dillon realised the enormity of the question involved and protested vigorously about the secrecy that was still attached to a vital issue that had nearly caused a European war.

The speech of Dillon's illustrates what a very good grasp he had of the origins of the "*continuity of foreign policy*" and the dangerous situation that was developing, as a result of the Liberal Imperialist secret policy.

Between August and December 1911 Dillon criticised British Foreign policy on a number of occasions in the House of Commons. He was well informed, but he was the only Irish member with any interest in world affairs. His Leader, John Redmond's horizons in the world were those of the British Empire and he took his reading of foreign policy from Britain - only objecting to it because Ireland did not play as full a part in it as he thought it should.

Dillon was more rigorous than the Gladstonian Liberals in his opposition to Grey's policy and was also more forthright in his questioning of its intent. But his criticisms and warnings began to fall on deaf ears as the Home Rule alliance drew together against the Unionists. And then it finally became impolitic of him to say any more as the future of the Home Rule Bill became dependant on the support of the Liberal Imperialists and how much they were going to back it against Unionist threats of armed resistance to it. And so Dillon kept his counsel and confined his thoughts to letters to C.P. Scott.

In the face of Dillon's questioning, the Government had no alternative but let the House of Commons see the secret articles regarding Morocco. Parliament was afforded a golden opportunity to prevent future secret diplomacy and to demand the fullest information regarding every detail of Britain's war obligations, including the true nature and objectives of Britain's military co-ordination and arrangements with the French. But nothing was done.

### Home Rule and World War

About eighty Liberals who were keenly interested in foreign affairs were organised in a private backbench group called the Liberal Foreign Affairs Committee. These Radicals were critical of both the direction and conduct of Grey's foreign policy. They were very active up to 1912, but after that they lost a great deal of their impetus.

From 1912 onwards, the conflict over Irish Home Rule began to predominate and from the same time the Radicals started acquiescing in the naval estimates. In the intensifying conflict with the Unionists over Home Rule no Liberal, however opposed to increased expenditure on military equipment, wished to break Party ranks. A Liberal publication, *The Nation*, of 9th June 1912, noted the dilemma for those Liberals and Irish Members opposed to Grey in the aftermath of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill,

and explained the Radical capitulation to the Liberal Imperialist foreign policy in the following way:

"When they go into the Government lobby to vote reluctantly on the handling of Anglo-German relations or the increase in armaments they are in fact voting for Free Trade, Home Rule and Social reform."

Once the Home Rule struggle began to develop, Liberal criticism of Grey ceased and the desire to probe his secret dealings and arrangements was quelled. It was left to a Unionist to next challenge Grey in the Commons over the nature of his alliances:

"The question was asked in the House of Commons: 'There is a very general belief,' said Lord Hugh Cecil, on March 10th, 1913, 'that this country is under an obligation, not a treaty obligation, but an obligation arising owing to an assurance given by the Ministry, in the course of diplomatic negotiations, to send a very large armed force out of this country to operate in Europe. That is the general belief.'

To this Mr Asquith replied: 'I ought to say that is not true.' A fortnight later he amplified his assurance by stating that this country was not under any obligation, not public and known to parliament, which compelled it to take part in any war. In other words, if war arose between European powers, there were no unpublished agreements, which would restrict or hamper the freedom of the government, or of parliament, to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in the war...

If the House of Commons had received any assurance less unequivocal, it is more than possible that the ministerial party would have split and that the Government would have fallen. Though heavily reduced in numbers, the Liberal majority was identical in spirit with that which had been returned to support Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman; it was strongly radical, strictly Nonconformist and essentially pacific, knowing little of history and nothing of foreign policy, neither understanding nor liking continental adventurers and occasionally resisting vehemently a quarter-comprehend drifting which demonstrably absorbed in armaments a revenue which might have been devoted to social reform. It disliked Mr. Churchill's activities at the Admiralty. It distrusted the liberal imperialist elements which had risen to the top of the Cabinet in the persons of Mr Asquith, Sir Edward Grey and Lord Haldane..." (Stephen McKenna, *While I Remember*, p. 135-6.)

Elie Halevy, the thoughtful French historian and philosopher, commented in the Epilogue to his *A History of the English People, 1906-14*, on this English desire not to know what was going on:

"Surely the silence of the entire press - Radical as well as Unionist - was a deliberate silence, inspired by the patriotic wish not to embarrass the Government. The country did not know because it refused to know. There is an ignorance whose true name is connivance." (p.620.)

However, what made the Gladstonian Liberals connive at Grey's foreign policy was not specifically "*the patriotic wish*", but Party loyalty in the intensifying struggle with the Unionists that culminated in the near civil war over Irish Home Rule.



The Gladstonian Liberals were in the same trap with regard to foreign policy as the Irish Party fell into over Home Rule, in relation to the Liberal Imperialist leadership. If the Liberal backbenchers voted against the Government they brought all their desired social reforms down with it and let the Unionists in - and everything was thrown away. So they supported the Liberal Imperialist war expenditure on a “*better the devil you know*” basis - not realising they did not know the devil at all.

Asquith, Haldane and Grey kept their cards very close to their chests with regard to what they were planning against Germany and the Party and the House of Commons were placated by peace platitudes, while detailed preparations for war were being planned behind the scenes.

And so the attitude in the Liberal Party to foreign affairs, which the Liberal Imperialists encouraged, was “*leave it to Grey*.” The Radicals were kept occupied by the welter of domestic legislation and the conflict with the Unionists over Home Rule. And so Grey and Haldane had a free hand to get on with their work unmolested by Gladstonian anti-war sensibilities and the bulk of the Party.

