

# 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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“Something not far from malice.”

## Editorial I

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John Bruton, the West Brit of long standing, who had a portrait of John Redmond in his office when he was Taoiseach, has been shocked by a sudden realisation of what Britain is. In an outburst at a meeting of the Ireland/Canada Business Association on 8th March he declared that Britain was motivated by "*something not far from malice*" in its recent handling of the Fiscal Compact development within the EU.

Bruton's attack was disowned for the Coalition by Joe Costello of the Labour Party. It would have been unpleasant for the present Fine Gael Taoiseach to have to repudiate a statement by the much-admired, and notoriously Anglophile, last Fine Gael Taoiseach.

Costello, Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, said:

"I don't think there is anything approaching malice in Britain's decision in relation to the fiscal compact. Immediately following the British decision, the Irish government made a friendly approach to the British government, and it made that approach because it sees Britain as an ally".

And he pointed out that Britain had made a £7 billion loan available to Ireland in the banking crisis of 2010.

That loan was, of course, an investment. Its motive was profit. The interest rate was 5.8%. However when Ireland negotiated a lower interest rate on European loans, the price of the British loan was reduced accordingly. And the British terms included the condition that, if Ireland did not actually avail of the money made available to it, it would have to pay a hefty fine.

Britain is well practised at applying the language of altruism to strictly commercial transactions. People from radically different cultures sometimes find it puzzling that one says "*Thank you*" on receiving a commodity for which one has paid, in a transaction which it is the vendor who profits, as if one had received a gift. But that is the custom. And, though it may be a pleasant custom, it is important not to forget that it is a mere gloss on "*the nexus of callous cash payment*"—a form of social connection pioneered in England, about which England never deceives *itself*.

England made a sound investment in the Irish banking crisis. And, if it had proved to be unsound, it would have been worth a few billion to it politically to have Ireland in hock to it.

Bruton's outburst came a few days before a meeting between Kenny and Cameron in London, at which arrangements were made to begin a process of merging the two civil services. And why not? RTE is already little more than an echo of the BBC. And increasingly

the Irish State appears to itself to be something left over from the actions of a previous generation whose motives, purposes, morale, and national will now appear alien and incomprehensible. It exists, but it knows not why. What separate business does it have in the world now?

Well, it has the Fiscal Compact, though it wishes that it hadn't. The mere fact of separate existence has, through the accidents of international affairs, during the past generation led to further degrees of separation from Britain, even while the separatist will has been withering. Regret or ridicule 1916 as much as you please—they produced something actual in the structure of the world. Garret FitzGerald, another Anglophile Fine Gael Taoiseach, was very much struck by that fact towards the end of his life.

John Bruton is a typical Irish Brit, in that he hasn't a clue about Britain. He soaked up the sentiment which Britain exudes from its elaborate façade and so he is shocked when he is confronted with a piece of the reality behind it.

In 1910 an American Ambassador had a friendly discussion with Arthur Balfour, former Prime Minister (who had enacted the most comprehensive social reform there has ever been in Ireland) and future wartime Foreign Secretary. Balfour—an urbane, civilised, philosophical politician—mentioned that it would probably be necessary to make war on Germany in order to maintain the British commercial position in the world. The American was shocked. But, if Britain had been incapable of imagining such projects, and carrying them out, it would not be what it is—and the world would not be what it is.

America has come on a lot since then. It now does what Britain did then. But Britain has still not given up the Imperial ghost—it would be very difficult for it to do so because it still lives by the exploitation of the world established by the Empire. The Fiscal Pact is therefore very dangerous to it, and there is nothing it will not do to ward off that danger.

The British action that disillusioned Bruton came at the end of decades of effective British subversion of the EU from within, some of it done while Bruton himself was a functionary of the EU. He did not notice it because he was starry-eyed.

The European development, as conceived and implemented in the period of De Gaulle and Adenauer, was incompatible with Britain's relationship with the world. Its applications for membership were therefore vetoed by De Gaulle. But eventually Britain got in, and it set about changing the EU into a mere market for its goods

and services, with the emphasis on financial services. It was its success that led to the banking crisis from which Ireland is trying to extricate itself.

Germany, being called on to bail out all the financial crises that resulted from changing the EU from the Christian Democratic model to the British, finally asserted itself as a European political presence—the first time it has done so since the Adenauer era. It undertook to keep the Eurozone functional. It was actively supported by France. The other Euro States could not but agree, including Ireland—which would have preferred not to, but which had got itself separated from Britain through not following promptly enough the zig-zags of British policy. And the EU States which were not Euro States supported the German/French departure because they were European.

The EU as a functional structure was already defunct by this time. All Britain did was to refuse to let its hulk be used as a cover for the new departure.

Bruton's complaint is that Britain might have let the EU faade be used for the Eurozone development and demanded an 'opt-out' for itself.

Britain obviously concluded that its long series of 'opt-outs' had served their purpose of disembowelling the EU and that it was best not to let British prestige be used in support of the Eurozone development. The Eurozone must sink or swim by its own efforts, and it is not in Britain's interest to help it to swim.

If it breaks up, that will cause Britain both difficulties and opportunities. Britain is prepared for this. A settled world is not its ideal, or its expectation, and is not in its interest.

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## Books by Pat Walsh

*Britain's Great War, Pope Benedict's Lost Peace*

How Britain Blocked The Pope's Peace Efforts Between 1915 and 1918

Athol Books 2006

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*From Civil Rights To National War*

Northern Ireland Catholic Politics, 1964-74

Athol Books 1989

In this pioneering work Pat Walsh traces the development of Catholic politics in Northern Ireland from the early 1960s and shows how the Civil Rights movement became transformed into the shooting war of today. The decline of the Nationalist Party, the IRA split, the formation of the SDLP and its moment of truth at Sunningdale are all covered in detail showing how the old, when it gave all the indications of dying out, reasserted itself against the new and fashioned the mould of Catholic politics for another decade.

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*Ireland's Great War On Turkey, 1914 - 24*

Athol Books 2009

Ireland's Great War on Turkey is largely a forgotten event in Irish history. That is despite the fact that it was probably the most significant thing Ireland ever did in the world. That war lasted from 1914 until 1924—when the Irish Free State ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and finally, along with the rest of the British Empire, made peace with the Turks. It made the Middle East (including Palestine and Iraq) what it is today, and had the catastrophic effects on the Moslem world that persist to the present.

Ireland's part in the Great War on Turkey was an embarrassment to Republican Ireland and its historians and the details of the War became forgotten. The more recent historians of a revisionist disposition and the Remembrance commemorators have also refrained from remembering it, for other reasons.

This book, the first history of Ireland's War on Turkey, explains why the British Empire really made war on the Ottoman Empire and why Irishmen found themselves part of the invasion force it sent to Gallipoli. It describes the forgotten political and military assault launched on neutral Greece and the devastating effect this ultimately had on the Greek people across the Balkans and Asia Minor. It explains the reasons for the establishment of Palestine and Iraq and why the United States was repelled from the League of Nations by the behaviour of the British Empire in the conquered Ottoman territories after the War.

It concludes on a positive note, describing the great achievement of Ataturk in leading the Turkish nation to independence from the Imperialist Powers. This was an event that Republican Ireland could only marvel at, from the confines of the Treaty and the British Empire.—an Empire whose demise Ataturk set in motion through the successful Turkish War of Independence.

Disillusioned leaders of the Libyan Revolution accomplished by NATO bombing are now complaining that the US/UK/EU combination is not tending to Libya's needs. They destroyed the functional Libyan State established by Gaddafi, leaving Libya Stateless. If the overthrow of Gaddafi had been conducted by a revolutionary force representing the great majority of the people—which is how it was represented when the shapeless opposition groups were recognised by the EU etc. as the legitimate authority—Libya would not have remained Stateless after Gaddafi was murdered. It is Stateless because it was not Gaddafi's Libyan opponents who overthrew his regime. NATO destroyed the regime, flattering the disorder of opposition groups out of their minds while doing so. The opposition groups were even primed to say to the world that they were in political command, and they had just "*outsourced*" the air strikes to NATO. But, when they murdered Gaddafi for world television, they found themselves without a State, and in a condition of megalomaniacal delusion on the subject of States, which is not conducive to constructing one.

States, even bad ones, are not easy to construct out of chaos. States of the kind that we call democratic are the outcome of long historical gestation in which democracy is a late development within systems of authority. But when powerful democratic states want to destroy some State which they have marked down as an enemy, they do not scruple at telling the inhabitants of that state that democracy comes as easy as eating pie. Just get rid of the bad man and it will happen.

(President Obama has said as we write that the leader of North Korea is a bad man.)

The point of the destruction of the Libyan State was not to put a better State in its place—a State better able to conduct Libya as a Power in the world system of Powers. It is just not in the interests of the militaristic democracies—US, UK, France—to erode their own power by helping other states, sitting over valuable raw materials or sited at strategic junctures, to become more effective at tending to their own national interests.

A development not much noted is the use of murder as a form of politics by President Obama. We have come a long way since the use of murder—the killing of an individual beyond the battlefield—was a war-crime. It was treated as such in the Nuremberg Trials. Otto Skorzeny was charged with planning to murder an enemy commander, General Eisenhower. The case was dropped on the ground that there was insufficient evidence, but probably because the Western democracies were getting ready for war on their eastern ally who had actually defeated Nazi Germany, and resourceful Germans began to be looked on kindly.

We did not hear that murder was ever struck off the list of war-crimes. And, if it is a war-crime, then it must be doubly a peace-crime.

The Israeli State pioneered murder as an open proceeding, and was not reprimanded for it. President Obama has now normalised it as a procedure of the greatest democracy in the world, which now appears to see it as its destiny to bring the world to heel. It has also established torture as a proper democratic procedure.

The grand ideals spun out of the war against Nazi Germany and the Cold War against Communist Russia have been blown away during the past 20 years—the era of the unchallenged dominance of the greatest democracy the world has ever seen.

We are not being pessimists. We just don't see living in illusion in these matters, and having inoperative ideals manipulated, as a very good thing.

Of course there are signs of change. We may be progressing towards the dominance of the world by a number of Great Powers. Russia is restoring itself. And China, which only wanted to live at peace within its own borders until Britain invaded it in the Opium War and broke it open, has realised that if it wants to be let live at peace within itself, it must make itself a military World Power. It must also show that it is capable of destroying the world if it is interfered with in order to ensure that it will not be interfered with and broken up.

The twenty years of unipolar dominance of world affairs by the greatest democracy the world has ever seen have been years of irresistible destructive wars by that democracy. The restoration of a system of more or less equally powerful World Powers, with each acting as the protector of weaker states against the others, seems at this juncture to be the only way of establishing an element of stability in world affairs.

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# 'NGO': The Guise of Innocence

by Jenny O'Connor

In December Egyptian prosecutors and police raided 17 offices of 10 groups identifying themselves as "pro-democracy" NGOs, including 4 US based agencies. 43 people, including 16 US citizens, have been accused of failing to register with the government and financing the April 6<sup>th</sup> protest movement with illicit funds in a manner that detracts from the sovereignty of the Egyptian state.

The US has applied massive pressure on Egypt to drop the case, sending high-level officials to Cairo for intense discussions and threatening to cut off up to \$1.3bn in military aid and \$250m in economic assistance if the US citizens are tried. A travel ban was imposed on seven of the accused by Egypt's Attorney General, including Sam LaHood, son of Obama's Transportation Secretary. By the first day of the case all but the seven with travel restrictions had left the country and those who remained did not even attend court. A day after the ban was lifted a military plane removed the remaining 7 US citizens from Egypt after the US government provided nearly \$5m in bail.

The Egyptian authorities stated that the matter was firmly in the hands of the judiciary and out of control of government and accused the US of unacceptable meddling. The international community has expressed outrage at the affair and accused the Egyptian military of inciting paranoia of foreign interference so as to deflect attention from the slow pace of political and democratic reform a year after the revolution. Amid the high-profile diplomatic strife there has been an almost total global journalistic silence on the nature and funding of these 'NGOs', rarely even mentioning them by name.

## State sponsored organisations, not NGOs

The people standing trial are repeatedly referred to by governments and the media as 'NGO workers'. The 43 defendants worked for five specific organisations; Freedom House; the National Democratic Institute (NDI); the International Republican Institute (IRI); the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and the Konrad Adenauer *Stiftung*. Only one of these organisations, the ICFJ, can be considered as non-governmental in that it does not receive the majority of its funding either directly or indirectly from a government.

The NDI, chaired by Madeline Albright, and the IRI, chaired by Senator John McCain, represent the US Democratic and Republican political parties. The NDI and IRI, together with the Center for International Private Enterprise, which represents the US Chamber of Commerce, and the Solidarity Centre, which represents the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), make up the four "core institutions" of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). NED is a non-profit, grant-making institution that receives more than 90% of its annual budget from the US government. While Freedom House claims to be independent it regularly receives the majority of its funding from the NED. The Konrad Adenauer *Stiftung*, sometimes referred to as the German NED, is a non-profit foundation associated with the Christian Democratic Union. It receives over 90% of its funding from the German

*government*. This means that the IRI, the NDI, Freedom House and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung - four of the five accused organisation - are state sponsored institutions and can not be defined as NGOs.

Freedom House has long been criticised for its rightwing bias, favouring free markets and US foreign policy interests when assessing civil liberty and political freedom 'scores' in countries around the world. Freedom House statistics for 2011 claim that Venezuelans had the same level of political rights as Iraqis. Bolivia's overall score was reduced from "Free" to "Partially Free" after mass protests removed American-educated millionaire Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada from power after he initiated a sweeping privatization program. Now, under the first government in her history to really recognise the rights of the indigenous majority, Bolivia is still rated by Freedom House as only partially free and received a lower overall score than Botswana where one party (the BDP) has been in power since the first elections were held there in 1965. Freedom House has also been accused of running programmes of regime destabilisation in US "enemy states" and a 1996 Financial Times article revealed that Freedom House was one of several organisations selected by the State Department to receive funding for "clandestine activities" inside Iran including training and funding groups seeking regime change, an act that received criticism from Iranian grass roots pro-democracy groups. [1]

The most nefarious of these organisations by far, however, are the IRI and the NDI. They receive NED grants "for work abroad to foster the growth of political parties, electoral processes and institutions, free trade unions, and free markets and business organizations." [2] On March 6<sup>th</sup> a protest march was organised by American civil society organisations at the offices of the NED in Washington, demanding; "NO ATTACKS ON DEMOCRACY ANYWHERE! CLOSE THE NED". Union members and labor activists have protested and campaigned for years demanding that the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center break all ties to the NED.

## Board of Directors

Chaired by Richard Gephardt - former Democratic Representative, now CEO of his own corporate consultancy and lobbying firm - the NED's board of directors consists of a collection of corporate lobbyists, advisors and consultants, former U.S congressmen, senators, ambassadors and military and senior fellows of think tanks. For example John A. Bohn, a former high level international banker and former President and Chief Executive Officer of Moody's Investors Service, is now Commissioner of the California Public Utilities Commission, a principal in a global corporate advisory and consulting firm and Executive Chairman of an internet based trading exchange for petrochemicals. Kenneth Duberstein, former White House Deputy Chief of Staff under Reagan, is now Chairman and CEO of his own corporate lobbying firm. He also sits on the Board of Governors of the American Stock Exchange and NASD and serves on the Boards of Directors of numerous conglomerates including The Boeing Company, ConocoPhillips and Fannie Mae. Martin Frost is a former congressman who was involved

in writing the 1999 'Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act' also known as the 'Citigroup Relief Act', and William Galston, former student of Leo Strauss, is a US Marine Corps veteran.

The Board also contains four of the founding members of ultra-conservative think tank *Project for a New American Century*; Francis Fukuyama (author of *The End of History*), Will Marshall (founder of the 'New Democrats', an organisation that aimed to move Democratic Party policies to the right), former congressman Vin Weber (who retired from Congress in 1992 as a result of the House Banking Scandal and is now managing partner of a corporate lobbying firm) and Zalmay Khalilzad. Under George Bush Jr., Khalilzad served as US Ambassador to Iraq, Afghanistan and the UN. He is now President and CEO of his own international corporate advisory firm which advises clients – mainly in the energy, construction, education, and infrastructure sectors – wishing to do business in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also briefly consulted for Cambridge Energy Research Associates while they were conducting a risk analysis for the proposed Trans-Afghanistan gas pipeline.

## History

The NED was founded in 1983 when Washington was embroiled in numerous controversies relating to covert military operations and the training and funding of paramilitaries and death squads in Central and South America. The NED was formed to create an open and legal avenue for the US Government to channel funds to opposition groups against unfavourable regimes around the world, thus removing the political stigma associated with covert CIA funding. In a 1991 *Washington Post* article, 'Innocence Abroad: The New World of Spyleless Coups', Allen Weinstein (who helped draft the legislation that established the NED) declared; "A lot of what we [the NED] do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA".[3]

In 1996 the Heritage Foundation published an article in defence of continued NED congressional funding which accurately summed up the NED as a US foreign policy tool; "The NED is a valuable weapon in the international war of ideas. It advances American national interests by promoting the development of stable democracies friendly to the U.S. in strategically important parts of the world. The U.S. cannot afford to discard such an effective instrument of foreign policy...Although the Cold War has ended, the global war of ideas continues to rage"[4]

As well as ongoing campaigns of regime destabilisation in undemocratic US enemy states such as Cuba and China, and its well known funding of "colour" revolutionaries in the former soviet space, the NED has been repeatedly involved in influencing elections and overthrowing governments in left-leaning and anti-US democratic regimes around the world. This is achieved by providing funding and/or training and strategic advice to opposition groups, political parties, journalists and media outlets. As Barbara Conry of the Cato Institute wrote; "Through the Endowment, the American taxpayer has paid for special-interest groups to harass the duly elected governments of friendly countries, interfere in foreign elections, and foster the corruption of democratic movements." [5]

From 1986 to 1988 the NED funded the right-wing political opposition to Nobel Peace Prize winner, President Oscar Arias, in democratic Costa Rica because he was outspokenly critical of Reagan's violent policies in Central America. During the 1980s the NED was even active in 'defending democracy' in France due to the dangerous rise in communist influence perceived as occurring under the elected socialist government

of François Mitterrand. Money was channelled into opposition groups including extreme right-wing organisations such as the National Inter-University Union. In 1990 the NED provided funding and support to right wing groups in Nicaragua, and Daniel Ortega and the Sandinistas were removed from power in an election described by Professor William I. Robinson as an event in which "massive foreign interference completely distorted an endogenous political process and undermined the ability of the elections to be a free choice". [6]

In the late 1990s the NED provided funding and support to the US backed right-wing opposition against the election campaign of progressive former president, and first democratically elected leader of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. When a coup removed Aristide from power for the second time in 2004 it was revealed that the NED had provided funding and strategic advice to the principal organizations involved in his ousting. The involvement of the NED in the 2002 attempted coup against President Hugo Chavez in Venezuela has been well researched and documented. Immediately after the coup, however, the then president of the IRI, George Folsom, revealed the institute's role in the endeavour when he sent out a press release celebrating Chavez's ousting; "The Institute has served as a bridge between the nation's political parties and all civil society groups to help Venezuelans forge a new democratic future...".

The IRI was also implicated in the 2009 Honduran coup amid claims that the organisation had supported the ousting of democratically elected leader Manuel Zelaya because of his support of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (an anti-free trade pact including Honduras, Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba) and his refusal to privatise telecommunications. According to the Council on Hemispheric Affairs AT&T – an American telecommunications giant – has provided significant funding to both the IRI and Senator John McCain (its chairman) in order to target Latin American states that refuse to privatize their telecommunications industry.[7]

## Influence in Egypt and the Arab Spring

The NED works in democratic Turkey but does not provide "democratisation grants" to civil society organisations in Western allied absolute monarchies such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman or the United Arab Emirates. A number of NED backed activists have taken centre stage in the Arab Spring struggles and U.S. supported candidates have risen to occupy leading positions in newly established transitional governments. The most glaring example of this is Libya's transitional Prime Minister, Dr. Abdurrahim El-Keib, who holds dual U.S./Libyan citizenship and is former *Chairman of the Petroleum Institute sponsored by British Petroleum, Shell, Total and the Japan Oil Development Company*. He handed the job of running Libya's oil and gas supply to a technocrat and, according to the *Guardian*, has passed over Islamists expected to make the cabinet in order "to please Western backers". [8] Tawakkul Karman too, of Yemen, who became the youngest ever recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, was leader of a NED grantee organisation; "Women Journalists without Chains".

In 2009 sixteen young Egyptian activists completed a two-month Freedom House 'New Generation Fellowship' in Washington. The activists received training in advocacy and met with U.S. government officials, members of Congress, media outlets and think tanks. As far back as 2008, members of the April 6<sup>th</sup> Movement attended the inaugural summit of the Association of Youth Movements (AYM) in New York, where they networked with other movements, attended workshops on

the use of new and social media and learned about technical upgrades, such as consistently alternating computer simcards, which help to evade state internet surveillance. AYM is sponsored by Pepsi, YouTube and MTV and amongst the luminaries who participated in the 2008 Summit, which focused on training activists in the use of Facebook and Twitter, were James Glassman of the State Department, Sherif Mansour of Freedom House, National Security Advisor Shaarik Zafar and Larry Diamond of the NED. This is rather ironic considering that in September 2009 the US authorities arrested Elliot Madison (a US citizen and full-time social worker) for using Twitter to disseminate information about police movements to G20 Summit street protesters in Pittsburgh. Madison, apparently in violation of a loosely defined federal anti-rioting law, was accused of "criminal use of a communication facility," "possessing instruments of crime," and "hindering apprehension". Given that heavily armed police officers were using tear gas, sonic weapons and rubber bullets on protesters Madison's actions were hardly unjustified. Further demonstrating the hypocrisy of Madison's arrest is the fact that in June 2009 the State Department had requested Twitter delay a planned upgrade so that Iranian protesters' tweets would not be interrupted. Twitter Inc subsequently stated in a blog post that it had delayed the upgrade because of its role as an "important communication tool in Iran." [9]

A leaked 2008 cable from the Cairo US Embassy, entitled "April 6 activist on his US visit and regime change in Egypt", showed that the US was in dialogue with an April 6<sup>th</sup> youth activist about his attendance at the AYM Summit. The cable revealed that the activist tried to convince his Washington interlocutors that the US Government and the International Community should pressure the Egyptian government into implementing reforms by freezing the off-shore bank accounts of Egyptian Government officials. He also detailed the Youth Movement's plans to remove Mubarak from power and hold representative elections before the September 2011 presidential election. While the cable revealed that the US deemed this plan "highly unrealistic", the dialogue proves that the funding of any youth organisation associated with the April 6<sup>th</sup> movement by a US organisation since December 2008 had been done with Washington and the US embassy in Cairo being fully aware that the movement's aim was regime change in Egypt. Yet in April 2011 the *New York Times* published an article entitled 'U.S. Groups Helped Nurture Arab Uprisings' in which it openly stated that; "A number of the groups and individuals directly involved in the revolts and reforms sweeping the region, including the April 6<sup>th</sup> Youth Movement in Egypt, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and grass-roots activists like Entsar Qadhi, a youth leader in Yemen, received training and financing from groups like the IRI, the NDI and Freedom House".

According to the NED's 2009 Annual Report, \$1,419,426 worth of grants was doled out to civil society organisations in Egypt that year. In 2010, the year preceding the January – February 2011 revolution, this funding massively increased to \$2,497,457. Nearly half of this sum, \$1,146,903, was allocated to the *Center for International Private Enterprise* for activities such as conducting workshops at governate level "to promote corporate citizenship" and engaging civil society organizations "to participate in the democratic process by strengthening their capacity to advocate for free market legislative reform on behalf of their members". Freedom House also received \$89,000 to "strengthen cooperation among a network of local activists and bloggers".

According to the same 2010 report, various youth organisations and youth orientated projects received a total of \$370,954 for activities such as expanding the use of new media and social advertising campaigns among young activists, training

and providing ongoing support in "the production and targeted dissemination of social advertisement campaigns", building the leadership skills of political party youth, strengthening and supporting "a cadre of young civic and political activists . . . well positioned to mobilize and engage their communities", and providing youth training workshops in "professional media skills as well as online and social networking media tools".

But this is just the funding that is transparently made known to us on the NED's official website. After the revolution, the NDI and IRI massively expanded their operations in Egypt, opening five new offices between them and hiring large numbers of new staff. The Egyptian authorities claim that they have found these organisations' finances very difficult to trace. According to Dawlat Eissa – a 27-year-old Egyptian-American and former IRI employee – the IRI used employees' private bank accounts to channel money covertly from Washington, and an IRI accountant stated that directors used their personal credit cards for expenses. Eissa and a number of her colleagues resigned from their posts with the IRI in October, and Eissa filed a complaint with the government after director Sam LaHood reportedly told employees to collect all of the organisation's work related paperwork for scanning and shipping to the US.

It is clear that NDI, IRI and Freedom House were training and funding the youth movement in Egypt while the US Government and its Cairo Embassy were fully aware that the youth movement aimed to remove Mubarak from power. Critics claim that the defendants are being charged with a law that is a "relic of the Mubarak era". But, it may be replied, in what country does the law allow foreign governments to fund and train opposition groups with a stated goal of regime change? It is common sense to assume that if China or Cuba were funding similar oppositionist groups in the US, those involved would be facing far harsher sentences than the 43 now accused in Egypt. Yet they continue to hide behind the tattered guise of being 'NGO' employees, claiming independence because their US government funding is channelled through the National Endowment for Democracy.

The term 'NGO' is used deliberately to create an illusion of innocent philanthropic activity. In this case the Egyptian government is investigating the operations of organisations in receipt of US state funding which have a proven history of covertly funding political parties, influencing elections and aiding coups against both autocratic and democratic non-compliant and left-leaning governments around the world. Yet one mention of the Egyptian government's raid on the offices of so-called 'pro-democracy NGOs' in Cairo was enough to spark an international outcry. The result has been an almost complete failure by the Western press to investigate at all the history of the organisations involved or the validity of the charges being brought against them.

## NOTES

1. 'Bush enters Iran 'freedom' debate' by Guy Dinmore. *Financial Times*, March 31<sup>st</sup> 2006.

2. National Endowment for Democracy official website: [www.ned.org](http://www.ned.org)

3 'Innocence Abroad: The New World of Spyleless Coups' by David Ignatius. *Washington Post*, September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1991.

4. 'The National Endowment for Democracy: A Prudent Investment in the Future' by James Phillips (Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs) and Kim R. Holmes (Vice President of Foreign and Defence Policy Studies), Heritage Foundation, 1996

5. Conry, B. (1993) Cato Foreign Policy Briefing No. 27, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

6. Robinson, William I. (1992), A Faustian Bargain: U.S. Intervention in the Nicaraguan Elections and American Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era. Boulder: Westview Press. p150

7. D'Ambrosio, Michaela 'The Honduran Coup: Was it a matter of behind the scenes finagling by state department

stonewallers? *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, September 16<sup>th</sup> 2009

8. 'Libyan PM snubs Islamists with cabinet to please western backers'. *The Guardian*, Tuesday 22 November 2011.

9. Fleming, Sue 'US State Department speaks to Twitter over Iran' *Reuters* Jun 16, 2009

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## **Iran is not Trying to Develop a Nuclear Weapon, says US Defense Secretary, Leon Panetta**

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**by David Morrison**

Asked about Iran's nuclear programme on *Face the Nation* on CBS on 8 January 2012, US Defense Secretary, Leon Panetta, replied:

"Are they [the Iranians] trying to develop a nuclear weapon? No." [1]

Viewers whose opinions on Iran's nuclear activities have been formed by mainstream media in the West must have been amazed by this statement. There, the impression is constantly given Iran definitely has an active programme to develop nuclear weapons, which will yield results in a year or two. And that has been the impression for the last six or eight years.

One would never guess that it has been the considered view of the US intelligence services since November 2007 that Iran hasn't got an active nuclear weapons programme. This assessment was contained in a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) entitled *Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities*, key judgments of which were made public. These stated, inter alia:

"We judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program ... We assess with moderate confidence Tehran had not restarted its nuclear weapons program as of mid-2007 ..." [2]

An IAEA statement on 4 December 2007 in response to the NIE said:

"IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei received with great interest the new U.S. National Intelligence Estimate about Iran's nuclear program which concludes that there has been no on-going nuclear weapons program in Iran since the fall of 2003. He notes in particular that the Estimate

tallies with the Agency's consistent statements over the last few years that, although Iran still needs to clarify some important aspects of its past and present nuclear activities, the Agency has no concrete evidence of an ongoing nuclear weapons program or undeclared nuclear facilities in Iran." [3]

The NIE's conclusions were a disappointment rather than a relief to President George W Bush, who complained in his memoir, *Decision Points*, that the news "tied my hands on the military side", saying:

"But after the NIE, how could I possibly explain using the military to destroy the nuclear facilities of a country the intelligence community said had no active nuclear weapons program?"

(Quoted in *Urging Obama to Stop Rush to Iran War* by ex-CIA analysts Ray McGovern and Elizabeth Murray, published by Consortiumnews.com on 30 December 2011 [4])

Subsequent annual threat assessments of the US intelligence community given to the US Congress were not materially different from the conclusions of the NIE. For example, the February 2011 assessment to the House of Representatives intelligence committee by the Director of National Intelligence, James R. Clapper stated:

"We continue to assess [that] Iran is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons in part by developing various nuclear capabilities that better position it to produce such weapons, should it choose to do so. We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons." [5]

So, when he expressed the opinion on 8 January 2012 that Iran hadn't got a nuclear weapons programme,



Defense Secretary Panetta was merely repeating the considered view of the US intelligence services for the past four or five years.

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Do the Israeli intelligence services disagree with this assessment? Not significantly, judging by quotations from key Israeli intelligence service personnel published in the Israeli media.

*Israel: Iran still mulling whether to build nuclear bomb* was the headline on an article by Amos Harel in *Haaretz* on 18 January 2012, just before a recent visit to Israel by the head of the US military. The article said:

“Iran has not yet decided whether to make a nuclear bomb, according to the intelligence assessment Israeli officials will present later this week to General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“The Israeli view is that while Iran continues to improve its nuclear capabilities, it has not yet decided whether to translate these capabilities into a nuclear weapon – or, more specifically, a nuclear warhead mounted atop a missile. Nor is it clear when Iran might make such a decision.” [6]

This concurs with the view expressed in January 2011 by the head of Israeli military intelligence, Brigadier General Aviv Kochavi, just after his appointment to the post.

According to an *Agence France Presse* report, he told the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee on 25 January 2011 that “Iran is not currently working on producing a nuclear weapon but could make one within ‘a year or two’ of taking such a decision” [7]. He added that Iran “would then need more time to develop an effective missile delivery system for it”.

He also said “it was unlikely that Iran which currently enriches uranium to 20 percent, would start enriching to the 90 percent level needed for a bomb, because it would be in open breach of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty exposing it to harsher sanctions or even a US or Israeli military strike”, adding that “at the moment, it's not in Iran's interest to move their programme ahead”.

Earlier in January 2011, Meir Dagan, who had just retired as head of Mossad, told the same Committee

that he did not believe that Iran would be able to produce a nuclear weapon until 2015 (see *Haaretz*, 7 January 2011, [8]). According to *Haaretz*, he said that “Iran was a long way from being able to produce nuclear weapons, following a series of failures that had set its program back by several years”.

So, whereas Israeli political leaders often assert that Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons is imminent, Israel's intelligence services question whether Iran has made a decision to develop nuclear weapons. In that, they appear to be at one with the US intelligence services.

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# A case of *déjà vu* - England and France, 1851-1859 and England and Germany 1907-1910

by Eamon Dyas

On 12 March 1850, Sir Robert Peel, under whose administration free trade became the economic orthodoxy, gave a speech to the House of Commons. Britain had become a manufacturing economy and although the colonies continued to be acknowledged as an important source for raw materials, the main markets for England's produce was recognised as being in Europe and north America. Consequently, at this time questions were being asked in high places about the purpose of the Empire. It was in this situation that the costs of sustaining and defending an empire began to impact on government policy. Peel explained the reasoning in terms of the peace dividend:

“If in time of peace you will have your arsenals in every one of our colonial possessions in a state of complete efficiency – if you will have all our fortifications in every part of the world kept in a state of perfect repair, he ventured to say that no amount of annual revenue would be sufficient to meet such demands. If you adopt the opinions of military men, naturally anxious for the complete security of every assailable point, naturally anxious to throw upon you the whole responsibility for the loss, in the event of war suddenly breaking out, of some of our valuable possessions, you will overwhelm the country with taxes in time of peace.

The Government ought to feel assured that the House of Commons would support them if they incurred some responsibility for the purpose of husbanding our resources in time of peace. *Bellum para si pacem vis* [“if you want peace prepare for war” – ED] was a maxim regarded by many as containing an incontestable truth. It was, in his opinion, to be received with great caution and admitted of much qualification. He did not mean to say that we ought to invite attack by being notoriously unprepared for defence. But we should best consult the true interests of the country by husbanding our resources in time of peace, and, instead of lavish expenditure on all the means of defence, by placing some trust in the latent and dormant energies of the nation, and acting upon the confidence that a just cause would rally a great and glorious people round the national standard, and enable us to defy the menaces of any foreign power.

It was said that reference must be had by us to the warlike preparations of foreign powers. That was true, but at the same time the conduct of foreign powers in maintaining enormous military establishments ought to be a warning as well as an example to us. Though the great military powers of the Continent might be proud of their strength, and might cherish the belief that by means of their vast armaments they secured themselves against attack, yet the cost of these armaments was exhausting their resources and enfeebling their capacity for exertion by preventing the possibility of economy. No greater benefit could be conferred on the human race than if the great Continental powers were to consent to maintain their relative position towards each other, while each reduced its army to an

amount of force the maintenance of which would not exhaust its strength and undermine the foundations of its prosperity. If the time for a severe struggle should ever recur the financial trial would be as severe as the physical one. If the Governments of Russia, Prussia, France and Austria would have the good sense, without any disturbance of the balance of their relative strength, each to forego a portion of the enormous expense incurred by maintaining vast armies, they would not diminish their national security, and would greatly contribute to the happiness of their people. The conduct of foreign powers must, no doubt, have a certain influence on our own course in respect of the maintenance of establishments, but he repeated there was a lesson of warning as well as of example.”

(Quoted by G. Shaw-Lefevre, in *The Shade of Cobden*, pub. by the Cobden Club, London, 1899, pp.12-13)

This position is consistent with the general free trade philosophy. Free trade was not only about economics. There was a definite morality behind free trade. Richard Cobden, “the father of free trade,” was always at pains to point out that he believed in free trade not simply as an economic system but also because its introduction would herald a period of peace and prosperity at home and between nations. If markets were open to all then there would be no need for countries to fight over them. No longer would nations need to constantly increase their investment in their armed forces as a means of forcing their economic interests. Now, with markets free to all comers, it would be simply a matter of buying or selling your goods without recourse to posturing, threats or violence. Prosperity would flow as a result of increased commercial activity and would bring a peace dividend in its wake. Sir Robert Peel, the prime minister who a few years earlier had introduced free trade, was eager to press the advantages of a peace dividend that would accrue if England adopted a relationship with its empire that was more in keeping with the age of free trade. But of course this did not mean that England was prepared to abandon its leading position in the world. Other countries were compelled to accept the *status quo* which reflected England's hegemony in the world and desist from rearmament. In such circumstances, Britain could afford to reduce its own armed forces and everyone would gain by the freeing up such resources for reinvestment in their respective economies.

Thus was the cause of free trade wrapped up in that of peace and prosperity. However, Peel's plea that “if the Governments of Russia, Prussia, France and Austria would have the good sense . . . to forego a portion of the enormous expense incurred by maintaining vast armies, they . . . would greatly contribute to the happiness of their people” was proved to be mere rhetoric in the case of France the next year. The situation in France and its relationship with Britain at this time shows that any country which would “forego a portion of the enormous

expense incurred by maintaining vast armies” without at the same time signing up to free trade, continued to be treated as an enemy despite reducing its armaments. Any hope for peace and prosperity based on a policy of arms reduction without the free trade ingredient was deemed, in the case of France, to be a hostile act by Britain.

Louis Napoleon had been elected President of the Republic on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1848 and after a *coup d'état* in 1851 became Emperor of the Second Empire. Since being elected in 1848 he had pursued a policy of armaments reduction the object of which was to ensure that monies previously expended on its armed forces could now be used to encourage domestic prosperity. Although the reinvestment of money previously allocated to armaments was not the only reason, it did contribute to the fact that on his watch France experienced a significant industrialization of its economy as well as the renovation and modernization of Paris. When he adopted his policy of shrinking his armed forces, the British reaction was to stir up a wave of anti-French sentiment on the back of which it justified an increase in its own military expenditure. In 1852, despite the fact that the French army was being reduced and its navy considerably less equipped than in any year since 1840, Lord John Russell introduced a ‘Militia Bill’ the object of which, he claimed, was to counter any threat of invasion from France. The Bill was defeated on a hostile motion based on the fact that it did not go far enough and a new Government was formed by Lord Derby. The new government sought to take the measure further:-

“A new Militia Bill was proposed by Lord Derby’s Government, and was supported strongly by Lord Palmerston, who fed the alarms of the country by his exaggerated statements.

Steam navigation, he said, had given an advantage to our neighbours. It had thrown a bridge across the channel; 50,000 to 60,000 men could be transported from Cherbourg to our shores in a single night. Under this Bill 80,000 militiamen were added to the land forces of the country. An addition was made to our naval force of 5,000 seamen and 1,500 marines. The Secretary of the Admiralty, in making this proposal, said: ‘The time had arrived when, with the most pacific intention, it was absolutely necessary that we should put our Channel defences in a new position, and man the Channel with a large force.’ . . .

Pamphlets in great number were published, violent speeches were made, accusing the French Government of war-like intentions against this country. (ibid. pp.15-16).

The policy of the British in increasing their military expenditure was twofold. It was designed to ensure that France understand that, without committing to free trade, any arms reduction would not change its status as a potential enemy, and secondly, by continuing to increase its military expenditure Britain was ensuring that the country continued to spend more on its military than it would prefer. That way the ‘prosperity’ that France might have achieved in terms of its industrialization remained muted and consequently less of a commercial threat to England. The figures show how this worked in practice:-

## Naval Expenditure by France

Year	Total spent on navy	No. of seamen	No. of Ships in commission
1847	£5,145,900	32,169	240
1848	£4,985,872	28,760	242
1849	£3,923,276	27,063	211
1850	£3,406,866	24,679	181
1851	£3,293,737	22,316	166
1852	£3,462,271	25,016	173

(ibid. p.16)

Thus it can be seen that France’s consistent reduction in naval expenditure was reversed in 1852 and even then it was only a marginal increase. Up to that point, over a period of five years the amount that France spent on its navy was reduced by almost two million pounds annually – a drop of almost 40%. Then, in 1852, with England not only spouting anti-French propaganda, but also increasing its military expenditure, there is a reversal of this trend.

However, England is fickle. A couple of years later, now perceiving Russia to be the main threat England went to war with France as its ally. But, such was the depletion of the French navy by this time that its main operation was in ferrying troops to the Crimea and during the first year of the war she could only put a single battleship into the Baltic. Britain, on the other hand, used one of its Fleets to destroy the Russian Fleet in Sebastopol and another Fleet to tie up the Baltic thereby imprisoning the remaining Russian ships in their harbours. During the Crimean war, Britain also made sure that France would bear the brunt of the ground fighting, thereby ensuring that its army was diminished in the process. At the close of the war the British navy had destroyed the Russian fleet on the Black Sea and under the terms of the Treaty of Peace, had prohibited its reconstruction.

In the aftermath of the Crimean War and under pressure from England, France began the process of considering a free-trade agreement with England. In 1856, on the occasion of a visit from Lord Clarendon, the English Foreign Secretary, a leading French free trade economist who had the ear of Louis Napoleon, Michel Chevalier, had suggested to Cobden that the time was ripe for establishing free trade between the two countries. This was to take the form of a treaty as a treaty would not have to contend with the largely protectionist French legislature (a consideration that inhibited any earlier initiative from the free trade lobby in France).

This should have been the signal for England to soften its attitude towards France. After all, it had been a military ally and was showing signs that it was reducing its armaments in the aftermath of the high point of the Crimea war. But the English were spooked in 1857 by the announcement by France of its programme for naval construction extending over the following twelve years. This involved the construction of a number of

iron-clad battleships (in fact only three were built). That this was a twelve-year programme and that France announced its plans quite openly was not enough to convince the English government that no hostility to England was involved. When a year later it was announced by the French Admiralty that it had laid down the keel on an armoured-plated ship, the *La Gloire* – the first such in the world, with a completion date of 1861, this was too much for the English government and resulted in another wave of anti-French propaganda which included the official use of blatantly false figures and claims.

Sir John Pakington, the First Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Derby's Government produced false figures to claim that the traditional superiority of the British Navy had been eroded by France's increase in its fleet. As a response to this propaganda, when he introduced his Navy Estimates early in 1859 he asked for an additional £1,200,000 for shipbuilding and an increase of 7,000 in the number of seamen. In justification:-

“He asserted that the number of line of battle ships of France was the same as our own, viz., twenty-nine, and that by the end of 1859 France would have forty such vessels and England only thirty-six. He proposed to add twenty-six men-of-war in the coming year, by converting a number of sailing vessels into steamers.” (ibid. p.20)

These figures were a mere contrivance and shown to be so by Sir Charles Wood (later the founder of the Indian Civil Service) and by Richard Cobden. In fact for the year in question, 1858, England had spent over ten million pounds on its navy while France spent slightly over half that much and in terms of seamen in service England had nearly 56,000 while France just over 29,500. The facts however, were not allowed to get in the way of England's programme for increasing its military capacity. Lord

Lyndhurst summed up the situation as far as England's attitude was concerned. In a speech on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1859 in which he went on to extol the victories of England against Napoleonic France he said, “I will not consent to live in dependence on the friendship or forbearance of any country.” These sentiments were echoed by Palmerston at this time when he said:

“you are not entitled to rely on the forbearance of a stronger neighbour. For the sake of peace it is desirable that we should not live upon forbearance. The utmost exertions had been made by France, and were still making to create a navy that very nearly equal to our own – a navy which could not be required for purposes of defence of France, and which, therefore, we are justified in looking upon as a possible antagonist we may have to encounter – a navy which under present arrangements would give to our neighbours the means of transporting within a few hours as large and formidable number of troops to our coast.” (quoted in G. Shaw-Lefevre, in *The Shade of Cobden*, pub. by the Cobden Club, London, 1899, p.27).