### **The importance of Liberal Imperialism**

Looking back on the pre-war period, Archibald Hurd, leader writer and naval expert of the *Daily Telegraph* counted it

“a providential ordering of affairs that the Asquith Government and not the Conservative Party was in control... In those fateful years, the Conservative Party would have been harried by the left-wing section of the Liberals and it is unlikely that the Liberal Imperialists, lacking inside information of what Germany was doing, would have given its support” (*Who Goes There?* pp. 108-9.)

There would not have been effective preparations made for war if the vital constituent in the recipe for disaster - the Liberal Imperialists - had been in opposition before the war. Without the key Ministries they would have not have carried as much weight in the Liberal Party and the Radicals would have been much freer to oppose any Unionist war plans. And if England had not been as prepared for war as it actually was in August, 1914, there would have been no British participation in it. And therefore there would have been no world war – which depended on British Liberal participation – in giving it a global and catastrophic character of millenarian proportions.

The character and composition of the Liberal Government made for a situation in which war was made much more likely than any other political combination could have produced. Even if Grey had decided that a declaration of armed support for France and Russia or the formal establishment of an open alliance between the three countries was the best way of preserving the peace of Europe, he could not have done it. Such a promise would have bound no one but himself. He could not have got the Cabinet to agree to such a policy prior to an actual war situation, when it was too late. Because the Liberal Imperialist policy was unacceptable to the Gladstonian substance of the Party in conditions of peace it could only be agreed to by Parliament as a *fait accompli* - as it was on 3 August 1914.

What greatly facilitated war in 1914 was the peculiar nature of British politics at the time. The Liberal Imperialist leaders of

the Government utilised the Unionist and Press attacks on it to beat down their own Radicals and get their own way. In the same way they occupied the Gladstonian anti-war element by letting them have their way against the Unionists in the domestic sphere whilst they procured unprecedented and unusual allies to the cause in the Irish Party through the Home Rule struggle.

Once the fight for Home Rule was joined, the Irish Party settled into a passive contentment with Imperial foreign policy. This transformation in the Irish Party policy between 1911 and 1914 can only be viewed in the context of its developing relationship with the Liberal Party, and in particular with its Liberal Imperialist leadership. In 1911 there was some independence of mind left in John Dillon and a few others, at least, and the Party was still capable of pursuing a critical policy with regard to British warmongering. In 1912 it went more fully into alliance with the Liberals and could no longer see anything bad in the Liberal Imperialists, who had taken up the Home Rule fight with gusto. And by August, 1914, when the Irish Party had become a virtual annexe of the Liberal Party, having gone the whole way on Home Rule together, Redmond and his colleagues were in the pockets of the Liberal Imperialist coterie and acted merely as an instrument of them in doing down the English Radical opposition to the Imperialist war on Germany.

There is a very great and intricate connection between the Liberal/Irish Parliamentary Party alliance and the Great War. It is not a connection that covers the Irish Party in glory – in the light of subsequent events. It is not a connection that the new breed of Irish historians has sought to explore. But it is vital to understand it if subsequent Irish history is to make any sense at all.

### **Continuity of Foreign Policy**

The House of Commons debate is interesting also for Ramsey Macdonald’s use of the phrase ‘*continuity of foreign policy*’.

The Liberal Imperialists took from their mentor, Lord Rosebery, a conviction that Foreign Policy should be ‘continuous’ and not be affected by party politics. What was actually meant by ‘continuance’ was a continuation of the active Imperialism of the era under new Liberal management – as opposed to a shift toward the half-cocked Imperialism of Gladstonian Liberalism.

This was a very important factor in the building of the necessary relationships required for an alliance and possible war against a new enemy, particularly since Britain had been known to practise the no binding commitments policy of splendid isolation in the previous century.

Edward Cook, the Liberal Imperialist journalist and former editor of the *Daily News*, suggested the insertion of an important sentence referring to the future continuity of British foreign policy in the famous article ‘*British Foreign Policy*’ written by Leo Maxse in late 1901 in the *National Review* that launched the new foreign policy of Liberal Imperialism.

Maxse’s article was not just another anti-German article, for two reasons. Firstly, the people who were intimately involved in its composition were in a position, or would be in a position shortly, to do something about the question of Germany. And secondly they did in fact do something about it – in such a way that the article ‘*British Foreign Policy*’ turned out to be *the* British

foreign policy, from 1906, under the long serving Liberal Imperialist Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey.

The interesting thing about Maxse's 1901 article was that it showed how confident Edward Grey was of becoming Foreign Minister in a future Liberal Government and getting his own way on policy. His confidence was based on the fact that he had been second in command to Lord Rosebery at the Foreign Office and had developed friendly and influential connections there. The fact that Grey had been an advocate of developing "an understanding" with France, even before the Unionists had perceived its advantages made him the favourite candidate of the Foreign Office to be their chief upon the assumption of power by the Liberals. When Grey entered the Cabinet in 1905-6, having the backing of powerful figures at the Foreign Office, he had the presumption to stipulate to Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister that he should agree to clear the decks for him by entering the House of Lords. When he was frustrated by the Premier's desire to lead from the Commons, Grey demanded a free hand in foreign policy as the price of his loyalty and party unity.

The Liberal Imperialist policy of 1901 was therefore continuous in both encouraging and predicting the tentative re-orientation of 1904, conducted by the Unionist Government, and accelerating it and developing it to its full potential from 1906 to 1914, when it bore its full fruits.

### Mark Sykes before his crusade

The House of Commons debate is interesting for a number of other reasons. It has the maiden speech of Mark Sykes for one. Sykes went on to write the famous article in *The Times* (20.2.17) called 'the clean fighting Turk – a spurious claim'. This was the opening of the British propaganda offensive waged against the Ottomans which was designed to prepare the way for the conquest of Moslem lands in the name of progress (which is another word for Britain).