England, God bless her, could not live in a world without friendship and could not live for any length of time in a world that depended upon friendship. What is striking about this particular decade is the way in which English animosity towards France was echoed fifty years later by England in its relationship with Germany even to the extent of the contrived French invasion scare (the equivalent German invasion scare was ongoing between 1907 and 1910) and the way in which the figures for French naval increase were distorted for political purposes (in 1910 the figures for German naval expenditure was similarly distorted by Reginald McKenna in the House of Commons).

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## Books by Pat Walsh

### *Remembering Gallipoli*

President McAleese's Great War Crusade

Athol Books 2010

The Irish President Mrs. Mary McAleese paid an official visit to Turkey to unveil a memorial to the Irish who died in the British invasion at Gallipoli in 1915. Such a visit is an unusual departure for Ireland, given the historical perspective of the independent Irish State.

Gallipoli is quite a famous battle in Ireland and many people know that there was Irish participation in it. However, the Irish participation at Gallipoli has never been commemorated in the same way that, for example, Australians and New Zealanders have marked it. However, tours organized from Ireland, to coincide with the visit of Mrs. McAleese, have advertised themselves as 'The Gallipoli Pilgrimage'—a phrase with religious meaning, borrowed from previous Australian commemorations.

There is a view in Australia that their participation in the Gallipoli landings was a major milestone in the forging of the Australian nation. Paul Keating, the former Premier, caused

something of a controversy a few years ago when he dissented from this view and remarked:

"Gallipoli was shocking for us... Dragged into service by the imperial government in an ill-conceived and poorly executed campaign, we were cut to ribbons and dispatched. In some respects we are still at it; not at the suffering and the dying, but still turning up at Gallipoli... we still go on as though the nation was born again or even was redeemed there. This is utter and complete nonsense. For these reasons I have never been to Gallipoli and I never will" (The Age, October 31, 2008).

Whether Australia was born at Gallipoli or not, the same cannot be said of Ireland and the Irish participation in the assault on Turkey.....

A Belfast Magazine, No. 37

by John Martin

In 1971, a year after his election defeat, Harold Wilson wrote about his experience as British Prime Minister from 1964 to 1970. His 1000 page book describes a Britain and a world that are almost unrecognisable today. It is not that the problems were different. On the contrary there were economic crises, war and famine then as now. But they were thought about in completely different terms.

In 1964 the incoming Labour government was faced with an enormous balance of payments deficit. This problem was exacerbated by speculation against the pound sterling, which was then an international reserve currency. In the economic crisis of that year Wilson believed that he had three options: devaluation; quotas; and tariffs. It is difficult to imagine a current British Government considering any of these policies, although it could be said that recent British governments have allowed a gradual depreciation of sterling over the last five years. Wilson decided to rule out devaluation on the grounds that it would undermine the credibility of the new government. Quotas would have damaged its relations with its trading partners and therefore he went for the third option, imposing a 15% surcharge on all imports except food and tobacco. Presumably, it was felt that a tax on tobacco would have adversely affected the quality of life of the working class.

A balance of payments deficit on the current account arises from a country consuming more than it produces. One way of addressing this problem is to restrict consumption. And since consumption is financed by credit, the Government limited access to credit.

Hire purchase contracts were restricted to 24 months. Down payments on cars and motorcycles had to equal at least 40 per cent. For domestic appliances the down payment had to equal 33 per cent. Only cookers and water heaters were exempted from this restriction, probably because these appliances were manufactured in Britain. It's a pity some of these policies weren't considered in the midst of Ireland's recent consumption boom.

A Policy that would be impossible to implement in current times was a travel allowance of 50 pounds per person per day for British tourists venturing outside the sterling zone.

However, these were only short-term measures. The State needed to take a more active role in modernising British industry. The Labour Government set up a new department for economic affairs designed to increase productivity. One of its tasks was to apply the benefits of research and development to British industry. The Government forced an amalgamation of the various computer companies into one company (ICL). Wilson claimed that by the time he left office the British computer industry was second only to the USA. The Steel industry

was nationalised. But most important of all the working class (through its representative institutions the Trade Unions) was to be given greater power and responsibility for the running of the economy.

In the 1960s the Trade Unions had become so powerful that they had the capacity to destroy the economy. The alternative was for them to play a more constructive role. The leadership of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was in favour of the latter course. However the Communist Party was opposed to this line. Wilson says that the industrial apparatus of this Party, which was run by Bert Ramelson, was extremely efficient and influential despite its political impotence.

The Government brought Management and Unions together to agree on a national plan for prices, incomes and productivity. In order for the Unions to have social power the TUC needed the capacity to discipline its constituent Unions. In many cases this involved wage restraint. The *quid pro quo* was an increase in the "social wage" or improved social services. Here is how Wilson himself described the system following a vote in favour of a voluntary incomes policy by the TUC in 1967:

"Each year we will sit down together, Government and Industry, with all the figures and forecasts available to us. We then work out together an assessment of what, in relation to production, the National Dividend for distribution between all forms of income, for distribution to workers by hand and brain. It will be then for the trade union movement, through the machinery it is developing, to ensure what is distributed is related to the workers' share - which will of course be the predominant share in that national dividend - on a basis of steadily rising incomes, and on a basis which ensures that the amount distributed does not run ahead of the amount we earn by our production.

"This will be a new concept, unique in a democracy in this or any country, and I pay my tribute in saying that it was the events of yesterday (the TU executives' conference) which made it possible."

Perhaps Wilson was overstating his case. There were similar developments in Germany. But it was a "new concept" for Britain. It was also anti Keynesian, in that it didn't use inflation to restore competitiveness.

More than a year later he attempted to reinforce the significance of the TUC decision:

"The TUC has arrived. It is an estate of the realm, as real, as potent, as essentially part of the fabric of our national life as any of the historic Estates. It is not easy for many within a movement

that grew out of revolt to accept all the implications of a role that is now creative, consultative and, in the central economic struggle in which this nation is involved, decisive. Influence and power carry with them the duties of responsibility. Never has this been more clearly illustrated than in the historic decision of the Trades Union Congress, fifteen months ago, to accept the need for an incomes policy which would relate the planned growth of wages to the achieved growth in productivity; which, indeed, went further, in that individual unions, many of them of great power, agreed to surrender to the central organization some part of the historic sovereignty for which they had battled for over a century".

Union power was to be centralised or to be more precise "socialised". Workers' wages would be no longer determined by the market or the relative power of individual unions, but by the TUC. The class struggle would not cease, but the arena of struggle would change. Instead of skirmishes in individual factories or industries, it would take the form of a social struggle to determine the distribution of the national dividend. This system had the potential to evolve into the social ownership of the means of production.

Wilson admits that these remarkable speeches landed on stony ground. It could be said that the media was too superficial to grasp what he was attempting. But Wilson himself must bear responsibility for the failure of his vision to be realised. Indeed, he failed to convince his cabinet, including Jim Callaghan, who was to succeed him as Labour leader.

Why did British society fail to evolve along the lines that Wilson envisaged? Part of the reason was that his vision was purely technocratic. It was not underpinned by an overall philosophical view of the world: whether Marxist or Christian Democratic. Why should shop stewards and individual trade unions subject themselves to such discipline? Wilson's nemesis Bert Ramelson, at least, had a vision that was not purely economic: that something beautiful would come from the chaos that he wrought.

There was a puritanical side to Wilson. In a September 1966 speech to the Labour Party conference he said:

"It is of paramount importance, however harsh this may seem, that where demand and real employment fall, the labour is released to meet the urgent demands of the export and other key industries. At this time, hoarding of labour by employers, and work-sharing by employees, must be scheduled as practices totally inimical to our national recovery."

Wilson promised and delivered an improvement in the economy, but the society wanted more. The quality of life in not determined by economic statistics alone.

The enormous balance of payments deficit of 1964 had been wiped out. By 1969 only Germany had a larger surplus than Britain. The expected devaluation of sterling was postponed until November 1967 following the Middle East crisis and the dock and rail strikes. It is interesting to note that the exchange rate was reduced from 1 pound equal to 2.80 dollars to 2.40; it is now about 1.60.

The burden of the adjustment largely fell on the wealthy. In 1969 Roy Jenkins introduced a budget which included a once off tax of 75 per cent on unearned income greater than 8,000 pounds. For higher amounts the tax was greater than 100% and so was in effect a levy on capital.

The Government also introduced an earnings related pension scheme. From the State's point of view this was a pay as you go scheme. It was weighted in favour of the low paid who would receive 60% of earnings, while the higher paid would only receive 50%.

Wilson gave as a reason for the scheme:

"We could not accept that society's long term arrangements for superannuation should be built round the private schemes."

So far this review has concentrated on domestic British politics, but most of the book is devoted to foreign affairs. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of Wilson in this sphere. There were very few tangible successes. But so much of foreign relations involves establishing personal bonds which can be leveraged in the interests of the State. It appears that Wilson developed close relations with influential leaders in the US, the Soviet Union, the Commonwealth and Continental Europe. Nevertheless, in this reviewer's opinion he should have devoted more time to domestic issues.

On the question of Vietnam Wilson was pro-American, but reserved the right to criticise specific actions by the USA. President Lyndon Johnson found this irritating and said to him:

"I won't tell you how to run Malaysia and you don't tell us how to run Vietnam."

Johnson also pointed out that while Attlee had British troops in Korea, Wilson had no troops in Vietnam. To which the Prime Minister pleaded that Britain was over stretched. She had already 54,000 in Malaysia to prevent Indonesian incursions. There is very little information on what exactly Britain was doing in Malaysia, but the reader will gather that that country was not entirely benign, since Singapore felt it necessary to secede in August 1965. Elsewhere in the book we learn that at its peak Britain had 80,000 troops in Malaysia and Singapore. This was reduced to 40,000 by 1971.

Wilson's position on Vietnam contrasted with that of de Gaulle who along with the Soviet Union favoured an American withdrawal.

Wilson spent a lot of time negotiating with Ian Smith who wanted to set up Rhodesia as an independent State run along racist lines. The impression is given of an enlightened British Prime Minister negotiating with a recalcitrant reactionary. But the whites were dominant before independence. Rhodesia didn't suddenly become racist on acquiring independence from Britain. From an Irish point of view it is interesting to note that in one of the negotiating sessions Wilson insisted that Smith present himself as having plenipotentiary powers. The latter was happy to renege on this commitment when he returned to Salisbury. At no stage were the Black leaders a party to these negotiations. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the negotiations were a

waste of time since Smith went ahead with UDI, which was his intention all along.

Wilson gives a very superficial treatment of the war in Biafra. He defends British policy on the grounds that she was already a supplier of arms to Nigeria. To cease supplying the Lagos Government would have been tantamount to supporting the secessionists. Also it would have allowed the Soviet Union to increase her influence.

The reader would almost form the impression that the war had its origins in a dispute between various British educational institutions. General Gowon the leader of the Government in Lagos was a graduate of Sandhurst. On the other hand Colonel Ojukwu, the Biafran leader, graduated from Eaton Hall, Chester and Lincoln College, Oxford.

Interestingly, Wilson notes that Gowon was a devout Christian and the son of an Anglican missionary. He doesn't mention that Ojukwu was a Catholic.

In the light of our recent rupture with the Vatican, there is an interesting description of the Prime Minister's meeting with Pope Paul VI. The Pontiff said that he prayed every night for peace in Vietnam. He also noted that Wilson's constituency in East Liverpool had the highest concentration of Catholics in England. He blessed rosary beads given by Wilson's Irish housekeeper and also gave a set for the Prime Minister's wife Mary. The Prime Minister promised the Pope that he would keep in close contact with him on developments in Vietnam, Rhodesia and Nigeria.

There is very little on Northern Ireland, although some significant players when war broke out in 1969 appear in this book in a different context. Lord Chalfont, who was the Junior Minister in the Foreign Office specialising on Anglo Irish relations pops up as Wilson's interpreter in discussions with the Russian Premier Alexei Kosygin. Oliver Wright, the British cabinet representative on Northern Ireland makes an appearance as the Prime Minister's interpreter in his discussions with President de Gaulle. Lord Arnold Goodman (Wilson's Mr Fixit and the person who advised on the setting up of the Irish Times Trust) has a walk on part as the Prime Minister's legal advisor in negotiations with Rhodesia. It is clear that the elite of the Foreign Office was mobilised to deal with the outbreak of war in Northern Ireland. Wilson does not describe at all Britain's diplomatic victory over Ireland at the UN.

Predictably, he is full of praise for Captain O'Neill and James Callaghan's efforts in 1969. He describes Brian Faulkner as a "hardliner" (this was in 1971 before Sunningdale and the UWC strike) and displays his ignorance – deliberate or otherwise – in the following passage on Northern Ireland:

"...the Labour Government had to act at the eleventh hour after years of neglect...their party [i.e. the British Conservative Party – JM] had ruled Ulster, unchallenged, for the whole of the Province's near half century's existence as a separate political unit: for nearly three quarters of that period, a Unionist Government in Stormont had run in double harness with a Unionist Government, or a Unionist dominated coalition, at Westminster."

The Unionist Party in Northern Ireland had no organic connection with the British Conservative Party. And why did the British Labour Party never challenge the Unionists in Northern Ireland?

There is a brief mention of the 1967 war in the Middle East. Wilson notes that de Gaulle, despite being her major arms supplier, considered Israel the guilty party.

Much of the book is taken up with the decline of an imperial power. Wilson recognised that Britain needed to reduce her global commitments. Unlike the Tories he did not believe that she had the capacity to develop an independent nuclear deterrent. The Polaris submarine, unlike the French equivalent, was dependent on American supplied materials.

There is no doubt that Labour was more pro-American than the Tories during the 1960s. Wilson mentions his dismay at the lack of enthusiasm of the Conservative Party for his decision to recall parliament from its recess to discuss the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Tories were as shrill in their condemnations as Labour, but they didn't think it was important enough to break up their holidays!

Nevertheless, even de Gaulle recognised that Wilson's government was more pro-European than MacMillan's. However, he believed that Britain still needed to transform herself if he was to abandon his veto on membership. He feared that the UK's accession would result in the 6 members of the EEC losing their distinct personality. He considered France a bulwark against *Atlanticist* influence.

In conclusion, a reader of Wilson's book in 1971 would have had good grounds for thinking that the UK was heading in a more social direction; that it was slowly detaching itself from American influence in favour of a closer relationship with Continental Europe; and was finally divesting herself of her imperial heritage. The history of Britain in the last 40 years has shown that developments in the 1960s never came to fruition and the country reverted to its more traditional role.

De Gaulle was right!

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A Book By John Martin:

*Das Kapital Reviewed*

*A modern business approach to Marxism*

Athol Books 2007

This book is a review of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* from a businessman's perspective. John Martin gives a clear concise summary of the ideas contained in the three volumes of Marx's classic work and then subjects them to criticism.

*Das Kapital* describes the laws of motion of the capitalist system. Marx had very little to say about the transition from capitalism to communism and still less about what a communist society might look like. Therefore the relevance of Marx's work does not stand or fall on the fortunes of the communist movement.

## Russia's Great War?

by Pat Walsh

I recently obtained a copy of Sean McMeekin's new book *'The Russian origins of the First World War'*. It is certainly a very interesting read, particularly because it looks at something that Western histories neglect about the Great War – the role of Czarist Russia. Czarist Russia collapsed in its waging of this war. Because it does not fit the narrative constructed by the Anglo-French accounts of the war its role has been handily forgotten. But Russia was the lynchpin of the *Triple Entente's* war on Germany and the position which the Ottoman Empire found itself in during the latter part of 1914 is incomprehensible without taking account of Russia.

Of course, when autocratic Russia collapsed her place was taken by democratic America and the Imperialist war on Germany became something else indeed for both the remaining parties to the *Entente* and their historians. A democratic gloss could be put on the subsequent war with the Czar out of the way – although on the downside restrictions were imposed in the carving up of the spoils amongst the remaining Imperialists (Britain, France, etc.) by the great democracy (the U.S.).

### Germans Guilty, Russia more Guilty!

Sean McMeekin wrote another book, a couple of years ago, called *'The Berlin-Baghdad Express'*. In this previous book the author put forward the view that the Great War represented an attempt by the Germans and Turks at world domination. *'The Berlin to Baghdad Express'* represented a modern manifestation of John Buchan's Wellington House propaganda popularised in his novel *'Greenmantle'* (the sequel to *'The 39 Steps'*).

I must give credit to McMeekin at this point for identifying the Berlin-Baghdad Railway as a major cause of the Great War. If one reads British publications of the time that impression is inescapable – although it has escaped the grasp of most academics.

When writing a review of the *'The Berlin to Baghdad Express'* for *Church and State* magazine it became apparent to me that his account of the importance of the Railway was precisely the opposite of mine. McMeekin saw the Railway as the chief instrument of the German/Islamic bid for world power that made it necessary for Britain to make war in 1914. I saw it as the thing that connected the German commercial rise to the Ottoman Empire that marked both states out for destruction in the British Imperial mind.

To hold McMeekin's position one must accept the British view of the world – that it is perfectly natural to cut competitors down to size because they represent potential challengers to England's world supremacy. And of course this was Britain's view in 1914 expressed in a thousand publications by its thinking class.

However, if one sees this as an unnatural state of affairs the world then looks to be a different place entirely. McMeekin, however, has changed his tune in his new book. Having delved into the Russian State archives he makes the bold statement: "I

*contend in this book that the current consensus about the First World War cannot survive serious scrutiny. The war of 1914 was Russia's war even more than it was Germany's.*" (p.5)

Presumably if the war was not Germany's it certainly was not Turkey's either.

McMeekin states that "*the current consensus about the First World War*" still blames it on the Germans. And having previously gone along with the "*current consensus*" McMeekin has now decided that it can no longer stand in the light of what he has discovered.

McMeekin blames the "*current consensus*" on Fritz Fischer who "*taught several generations of historians to pay serious attention only to German war aims.*" (p.3) Fischer's book, *'Griff nach der Weltmacht,'* was published in Germany in 1961. It was issued in Britain under the title *Germany's Aims in the First World War* in 1967. Fischer argued that Germany had a set of annexationist war aims similar to those of Hitler and a policy of deliberately provoking war in July 1914.

But surely there is a similar narrative older than that of Fischer's - the guilty German. Isn't Fischer merely a product of the ideas and world that John Buchan *et al* helped create?

### Russian War Aims

Having broken free of Fischer's influence, McMeekin comes across some important facts in his latest book. One of them is the following: "*Russia's war was fought not for Serbia, but to achieve control of Constantinople and the Straits... control of the Straits was Russia's first strategic priority.*" (p.239)

A few years ago when I was writing *'Britain's Great War on Turkey'* it occurred to me to ask the question: why Russia was fighting in the Great War at all. There is a question that is not asked very often in the West. McMeekin notes: "*As for what Russia's leaders hoped to accomplish by going to war in 1914, most histories of the conflict have little to say, beyond vague mutterings about Serbia and Slavic honor, treaty obligations to France, and concern for Russia's status as a great power.*" (p.2)

It is taken for granted that Russia should want to fight Germany because it was part of an alliance that did its duty against her. But that explains very little.

It might be pretended that Russia had territorial desires in Eastern Europe in relation to the Austro-Hungarian State. However, McMeekin correctly points out: "*Austrian Galicia clearly mattered to Russia's leaders but nowhere near as much as the Straits. For Russia, the war of 1914 was always, ultimately, about Turkey.*" (p.101)

Galicia mattered because the salient that was Russian Poland felt exposed by having East Prussia to the North and Austrian Western Galicia (Cracow etc.) to the South. It was one of those extensions of Empire that often felt vulnerable in the Imperial view unless territory around it was added to protect



it. But then more territory had to be added to protect the new territorial acquisition and so on, in infinitum. That was how Empires had almost a mind of their own in their growth.

McMeekin correctly points out that although Anglo-French efforts to carve up Ottoman territory dominate accounts of the demise of the Ottoman State the role of Russia is almost forgotten - due to the collapse of the Czarist State in 1917 before a sharing out of the spoils amongst the victors could be accomplished.