Sykes was, of course, also involved in carving up the Middle East with the French at the same time as Britain was promising an Arab state to the Arabs who they had recruited against the Ottomans. In December 1915 Sykes became Asquith's expert in dividing up the Middle East. At that point, when Britain had decided upon throwing the area into flux in overturning its foreign policy of a century and destroying the Ottoman Empire, it needed to get down to the detail of assigning the booty of war. So Asquith turned to Sykes who had travelled the region and had written a couple of travel books on it. Sykes pretended to be fluent in Arabic and Turkish and charmed Asquith into letting him redraw the map of the Middle East for posterity. "I should like to draw a line from the *e* in *Acre* to the last *k* in *Kirkuk*" said Sykes. And that is how England and France drew their line in the sand.

In May 1916, the Sykes-Picot Treaty saw Britain and France grant themselves exclusive rights to divide up the Arabic-speaking regions of the Ottoman Empire along Sykes's line in the sand. Roughly what is now Syria and Lebanon went to France, while Britain claimed what became the Palestine and Iraq. At the same time, Britain was promising Faisal Hussein, son of the Hashemite Sharif Hussein of Saudi Arabia, and later king of Iraq, an Arab State in the same area, in return for his rebelling against the Ottomans.

Sykes's view of the Ottoman Empire in 1911 was very different from that of 5 years later. In 1911 he expressed the traditional Tory view of the Ottomans in supporting the propping up of the Ottoman Empire as a buffer against Russian expansion into the Mediterranean. And he wondered, before the consequences of Britain's strategic orientation against the Ottomans became apparent, what on earth England was trying to do in Istanbul – not realizing that the British State was changing its mind about not letting Russia have Istanbul.

### The Problem of Persia

Another issue that raised its head in the debate is the problem of Persia. Assurances that Britain was not involved in a partition and annexation of Persia were given by Grey and Asquith. But the future showed differently.

In the 1907 agreement between Russia and Britain, which paved the way for war on Germany and the Ottoman Empire, the Russians and British had partitioned Persia into zones of influence. One of the chief bones of contention between Russia and England had been about spheres of influence in Persia. The British agreements with the Russians to settle differences over Persia were designed so that war could be made on Germany. Persia, it was decided, was to be divided in two by the two Powers with a buffer zone in between. The zones were supposed to be "spheres of influence" but Southern Persia, adjacent to the Persian Gulf, was gradually absorbed by Britain into the Empire.

In March 1915, through a series of three notes exchanged among Britain, Russia and France, Istanbul/Constantinople was promised to Russia, while France and Britain were to be given the other areas from the Ottoman Empire. Russia was to allow Britain to take control of the so-called "neutral zone" that the two empires had established to separate their respective spheres of influence in Persia before the war.

Persia was intimately connected with Mesopotamia in the British strategic conception. In August 1919, Britain imposed the Anglo-Persian Agreement on the country. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, who drafted the document, described England's policy of adding Persia to the Imperial sphere, in a memorandum:

"If it be asked why we should undertake the task at all, and why Persia should not be left to herself and allowed to rot into picturesque decay, the answer is that her geographical position, the magnitude of our interests in the country, and the future safety of our Eastern Empire rendered it impossible for us any time during the last fifty years - to disinherit ourselves from what happens in Persia. Moreover, now that we are about to assume the mandate for Mesopotamia, which will make us coterminous with the western frontiers of Asia, we cannot permit the existence between the frontiers of our Indian Empire and Baluchistan and those of our new protectorate, a hotbed of misrule, enemy intrigue, financial chaos, and political disorder. Further, if Persia were to be alone, there is every reason to fear that she would be overrun by Bolshevik influence from the north. Lastly, we possess in the south-western corner of Persia great assets in the shape of oil fields, which are worked for the British navy and which give us a commanding interest in that part of the world." (Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, pp. 39-40)

It seems that many things of today began to come about in 1911. □

## **Extracts from House of Commons Debate on Foreign Policy, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1911**

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[Edited and Introduced by Pat Walsh (see p 30)]

**Sir Edward Grey:**

“... Now let me say something as to foreign policy generally. First of all let me try to put an end to some of the suspicions with regard to secrecy—suspicions with which it seems to me some people are torturing themselves, and certainly worrying others. We have laid before the House the secret Articles of the Agreement with France of 1904. There are no other secret engagements. The late Government made that Agreement in 1904. They kept those Articles secret, and I think to everybody the reason will be obvious why they did so. It would have been invidious to make those Articles public. In my opinion they were entirely justified in keeping those Articles secret, because they were not Articles which commit this House to serious obligations. I saw a comment made the other day, when these Articles were published, that if a Government would keep little things secret, *a fortiori*, they would keep big things secret. That is absolutely untrue. There may be reasons why a Government should make secret arrangements of that kind if they are not things of first-rate importance, if they are subsidiary to matters of great importance. But that is the very reason why the British Government should not make secret engagements which commit Parliament to obligations of war. It would be foolish to do it. No British Government could embark upon a war without public opinion behind it, and such engagements as there are which really commit Parliament to anything of that kind are contained in treaties or agreements which have been laid before the House. For ourselves we have not made a single secret article of any kind since we came into office.