He also usefully notes that the Great War is seen in very different terms in Turkey, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Egypt than it is in the West:

“From the perspective of present-day residents of these places, the First World War appears not as a kind of senseless civil war between European nations which have now long since learned to live in peace but more like a deliberate plot to disrupt and dismantle the last great Islamic power on earth, Ottoman Turkey. What were the Italian and Balkan wars fought by the Turks in 1911-1913, after all, but a kind of opening act for the world war of 1914, in which great powers threw in with the smaller ones already fighting to dismember the Ottoman Empire?” (p.4)

There is certainly a case for arguing that what began in Libya in 1911 and continued into the Balkans in 1912 had great implications for what subsequently happened from 1914 on, when the direct participation of Britain produced a qualitative escalation in throwing the region into the melting-pot of history – a melting-pot from which it still struggles to emerge because of recent stirrings by the West.

### **Russia's Strategic Imperatives**

McMeekin's chapter *'The strategic imperative in 1914'* describes Russia's intentions towards the Ottoman Empire.

The Balkan Wars had the effect of convincing Russia that the dismembering of Ottoman Turkey was a realistic possibility not only because of the defeats suffered by the Ottoman army at the hands of the Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs but also because of the reluctance of Austria to intervene in the conflict. McMeekin argues that the Russians realised that the only power standing between their dream of occupying Constantinople and turning it into 'Czargrad' was Germany.

McMeekin comments that the two major fears of Russia at this time were the worry of a 'Crimean coalition' emerging against them or another 'Congress of Berlin' being organised to cheat them of the spoils they might win on the battlefield, to deprive them of Constantinople when they had won it.

McMeekin, however, fails to mention the pertinent fact of the all-important 1907 agreement between the Russians and Britain. This altered everything. Firstly, it meant that there would be no 'Crimean coalition' organised against Russia to frustrate their intentions in the Black Sea toward Constantinople because both the French and British were now the allies of the Czar. Also, the logic of this agreement implied Russian help against Germany in return for an ending of the Anglo-French block on a Russian move down to Istanbul.

McMeekin notes that during the First Balkan War a discussion took place in Russia about whether to wait for a general European war to take place in order to seize Constantinople or to seize an opportunity presented by the Ottoman collapse in the Balkans. Sazanov, the Czar's Foreign Minister, argued in a memorandum, for a Russian intervention to seize Constantinople, before the Bulgarians got there. Conquering Constantinople would, he argued, give Russia a *"global position which is the natural crown of her efforts and sacrifices over two centuries of our history."* He was opposed, however, by Yuri Danilov, the chief

architect of Russia's *war plan 19*, who suggested that *"the shortest and safest operational route to Constantinople runs through Vienna... and Berlin."* (p. 26)

McMeekin explains that the Russian desire to come down to Constantinople was not just a romantic dream about worshipping again in St Sophia but it had a strong economic impulse:

“Because of the centuries-old Russian interest in ‘Tsargrad’ as the ‘Second Rome’ of Orthodox Christian dreams, the Straits obsession of Russian policymakers like Sazanov in the early 20th century has sometimes been mistakenly assumed to be romantic. In fact, Russia's designs on the Straits, unlike her shadowy pan Slavic pretensions in the Balkans, were a matter of cold, hard national interest... In economic terms, the importance of the Straits of Russia was stark and true. Although calculations differed on the exact figure, something approaching half of Russia's burgeoning export trade was, by 1914, routed via the Black Sea, Bosphorus, and Dardanelles to world markets. When, in summer 1912, the Porte had briefly closed the straits to shipping during the Italian Turkish war, Russia's vulnerability had been painfully exposed: the volume of Black Sea exports dropped by one third for the calendar year 1912, and revenue likewise dipped 30%, from £77 million Sterling to 57 million. Heavy industry in the Ukraine, dependent on supplies imported directly through the Straits near the Black Sea, had nearly ground to a halt... To understand the overriding importance of the Straits question for Petersburg, however, we must go beyond numbers. Russia's principal Black Sea export was grain. Over 20,000,000 tonnes were shipped in both 1911 and 1912, of which nearly 90% was exported through the Bosphorus to world markets: the health of her entire agricultural economy now depended on unfettered Straits access. Stimulating grain production was, moreover, the key to Stolypin's social reforms, which envisaged the creation of a stable class of successful peasant producers who would serve as a bulwark against anarchic social revolution... “ (pp.29-30)

### **The Russian Predicament**

McMeekin makes an interesting point about the pressure that suddenly appeared on Russia in late 1913 with regard to their objective of capturing Constantinople. After the Balkan Wars the Ottomans began to strengthen the Straits defences by appointing Liman von Sanders and other German officers as advisers as well as purchasing coastal defence guns from Italy. However, most worrying of all was the naval alliance Turkey had with Britain and the two dreadnoughts that were being built by the Royal Navy, which would immediately make obsolete Russia's entire Black Sea Fleet. This was because by the terms of the Berlin treaty of 1878 Russia was not allowed to send warships through the Straits, even in peacetime, which meant she could not import dreadnoughts into the Black Sea. This stipulation was largely a British insistence because England did not want Russia to be able to send its fleet into the Mediterranean. However, what it meant in 1914 was that as the Turks improved their defences in the Black Sea and around Constantinople in the light of the Russian and Slavic threat the window of opportunity for a Russian amphibious attack on the Ottoman capital was rapidly closing.

When the Russians complained to the British government that they were helping to strengthen the defences of a potential enemy against their ally Edward Grey and Winston Churchill washed their hands of the problem claiming they were *laissez-faire* liberals and the British government could not legally interfere with private business contracts.

Interestingly, as McMeekin notes, when in 1908 Izvol'ski demanded that Britain relax its insistence against Russian naval access to the Mediterranean Edward Grey made a counter offer to Russia that the Straits be open to warships of all countries. Grey knew that this proposal was even more repugnant to the Russians than maintenance of the *status quo* as it would open Russia's southern coastline to attack from any rival naval power, particularly Britain. And so the Russians declined and settled for the *status quo*.

McMeekin reveals that things came to a head at a meeting of the Russian Council of Ministers in January 1914. Sazanov had, a week earlier, proposed to the Czar that the time was now right to provoke a European war in alliance with England and France so that Constantinople could be stormed. The idea was to use the Liman von Sanders appointment as a cause for war. McMeekin reveals that there was almost unanimous enthusiasm for provoking a European war over the Liman affair. However, whilst there was near certainty amongst the Ministers that Russia would be joined by England and France in such a war there were lingering doubts about whether London would stay out of the conflict if it was provoked at that point on such an issue. The Russian naval command warned that a unilateral amphibious assault would also be beyond them at that moment. It was determined, therefore, to resort to war only if "*the active participation of both France and England in joint measures were assured.*" (p.32)

The following month a joint army/navy meeting was convened that aimed to make a unilateral attack on Constantinople a possibility and a large subsidy was allocated to fund a Russian offensive against the Ottoman capital. However, there was general acceptance that such an operation could only be guaranteed success in conjunction with France and England in the context of a European war.

Although McMeekin has come across a significant fact here he does not choose to develop it. The leverage that England had cultivated over Russia through the *Entente* is evident in the predicament Russia found herself in, in relation to Britain, and her heart's desire at Constantinople.

McMeekin passes by Grey's and Churchill's *laissez-faire* dismissal of Russia's complaints about British private companies contributing to the defence of the Straits without noting that the Royal Navy – the senior agency of the British State – was the primary contributor to the Ottoman defences.

### **A British double game**

The obvious question – which McMeekin does not ask – is why Britain was contributing to the defences of the Straits when it understood for centuries that Constantinople was the heart's desire of its new ally?

The reason is connected to the fact that Britain is an island nation and it was primarily a sea power. It did not have a large army and it had been traditionally opposed to military conscription. Therefore, it would have been impossible for Britain to have defeated Germany by itself. It needed the large French army and the even larger Russian Army to do most of the fighting on the continent for it. The Russian Army was particularly important and it was described in the English press as a 'steamroller' that would roll all the way to Berlin, crushing German resistance by its sheer weight of numbers.

The problem for Britain was that the Russians (unlike the French who wanted to recapture Alsace/Lorraine after their loss to the Germans in 1871) had no real reason to fight Germany. Therefore, something substantial had to be promised to the Czar for his help in destroying Germany. That something was his heart's desire, Constantinople.

But at the same time leverage had to be maintained and the hand had to be kept in at the Ottoman capital. The Young Turks had entered into a naval agreement with Britain in which British dockyards took orders for Turkish battleships, under the supervision of Winston Churchill and the Admiralty, and a British naval mission was established at Constantinople. By 1914 the size of this naval mission was as large as the German military mission there, and they were looked on as a counter-balance to each other by the Turks. If it was said that Turkey had a military alliance with Germany in 1914 it could be equally said that she had a naval alliance with England.

The Turkish Government gave both England and France extraordinary positions of influence in its capital - positions that no other country with concern for its sovereignty would offer. They entrusted to Britain the most vital components of the defence of Constantinople - the reorganisation of their navy under Rear-Admiral Gamble and Admiral Limpus and an English Naval Mission, and the modernisation of the arsenal at the Golden Horn (Turkey's centre of munitions) by Armstrong and Vickers. Admiral Limpus offered advice to the Turkish Admiralty on such matters as the location of mine fields in the Straits and mine laying techniques as well as torpedo lines.

It is not surprising that the British took on this constructive work, even though their longer term ambition was to destroy the Ottoman Empire. From the British interest it countered German influence at Constantinople, gave the English a unique, inside knowledge of the defences of the Turkish capital and controlling influence over the Turkish Navy - and made sure that the Russians, French and Germans did not possess such influence or information themselves. And when the English naval mission left, those in charge of it were the first to suggest to Winston Churchill that Constantinople should be attacked, and how it should be, with all the inside information they had obtained.

But the naval mission also had a vital role to play in relation to England's ally, Russia, by keeping the Czar out of Constantinople until his steamroller was started, pointed westward and heading toward Berlin.

### **Enver Vindicated?**

The war against Germany got underway in August 1914 but unfortunately for Russia Turkey remained neutral.

The opportunity of finding a cause of war against Turkey developed after the Royal Navy forced two German ships (*Goeben* and *Breslau*) trapped in the Mediterranean into neutral Constantinople in early August. The German crews faced with the prospect of destruction if they re-entered the Aegean handed the ships over to the Turks. The Turks accepted them in place of the two battleships owed to them by Britain that Churchill had seized before war had even been declared on Germany.

Churchill proceeded to lay a blockade on the Dardanelles to prevent the ships coming out. This in itself was an act of war against Turkey. Then he organised a series of meetings in the first days of September to discuss a pre-emptive strike on Constantinople - to "*Copenhagen*" the city, as Nelson had done in destroying the Danish fleet in its port in neutral Denmark in 1801 before declaration of war. But the British Cabinet decided that diplomatic niceties had to be persevered with, particularly as things went badly in France and another enemy, at this juncture, would be better put off for the present.

McMeekin, although he doesn't probably intend to, vindicates Enver's policy when he sees things from the point of view of Russian aggression toward the Ottoman capital:

“Paradoxically, the arrival of the two German warships in Constantinople – at least after they had been transformed into ‘Turkish’ ships by Said Halim’s fictitious sale – likely delayed the onset of hostilities between Turkey and Russia for months. The reason should not be difficult to grasp... This made offensive operations supremely difficult, and rendered any kind of amphibious operation in the Bosphorus... well-nigh impossible. Had the Goeben not made it through the Allied Mediterranean screen against heavy odds the Russians might themselves have forced the issue.” (p.106)

This is a very good argument for what the Turks actually did in relation to the German battleships. If the Turks had refused entry to the battleships they would have been destroyed by the Royal Navy outside the Straits and this would have put an end to any hope of German protection in the event of a British war Russian attack on Istanbul. Whilst the German battleships were anchored in the Straits the Turks realised that they were open to attack by the Royal Navy. It was only through their conversion into ships of the Turkish Navy (replacing the two battleships which Churchill had earlier seized) that two birds were killed with one stone.

Firstly, the delicate problem of neutrality was solved. Secondly, the defence of Constantinople against Russian attack was secured. The combination of these two factors meant the preservation of Turkish neutrality in the Great War - at least in the short-term. This was an important achievement because in August 1914 it was not clear how long the war would last or whether the attention of the major combatants would just move elsewhere according to the passage of events in Europe. It therefore held out the possibility that the Ottoman Empire might survive the war that was meant to bring about its demise.

McMeekin argues that whilst “*publicly, Girs* (the Russian Ambassador at Istanbul), *along with his British and French counterparts Louis Mallet and Morris Bompard, made a great show of desiring Ottoman neutrality... there is little chance the Russian diplomat was ever sincere about this.*” (p.106) And McMeekin quotes a memorandum of Girs to his Foreign Office that states; “*We need a strong boss ruling over Constantinople, and since we cannot let any other power assume this role, we must take her for ourselves. For us to accomplish this without waging war on Turkey would, of course, be impossible.*” (p.98)

McMeekin does not say this was also the British position - through the implication that England was allied with Russia. It is unlikely that it will be found in any British archives.

But if England needed Russia against Germany and Russia had Constantinople as her price for assistance how can it be any other way than Britain required a war with Turkey. (There are other reasons why England wanted war on the Ottomans. Two of them were Mesopotamia and Palestine)

The Ottoman Cabinet, in order to preserve the Empire in the face of the war that was threatening its existence, did much ducking and diving between September and October 1914.

On 5 August 1914 Enver made an offer to the Russians of demobilising the Turkish army in eastern Anatolia and dismissing the German military mission in Istanbul so that the Russians could reinforce their fronts against Germany and Austria. McMeekin comments,

“Here we have a precious glimpse into Russia's real war aims. Given even the hypothetical chance of a rapprochement with Turkey, which would free up troops from the Caucasus to reinforce the European fronts, the architect of Russia's mobilisation on those very fronts said no, absolutely not, because these fronts were no more important than the Caucasian one, even if the latter was still inactive. Sooner or later, Russia

and Turkey would be at war, and the last thing Stavka (Russian command centre) wanted to do was deprive Tiflis command (Caucasus) of the troops it needed to fight.” (p.108)

The occasion for the Russian and British declarations of war was an obscure incident in the Black Sea where the two formerly German ships engaged Russian ships that were attempting to lay mines on the approaches to Constantinople to complete a blockade which the British had instituted at the other end of the Straits. The ships then engaged Russian ships at the port of Odessa where operations were taking place to prevent the Turks from being able to reinforce their Eastern provinces via the Black Sea - something that was indispensable to Ottoman forces due to the lack of a road network toward Eastern Anatolia.

The Czar's declaration of war on Turkey explicitly mentioned the Russian objective with regard to Constantinople. The war would provide the opportunity to “*open up Russia's path towards the realisation of the historic task of her ancestors along the shores of Black Sea.*” It was to be a holy war too waged for “*the Christian faith*” against the “*Turkish hordes*”. (p.114)

### Origins of the Gallipoli assault

The problem for Russia in relation to seizing Constantinople after the war had been declared on Turkey was that they did not have sufficient resources to accomplish this by themselves. The dreadnought-class Goeben had cancelled out any previous advantage Russia had in the Black Sea and made an amphibious assault on Constantinople very difficult. Also, Russian forces were only holding their own against the Germans and Austrians on the eastern front (Russia's western front) and this made the diversion of Russian forces very difficult to accomplish.

The Russians, therefore, found themselves reliant on the British to realise their dream because it was only Britain which had the naval forces and sufficient military reserves to attack the Ottoman capital from the Aegean (French forces were also bottled up defending their homeland against the Germans).

When Grey met a Russian delegation in November 1914, a few days after the declarations of war on Turkey, his main fear was that Russia might divert troops into Persia. Before the war the British and Russians had divided up spheres of influence in Persia and England did not want the war to spread into the country as British troops moved in to conquer Mesopotamia. Grey told the Russians that they should concentrate their efforts on the eastern front and that the question of Constantinople and that they need not worry - the Straits would be settled “*in accordance with their interests*”. On the same day the British Prime Minister, Asquith, made a public speech in which he stated that Turkey's entry into the war had spelt “*the death knell*” for the Ottoman Empire. Less than a week later King George V told Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, that “*as concerns Constantinople, it is clear that must be yours.*” (p.123)

These were the first formal indications to the Russians that the British had ended their century's long opposition to the Czar having Constantinople.

Grey then gave a pledge from the British foreign office that a settlement of the Constantinople issue “*would be reached after defeat of Germany irrespective of whether Turkish rule is actually overthrown in the course of the hostilities now being conducted.*” (p.124) McMeekin comments: “*In effect, Britain's Foreign Secretary had promised Russia Constantinople and the Straits, whether or not she contributed in any way to a military campaign that might conquer them.*” (p.124)

McMeekin then states:

Consider the enormity of diplomatic revolution wrought by the end of November 1914. In the Crimean War, British troops had bled and died to prevent Russia from dismembering the Ottoman Empire. Following the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78, Disraeli's government had dispatched the British Mediterranean Fleet to deny Constantinople to the Russians... the maintenance of some kind of Ottoman buffer against the Russian threat had endured as a cardinal aim of British foreign policy right up to 1914, as illustrated by British fears of Russian incursions into Persia ostensibly justified by the Turkish threat there. And yet here were British statesmen openly advocating the total dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire so that Russia might have naval access to the Mediterranean - the urgent prevention of which had been a full-on British *casus belli* as recently as 36 years ago." (pp.124-5)

That is the background to the French and British assault on the Straits in March 1915 and the subsequent landings at Gallipoli later on. It struck me in writing '*Britain's Great War on Turkey*' that there was more to it than that and McMeekin comes up with exactly the same understanding that I reached myself. The British and French, in attempting to capture Constantinople, were actually intending to hold it as a kind of hostage to prevent the Russians from ever making peace with Germany or Turkey. The Russian steamroller could be guaranteed against Germany by holding the Czar's greatest prize in readiness for him in return for the continued commitment of his armies on the eastern front:

"The Dardanelles campaign represented the logical culmination of this pattern. With both Paris and London on perennial alert that Petrograd might cut a separate peace with Berlin, a Straits campaign had a compelling strategic logic for the Western allies, even if Petrograd stood to reap the principal reward. Certainly, the thinking went, the Russians would not waver in their commitment to the war while her alliance partners were endeavouring to win her Constantinople. At a minimum, such an amphibious campaign, launched to aid Russia, would improve Russian fighting morale. If it succeeded, it would open Russia's year-round warm-water Black Sea ports for Western arms (and maybe also food) shipments." (p.128)

## Dividing the Ottoman spoils

In March 1915 the Czar decided that the time had come to get his French and British allies to formally agree to the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. Sazanov coupled the Czar's demands for Constantinople with a threat to the allies that if they did not agree he would resign and bring Sergei Witte (who was regarded as sympathetic to the Germans) into the government in order to cut a separate peace with Germany.

Grey used Sazanov's threat to convince the British Cabinet to cut a deal with the Russians on Constantinople and finally give concrete form to the reversal of British foreign policy of a century. On 12 March 1915 the British Cabinet adopted the position of endorsing Russia's Imperial claim to Constantinople and the Straits.

(For some reason or other McMeekin does not discuss or detail the secret Constantinople agreement of March 1915 that then took place between the Triple Entente. We therefore include this as an Appendix)

In early 1916 flesh was put on the bones of the Constantinople agreement through the Sykes-Picot agreement for the dividing up of the Ottoman spoils after the war. And McMeekin suggests that the real inspiration to this agreement from the British side was Kitchener's fear that Russia would re-emerge as Britain's primary antagonist after the world war was over. The idea, therefore, was to create a French buffer zone in between the old Great Game antagonists. Britain agreed to give France

Syria, Lebanon, and Cilicia in exchange for French recognition of British primacy in Mesopotamia up as far as Mosul and the ports of Acre and Haifa as well as the whole of Arabia.

The final agreement that emerged gave Russia direct control over Constantinople and the area around the Straits. The Czar also received 'Turkish Armenia,' 'Kurdistan' and 'Persian Azerbaijan'. France obtained Cilicia as far East as the Taurus Mountains and South to Beirut. The French also obtained an area of indirect control encompassing modern-day Syria and Northern Iraq. Most of the areas south of this, including the bulk of Mesopotamia became areas of direct and indirect British control.