Now let me say a word upon the general aspects of what I consider is the proper foreign policy of this country, and what the foreign policy of the Government has been. It is said to be, and in a sense that is quite true, a continuation of the policy of the Government in which Lord Lansdowne was Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Some years ago we had constant trouble and friction with France and Russia. Everybody remembers it. There were continual excursions and alarms, and more than once we were supposed to be on the brink of war with one or other of these two countries. I remember when I was Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office in 1893, there was much more abrupt talk of war about Siam, although I believe it would have been madness for the two countries to go to war about Siam in the light of what has happened since. It would have been madness and a crime. But for a short time there was great excitement on that point. An end has been put to all that as far as regards France and Russia. The late Government turned relations which had been those of friction and difficulty with France, not perpetual but intermittent, into relations of cordial friendship. The friendship which they made we have kept unimpaired. As far as there are records in the Foreign Office to give me any indication of Lord Lansdowne's intentions, I think he would have desired, had he remained in office to-day, something of the same kind with Russia. I do not say they had gone far, or that he had incurred any responsibilities or committed himself in the matter, but as far as I have any indications, that is the direction in which he would have gone. We have gone on in that direction, and what was accomplished with France has been

accomplished with Russia. The relations have been changed from those of friction and difficulty into relations of friendship, and it is well that it has been so, because in different parts of the world British interests touch and rub against French and Russian interests, and where that is so, it is difficult to find a halfway house between constant liability to friction and cordial friendship. It is cordial friendship alone which provides sufficient mutual tolerance and goodwill to prevent difficulties and friction which would otherwise arise.

In addition to that, our friendship with France and Russia is in itself a guarantee that neither of them will pursue a provocative or aggressive policy towards Germany, who is their neighbour and ours. Any support we would give France and Russia in times of trouble would depend entirely on the feeling of Parliament and public feeling here when the trouble came, and both France and Russia know perfectly well that British public opinion would not give support to provocative or aggressive action against Germany...

There is one foreign policy different to the one which I have been endeavouring to sketch to the House, and it seems to me to be advocated in some quarters of the country. It seems to me to be simply disastrous. It is that we should give it to be understood that in no circumstances, however aggressively, provocatively, or wantonly, a friend of ours was attacked, we should give our friend any assistance whatever. That would be an attempt to revert to what was once called a policy of ‘splendid isolation.’ It would deprive us of the possibility of having a friend in Europe, and it would result in the other nations of Europe, either by choice or by necessity, being brought into the orbit of a single diplomacy from which we should be excluded. The ideal of splendid isolation contemplated a balance of power in Europe to which we were not to be a party, and from which we were to be able to stand aside in the happy position of having no obligations and being able to take advantage of any difficulties which arose in Europe from friction between opposing Powers. That policy is not a possible one now. Any single Power that attempted to adopt that policy in Europe to-day would be felt as a public nuisance, and if we were that single Power, one result would be that in the course of a few years we should be building warships not against a two-Power standard, but probably against the united navies of Europe. As a matter of fact that policy, which would be disastrous, is not a policy...”

**Mr Andrew Bonar Law:**

“...We all rejoice that this Morocco settlement seems to be going to be carried through. We all trust and believe that it will remove one ground of possible friction between us and Germany, and we desire nothing more than that every ground of friction, so far as it possibly can be done, should be removed in the same way. We do not grudge Germany, to use an expression which is constantly found in statements, her place in the sun. We do not

wish to stand in the way of her legitimate aspirations, and we shall never show ourselves anxious to block her path merely to prevent her becoming a greater nation than she is. We shall never do so. The right hon. Gentleman made another statement with which I also agree. He pointed out quite truly that we do not desire to extend our Empire further. Speaking of the possibility of the future, every man must make reservations, and I think the reservations which were made by the right hon. Gentleman are sufficient for me. I say without any hesitation that we do not desire accessions of territory, and in saying that I am not speaking for one small section of the House. I believe I am speaking for the nation at large. We do not desire accessions of territory. Our responsibilities are great enough already. We have no wish to increase them. The one wish by which all my Friends behind myself are actuated, and I believe it is true of every man, it is true of the whole nation, our one desire, our one ambition, is not to enlarge but to build up our Empire.”

### **Mr Ramsey Macdonald:**

“I am afraid that in respect to the pious opinion in favour of continuity of foreign policy, I am somewhat of a heretic. It all depends on what you are continuing. If the foreign policy which you have inherited from your predecessors is a bad foreign policy, I am bound to confess I see no virtue in carrying it on... We are told that we are going to continue our friendship with France and with Russia. Why? What is the friendship? What are the obligations? With reference to Russia, we have had the explanation given in previous Debates in this House. In preparation for this Debate I have glanced down some of the speeches made on those occasions.... The whole justification for our friendship with Russia lies in the liberalising of Russian institutions—and that has not happened. As a matter of fact, one of the results of our pro-Russian policy has been to encourage the Russian bureaucracy to stamp out Parliamentary institutions as much as they possibly can in Russia. Things have gone back from the Parliamentary point of view rather than forward on account of the friendship we have shown to Russia during the last five or six years. With reference to our present relations with Russia, how far are they going to carry us? The right hon. Gentleman told us that we had no secret understandings, no secret treaties, no secret obligations of any kind whatever. I am bound to confess that the present position of affairs in Persia—which I am not going to discuss, but which I believe other Members desire to consider in detail—give one a justification for suspecting that there is an understanding with Russia going much further than anything which has been published. Is our friendship with Russia going to carry us to the extent of being willing to crush out Persian nationality? Is our friendship with Russia of such a character as to compel us to agree to a partition of Persia?...

...At any rate, I hope the experience of the summer and autumn will not allow this House to go quietly to sleep again. We have had our warning. We have had our disturbance. If the result of it is that in future some machinery will be created by which this House, and through this House the country may be kept in touch with foreign affairs and with the mind of the policy of the Foreign Office, then we will look back to the summer of 1911 with a shudder of what we have gone through, but nevertheless with a great deal of delight that it has helped us to settle one of the most difficult and one of the most dangerous problems of our diplomacy.”