## Russia and the Armenians

McMeekin describes the relationship between the Russian State and the Armenian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire from the time of the Armenian risings of 1894-6:

"Most commentators concede that Armenian Revolutionary groups deliberately aimed to enlist outside powers in their cause by staging provocations... and that outside powers did indeed take the Armenian side in 1895-6, even if none intervened in any effective way... the essential truth about Russian imperial foreign policy should not be surprising, considering the evidence of the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78 and the First World War. However, the same policy was consistently followed in peacetime years in between these conflicts, with predictable - and revealing - upswings in the intensity of military planning during each successive Armenian crisis. It was precisely in order to piggyback on the Armenian uprisings of 1895-6 that Russia first began serious logistical research into the possibility of staging an amphibious operation at the Bosphorus... in the wake of internal Ottoman turmoil with unruly Christian minorities, Russian operational planning for seizing Constantinople was accelerated. These plans expressly specified that 'agents from the Christian population' would cut off rail lines to Constantinople... whereupon native Christians would 'burn down all the wooden bridges spanning the Golden Horn and set fire to Stamboul'. A more explicit blueprint for using Armenians (and other Ottoman Christians) as a fifth column for an invading Russian army could scarcely be imagined." (pp.145-6)

The quotations McMeekin uses are from a Russian General Staff memorandum produced just after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. The Russians saw the democratising of the Ottoman State as a sign of weakness and as an opportunity to be exploited. McMeekin discusses this earlier in his book:

"The fall of the last true Ottoman Sultan produced a kind of manic glee in the Russian General Staff, where wargaming for the occupation of Constantinople - which had largely ceased following the sinking of the Russian Baltic and Pacific fleets in the Russo Japanese war - now resumed with a vengeance. The mood at the time was well captured in a General Staff memorandum of October 1910 that outlines plans for seizing Constantinople: first the rail and telegraph lines to Adrianople and Ankara would be cut by 'agents from the Christian population', whereupon Russia-friendly Christians in the city would burn down all the wooden bridges spanning the Golden Horn and set fire to Stamboul - which predominantly Muslim district was, conveniently for Russian purposes, blanketed 'almost without interruption with wooden houses'... The Christians of Pera would then rise, in coordination with a Russian amphibious landing. Once Russia's Black Sea Fleet had secured the Straits, it would herald the annihilation of Turkish Dominion on the Balkan Peninsula." (p.17)

That was a very inflammatory programme considering the vast ethnic cleansing of Moslems that was to take place in the Balkans during the following years. And one way or another it was going to result in tragedy for the communities of the Ottoman Empire when it was attempted. (The subsequent Balkan Wars of 1912-13 did not fully realise the Russian programme of inter-ethnic mayhem in the Ottoman capital because the Bulgarians were halted short of Constantinople. However, similar events as those hoped for were to occur in Eastern Anatolia from 1915.)

McMeekin describes the complicated situation that existed in eastern Anatolia in the period just prior to the Great War:

“In a real sense, the whole disputed area of eastern Anatolia... where the Ottoman and Russian empires intersected with Persia, was on a permanent war footing long before 1914. Most Kurdish tribal chiefs were exceedingly well armed and virtually sovereign in the areas they roamed. Like nearly everyone else, they bought primarily Russian weapons. Christian townsmen, too, bought arms from the Russians... the great Kurdish tribal chiefs... generally had the rule of the roost, unless they were directly confronted by Ottoman or Russian troops, in which case they would simply flee to friendlier marauding pastures. The story of eastern Anatolia in this tense and dangerous time, then, was about far more than Turks and Armenians. One could claim that Kurdish nomads were consistently hostile to the Christian population, but other generalisations about which groups were on which ‘side’ are hazardous... At times, armed Armenian groups inside the Ottoman Empire might even join forces with Turkish troops to pursue Kurdish chieftains who would wrong their people... Complicating the regional picture immeasurably were the opportunistic Russians, willing to work with anyone who might extend their influence. In the classic divide and conquer style Chorister’s Bridge (St Petersburg) cultivated close relations with Kurdish tribal chiefs and their Christian victims alike. Both groups were often at loggerheads with the Ottoman government, Russia’s primary antagonist... By thus promoting general mayhem, Kurdish nomads were the ideal Imperial tool. And the Russians were not loath to use them, sending arms, money, and even trade missions to Ottoman and Persian Kurds. So serious was Russia’s commitment that Kurdish language institutes were founded in Petersburg... Russian diplomats had to be careful with the Kurds. Periodic tribal skirmishes with Ottoman troops were one thing: summoning armies of 50,000 men was something else entirely, not least because their first target after routing Ottoman troops would almost certainly be Armenians and other Russia friendly Christians... The ideal scenario was simply to promote enough regional chaos to give Russia a pretext for intervening, with no single ethnic or religious group emerging to dominate the others.” (pp.147-9)

This was the complex *milieu* that Russian and Anglo-French invasion and blockade imposed itself upon in 1915. It was something that could be easily set ablaze but not so easily controlled or extinguished.

Russia’s great Armenian Reform Campaign of 1913 was ironically conducted, according to McMeekin, as Ottoman troops and Dashnaks (Armenian revolutionary bands) combined to see off Kurdish raiders who were attacking Armenian villages. The Reform Campaign which made some unrealistic demands on the Ottomans in relation to imposing law and order without shedding blood culminated in the threat of Russian intervention in Ottoman territory if another ‘Armenian massacre’ occurred.

In late 1913/early 1914 a Kurdish rising occurred in Bitlis led by Mullah Selim. Tens of thousands of Kurds took to the field with the object of imposing Sharia Law in the area (to ‘put it up to’ the ‘impious’ C.U.P/Young Turks). When Ottoman troops were sent to disperse the Kurds Mullah Selim was given

refuge by the Russian Consulate (where he remained until Russia declared war on the Turks in November 1914).

Perhaps in recognition of the Ottomans’ efforts at maintaining some measure of security, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation vowed support for the Ottoman Government against the Russians at their conference in August 1914 at Erzurum and the Dashnaks even sent a delegation to discourage Armenians from enrolling in the Czarist armies. But Russia was determined to make the Armenians into their fifth column.

Despite the Dashnak proclamation of loyalty to the Ottoman State, tens of thousands of Armenians deserted the Ottoman army and went over to the Russians even before war was declared on Turkey. In August 1914 (more than two months before war was declared on Turkey) the Russian Caucasian army asked for an extra 25,000 rifles and millions of rounds of ammunition to arm the Armenian bands being organised along the Ottoman frontier and began to smuggle arms into Ottoman territories so that Armenians could fight behind Ottoman lines when the time was right:

“The Russian army, then, actively sought to arm Ottoman Armenians even before Turkey entered the war, with the full co-operation of the Dashnaks, General Andranik, and Armenian leaders in Tiflis. So, too, was the Russian Foreign Office involved, and at the very highest level... Russia’s Foreign Minister recommended that Tiflis command begin arming Ottoman ‘Armenians and Assyrian Christians’ so that they could strike a blow for Russia as soon as Turkey entered the war. Crucially, Sazanov stipulated that the Armenians were ‘not to undertake anything without our instructions’, because ‘if they launched an uprising that was not supported by us, this would inflict an irreparable blow to our prestige’. (p.156)

McMeekin also reveals that whilst the Russian army command favoured an arming of the Kurds, Sazanov saw things in religious terms and insisted that Russia act simply as a Christian power against the Moslems. McMeekin comments:

“The Armenians were to be encouraged to achieve an essential foreign policy goal for Petrograd: the overthrow of Ottoman rule in eastern Anatolia. The Russians would offer all assistance to the Armenians in this endeavour... but they would do so only so long as they... acted in full obeisance to Russia’s instructions, so that Russia could reap the strategic benefit. Considering the human consequences... Sazanov’s carelessness about ends and means is almost breathtaking.” (p.156)

### The question of ‘genocide’

McMeekin’s argument is that the Russians were always incapable of following through on their promises and this was the main reason for the disaster that befell the Armenians:

“The root of the Armenian catastrophe is not so much in the fact of treachery and collaboration, which was rampant among other groups on both sides, but rather in the gap between Russia’s enormous Imperial ambitions and her limited means for achieving them. The reform campaign of 1913-14 had left little doubt at the Porte that Russia aimed to annex Turkey’s six eastern provinces over which she had essentially declared proprietary interest, if not yet a formal protectorate. Likewise, the Dardanelles campaign and the diplomacy surrounding it - if not also the previous 500 years of history - made perfectly clear that Russia aimed to conquer Constantinople and the Straits. Any group inside Turkey rumoured to be aiding and abetting the Russians near either of these fronts would not simply be suspected of disloyalty, but likely relocated for reasons of urgent military necessity, as were the Ottoman Greeks from the Gallipoli peninsula in April to May 1915. That Armenians

*were eventually targeted in the same way is not the least bit surprising, considering how much the Ottomans stood to lose from defeat to the Russians.”* (p.158)

Two events precipitated and provoked the Armenian relocations: the Gallipoli landings and what happened at Van. (Earlier in his book McMeekin blames the Russians for failing to aid the British at Gallipoli and therefore contributing to the disaster there.) McMeekin describes the events at Van to illustrate how Russian ambitions and their failure to realise them in time provoked the disaster that befell Armenian and Moslem alike:

“The rebellion at Van provides a perfect illustration of the Armenian tragedy... violent clashes between the Dashnaks and government forces in Van were reported as early as September 1914. On 24 September 1914, the Ottoman Third Army reported evidence that the Russians were smuggling weapons and ammunition across the border... all winter, the frontier areas passed with activity, as Armenian deserters, fleeing Van, crossed over to the Russians... February-March 1915 saw the first reports of significant rebel activity in Van, Bitlis, and Erzurum, including the cutting of telegraph wires, the detonation of bombs, attacks on Turkish army and police barracks, and... the ‘pillaging and destroying of Moslem villages’... On or about 13th to 14th of April 1915, the Turk's worst nightmare came to pass, when partisans expelled government forces from Van erecting barricades around the city... the fighting was merciless, with Armenians despatching Moslems caught inside the town even while the Turks and Kurds were massacring Armenian civilians outside its walls... The first advance guard of Cossacks rode into town on 18 May 1915 - almost 5 weeks after the rebellion began. By this time, the city was in ruins, with its Armenian quarter bombed out by Ottoman artillery and the Moslem neighbourhoods raised to the ground by Armenian partisans. Tens of thousands of Armenians, Kurds and Turks alike had perished, the vast majority of them civilians... scarcely had the town's reconstruction under Russian occupation begun before it was retaken by the Ottoman army in August 1915... the short lived and ultimately futile Armenian rebellion at Van had set in motion that whole terrible series of events about which historians still argue today.” (pp. 169-70)

McMeekin concludes:

“By 18th of May 1915, when the first advance Cossack regiments of the Caucasian army finally made it as far as Van, Ottoman Armenians had already begun dying in droves for Russia's hollow promises - as they would in even greater numbers after her half-hearted invasion of eastern Turkey swung into reverse that summer. One can hardly blame the Dashnaks and Hunchaks for arming themselves in self defence. Their error lay in expecting the Russian cavalry to arrive in time to protect them once the inevitably brutal counter-attack against their rebellion commenced. These revolutionaries, and the Ottoman Armenian civilians they claimed to represent, fell victim to Russia's peculiar mixture of imperial greed and impotence, as the would-be liberatees of an army unable - or rather willing - to liberate them.” (p.174)

It is certainly the case that the Czarist State proved incapable of realising its dream and collapsed in pursuing it. And it is certainly the case that in instigating the Armenians to rebellion in order to provoke the collapse of the Ottoman State Russia led them on to disaster. The Armenians were used by England in a propagandist manner and by Russia as cannon-fodder as a means of destabilizing the Ottoman Empire and disrupting Turkish resistance behind the lines. There were, obviously, Armenian revolutionaries who were willing to participate in this process but its main effect was to make the ordinary Armenians' position impossible within the Ottoman Empire. It was made impossible

for them to remain a loyal community and a functional part of the Empire, which they had been for centuries.

Justin McCarthy's book *'Death and Exile – the ethnic cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922'* describes the internal situation in eastern Anatolia as the Great War began.

The last decades of the Ottoman Empire had seen a significant extension of Ottoman power in Eastern Anatolia. Law and order had been established through renewed Ottoman military power in the region. However, when the Great War began these military forces withdrew and civil order began to end. Ottoman troops were withdrawn from garrisons in eastern and central Anatolia and sent to fight the Russians on the Caucasian border. Only a minimum of the gendarmerie remained to control the Kurdish tribes in the area. In theory, Kurdish tribesmen should have been conscripted into the Ottoman army but the Ottomans found this was more trouble than it was worth. The Ottomans would have had to employ considerable men and military forces to subdue the tribes in the middle of a war situation. The Kurdish tribesmen were not loyal or compliant citizens and they began to attack and pillage local villages, Christian and Moslem alike, when this Ottoman state apparatus was absent.

In the same areas in preparation for war Armenian revolutionaries had stored vast stockpiles of weapons, largely provided or paid for by the Russian army. When the war was declared, the Armenian revolutionaries mobilised and were joined by substantial numbers of Armenian deserters from the Ottoman army. Great internal migrations began to take place with Armenians and Moslems who lived in mixed villages migrating to purely Armenian or purely Moslem villages and populations even began to cross Russian and Ottoman lines for safety.

Armenian revolts and attacks on Ottoman forces in various districts of the East were in full swing by May 1915. There were three sides in the battles and massacres. On one side were the settled Moslems (Turks, Kurds and others) and the Ottoman military forces. On the other side were Armenians (and other native Christians) and the Russian army. On the third side were tribal Kurds, an essentially neutral force that pursued its own agenda, both attacking and cooperating with the Russian and Ottoman forces as the need arose. From the first, the war was distinguished by attacks on civilian populations from all sides. The innocent and peaceful on all sides were forced to fight in order to survive.

McCarthy details the extensive attacks that took place by Armenian bands on Moslem villagers and reproduces accounts of the killing, pillaging and rape that occurred before the relocations. He acknowledges that similar things happened to the Armenians. He stresses that the most dangerous situation for all communities occurred when state forces of either side, Ottoman or Russian, withdrew from an area and security began to break down. The Russian army tended to have a controlling influence on local Armenians but when they withdrew from an area the local Moslems became very vulnerable to massacre.

McCarthy says the following about the relocations:

“The decision to force the Armenians to leave was sound in purely military terms, but it caused hardship and great mortality among them, and these were deplorable. Nevertheless, it did have the desired effect: Armenian Revolutionary attacks dwindled in areas still occupied by the Ottoman government... In the end, the Armenian deportations did reveal the Ottoman state as a failure in its ability to protect its own citizens - the most important aspect of any state. It was the weakness of the Ottoman state that forced it to choose between two groups of its citizens. The blame for the deaths of Armenians in the convoys must be shared by the Ottomans - shared with the Armenian

revolutionaries and their supporters and with the Russians.” (pp.195-6)

McCarthy notes that the Ottoman relocations were the standard military response to guerrilla warfare behind the lines at the time. The British had used similar measures only a decade previously in South Africa to deal with Boer resistance. Tens of thousands of relocated civilians had died in British concentration camps. The difference between what the British did in South Africa and what the Ottomans attempted to do in eastern Anatolia in 1915 was that the Ottomans were confronted by a much stronger enemy and assault on their state. The Armenian relocations were conducted in a situation of external invasion, blockade, starvation, inter-community killing and general lawlessness of a collapsing state apparatus.

McCarthy produces figures (p.229) to show that the Moslem population of Eastern Anatolia declined by about one million people during the decade to 1922. He states that the exact number of deaths can never be accurately known (on all sides). But there is strong reason to believe that the number of Moslems (Turks and Kurds) and Armenian Christians who perished were comparable in the general mayhem that occurred.

The use of the word ‘genocide’ with regard to what happened to the Armenians during the Great War is an attempt to connect Turkey with Nazi Germany. However, a much better analogy would be that which happened on the Eastern Front during the Second World War when different groups of people became destabilized by the Nazi invasion of Russia. This is much closer to the events which McMeekin describes than what happened to the Jews between 1943 and 1945.

In the hinterland of war between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia terrible things were done as state authority began to collapse, society began to return to its elements and ordinary people struggled to survive in the circumstances. In 1915 the Russian and British invasions of the Ottoman Empire had a similar effect on the patchwork that was Eastern Anatolia. The Russians and British raised some people's expectations so that they were willing to exact retribution on people they had grievances against and in turn those people exacted revenge on them. No one quite knew under whose authority they would exist when the war was over and as a consequence all restraint was removed on behaviour. It was under these circumstances and in this context that the relocation of the Armenians took place.

Essentially the responsibility for what happened to the Armenians and the other minorities that existed happily and peacefully within the Ottoman Empire for centuries must be placed at the hands of those who attempted to destabilize and ultimately destroy this multinational Empire. It was not in the Turkish interest that the Armenians should rebel and resort to war but it was very much in the Russian and British interests that they should do so. That both powers were ultimately unable to complete the task they set themselves left the Armenians in a situation not unlike that of the unfortunate East Prussians in 1945 (although it is not politic to show any sympathy for them).

## Whose ‘genocide’?

Michael Reynolds’s recent book, *Shattering Empires - The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918*, makes some interesting points in relation to the context of the Armenian relocations:

“At the same time as the Van rebellion was unfolding, the Russians were entering from the East, the British pushing on Baghdad from the South, and, most ominously, the British and French were storming ashore at Gallipoli. The simultaneous attacks stretched the wobbling Ottoman army to breaking

point. As the Unionists debated how to handle the Van uprising, an Ottoman colonel pointed to Russia's expulsion of Moslems into Ottoman territory and urged a reciprocal expulsion of the rebels and their families either into Russian territory or into the interior of Anatolia... Small scale deportations of Armenians had begun in February, but it was the combination of the Van uprising and the landings at Gallipoli that triggered the decision to deport the Armenians en masse...

The decision to define whole populations as suspect and to uproot, expel, and relocate them was not particular to the Ottomans or Unionists. The manipulation of borderland populations was hoary imperial practice. In the 19th century, however, two things changed. The first was that, beginning in Europe, state institutions began to employ sciences such as statistics, sociology, and ethnography to vastly increase their capacity to identify, classify, and control population groups. The second was that these institutions, including armies, came to imagine ethnicity to be a key predictor of political behaviour. Armies anxiously trained ethnographers to advise on how to manage and exploit the ethnic identities of friendly or hostile populations alike. By the beginning of the 20th century, forced population exchange was emerging as an almost routine practice, one that many regarded as logical and even salutary... During World War I, Russia forcibly relocated not just Moslems from the border region in the Caucasus but also Germans and Jews by the hundreds of thousands on its Western front... Ottoman military officers referenced the Russian precedent in the Caucasus during the debate on how to respond to the uprising at Van...

The destruction of the Armenians... must be understood as part of a nascent programme of ethnic homogenisation that involved the resettlement of a multitude of other population groups, including Moslem Kurds, Albanians, Circassians, and others in small, dispersed numbers so as to break up clan and tribal ties and facilitate assimilation... These measures were aimed at the long-term Turkification of Anatolia. This larger programme, *in turn*, was a direct response to the global order's adoption of the national idea. If the legitimacy, and security, of state borders was dependent on the degree of correspondence to ethnographic lines, the Unionists would ensure that the latter conform to the former. They would reshape the square peg of Anatolia to fit the round hole the global order favoured...

It is no coincidence that nearly half of the Unionist leadership came from the Balkan and Aegean borderlands, i.e. those territories that had witnessed repeated violent expulsions and massacres of Moslems and the establishment of nation states. Significantly, these men fostered no fantasies of irredentism in the Balkans. They nurtured no illusions about the relative power of the Ottoman state. Difficult though it must have been for them, they recognised that their homelands had been lost for good... Experience had taught them that the global community of states accorded no legitimacy to pluralistic and weak empires. As long as Anatolia remained ethnically pluralistic it would be vulnerable to subversion and partition. The homogenisation of Anatolia was the surest solution to the dilemma they faced.” (pp. 147-9)

The logical implication of this is that if what happened to the Armenians in 1915 is to be described as ‘genocide’ we must look much wider for those responsible than just the C.U.P. and Ottoman authorities directly responsible for relocating the Armenians. Firstly, there was the responsibility of the Anglo-French and Russian invasion forces whose arrival in May 1915 signalled that the destruction of the Ottoman Empire was a distinct probability. Secondly, there was the exportation from Europe of Social Darwinist ideas of race homogeneity as the ideal type for societies that undermined the old heterogeneous

Ottoman attitude toward race that had promoted 'live and let live' in the Empire. Thirdly, there was the promotion of nationalism from Europe in order to destabilise the Ottoman State and make multi-ethnic units impossible.

I have not seen any evidence that the Ottoman State actively pursued a policy of religious homogeneity in 1915. Events from then to 1923 certainly resulted in the heterogeneous Ottoman State giving way to the largely homogeneous Turkish Republic.

In 1915 the Ottoman Empire was collapsing under the weight of problems that came to it from Europe and the C.U.P. looked for solutions to its predicament in that direction too. It had been a multi-ethnic state based on a healthy disregard for any notions of racial hierarchy. But what was being imposed upon it from the West, in the name of 'progress', was the requirement that society should be based on the nation state rather than a multi-ethnic/religious combination, with as much racial homogeneity as possible.

What happened to the Armenians in 1915 was qualitatively different from what had ever happened to that community before. And that can only be seen as being so because the Ottoman Empire was being assailed from without and within and being dissolved in the name of Western 'progress'.

McMeekin has an interesting section on Russian plans for the government of the Armenians. He relates that, despite the assistance given by Armenian revolutionaries to the Czarist forces, the Russians began to have doubts about how far they should trust the Armenians with any measure of autonomy:

"Armenian partisans, despite playing a certain useful role for the Russians at Van and Bitlis in 1915, had long since worn out their welcome at Tiflis's command, which kept hearing about the atrocities they were committing against Moslems. 'The Armenians,' General Pechkov wrote on 29 June 1916, 'have shown themselves to be a very cruel people. It appears they have massacred the Kurds without pity.' The report spoke of rampant 'lawlessness and looting' by Armenian volunteer units, which were now disbanded by direct order of Grand Duke Nicholas himself. Another decree from Tiflis's command imposed 'strict censorship on Armenian publications'... In a letter dispatched from Tiflis on 27th of June 1916, Sazanov reminded Grand Duke Nicholas that Russia had pushed for greater Armenian autonomy - under Ottoman rule - during the reform campaign of 1913-14. But now the Armenians were under Russians suzerainty, things looked different... Sazanov noted that 'the Armenians nowhere constitute a majority' in the area he called Greater Armenia - particularly after the deportations of 1915. Armenians now comprised, even in the areas of their greatest concentration, at most 25% of the population. In view of this fact, for Russia to grant Armenian autonomy 'would mean unjustly enslaving the majority to the minority.' Tensions between Christians and Moslems would explode yet again, this time in Russia's face instead of Turkey's. An enduring peace would only be possible, Sazanov argued, if the Czarist government could rule 'on the basis of its own laws, its own system of justice, and with complete impartiality towards all national elements in the land'... The only concession Russia's Foreign Minister was willing to grant Armenians was to allow them to use their own language and to run their own churches and schools... Grand Duke Nicholas agreed to all of these stipulations." (pp. 211-2)

I think this confirms the view that it was the attempted destruction of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire with its delicate balance of order between the patchwork of peoples that inhabited it that led to disaster for Balkan Moslems and Jews,

Anatolian Greeks and Armenians and many more besides. It was possible that a Russian victory and the reincorporation of these peoples in another multi-ethnic state might have preserved the balance in a new form leading to some kind of stability. But that is the stuff of counterfactual conjecture. The Russian Revolution saved the Ottomans in the East and closed off this possibility for good.

Sean McMeekin has now written two books attributing blame for the Great War. The first argued for the guilt of the Germans and Ottomans. The second blames the Russians. Perhaps another would make him 'third time lucky.'

## Appendix:

### **Correspondence between the partners of the Triple Entente for the secret Constantinople Agreement of March 1915 (as later revealed by the Bolsheviks):**

*Aide-mémoire* from Russian Foreign Minister to British and French ambassadors at Petrograd, 19 February / 4 March 1915

"The course of recent events leads His Majesty Emperor Nicholas to think that the question of Constantinople and of the Straits must be definitely solved, according to the time-honoured aspirations of Russia.

"Every solution will be inadequate and precarious if the city of Constantinople, the western bank of the Bosphorus, of the Sea of Marmara and of the Dardanelles, as well as southern Thrace to the Enez-Midyé line, should henceforth not be incorporated into the Russian Empire.

"Similarly, and by strategic necessity, that part of the Asiatic shore that lies between the Bosphorus, the Sakarya River and a point to be determined on the Gulf of Izmit, and the islands of the Sea of Marmara, the Imbros Islands and the Tenedos Islands must be incorporated into the (Russian) Empire

"The special interests of France and Great Britain in the above region will be scrupulously respected.

"The Imperial Government entertains the hope that the above consideration will be sympathetically received by the two Allied Governments. The said Allied Governments are assured similar understandings on the part of the Imperial Government for the realization of plans which they may frame with reference to other regions of the Ottoman Empire or elsewhere."

British *aide-mémoire* to the Russian Government, 27 February / 12 March 1915

"Subject to the war being carried on and brought to a successful conclusion, and to desiderata of Great Britain and France in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere being realised, as indicated in the Russian communication herein referred to, His Majesty's Government will agree to the Russian Government's *aide-mémoire* relative to Constantinople and the Straits, the text of which was communicated to His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador by his Excellency M. Sazonof on February 19 / March 4 instant."

British Memorandum to the Russian Government, 27 February / 12 March 1915

"His Majesty's Ambassador has been instructed to make the following observations with reference to the *aide-mémoire* which this Embassy had the honour of addressing to the Imperial Government on February 27 / March 12, 1915.



"The claim made by the Imperial Government in their *aide-mémoire* of February 19 / March 4, 1915, considerably exceeds the desiderata which were foreshadowed by M. Sazonof as probable a few weeks ago. Before His Majesty's Government have had time to take into consideration what their own desiderata elsewhere would be in the final terms of peace, Russia is asking for a definite promise that her wishes shall be satisfied with regard to what is in fact the richest prize of the entire war. Sir Edward Grey accordingly hopes that M. Sazonov will realise that it is not in the power of His Majesty's Government to give a greater proof of friendship than that which is afforded by the terms of the above-mentioned *aide-mémoire*.

"That document involves a complete reversal of the traditional policy of His Majesty's Government, and is in direct opposition to the opinions and sentiments at one time universally held in England and which have still by no means died out. Sir Edward Grey therefore trusts that the recent general assurances given to M. Sazanov have been most loyally and amply fulfilled. In presenting the *aide-mémoire* now, His Majesty's Government believe and hope that a lasting friendship between Russia and Great Britain will be assured as soon as the proposed settlement is realised.

"From the British *aide-mémoire* it follows that the desiderata of His Majesty's Government, however important they may be to British interests in other parts of the world, will contain no condition which could impair Russia's control over the territories described in the Russian *aide-mémoire* of February 19 / March 4, 1915.

"In a view of the fact that the Constantinople will always remain a trade *entrepot* for South-Eastern Europe and Asia Minor, His Majesty's Government will ask that Russia shall, when she comes into possession of it, arrange for a free port for goods in transit to and from non-Russian territory. His Majesty's Government will also ask that there shall be commercial freedom for merchant-ships passing through the Straits, as M. Sazanov has already promised.

"Except in so far as the naval and military operations on which His Majesty's Government are now engaged in the Dardanelles may contribute to the common cause of the Allies, it is now clear that these operations, however successful, cannot be of any advantage to His Majesty's Government in the final terms of peace. Russia alone will, if the war is successful, gather the direct fruits of these operations. Russia should therefore, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, not now put difficulties in the way of any Power which may, on reasonable terms, offer to co-operate with the Allies. The only Power likely to participate in the operations in the Straits is Greece. Admiral Carden has asked the Admiralty to send him more destroyers but they have none to spare. The assistance of a Greek flotilla, if it could have been secured, would thus have been of inestimable value to His Majesty's Government.

"To induce the neutral Balkan States to join the Allies was one of the main objects which His Majesty's Government had in view when they undertook the operations in the Dardanelles. His Majesty's Government hope that Russia will spare no pains to calm apprehensions of Bulgaria and Roumania as to Russia's possession of the Straits and Constantinople being to their disadvantage. His Majesty's Government also hope that Russia will do everything in her power to render the co-operation of these two States an attractive prospect to them.

"Sir E. Grey points out that it will obviously be necessary to take into consideration the whole question of the future interests of France and Great Britain in what is now Asiatic Turkey; and, in formulating the desiderata of His Majesty's Government with regard to the Ottoman Empire, he must consult the French as well as the Russian Government. As soon, however, as it

becomes known that Russia is to have Constantinople at the conclusion of the war, Sir E. Grey will wish to state that throughout the negotiations, His Majesty's Government have stipulated that the Mussulman Holy Places and Arabia shall under all circumstances remain under independent Mussulman dominion.

"Sir E. Grey is as yet unable to make any definite proposal on any point of the British desiderata; but one of the points of the latter will be the revision of the Persian portion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 so as to recognize the present neutral sphere as a British sphere.

"Until the Allies are in a position to give to the Balkan States, and especially to Bulgaria and Roumania, some satisfactory assurance as to their prospects and general position with regard to the territories contiguous to their frontiers to the possession of which they are known to aspire; and until a more advanced stage of the agreement as to the French and British desiderata in the final peace terms is reached, Sir E. Grey points out that it is most desirable that the understanding now arrived at between the Russian, French, and British Governments should remain secret."

French Ambassador in Petrograd to Russian Foreign Minister, 1/14 March 1915

"I should be grateful to Your Excellency for informing His Imperial Majesty that the Government of the French Republic, having studied the conditions of the peace to be imposed on Turkey, would like to annex Syria together with the region of the Gulf of Alexandretta and Cilicia up to the Taurus (mountain) range. I should be happy to inform my government, without delay, of the Imperial Government's consent."

Russian Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs to Russian Foreign Minister, 2/15 March 1915

"The French Ambassador has told me that it is his impression that Syria "includes Palestine". I deemed it useful to remind him that there is in Jerusalem an independent governor."

Russian Foreign Minister to Russian Ambassador in Paris, 3/16 March 1915

"After arrival at General Headquarters, the French Ambassador informed me of the contents of Declasse's telegram which asks for consent by Russia to the annexation of Syria and Cilicia by France. Paleologue explains that in his opinion the French Government refers also to Palestine when speaking of Syria. However, since in this telegram there is no question of Palestine, it would be desirable to elucidate whether the explanation of the Ambassador really corresponds to the view of the French Government. This question appears important to us; for, if the Imperial Government should be prepared largely to satisfy France's desires concerning Syria and Cilicia proper, it is indispensable to study the question with closer attention, if the Holy Places are involved."

Russian Foreign Minister to Russian Ambassador in Paris, 5/18 March 1915

"On 23 February, the Ambassador of France declared to me, in the name of his Government, that France was prepared to consider in the most benevolent manner the realization of our desires relative to Constantinople and the Straits, which I explained to you in my telegram No. 937 and for which I charged you to express my gratitude to M. Delcasse. In these earlier conversations with you Delcasse had assured us several times that we could count on the sympathy of France and had simply pleaded the necessity of elucidating the attitudes of England, from whom he feared objections, before he could himself give more formal assurances in the sense already indicated.

"Now, today, the British Government has expressed to us in writing its full accord in the matter of the annexation by Russia of the Straits and Constantinople within the boundaries fixed by us; it has simply formulated one reservation concerning the safeguard of its economic interests and an equally benevolent attitude on our part toward the political aspirations of England in other areas.

"Insofar as it concerns me personally, the assurance received from Delcasse is amply sufficient, because of the complete confidence that he inspires in me; but the Imperial Government would desire the French Government to issue more precise declarations like [those of the] British Government regarding its assent to the complete realization of our desires."

Russian Foreign Minister to Russian Ambassador in London,  
7/20 March 1915

"Referring to the memorandum of the British Embassy here of 12 March, will you please express to Grey the profound gratitude of the Imperial Government for the complete and definitive approval of Great Britain to a solution of the question of the Straits and Constantinople that satisfies Russia's desires. The Imperial Government appreciates fully the sentiments of the British Government and is convinced that the sincere recognition of their respective interests will guarantee in perpetuity firm friendship between Russia and Great Britain. Having already given assurances respecting the commercial regime in the Straits and Constantinople, the Imperial Government sees no objection to confirming its assent to the establishment (1) of free transit through Constantinople for all goods not deriving from or destined for Russia and (2) free passage through the Straits for merchant vessels.

"With a view to facilitating the capture of the Dardanelles undertaken by the Allies, the Imperial Government will endeavour to obtain the intervention on reasonable terms of those states whose help is considered useful by Great Britain and France.

"The Imperial Government completely shares the view of the British Government on the maintenance of the Muslim Holy Places under an independent Muslim government. It is necessary to elucidate at once whether [those places] will remain under the suzerainty of Turkey, the Sultan retaining the title of Caliph, or it is contemplated to create new independent states, in order to permit the Imperial Government to formulate its views in full knowledge of the case. For its parts the Imperial Government desires that the Caliphate should be separated from Turkey. In any case, the freedom of pilgrimage must be completely secured.

"The Imperial Government confirms its assent to the inclusion of the neutral zone of Persia in the English sphere of influence. At the same time, however, [the Imperial Government] regards it as equitable to stipulate that the districts adjoining the cities of Isfahan and Yazd, forming with them an inseparable whole, should be reserved for Russia in view of the interests that Russia possesses there; a part of the neutral zone which now forms a wedge between the Russian and Afghan frontiers and touches Russia's frontier at Zulfiqar, must also be included in the Russian sphere of influence.

"Railway construction in the neutral zone constitutes for the Imperial Government a question of capital significance that will require further amicable discussion.

"The Imperial Government expects that in the future its full liberty of action will be recognized in the sphere of influence thus delimited and that in particular it will enjoy the right preferentially [to develop] its financial and economic policy.

"Finally, the Imperial Government considers it desirable simultaneously to solve the question of northern Afghanistan

adjoining Russian in conformity with the wishes expressed on the subject by the Imperial Government in the course of negotiations last year."

*Note verbale* from French Ambassador at Petrograd to Russian Foreign Minister, 28 March / 10 April 1915

"The Government of the Republic will give its agreement to the Russian *aide-mémoire* addressed by M. Isvolsky to M. Delcasse on 6 March last relating to Constantinople and the Straits, on condition that war shall be prosecuted until victory and that France and Great Britain realise their plans in the Orient as elsewhere, as it is stated in the Russian *aide-mémoire*."

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## COLD BLOOD/WARM BLOOD

A cold-blooded killer murders three soldiers,  
three Jewish children and a rabbi in  
France.

Warm-blooded the French pilots who helped  
bomb Libya into *peace* with the explosive  
olive-branch.

A warm-blooded killer murders twelve Palestinians  
over Gaza, Israeli Government  
enhanced.

A cold-blooded US soldier murders seventeen  
Afghanis,  
becomes warm-blooded due to a  
post-traumatic-war-syndrome  
circumstance.

Was it cold blood or warm blood that killed  
hundreds that day in Vietnam's My Lai death  
avalanche.

Or those twenty-four villagers in Batang Kali,  
Malaya, when Britain went for  
root-and-branch.

What blood killed eleven civilians in Ballymurphy  
when Brit bullets flew  
carte-blanche.

But bloodless the drone flying to massacre, sent  
by the warm blood of somebody's  
aunt.

Wilson John Haire. 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2012

## Toulouse and French Foreign Policy

by Cathy Winch

In South-West France a gunman killed three French soldiers (two of North African descent, one black) and on 19<sup>th</sup> March three Jewish children and a teacher outside a Jewish school in Toulouse.

He was himself killed after a 30-hour siege of his flat.

The government declared a minute of silence to be observed in all schools for the victims of the shootings. In a number of schools this proved impossible to enforce as pupils refused to participate, citing the fact that no minute of silence had been observed for the dead children of Gaza. There is controversy about where to bury the gunman, so that his tomb does not become a place of pilgrimage.

The killings were the first terrorist outrage in France since 1996.

The killer, Mohamed Merah, said that he was avenging the law against wearing the burqa, the participation of France in the war of Afghanistan, and the children killed in Gaza. He said that to a journalist of France 24 television which he had contacted before his flat was surrounded.

An article in *Le Figaro* (24 March) described the training of young Western Muslims in camps in Pakistan and Egypt; there they are taught to admire heroic Muslim fighters engaged in the struggle in Afghanistan and Palestine. The paper detailed Merah's trips to these places and his connections with men who had undergone that training.

His actions therefore have a connexion to France's foreign policy, its participation in the war in Afghanistan and its support for the state of Israel.

His actions receive an echo in parts of French society, especially among young Muslims. Politicians naturally followed the vast majority of opinion in expressing shock and outrage. Most, wanting to limit the potentially enormous damage done to relations between different groups in society, called for calm, tolerance and understanding. Jewish and Muslim leaders marched arm in arm in Toulouse; there were similar gatherings in other large towns. Some criticised Sarkozy's discriminatory tones in his electoral campaign as inflammatory.

Most stress both the criminality and the extreme religiosity of the killer and people like him. The killer had spent over a year in prison for a succession of petty crimes. He was not, judging by his way of life, very strictly observant. However this type of action can be separated from dissatisfaction with one's personal life. The July 2007 bombers in London, motivated by Britain's involvement in the Iraq war, were not dropouts.

It is easy to forget that there was a time when France had a foreign policy which turned away from attacks on Middle Eastern countries. In 2003 Jacques Chirac refused to join the Americans and British in attacking Iraq. France was vilified then (remember the "Freedom Fries", the "Cheese Eating Surrender Monkeys"). Today the Iraq war is almost universally seen as an unmitigated disaster and the reason given for starting it (Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction) is now known to have been a complete fabrication.

Do the French rejoice: "we were right! If others had followed our lead, we would not be in such a dangerous world today, where one war follows another without an end in sight, and the break up in the world is reflected in the break up of French society." No, they do not rejoice. They have joined

the Americans and British in their wars. Indeed in the case of Libya, they led the attack.

The attack on Libya created unanimity among all the political parties, at least at the beginning.

Why this unanimity? Of course there is the unanimity created by an appeal to the emotions: we must save these people in Benghazi from being massacred. These emotions do not last; very soon they evaporate, and a few months later, who remembers what the situation was that necessitated our involvement? The media does not ask "if these people we wanted to save were actually saved, and at what cost." There was an extensive inquiry after the Iraq war but it is doubtful if the present roller coaster of urgent aggressions will stop to make time to inquire about the war against Libya.

One worry that lasts on the other hand is the one about the economic and financial crisis. The French are worried that the government seems unable to do anything about it. The bankers receive bailouts and then proceed as before. Politicians are also helpless in the face of deindustrialisation. Sarkozy visits stricken industrial sites, promises to save them, and they promptly close forever.

The one field where the government seems able to act effectively is in foreign policy. Thanks to Sarkozy the Chinese were driven out of the Libyan oil fields by French fighter planes. One can but suspect that French people are aware of the material advantage to themselves of this result. Hence the lack of a political movement to protest against the crimes and atrocities involved. We are stronger militarily, so we get the goods, and there is no more to be said.

The old colonial justifications for having a relation of superior force towards the providers of raw materials are still there, in a slightly modified form: their civilisation is inferior to ours—"they don't have democracy, they treat women badly, they don't respect human rights." And, ironically, when you remember that once the colonisers brought priests and salvation, another sure sign of backwardness in these peoples is that religion is very much part of their life.

The French of almost every description display narrow self-interest when it comes to foreign policy. Owning the resources of Algeria was once too precious to abandon just because the Algerians wanted independence, after fighting with France for democracy in WW2.

When Algeria was a colony, "part of France", when people said that "the Mediterranean flows through France like the river Seine through Paris", the Algerian post war struggle for independence found no support even among the virtuous WW2 Resisters, Communists or Gaullists. They were only brought round when the war was almost won and the terrorist group fighting to keep Algeria French (the OAS) intensified a bombing campaign in Paris.

It is less than ten years ago that France had an independent and peaceful foreign policy. Peace was an ideal until recently. If France will not return to a peaceful foreign policy, the only hope is that weaker countries find someone to defend them. As the Editorial on Libya says, Russia and China may help return us to a more pacific situation; they may play a role as brake on war mongering by acting as protectors for weaker states who are potential victims of aggression. Otherwise we will continue in a war-infested world, and a Europe where acts of violence mirror those committed by Europeans and Americans in the Middle-East.

## THE ENIGMA OF FRANK RYAN - PART ONE

by Manus O’Riordan

“Queen’s set for Nazi Occupation” was the heading in the Irish edition of the *Sunday Times* on September 11, 2011 when reporting that Queen’s University Belfast had been festooned with Nazi insignia to represent war-time Berlin for a film being made by Desmond Bell of that same university, entitled *The Enigma of Frank Ryan*. The report quoted Bell on the declared purpose of the film: **“What we are really trying to do is to present to the audience the kind of enigma that Frank Ryan was — how he started out on the left and ended up working for fascism.”** The film’s historical consultant was stated to be fellow Queen’s academic Fearghal McGarry, author of *Frank Ryan* (2002), with one character assassination chapter headed: **“Collaborator, 1938-44”**.

The completed film was premiered at the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival on February 18, 2012. The publicity material generated for its marketing contained the same message. “Wartime Berlin comes to Queen’s” was the proud boast of the press release from Queen’s University itself, which continued: “Academic and film-maker, Professor Des Bell and historian Dr Fearghal McGarry, both from Queen’s, are taking on one of their biggest assignments to date with the production of a film on the enigma that was Frank Ryan. Ryan, born in Limerick in 1902, was a teenage IRA volunteer, irregular in the Civil War, dissident republican socialist of 1930s Dublin and International Brigade volunteer who fought fascism in the Spanish Civil War, **and ended his life working for the Nazis in wartime Berlin.**” (My emphasis – MO’R) While, under the heading of “The ex-IRA man who died a Nazi collaborator” in the *Irish Examiner* on February 16, one Richard Fitzpatrick sounded off: **“Frank Ryan fought in the Irish and Spanish civil wars but became a Hitler stooge. A new film tells his story.”** (His emphasis – MO’R)

The film received a second showing on February 26, followed by a “Hedge School” debate organized by *History Ireland*, in which this writer participated. I will refer to that debate in greater detail in the next issue. Suffice to say at this juncture, while not disavowing the character assassination still being deployed in the promotion of his film, Bell’s screenplay has actually pulled back from some of the excesses of the line that, however, continues to be championed by McGarry. Indeed, I am less happy with some of the film’s caricatures of 1930s Irish Republican controversies and of Ryan in the Spanish Civil War – riddled with many inaccuracies – than of its portrayal of Ryan in Germany.