### **Mr John Dillon:**

“I do not believe any representative assembly in the history of the world has ever been called upon to discuss a matter so vital and so far-reaching as that which the House of Commons has before it to-day to consider, and with so absolute a lack of information. This present discussion in this respect beats all records. The House was summoned for this discussion to-day without any Papers whatsoever. What is it that the House ought to have had before we were asked to embark on this discussion? We ought to have had a Blue Book containing the diplomatic history of the Moroccan question, including the secret treaty with Spain. The Algeiras Act has already been published. I refer to the secret treaty with Spain, published for the first time the other day, and which the Foreign Minister of France declared three weeks ago he had never heard of, and was not aware of the existence of a treaty to which this country was a party. We should have had the text of the German agreement of 1909, with an explanation of how it came about that France jockeyed Germany in regard to that agreement, and withdrew from carrying into effect—a matter that was one of the immediate causes of the recent friction. We ought at all events to have had such an account of diplomatic correspondence between the four great Powers intimately interested in the question of Morocco, as is customary to be given to the House of Commons on such an occasion. This would have enabled Members of the House, before this Debate commenced, to form a really well-grounded judgment upon the whole matter.

We have heard a good deal to-night of the secrecy of the foreign policy of this country. It is no use attempting to deny it. Those of us who have been a long time in this House, and can remember the methods of the Foreign Office twenty-five years ago, know as a matter of fact, which cannot be successfully denied, that the Foreign Office policy has become during the last ten years progressively more secret every year. Until this present year this has gone on, when the intense pressure of foreign affairs and the danger of war has forced the hands of the Minister to give some time for the discussion of Foreign Office affairs. For ten years the foreign policy of this country has been conducted behind an elaborate screen of secrecy. Some of us pointed out years ago that the secrecy of foreign affairs was the inevitable and logical result of that new departure which was heralded about ten years ago, and which we heard praised once more on the floor of this House tonight. I refer to what is known as the policy of the continuity of the foreign policy of this country; of the withdrawal of the foreign policy of this country from the sphere of party politics.

Party politics are the only means by which you can discuss matters of great moment in this House, and the moment there is agreement between the two Front Benches to withdraw the foreign policy of this country from the sphere of party politics, that moment you set up an inevitable and by logical sequence a secret system of foreign policy. As some of us pointed out at the time the inevitable result of that system, which the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has on more than one occasion lauded in public, and which we have endorsed from the Front Opposition Bench to-night, has been more and more year after year to throw the conduct of the foreign policy of this country into the hands of the permanent officials of the Foreign Office. That is really what is at the bottom of this matter. This Moroccan business has been in the hands of the permanent officials of the Foreign Office, and has been withdrawn alto-

gether from the cognizance of the House of Commons now for the last seven, eight, or ten years. We are now reaping the consequences.

What were the questions that were being asked all over the country last week? Although he has skirmished round them in his statement to-night I maintain that the Foreign Secretary has given entirely unsatisfactory answers. The first question that I have endeavoured to frame is: What were the causes which led His Majesty's Government to support the French Government in their recent incursion in Morocco—for that is what has led up to the strain and trouble of recent times? What is the nature and extent of the obligations by which this country is bound to France in connection with affairs in Morocco? The Foreign Secretary made an able speech, but he gave us no categorical answer to that point. We know from the statement of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs that it was known to Germany that England was compelled by treaty to support France in her policy to Morocco—at least, diplomatically. The Foreign Secretary evidently laid stress on the words 'at least.' We have had no light thrown upon the question to-night as to whether we were bound by the interpretation put upon the agreement of 1904 to go beyond diplomacy in supporting France in her attempt to carry into effect a Protectorate over Morocco.

Further, there is a question on which I want to say a very few words upon; but it is an all-important question. I understand that the Foreign Secretary or the Prime Minister intends to wind up this Debate and to reply to the various questions raised. What is the interpretation which is put by His Majesty's Government on the terms of the Anglo-Russian Agreement in its application to Persia? These questions, I maintain, have not been satisfactorily answered in the statement to which we have just listened. I have made a careful study of the statement to the Reichstag Committee on Foreign Affairs by the German Foreign Minister, or such parts of it as were published. An authentic official copy of that ought to have been circulated to the Members of this House. We have to rely, so far as the text is concerned, upon newspaper reports, and we have had striking evidence of late that newspaper reports are very dangerous things to rely upon...

The first thing that strikes me in this Debate on Morocco to-night is that in all the controversy that has raged during these recent months it does not appear to have occurred to anyone that the people of Morocco have any say in the matter at all. [HON. MEMBERS: 'Hear, hear,' and a laugh.] That statement excites laughter. I pause here to say that I really do feel it to be a deep humiliation that a British Liberal Minister should stand up and deliver the long speech to which we have listened, the burden and conclusion of which apparently was that in his judgment the Moroccan question had been most satisfactorily settled, with not one sentence from beginning to end to indicate the smallest sympathy with the people to whom the country belonged. Yet I say, I speak with confidence, that there is not a man in this House who would have the courage to stand up and say that we have evidence that the people of Morocco, or any small section of the people of Morocco, are satisfied with the treatment to which their country has been subjected. France, Germany, Spain and Great Britain have been brought to the very edge of war over their respective interests, and not one amongst them has in all this discussion dreamed of consulting the people of Morocco, or of taking into consideration the question that these people have their rights. The Moorish people are a very ancient and a very proud

people, who have maintained their liberty now for upwards of a thousand years.