The film’s title is borrowed from a biographical study entitled “The Enigma of Frank Ryan” that was penned by Michael McInerney, and whose first part was published in Jim Kemmy’s *Old Limerick Journal* in December 1979. Part Two was then published in March 1980. In the meantime, McInerney himself had died in January 1980. Even Part One appeared to be quite a rushed, work-in-progress production, replete with many typos that I have corrected in the following reproduction. It also contained huge chunks of Ryan’s Republican Congress articles, including an incongruous insert subsequent to McInerney’s

narrative of the 1937 Battle of Jarama. I have removed all of these as being unnecessary for the essential story. And essential it is, for one can learn far more of the truth about Frank Ryan from McInerney’s monograph than from the well-funded Bell/McGarry movie.

A caveat must, however, be entered here about McInerney’s own opening paragraphs, which also read like a movie script! Except for the awkward fact that such an “event” involving Ryan never happened as McInerney so dramatically described it! None of the other Nazi luminaries were present when Veessenmayer reintroduced Ryan and Seán Russell, nor did Ryan ever subsequently meet any other person on McInerney’s list, with the single exception of Lahousen, who was to interrogate Ryan in a particularly accusatory manner concerning the death of Russell. McInerney did, however, proceed to suppress any repetition of such imaginative excesses and deal most factually with Ryan’s German period in the second part of his study, to be published in the next issue.

Limerick-born Michael McInerney had a chequered career – having been the first editor in Britain of the Connolly Association’s *Irish Freedom* (subsequently renamed the *Irish Democrat*), wartime industrial organiser for the Communist Party of Northern Ireland, and political correspondent of the *Irish Times* during the 1960s and 70s. Like his editor Douglas Gageby, who had served as a wartime intelligence officer in the **Irish Army**, McInerney passionately defended Dev’s neutrality record during the Second World War. McInerney particularly did so in the *Irish Times* on August 30, 1975 – the day after Dev’s death – in his obituary entitled **“Eamon de Valera 1882-1975, the controversial giant of modern Ireland: revolutionary, hero, politician and statesman, he moulded the nation of today”**. In a thoroughly perceptive manner that would remain incomprehensible to the Churchillian/Orwellian myopia of Queen’s men (as both Sir Winston and the bold George were indistinguishable when it came to viciously attacking Ireland’s wartime neutrality), McInerney wrote:

“The most important national event from 1932-1938 was the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1938) ... returning the ports which Britain had held under the terms of the 1921 Treaty for use in time of war. It was the return of those ports which enabled Ireland to be neutral during the Second World War which began the following year... Whatever criticism may be made of de Valera about the North or about his social and cultural policies – and they are related – there will be none to dispute (some hope! - MO’R) his superb handling of Ireland’s neutrality during the Second World War. Assailed by threats from Germany, Britain and the United States, his superb diplomacy maintained Irish neutrality. He defeated attempts to impose conscription on Northern Ireland, the greatest threat of all to peace in Ireland.”

“The most serious internal threat, which came from the German orientated IRA, was defeated by the toughest measures. Over 1,000 IRA men were imprisoned or interned under emergency laws and 16 IRA men were tried on murder charges by the Special Criminal Court or by the Military Court whose only sentence was death. Six were shot or hanged, four were sentenced to life imprisonment when their death sentences

were commuted by the Government, while the remainder were acquitted or jailed for many years. Three IRA men died on hunger strike while another 12 were shot in armed clashes in which about 12 detectives died. All the efforts of German agents for joint working with the IRA were foiled though vigilant police work.”

“De Valera managed to retain mainly friendly relations with Britain throughout. While tough with Churchill, he turned the blind eye to crashed British pilots making their way back over the Border or to British aircraft flying over Irish territory. He permitted some 50,000 Irish to join the British Forces and many more to work in British factories, hospitals or transport, etc and he agreed to defence plans being worked out by top British and Irish Army Chiefs. He offered to receive women and children refugees from air-raid districts. And yet behind the scenes, there were tough sessions with the British on supplies, on arms, and particularly on threats of occupying the ports. The only serious public row was when, at the end of the War, Churchill made a famous ‘Victory Speech’ which contained unworthy words on Dev. In reply, de Valera declared his admiration for Britain standing alone, *‘but there is one small nation that had stood alone – not for two years – but for several hundred years against aggression, a small nation that could not be forced to accept defeat and has never surrendered her soul’.*”

“De Valera also stood up to Germany and to the powerful United States and held his own with both. He took risks with Germany at a time when Hitler was rampant in Europe. He made an international protest against *‘the cruel wrong’* of the invasion of Holland and Belgium. He protested vigorously at the bombing of Dublin by the Germans and he took a risk when he sent the Dublin Fire Brigades to the aid of Belfast after the Germans had bombed its citizens. Later he insisted on the Germans surrendering their Embassy radio transmitter. But on the other hand he resisted tempting offers to abandon neutrality even when it was evident that Germany was beaten. When Hitler died, de Valera paid ‘a formal call of condolence to Hempel, the German Ambassador’. Not to do so, he has said, ‘would have been an act of unpardonable discourtesy to the German people and to Dr Hempel’. His balancing act was adroit. One serious single mistake could have been fatal not only for himself but for the whole nation.”

It is in this context we must place the tribute paid to Frank Ryan by Éamon de Valera, five months before his death - a tribute echoed by his successor as President of Ireland, Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh, who had been a personal friend of Ryan’s. In the *Irish Times* on April 11, 1975, Michael McInerney placed on the record: “A few days ago Mr. de Valera, asked about Ryan, said: *‘Frank Ryan was a man for whom I have always held the highest regard.’* It is a statement which, Mr. de Valera would agree, means that *‘in all he did at home or abroad he had as his first aim, the interests of his own country’.* Mr. Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh, the President, has said: *‘Those around him regarded him as selfless and genuine. Perhaps he could best be described as a Sir Galahad. In politics he would have been a Wolfe Tone Republican of the Twentieth Century, the man of no property.’*

And it is here that I must disagree with a statement in the final paragraph of the article that follows, where McInerney wrote of Ryan’s supposed “hero Stalin”. That may have been true of McInerney himself from his own period as a Communist but – leaving aside the ex-Stalinist’s questionable “God-that-failed” summing up (without providing any context) of what lay behind the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact – a starry eyed Party-line myopia had never afflicted Frank Ryan. Ironically, it had been McInerney himself who was once to read the riot act to me, and rightly so, at a lecture he gave on Ryan during the

mid-1970s, when I stated from the floor – without any basis whatsoever for my suggestion – that Ryan had probably joined the Spanish Communist Party while a prisoner in Burgos jail. Quite apart from the fact that Ryan was a life-long, publicly professing Catholic believer, at no stage in his life had his politics ever been Communist. In a conversation with myself in October 2005, Ryan’s devoted friend through both life and death, Budge Clissmann (who died this March 20, the widow of Helmut), said of Ryan’s fellow International Brigader, my father Micheál O’Riordan (but in his case certainly a life-long professing Communist!): “You know, Éilis Ryan was always terrified that your father would try to make (her brother) Frank out to have been a Red.” But immediately pre-empting any need for me to rebut Éilis’s paranoia, Budge herself hastened to add: “which, of course, he never did!” Ryan’s politics were the same during both the 1930s and 1940s. In researching his superb and unsurpassed 1980 biography, *Frank Ryan: The Search for the Republic*, the late Seán Cronin conducted a series of interviews in June and July 1977 with both Budge and Helmut Clissmann, wartime intelligence officer in the Abwehr, an instigator of Ryan’s release from imprisonment in Spain and his friend and protector in Germany. The Clissmanns unequivocally told Cronin that Frank Ryan had remained “*an Irish Republican and a Connolly Socialist*” to very end of his life. With that political clarification, we can now proceed with McInerney’s study.

## THE ENIGMA OF FRANK RYAN – PART ONE

by Michael McInerney

(First published in *The Old Limerick Journal*, Vol.1, December 1979)

The date is August 4th 1940. The scene: the historic Wilhelmstrasse, Berlin. Hitler, now master of Europe, including La Belle France, is making final plans for the next battle, the invasion of England.

Ribbentrop, Nazi Foreign Minister, enters with his Under-Secretaries of State. With them are War Office personnel - General Raeder, General Keitel, Admiral Doenitz (Admiral-in-Chief of U-Boat Fleet), Admiral Canaris (Chief of Abwehr Intelligence), Lt. Colonel Lahousen (Head of Abwehr Sabotage) and S.S. Colonel Veessenmayer (Irish Advisor, Foreign Office). The subject for discussion is "Ireland - Its role in the English Operation".

First, there is a short discussion, Ribbentrop presiding, and then a low-sized, mild-looking but sturdy man, an utterly complete stranger to most present, enters. He is greeted by Ribbentrop and introduced as Herr Sean Russell, Chief-of-Staff of the Irish Republican Army. He is greeted warmly and shown to a seat. Another stranger, obviously a foreigner, then enters, guided by an official. He is exceptionally tall, strongly built, yet gaunt and pale, and clearly not at ease. Even before he has taken a seat, however, he and the first stranger recognise and greet each other with excited cries of 'Frank', 'Sean' as they embrace, talking away, ignoring everybody else. "Frank" is then shown to a seat and introduced to the whole company as Herr Frank Ryan, an heroic fighter against England in the Irish War of Independence. He also is greeted warmly.

Sean Russell's presence in such politically strange company might have surprised few Irish people with any knowledge of

the Easter Rising or awareness of the IRA connivance with the Germans at that time. But how did Frank Ryan get there? The question was on all political minds in Ireland and in a few other countries at that time. Only ten days earlier he had been Major Ryan of the Spanish Republican Army, the last international antifascist prisoner of Franco, captured in fighting against Germans, Italian and Spanish fascists, and sentenced to death but defying his captors in questions from even the German Gestapo.

The mystery of Ryan's presence at that Nazi meeting, and the mystery also of his later journey in a German U-Boat with the same Sean Russell - and Russell's death in that tragic journey - has remained unsolved for almost 40 years. His later 4 year stay and death in Germany on the return of the U-Boat added to the mystery.

Ryan was widely known and loved in Ireland as a leading IRA writer, speaker, left-wing advocate of Saor Eire and of the many social issues of that time, until that day in July 1940 when he was removed from Spain. Ever since, however, his popularity has been clouded somewhat by the German question mark. Why did he go there? How did he, an avowed anti-fascist, survive among such political criminals? Did he hold on to his principles? The only reply one can attempt to give is to sketch an outline of his life's work and principles from his early membership of Fianna Eireann and the IRA in 1919, while still a boy in Bottomstown, Elton, Co. Limerick.

It is the only full answer that can be essayed. Within it, however, may be found the one single emotion that unites most Catholic Irish men and women and also some Protestants. It is the emotion that was dominant in 1919-21, in 1939 to 1945. It is the emotion that Tom Barry, Sean MacBride, Rory O'Connor and others sought to exploit in that famous IRA Convention, when Barry - in vain - proposed that the IRA should resume the war against the English. (Indirectly, however, the proposal led to the Civil War). Stalin exploited the same emotion in 1941 when he turned the Russian defence into a 'Patriotic War' against the German assault.

It is an emotion which is often abused in peace time to divert generous minds from serious social issues and needs into channels far removed from those issues. In Ryan's most dynamic activity in Ireland almost all his energy was diverted into grappling with those very social issues and maintaining that their resolution could also solve any remaining national questions.

The Ryan family in Bottomstown, Elton, Co. Limerick could be described as comfortable - even middle class. All the five boys and four girls received secondary education, three of the girls became nuns, two of the boys doctors, and for a brief period Frank believed he had a vocation for the priesthood. That very brief vocation came from the intense education on the twin struggle of Ireland 'for Faith and Fatherland', from a Father Roche in St. Colman's College, Fermoy. That education merged well with the history of Ryan's early youth. The new national movement of physical force, after the tragedy of Parnell, the Boer War, the defeat of Home Rule, and the outbreak of the Great War between Germany and the British Empire, was almost a prologue to his own life. The heroism, the tragedy and glory of the Easter Week Rising, as portrayed by Father Roche, made a deep impression on the youngster of 13 years and, somehow, the effort of Casement to obtain help from the Germans, loomed large. Of earlier history, Father Roche did not neglect the Spanish Armada. Ryan's later career made its own history and reflected in many ways his educational background.

In Fermoy he met the famous Malone brothers of Tipperary, who soon introduced him to Sinn Fein and the junior IRA, the

Fianna. He joined the East Limerick IRA in late 1920, while only barely 18 years old and still at college, and took part in the Tan War until the Truce. In the Civil War, however, he parted with his hero Michael Collins and, though not attracted to Liam Mellows and Rory O'Connor of the Four Courts IRA, he joined with Liam Lynch and de Valera after the Four Courts attack by the Provisional Army of Collins, Griffith and Mulcahy.

Then followed capture, internment and, after the Civil War ended, release in September 1923, just in time to resume his studies on the opening of the 1923-24 term at University College, Dublin. Ryan, through scholarships, had secured free education through St. Colman's. From there he gained another scholarship to enter U.C.D. in September 1921, but the Civil War and internment had interrupted his studies. It is worth noting that the Limerick County Council, though opposed to his politics, renewed his scholarship after the Civil War.

He completed his Degree in Celtic Studies, with Honours, in 1925 and began study for a Master's Degree. Political activity crowded out his life so much, however, that he never completed those studies. He became quickly known as a brilliant public speaker, organiser, writer, Gaelic scholar, teacher, and propagandist. By 1926 he was writing for *An Phoblacht*. Through the crisis of the IRA break with de Valera and the formation of Fianna Fail, Ryan stuck to the IRA, refusing all promises and offers of position, money and influence. His reason? By now he had become a republican socialist. Always inclined towards the left, in spite of his physical force idealism, he saw that de Valera was ignoring the terrible poverty, the bad housing conditions, the unemployment and the emigration.

Now working closely with Peadar O'Donnell, the well-known socialist former trade union organiser, schoolteacher and writer, Ryan had also moved to the left. Their work for the small farmers, now under (Cosgrave) government pressure to pay land annuities arrears had aroused rural Ireland, and de Valera, now seeking state power was forced to pledge reforms. Ryan was busy helping O'Donnell, building a left wing in the IRA, urging the conservative IRA into a social-revolutionary body and to give up the gun, arguing that if they concentrated on land division, jobs, houses, security, improved education, old-age welfare, they would make contact with Protestant workers in the North and create an all-Ireland organisation. De Valera, on the other hand, was now using the North for political advantage in the South, to divert the people from urgent social issues to nationalist issues that would widen, not narrow, the antagonisms in the North.

The left made real progress and now the IRA had contacts with the Soviet Union, radical rural groups in France, Germany, Italy and Britain. At home junior IRA officers were prominent at unemployed marches, tenant protests and with small farmers on the annuities issue. Soon the IRA had a new radical programme that frightened the life out of the Cosgrave Government and the Church. That new 1931 programme named 'Saor Eire' was to mark an important watershed in Irish politics. Cosgrave imposed new security laws. Soon hundreds, including Frank Ryan, were in jail while all radical newspapers, meetings and marches were banned and there were hints of 1922-type executions. The IRA was denounced by Church and State as communist, "working to establish a Soviet satellite" in Ireland. Cosgrave, believing that de Valera, because of his defence of the IRA in the Dail, had been discredited by the new radical IRA, declared a general election, confident of victory. But this strategy was defeated by his own tactic of linking de Valera to the IRA.

He (Cosgrave) claimed he wished to see a stable government elected in 1932 to welcome the Eucharistic Congress and the

functions to mark the 1,500 anniversary of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland. Cosgrave's wish was fulfilled but not as he planned. That tough election campaign had stimulated all IRA volunteers and republican supporters to work for de Valera, and in March 1932 Cosgrave was defeated and with Fianna Fail in power, de Valera became president of the executive council. Soon the Oath was abolished, the Governor-General gone and the Treaty rewritten. Again Ryan resisted the allurements of office. He was now dedicated to moving the IRA to the left as the social opposition to de Valera and it was in this situation that the events which mapped Ryan's road to Spain and to Germany took place.

With de Valera's rise to power the left social forces in the State grew rapidly, with the rise of a Communist Party, anti-imperialist groups, unemployed workers associations etc. and hundreds of IRA volunteers. The (IRA) leadership believed that too many were becoming interested and began an anti-communist campaign similar to that of the Church and the British and Irish capitalist press. Ryan refused to go forward for election to the (IRA) executive in protest against the right-wing policies as editor of *An Phoblacht*. Soon he, O'Donnell and George Gilmore put forward a proposal at the 1934 Army Convention to call a "Republican Congress" that would unite all republicans, radicals, trade unionists in a "great social-revolutionary body" with social aims that would help to forward unity between Catholic and Protestant workers in the North. The motion for such a Congress was defeated by a single vote, but O'Donnell, Ryan, Gilmore and others went on to form their own Congress.

Ryan for some years now had been noting the threat of fascism in Italy and of nazism (and Hitler) in Germany. He had become the most prominent opponent of the newly-formed Blueshirts, led by General O'Duffy, even though the official IRA leadership had banned volunteers from anti-Blueshirt demonstrations. Now the left clashed with orthodox republicanism and with the Catholic Church because of the left's opposition to Mussolini in Abyssinia and Japanese fascism in China. And in the Republican Congress newspaper of the same name, it continued its anti-fascism. By this time Ryan, O'Donnell and Gilmore and all who had joined the Congress had been expelled from the IRA...

The campaign against the Congress and its supporters reached a new crescendo when in September 1936 they decided to send an Irish Unit to Spain after General Franco had launched an all-out military attack on the Republican Government. He had early allies in Hitler and Mussolini, with their tanks and armies. Ryan was chosen to lead the Irish Unit and he and about 80 men left for Spain on December 11th. (They had been preceded by General O'Duffy, of the Irish Christian Front). The Christian Front members described themselves as the Irish Brigade. They were, however, to remain only six months in Spain, becoming disillusioned with Franco (Ryan and his men remained for almost two years, Ryan rising to the post of Major and Adjutant on the General Staff.) His international career had begun.

Ryan had left Ireland with a national reputation. He was one of the most popular republicans but no longer the republican who believed in the isolated use of the gun or bomb, but one who wished to win the support of the people for social reform. With that support, but in circumstances, as in Spain, where progress was blocked by wealthy property elements backed by the national army of the wealthy, he was prepared to fight with a people's army to end all wars. He was still, however, Irish of the Irish, fighting in an international war for democracy and socialism.

Students, volunteers, socialists, communists, and women friends still remember him. "A giant of a man in every way: careless, gay, but serious when necessary, dark hair with a permanent fringe, slightly deaf." Sheila Humphreys, a beautiful Cumann na mBan girl, recalls him as always in great form, extraordinarily generous and ready to give away his last penny, always ready for devilment. Peter O'Flynn, who loved him, recalls their many 'nights on the town'. Others speak of his serious disappointment when he was in love with a close woman relative of Kevin Barry, the boy hero.

Ryan's national reputation was to reach international fame from his record in Spain. He became widely known. It was an important historical event, since apart from a small group that went to Garibaldi's aid in 1848, it was the first ever Irish unit to go abroad in support of a radical, democratic or progressive cause. All others like "the Wild Geese" had fought for old feudal or monarchical causes of France, Spain, Austria, and England. [Not quite correct: Irish men fought with revolutionary France e.g. at Valmy 1792. Ed.]

Almost every county, including Limerick, was included. Ryan was the great hero of the famous Battle of Jarama, in which, though wounded, he had rallied his men. He has described the battle himself. The description is included in the *"History of the Fifteenth Brigade"*, of which Ryan was the editor. In a retreat the battalion of the British, Irish and Americans had left a dangerous gap vital to the defence of Madrid: "The men appeared to have reached the end of their tether through heavy casualties, worn out by three days of gruelling fighting, lack of food. They had suffered more than flesh and blood could stand. I hitched my own rifle to my shoulder and some of the men noticing this stumbled to their feet, formed a line of four and I remembered an old Irish trick. I jerked my head back and shouted '*Sing up ye sons of guns*' and they did. We marched back up the road into the olive groves. At last we are on the ridge. Flat on the ground we fire into the groves. We are advancing. We are in the olive groves. We were to hold that line - the gap of danger."

At Jarama, however, the Irish lost some 19 men, their best; men like Kit Conway from Tipperary, Bob Hilliard, a former Protestant clergyman from Killarney, Charles Donnelly, the young Northern poet who gave the title 'Even the Olives are Bleeding' to Cathal O'Shannon's RTE programme. Others to die were Leo Green, Paddy McDaid from Dublin, and Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland. Others who had died earlier, Tommy Patten from Achill, and Bill Barry from Dublin, among the very first to volunteer independently and who died in those December days when Madrid was in deadly peril. At Las Rozas, Mick May, Tony Fox, and other Dubliners, including Dinny Coady, a former IRA officer, were killed. Jim Woulfe of Limerick died too, but two other Limerick men, Gerald Doyle of Upper William Street and Jim Tierney, though badly wounded, survived to return home. Waterford sent the three Power brothers, Peter O'Connor, and Frank Edwards, all of whom won fame, and Mossie Quinlan, who died at Jarama.

Ryan wrote: "The Irish had a splendid record. They won glory at Jarama, Brunete, Las Rozas, the Ebro . . . all honour to those who died for Ireland but even greater honour for those who died here for the greatest cause in the world, the liberation of mankind." When someone wrote that he had broken the old tradition of not fighting on the side of England's enemy, he described such an attitude as 'canned nationalism'. The Irish in Spain were fighting for the working people everywhere, those in Ireland and everywhere else...