I confess that to me—I am only an Irish Nationalist—it appears one of the most disgraceful of the whole of these transactions, and a disgrace which attaches to all the great Powers of Europe, that the wishes of the people themselves have been so completely ignored...

I recall this more especially, not for its application to the present immediate situation, but as a warning of the danger of this system of secret diplomacy going on behind our backs, and which suddenly finds us on the edge of a precipice without knowing how we got there. If war had broken out in July last, I say there would not have been 100 people in this country who could tell what that war was all about. Is it not a horrible thought that two of the great nations of Europe were brought to the edge of war and would undoubtedly engage in the worst war since the Thirty Years War, which turned back the tide of culture and civilisation in Europe for generations; and I say deliberately, in spite of what the Foreign Secretary has said, I believe we were on the very edge of war when the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was made, and I say it is horrible to think that we should have found ourselves on the verge of war, and that such had been the system of the foreign policy of this country that not 100, and certainly not 300, people in the whole of England could have told what that war was about.

We heard a great deal about that speech in which the world was informed that England was not prepared to be left out of any negotiations which affected her interests as if she had no right to a seat in the Cabinets of Europe. Was Germany left out in 1904 by England and France, and treated as if she had no right to a seat in the Cabinets of Europe? I think that is a reasonable consideration when there is talk about good feeling between Germany and England, and it helps us to understand Germany's feeling. Let me turn to the justification of that feeling... The German Emperor declared his determination of maintaining the independence of the Sultan, and that brought about a conference at Algeciras and another war condition. What was the main leading article in the Algeciras Act? It was the justification of the position of Germany, namely, that the European Powers solemnly undertook to maintain intact the sovereign rights and integrity of the Empire of Morocco. I have come to the conclusion, from studying this question, that wherever three or four Powers enter into an agreement to maintain the integrity of a smaller and weaker Power, that Power is certainly doomed and going to be divided up.

The ink upon the Algeciras Act was hardly dry when France set to work to attempt to undo it, and by steady encroachment to set aside this solemn European instrument and to set up her Protectorate over Morocco...

I want to say a few words about the question of Persia... Things have come to such a pass in Persia that I do think the interest of this country is considerably aroused. What was the object set forth in the Anglo-Russian Agreement? That object, so far as it related to Persia, was to preserve and maintain the integrity and the independence of the Persian Government. When the Persian Government protested against those portions of the Anglo-Russian Agreement which set up spheres of influence without consulting the Persians at all, the British Government desired the

British Minister at Teheran, on 5th September, 1907, to make a solemn communication to the Persian Government in the following words:— The object of the two Powers, Russia and England, in making this agreement, is not in any way to attack, but rather to assure for ever the independence of Persia... What has been the history? Immediately after the meeting at Revel, the Persian Parliament was bombarded by Russian Cossacks, and from that hour to this the Russian Government has persistently, steadily, and without halt, obstructed the National Government of Persia and carried on a system of perpetual aggression...

What is the traditional policy of Russia? She commences with small things, by which she feels her way, and, if they pass, she goes and does something more. When the Foreign Secretary justifies and excuses and explains away these attacks on the integrity and independence of Persia, I say he makes himself responsible for all Russia is doing and encourages her to further acts of violence. That is not all... The very moment the Persian Government is getting on its legs, and had a chance again of producing order, the British Government on a totally different pretext ordered Indian troops to occupy several of the southern cities in the England sphere of influence. Remember this—it is really the most cruel thing: The pretext on which this act was done was that European lives were in danger. It is one of the most extraordinary things throughout the whole of this Persian trouble, now lasting for six years, that from the beginning to the end—during civil war, tumult, and disorder of various kinds—not one single European has been injured. There is no such record in the whole of history. Yet after such a magnificent record, England seizes the opportunity, while Russia are invading Northern Persia, to send Indian troops into Southern Persia. Remember this: We have not up to this moment one tittle of evidence laid before the House of Commons on what ground our Government asserted that European lives were in danger in any of the Southern spheres; indeed, nothing but the word of the Secretary of State.

What is the effect of this policy? The effect, in the first place, must be to destroy the prestige of the Persian Government, and, in the second place, to make it despair of maintaining its ground against the pressure of Russia. The effect in this country has been to convince the people here that England is a party to the Russian aggression, and has consented practically to the partition of Persia..."

**Mr. Mark Sykes:**

"I need not say how hard it is for anyone speaking here for the first time to touch on so difficult, I might almost say so perilous, a subject as foreign affairs... I particularly feel the responsibility which attaches to any Member, no matter how new a comer he may be, when he is speaking on these subjects. I have known Armenians who have been encouraged to their own disaster by hearing occasional encouragement in this House, and have been led to go far beyond what they would have done had it not been for such encouragement. I have had similar knowledge and experience of Greeks who have suffered in the same way. I even fear to-day lest when this Debate is reported in the French newspapers there may be a certain danger of revulsion of feeling consequent on words used by the hon. Member for East Mayo [Mr. Dillon]..."

Again, if we turn to Turkey, I think the results are far from satisfactory so far as our policy is concerned. When the right hon.

Gentleman first assumed office he took over that awful charge which weighed on the shoulders of every English Secretary of State, the internal condition of Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia, and our responsibility in the matter. The right hon. Gentleman took over that charge when Turkey was at its very worst, during the last declining days of Abdul Hamid. There were then three serious problems to be faced in regard to Turkey: the problem of equilibrium, the hope of good government for the Balkans, the problem of the Bagdad Railway, and also the problem of our serious responsibilities with regard to the Christian inhabitants of Turkey in Asia; liabilities which we have always been ready to admit and always done our best to carry out. Suddenly, and not altogether unanticipated, came the revolution... The whole people, Mahomedans and Christians alike, turned to us. What has been our policy in regard to Turkey since then it is impossible to say. The right hon. Gentleman has really given so little information that we are without the rough outline of what our policy has been since then. On the surface we have given some officers to the Navy, some excellent officers and instructors. We have given certain officers to the Turkish Customs, who have done good work. That is not going very far. I know that the financiers of Turkey will never forgive us—although I do not think the right hon. Gentleman is responsible for it—in that we are building for Turkey two 'Dreadnoughts' at this moment... Then came the revolution of April, and again the silence at home. We know not what happened, or what was our attitude with regard to it. We know that those who conquered in that revolution and the people who succeeded in crushing the counter revolution have been hostile to England since that day. I do not know whether we did something by omission or commission; I should think omission. A rough idea ought to be given to the House of how we stand with regard to Turkey. Turkey is going downhill, she is bound in debt, and yet I am certain that a strong and united Turkish Empire is as important to English commerce and strategy now as it was in the time of Lord Beaconsfield, and, perhaps, even more so.

One thinks of Germany for a moment, but I am certain that, so far as private Members are concerned, the least said about Germany the better. We have heard from the right hon. Gentleman that there are no obligations other than those obligations that have been stated, and that there are no secret obligations. Although we may have no obligations in the event of a possible war taking place, the right hon. Gentleman did not say anything about intentions, and if it were our intention, in the event of a war—I do not say with whom—to send an armed force of troops sufficient in number to affect a European war from this country to the Continent of Europe, all I can say is our Foreign Office policy and the War Office provision do not fit at all. If we had to send abroad enough men to have any effect in a European war, we should not only have to send men to the Continent of Europe, but I am certain that when you send a red-coat or a khaki-coat across the water to the Continent of Europe you must simultaneously send large numbers to Egypt, the Soudan, and India. We remember the Mutiny and the Crimea, and how the two went together. There are plenty of people in India, in Egypt, and in the Soudan who, the moment the news comes across the wires that English soldiers are in Europe will spread the news that they are beaten. If you do not want to have simultaneous trouble in those countries, not only must you send your expedition to Europe, but you must send two fairly large expeditions to show that your hands are not preoccupied, to show that you have still got strength..."

## The Community Spirit is the Missing Link of the EU

### Interview with Jacques Delors on Euronews 13.9.11

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[Jacques Delors reminds us of what it meant to be European. Euronews is a European News TV Channel, founded in France.]

Euronews: “Monsieur Delors bonjour! First, could you tell us how you feel when you see the European Union project in such difficulties.”

Jacques Delors: “I’m worried and I have regrets. I especially regret that when the euro became operational, during the decision-making in 1997 they rejected my idea for an economic policy coordination pact alongside the Stability and Growth Pact.”

Euronews: “Who rejected it?”

Jacques Delors: “I think the Heads of Governments together rejected it.

“If we’d had that [an economic policy coordination pact], the euro would not only have had a protective effect, including of mistakes made by certain people, but also the pact would have stimulated the euro, and also, in discussions with each other, they would have noticed that private debt in Spain was mounting to dangerously high levels, that the Irish government was turning a blind eye to the mad deals made by the banks, etc etc...”

“But they didn’t do it.”

Euronews: “But why?”

Jacques Delors: “Why? Because, leaving aside this business of the economic policy coordination pact... which they’re now coming back to in one form or another but it’s a bit late now... The problem which has arisen from the Greek difficulties is simple: do we apply the “no bail out” as written in the Treaty which states that there will be no systematic help for a State which runs into difficulties.

“Or does the Eurogroup feel that it is morally responsible since it did not see the deterioration of the situation in these countries, and therefore it should take political decisions to address the problem.

“That’s the idea I’ve been putting forward, especially to the Germans, telling them “But we are collectively responsible, we cannot simply point the finger at the naughty Greeks”.

Euronews: “You say that the idea of an economic government for the eurozone, as proposed by Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel, would not be useful.”

Jacques Delors: “If Mr Sarkozy and Mrs Merkel supported the community method, if they didn’t spend their time trying to marginalise the Commission and piling difficulties on top of President Jean-Claude Juncker of the Euro-group...”

Euronews: “Is that what they’re doing now?”

Jacques Delors: “That’s what they’ve done... they’ve tilted the system towards intergovernmental decision-making but it isn’t possible for 17 Heads of Government or Finance Ministers to define economic policy.

“We need to go back to the community method, give the Commission back its role in decision-making.

“If you marginalise the Commission ... if you swap Mr Juncker for Mr Van Rompuy to do the same job, then nothing changes.

“The problem is the anti-Community attitude of these two leaders.”

Euronews: “ But the Commission... can... how shall I say... get its pride back and act strongly again, reassert itself.”

Jacques Delors: “The Commission initiates. It can therefore make proposals. If these proposals are not accepted, it can explain these proposals to the press, and thus to EU citizens. That’s the threat I used when they wanted to put off adopting the Erasmus programme.

“I told the President of the European Council, Mrs Thatcher, “You know, at our joint press conference, I’m going to say that you don’t want this student exchange programme.” They changed their minds and backed the programme.

“This is how a system can work.

“The European Parliament plays an increasingly important role, I’m glad to say, and it does good work. So it only needs a few adjustments for the system to get back to healthy working methods.”

Euronews: “For you the key is “returning to the principle of reinforced economic cooperation.”

Jacques Delors: “Yes.”

Euronews: “What would that mean?”

Jacques Delors: “I say: You have to isolate the Greek case and deal with it. You can’t simply say, punish Greece or even just say to them “Get out of here!”