After two tough years in Spain, broken only by sick leave in Dublin (via England, when he met Sean O'Casey who begged him to remain at home), Ryan was captured by Italian troops at Aragon, in March 1938. He was sentenced to death after a Court Martial, during which he defied the Court, but was saved after the intervention of de Valera and other international pressure, but also because the Italians hoped to exchange him for another prisoner. In March 1939, however, Franco won total victory and, though he celebrated this by executing thousands of Spanish republicans, he began to release International Brigade prisoners. Mysteriously, however, he held on to Ryan, who was the last international prisoner in Spain by March 1940.

By August 1939 the whole world was shocked by the Non-Aggression Pact between Hitler and Stalin. The two most bitter enemies - the leading communist and the top fascist - had become allies. The world anti-Fascist Front had been shattered. All Communist Party and other leftwing forces in the democratic

countries withdrew from the Anti-Fascist Front. When world war broke out in September the left forces everywhere treated it as an old style imperialist war, like that of 1914. In Spain's jails, however, the enemy had not changed. Franco and Hitler, who supported him, remained the enemy. That applied also to Ryan, but now Germany became England's enemy, while Ireland was under threat of invasion from England, who needed the Irish ports to cope with Hitler's U-Boats. That was the situation facing Ryan at a time when all his high hopes for Spain and his return to Ireland for new endeavours had been shattered and when his hero Stalin seemed to have deserted the workers of the world. Was his fate now to lie in a Spanish fascist jail to serve the thirty years sentence imposed after the death verdict had been commuted? And at a time when his own country was in real danger. The one thought filling his heart was somehow to return to Ireland and play his part in, possibly, its greatest national crisis ever.

(to be continued)

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## Documents

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### **Kenny and Cameron Meeting 12 March 2012**

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This is the text of the agreement mentioned in Editorial I following: "a meeting between Kenny and Cameron in London, at which arrangements were made to begin a process of merging the two civil services. And why not? RTE is already little more than an echo of the BBC. And increasingly the Irish State appears to itself to be something left over from the actions of a previous generation whose motives, purposes, morale, and national will now appear alien and incomprehensible. It exists, but it knows not why. What separate business does it have in the world now?"

Taoiseach Enda Kenny and UK Prime Minister David Cameron have issued a joint statement this afternoon [12/3/12] following a meeting between the two leaders in London. The statement, below the fold, says that Britain and Ireland have begun an "intensive programme of work" to reinforce the relationship between the two countries over the next decade.

The statement, below, points to opportunities for collaboration in education and research, further work to develop interconnectivity in the energy market, as well as closer work in the agri-food sector. It also commits both countries to the Common Travel Area.

The statement also says that the two countries will prepare a joint evaluation on the depth of economic relations between the UK and Ireland.

#### **Joint Statement by the Prime Minister, David Cameron and the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny**

The relationship between our two countries has never been stronger or more settled, as complex or as important, as it is today.

Our citizens, uniquely linked by geography and history, are connected today as never before through business, politics, culture and sport, travel and technology, and of course family ties.

These vital human links are nowhere more evident than in the presence of a large, confident, valued and integrated Irish community in Britain and in the increasing number of British people who now live and work in Ireland.

Our two economies benefit from a flow of people, goods, investment, capital and ideas on a scale that is rare even in this era of global economic integration.

We are partners in the European Union and firm supporters of the Single Market.

We enjoy a uniquely close political relationship, grounded in the progress which we have led together over the last 25 years in the peace process in Northern Ireland. We stand together in continuing and unqualified support for the Agreements and institutions to which the process led.

2011 was a momentous year, with the State Visit of Her Majesty The Queen to Ireland serving as a symbol of a modern, deep and friendly relationship. We look forward to the prospect of a return State Visit by the President of Ireland at an appropriate time.

This year brings another symbolic representation of our enduring relationship, with the Olympic Torch travelling to Ireland in June, to shine a light on the rich heritage and sporting ambitions of our athletes as they prepare to participate in the London 2012 Olympic Games.

2012 also marks the beginning of a decade of centenary commemorations of events that helped shape our political destinies. This series of commemorations offers us an opportunity to explore and reflect on key episodes of our past. We will do so in a spirit of historical accuracy, mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation.



But we want to ensure that this is a decade not only of remembering but also of looking forward; a decade of renewed and strengthened co-operation between our two countries.

To that end we have initiated an intensive programme of work aimed at reinforcing the British Irish relationship over the next decade.

#### Accelerating recovery, growth and job creation

The UK and Ireland both have open and globalised economies and we share a commitment to boosting growth as the cornerstone of economic recovery and job creation.

We recognise that our economies have different strengths and that sometimes we will compete with each other. We each benefit greatly from the flow of goods and services between our economies, amounting to 1 billion euros every week and we want to see this expand and develop further.

We are committed to boosting competitiveness and productivity and to supporting innovation, research and development and we plan to intensify our cooperation to help to make this happen.

Collaboration between our third-level colleges, research institutes and business sectors increases the benefits of investment in research and development. Acknowledging Dublin's designation as European City of Science in 2012, we plan to examine the potential for increased collaboration in research.

We share common long term challenges to our prosperity, including the need for secure, competitive and sustainable sources of energy.

We welcome the progress achieved on the all-Ireland Single Electricity Market and on the new East-West interconnector which is due to be commissioned later this year. Our two administrations will work to develop further interconnectivity North-South and East-West, to facilitate security of supply and enhanced competition.

We recognise the significant untapped potential in renewable energy and will seek to promote mutually beneficial investment and deployment in this area. We will also seek to collaborate in the development and commercialisation of related technologies.

With growing uncertainty in global food and commodity markets we believe there is considerable potential for closer cooperation in the agri-food sector.

We will work closely to identify and pursue opportunities for collaboration in these and other areas (such as professional and financial services and the 'creative' sectors such as media, music, film, fashion and ICT).

Shared strengths in areas such as the construction sector offer potential for global-scale partnerships between British and Irish firms.

We will prepare a joint evaluation of the depth of economic relations between the UK and Ireland and of the opportunities for closer collaboration in support of growth to our mutual benefit.

We remain firmly committed to preserving and protecting the Common Travel Area, which allows ease of travel for our people. We will continue to work together on immigration issues, and to combat potential vulnerabilities from terrorism, illegal immigration and organised crime.

Northern Ireland: from peace to reconciliation and prosperity

We continue to work in the closest cooperation on Northern Ireland issues. We reaffirm our support for the full

implementation of the Agreements and for the ongoing work and development of the devolved and other institutions.

Our joint efforts in support of these objectives must and will continue. Above all, we stand together with the people of Northern Ireland and its Executive in our determination to make sure that society there is never again blighted by violent conflict. But our aim, along with the Executive, is more than that: it is a society that is not only peaceful, but stable, prosperous, and based on a genuinely shared future for all.

We support the Northern Ireland Executive in its objective of rebalancing the economy, and we have asked our embassies in emerging markets to support its efforts in promoting jobs, growth and investment in Northern Ireland.

We support and encourage intensified economic cooperation on the island of Ireland that delivers benefits in stronger growth and better public services. The all-Ireland Single Electricity Market is an excellent example of what can be achieved.

We welcome the progress being made in the areas of culture and tourism. The centenary of the Titanic this year, and initiatives such as the designation of Derry/Londonderry as the 2012 City of Culture, are opportunities to attract international attention and new visitors.

We will maintain our efforts to promote reconciliation, underpinning the Executive's objective of creating a cohesive, shared and integrated society in Northern Ireland. We will work together, with the Executive, to encourage the marking of forthcoming centenaries in a spirit of mutual respect, and the promotion of understanding.

We acknowledge the excellent security cooperation between our two governments, and will continue to stand fast together in the face of those who resort to violence, which is abhorred by our people and has no place in our societies.

## **Working together in Europe**

Our two countries have shared common membership of the European Union for almost forty years. As partners in the European Union we are firm supporters of the Single Market and will work together to encourage an outward-facing EU, which promotes growth and jobs.

We share a desire to reduce the burden of regulation, particularly on small and medium enterprises, and believe that the Single Market should in particular take advantage of digital opportunities, reflecting the growing importance of online commerce and trade, opening up services markets and establishing a genuine, efficient and effective internal market in energy.

We also share a commitment to build a robust, dynamic and competitive financial services sector across the EU that provides vital support to citizens and businesses and creates sustainable employment.

We both look forward to Ireland's Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2013 and we will work closely across the range of EU dossiers.

We will continue to consult each other on key EU policy issues.

## **Addressing global challenges**

We remain committed to effective multilateralism and to the UN in particular.

We share a commitment to tackle the challenge of climate change and will cooperate on climate change issues both within the EU, including in the context of the Irish Presidency, and in the context of wider international negotiations.

We will continue to co-ordinate closely during Ireland's period of Chairmanship in Office of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe during 2012.

We are strong supporters of international aid and will work together to promote a more equitable international society. DFID and Irish Aid work together in Africa and elsewhere in their efforts to combat hunger and poverty. We are strongly committed to reaching our shared goal of 0.7% GNI on ODA and will also work together on reform of the international development system. We will strengthen our common efforts to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals and to end the scourge of global hunger and poor nutrition.

### Looking ahead

We intend that this Joint Statement will be the starting point for realising the potential over the next decade of even stronger relations for current and future generations living on these islands.

We have asked our respective Secretary General/Cabinet Secretary to take forward the work necessary to give effect to this new phase of our relationship.

We have agreed that there will be regular meetings at Secretary General/Permanent Secretary level, working with the relevant lead Departments, and through formal exchanges of civil servants.

We agree that the scope to utilise our official agencies, including the North-South bodies and the new BIC Standing Secretariat, and private sector organisations and networks to contribute to this work, should be fully explored.

We will explore the potential for more exchanges/secondments of officials between our administrations.

We are committed to meeting together at Annual Summits to review and oversee progress in the areas outlined in this statement.

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(Continued from p. 35)

### Wikileaks Revelations

32. The United States used threats, spying, and more to try to get its way at the crucial 2009 climate conference in Copenhagen.

33. Mahmoud Abbas, president of The Palestinian National Authority, and head of the Fatah movement, turned to Israel for help in attacking Hamas in Gaza in 2007.

34. The British government trained a Bangladeshi paramilitary force condemned by human rights organisations as a "government death squad".

35. A US military order directed American forces not to investigate cases of torture of detainees by Iraqis.

36. The US was involved in the Australian government's 2006 campaign to oust Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare.

37. A 2009 US cable said that police brutality in Egypt against common criminals was routine and pervasive, the police using force to extract confessions from criminals on a daily basis.

38. US diplomats pressured the German government to stifle the prosecution of CIA operatives who abducted and tortured Khalid El-Masri, a German citizen. [El-Masri was kidnaped by the CIA while on vacation in Macedonia on December 31, 2003. He was flown to a torture center in Afghanistan, where he was beaten, starved, and sodomized. The US government released him on a hilltop in Albania five months later without money or the means to go home.]

39. 2005 cable re "widespread severe torture" by India, the widely-renowned "world's largest democracy": The International Committee of the Red Cross reported: "The continued ill-treatment of detainees, despite longstanding ICRC-GOI [Government of India] dialogue, have led the ICRC to conclude that New Delhi condones torture." Washington was briefed on this matter by the ICRC years ago. What did the United States, one of the world's leading practitioners and teachers of torture

in the past century, do about it? American leaders, including the present ones, continued to speak warmly of "the world's largest democracy"; as if torture and one of the worst rates of poverty and child malnutrition in the world do not contradict the very idea of democracy.

40. The United States overturned a ban on training the Indonesian Kopassus army special forces — despite the Kopassus's long history of arbitrary detention, torture and murder — after the Indonesian President threatened to derail President Obama's trip to the country in November 2010.

41. Since at least 2006, the United States has been funding political opposition groups in Syria, including a satellite TV channel that beams anti-government programming into the country.

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### A Book by Eamon Dyas

*The British Legion And Hitler*

Lest We Forget

Athol Books 2005

This pamphlet, which is not intended as an insult to the decent people who are members of the British Legion, is dedicated to the millions of decent human beings who perished on all sides during the First World War. It simply gives the history of the British Legion which shows it to have been a product of political duplicity on the part of the Establishment.

(Continued from p.36)

13. Saudi Arabia in 2007 threatened to pull out of a Texas oil refinery investment unless the US government intervened to stop Saudi Aramco from being sued in US courts for alleged oil price fixing. The deputy Saudi oil minister said that he wanted the US to grant Saudi Arabia sovereign immunity from lawsuits.

14. Saudi donors were the chief financiers of Sunni militant groups like Al Qaeda, the Afghan Taliban, and Lashkar-e-Taiba, which carried out the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

15. Pfizer, the world's largest pharmaceutical company, hired investigators to unearth evidence of corruption against the Nigerian attorney general in order to persuade him to drop legal action over a controversial 1996 drug trial involving children with meningitis.

16. Oil giant Shell claimed to have "inserted staff" and fully infiltrated Nigeria's government.

17. The Obama administration renewed military ties with Indonesia in spite of serious concerns expressed by American diplomats about the Indonesian military's activities in the province of West Papua, expressing fears that the Indonesian government's neglect, rampant corruption and human rights abuses were stoking unrest in the region.

18. US officials collaborated with Lebanon's defense minister to spy on, and allow Israel to potentially attack Hezbollah in the weeks that preceded a violent May 2008 military confrontation in Beirut.

19. Gabon president Omar Bongo allegedly pocketed millions in embezzled funds from central African states, channelling some of it to French political parties in support of Nicolas Sarkozy.

20. Cables from the US embassy in Caracas in 2006 asked the US Secretary of State to warn President Hugo Chávez against a Venezuelan military intervention to defend the Cuban revolution in the eventuality of an American invasion after Castro's death.

21. The United States was concerned that the leftist Latin American television network, Telesur, headquartered in Venezuela, would collaborate with al Jazeera of Qatar, whose coverage of the Iraq War had gotten under the skin of the Bush administration.

22. The Vatican told the United States it wanted to undermine the influence of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez in Latin America because of concerns about the deterioration of Catholic power there. It feared that Chávez was seriously damaging relations between the Catholic Church and the state by identifying the church hierarchy in Venezuela as part of the privileged class.

23. The Holy See welcomed President Obama's new outreach to Cuba and hoped for further steps soon, perhaps to include prison visits for the wives of the Cuban Five. Better US-Cuba ties would deprive Hugo Chávez of one of his favourite screeds and could help restrain him in the region.

24. The wonderful world of diplomats: In 2010, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown raised with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton the question of visas for two wives of members of the "Cuban Five". "Brown requested that the wives (who have previously been refused visas to visit the U.S.) be granted visas so that they could visit their husbands in prison. ... Our subsequent queries to Number 10 indicate that Brown made this request as a result of a commitment that he had made to UK trade unionists, who form part of the Labour Party's core constituency. Now that the request has been made, Brown does not intend to pursue this matter further. There is no USG action required."

25. UK Officials concealed from Parliament how the US was allowed to bring cluster bombs onto British soil in defiance of a treaty banning the housing of such weapons.

26. A cable was sent by an official at the US Interests Section in Havana in July 2006, during the runup to the Non-Aligned Movement conference. He noted that he was actively looking for "human interest stories and other news that shatters the myth of Cuban medical prowess". [Presumably to be used to weaken support for Cuba amongst the member nations at the conference.]

27. Most of the men sent to Guantánamo prison were innocent people or low-level operatives; many of the innocent individuals were sold to the US for bounty.

28. DynCorp, a powerful American defense contracting firm that claims almost \$2 billion per year in revenue from US tax dollars, threw a "boy-play" party for Afghan police recruits. (Yes, it's what you think.)

29. Even though the Bush and Obama Administrations repeatedly maintained publicly that there was no official count of civilian casualties, the Iraq and Afghanistan War Logs showed that this claim was untrue.

30. Known Egyptian torturers received training at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

31. The United States put great pressure on the Haitian government to not go ahead with various projects, with no regard for the welfare of the Haitian people. A 2005 cable stressed continued US insistence that all efforts must be made to keep former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whom the United States had overthrown the previous year, from returning to Haiti or influencing the political process. In 2006, Washington's target was President René Préval for his agreeing to a deal with Venezuela to join Caracas's Caribbean oil alliance, PetroCaribe, under which Haiti would buy oil from Venezuela, paying only 60 percent up front with the remainder payable over twenty-five years at 1 percent interest. And in 2009, the State Department backed American corporate opposition to an increase in the minimum wage for Haitian workers, the poorest paid in the Western Hemisphere.

## Wikileaks revelations

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The following is a list of things revealed by Wikileaks, mostly derived from US Embassy cables. It was compiled by William Blum (see his Anti-Empire Report 103 at <http://killinghope.org/bblum6/aer103.html>)

1. In 2009, Japanese diplomat Yukiya Amano became the new head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which plays the leading role in the investigation of whether Iran is developing nuclear weapons or is working only on peaceful civilian nuclear energy projects. A US embassy cable of October 2009 said Amano "took pains to emphasize his support for U.S. strategic objectives for the Agency. Amano reminded the [American] ambassador on several occasions that ... he was solidly in the U.S. court on every key strategic decision, from high-level personnel appointments to the handling of Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program."

2. Russia refuted US claims that Iran has missiles that could target Europe.

3. The British government's official inquiry into how it got involved in the Iraq War was deeply compromised by the government's pledge to protect the Bush administration in the course of the inquiry.

4. A discussion between Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and American Gen. David H. Petraeus in which Saleh indicated he would cover up the US role in missile strikes against al-Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen. "We'll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours," Saleh told Petraeus.

5. The US embassy in Madrid has had serious points of friction with the Spanish government and civil society: (a) trying to get the criminal case dropped against three US soldiers accused of killing a Spanish television cameraman in Baghdad during a 2003 unprovoked US tank shelling of the hotel where he and other journalists were staying; (b) torture cases brought by a Spanish NGO against six senior Bush administration officials, including former attorney general Alberto Gonzales; (c) a Spanish government investigation into the torture of Spanish subjects held at Guantánamo; (d) a probe by a Spanish court into the use of Spanish bases and airfields for American extraordinary rendition (= torture) flights; (e) continual criticism of the Iraq war by Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero, who eventually withdrew Spanish troops.

6. State Department officials at the United Nations, as well as US diplomats in various embassies, were assigned to gather as much of the following information as possible about UN officials, including Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, permanent security council representatives, senior UN staff, and foreign diplomats: e-mail and website addresses, internet user names and passwords, personal encryption keys, credit card numbers, frequent flyer account numbers, work schedules, and biometric data. US diplomats at the embassy in Asunción, Paraguay were asked to obtain dates, times and telephone numbers of calls received and placed by foreign diplomats from China, Iran and the Latin American leftist states of Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia. US diplomats in Romania, Hungary and Slovenia were instructed to provide biometric information on "current and emerging leaders and advisers" as well as information

about "corruption" and information about leaders' health and "vulnerability". The UN directive also specifically asked for "biometric information on ranking North Korean diplomats". A similar cable to embassies in the Great Lakes region of Africa said biometric data included DNA, as well as iris scans and fingerprints.

7. A special "Iran observer" in the Azerbaijan capital of Baku reported on a dispute that played out during a meeting of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. An enraged Revolutionary Guard Chief of Staff, Mohammed Ali Jafari, allegedly got into a heated argument with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and slapped him in the face because the generally conservative president had, surprisingly, advocated freedom of the press.

8. The State Department, virtually alone in the Western Hemisphere, did not unequivocally condemn a June 28, 2009 military coup in Honduras, even though an embassy cable declared: "there is no doubt that the military, Supreme Court and National Congress conspired on June 28 in what constituted an illegal and unconstitutional coup against the Executive Branch". US support of the coup government has been unwavering ever since.

9. The leadership of the Swedish Social Democratic Party — neutral, pacifist, and liberal Sweden, so the long-standing myth goes — visited the US embassy in Stockholm and asked for advice on how best to sell the war in Afghanistan to a skeptical Swedish public, asking if the US could arrange for a member of the Afghan government to come visit Sweden and talk up NATO's humanitarian efforts on behalf of Afghan children, and so forth. [For some years now Sweden has been, in all but name, a member of NATO and the persecutor of Julian Assange, the latter to please a certain Western power.]

10. The US pushed to influence Swedish wiretapping laws so communication passing through the Scandinavian country could be intercepted. The American interest was clear: eighty per cent of all the internet traffic from Russia travels through Sweden.

11. President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy told US embassy officials in Brussels in January 2010 that no one in Europe believed in Afghanistan anymore. He said Europe was going along in deference to the United States and that there must be results in 2010, or "Afghanistan is over for Europe."

12. Iraqi officials saw Saudi Arabia, not Iran, as the biggest threat to the integrity and cohesion of their fledgling democratic state. The Iraqi leaders were keen to assure their American patrons that they could easily "manage" the Iranians, who wanted stability; but that the Saudis wanted a "weak and fractured" Iraq, and were even "fomenting terrorism that would destabilize the government". The Saudi King, moreover, wanted a US military strike on Iran.