“Secondly and most importantly, we have to use the decisions that have already been taken to formulate plans of actions to try and support the euro, leading to the issue of euro-bonds.”

Euronews: “Mrs Merkel says she’s against euro-bonds.”

Jacques Delors: “The governments have decided via a small amendment of the Treaty, to create a European Stability Mechanism.

“I suggest this mechanism be put in place by 2012. And I think this should issue the euro-bonds.

“So in a practical spirit, I say it is possible to graft these euro-bonds onto the European Stability Mechanism, which is the result of a preexisting intergovernmental agreement, so I wouldn’t jeopardise the Treaty.

“And secondly, I suggest that the European Investment Bank

increase its operations and also issue euro-bonds, not to consolidate the debt, but to cover future expenses.”

Euronews: “If a lack of fiscal and budgetary union is what’s destabilising the euro to that extent, isn’t the answer to be found in fiscal union?”

Jacques Delors: “I feel that we are building a Union of diversity. But when we go from 27 to 17, meaning Economic and Monetary Union, well then diversity has to take a back seat... otherwise it’s not possible.

“With the Single European Act in 1985 which I proposed, I said it is based on three principles: competition which stimulates, cooperation which strengthens, and solidarity which unites.

“Cooperation is the missing link.

“But if that doesn’t work, either the euro project ends and Europe simply becomes a vast free trade zone, a “loose confederation” as the British say... or they decide to make a new Treaty with more federalism at the top...”

Euronews: “But Mr Delors, this Europe isn’t speaking with one voice...”

Jacques Delors: “All these great leaders who are talking, do they care that the Presidency of the European Council is Polish?

“Do you think the way the Polish presidency is ignored is a good thing?”

Euronews: “You think it’s being ignored?”

Jacques Delors: “Yes, it’s being ignored!

“And do you think that that is a good sign for Europe?

“Same thing with this scandal... Finland and Slovakia demanding special guarantees before they would take part in the Greek rescue plan.

“It’s a scandal!

“As soon as Finland said that, the European Council ought to have met and said NO, that’s not possible.

“It’s the spirit that is being diluted, the community spirit in a way, the feeling of belonging to a collective enterprise.

“That has to be deplored.

“We who are Europeans, we’re not just Europeans in our heads, because “The EU makes us strong”. We are Europeans in our hearts, and that’s what’s missing today.”

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## An American voice on US foreign policy

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### **Gen. Wesley Clark interviewed by the daily news programme Democracy Now 2 March 2007**

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Interviewer (Amy Goodman): Today, an exclusive hour with General Wesley Clark, the retired four-star general. He was Supreme Allied Commander of NATO during the Kosovo War. He has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2004, he unsuccessfully ran for the Democratic presidential nomination. He recently edited a series of books about famous US generals, including Dwight Eisenhower and Ulysses Grant, both of whom became president after their military careers ended.

On Tuesday, I interviewed Wesley Clark at the 92nd Street Y Cultural Center here in New York City before a live audience.

[General Wesley Clark recounted a post 9/11 conversation in the Pentagon:]

“About ten days after 9/11, I went through the Pentagon and I saw Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz. I went downstairs just to say hello to some of the people on the Joint Staff who used to work for me, and one of the generals called me in.

He said, “Sir, you’ve got to come in and talk to me a second.” I said, “Well, you’re too busy.” He said, “No, no.” He says, “We’ve made the decision we’re going to war with Iraq.” This was on or about the 20th of September.

I said, “We’re going to war with Iraq? Why?” He said, “I don’t know.” He said, “I guess they don’t know what else to do.” So I said, “Well, did they find some information connecting Saddam to al-Qaeda?” He said, “No, no.” He says, “There’s nothing new that way. They just made the decision to go to war with Iraq.” He said, “I guess it’s like we don’t know what to do about terrorists, but we’ve got a good military and we can take down governments.” And he said, “I guess if the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem has to look like a nail.”

So I came back to see him a few weeks later, and by that time we were bombing in Afghanistan. I said, “Are we still going to war with Iraq?” And he said, “Oh, it’s worse than that.” He

reached over on his desk. He picked up a piece of paper. And he said, “I just got this down from upstairs” — meaning the Secretary of Defense’s office — “today.” And he said, “This is a memo that describes how we’re going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.” I said, “Is it classified?” He said, “Yes, sir.” I said, “Well, don’t show it to me.”

And I saw him a year or so ago, and I said, “You remember that?” He said, “Sir, I didn’t show you that memo! I didn’t show it to you!”

[http://www.democracynow.org/2007/3/2/gen\\_wesley\\_clark\\_weighs\\_presidential\\_bid](http://www.democracynow.org/2007/3/2/gen_wesley_clark_weighs_presidential_bid)

See also: Interview 10 March 2007, which mentions a conversation with Paul Wolfowitz in 1991:-

“I said to Paul and this is 1991, I said Mr. Secretary you must be pretty happy with the performance of the troops in Desert Storm. And he said, well yeah, he said but not really, he said because the truth is we should have gotten rid of Saddam Hussein and we didn't. And this was just after the Shia uprising in March of 1991 which we had provoked and then we kept our troops on the side lines and didn't intervene. And he said, but one thing we did learn, he said, we learned that we can use our military in the region in the Middle East and the Soviets won't stop us. He said, and we have got about five or ten years to clean up those all Soviet client regimes; Syria, Iran, Iraq, - before the next great super power comes on to challenge us. [...]

This country was taken over by a group of people with a policy coup, Wolfowitz and Cheney and Rumsfeld and you could name a half dozen other collaborators from the project for a new American century. They wanted at us to destabilize the Middle East, turn it upside down, make it under our control. It went back to those comments in 1991.”