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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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Editorial

Egypt

Democratic elections are rarely won by large majorities. If we hear of an election being won by 80% of the vote, we know what to think. We have been told often enough. We know that the winner was a tyrant on a vanity trip without the sense of appearances to tell him rigging it to 70% would have been ample.

Assad of Syria won the June Presidential election with 88.7% of the vote. Enough said!

Enough said, that is, until one looks at the May Egyptian election, which was won by General Sisi with 96% of the vote, and is told that it is valid and democratic and really does express the will of the Egyptian people.

When General Sisi overthrew the elected Government of Egypt and installed a military regime, the *Irish Times* told us that this was not a *coup* but a step on the road to genuine democracy.

That was puzzling, because Morsi had won a hotly contested election with an impressively small majority—the kind of majority which until then had been taken for a hallmark of democratic authenticity.

But now it has been authoritatively discovered that small majorities were, after all, not a sign of democratic authenticity. A small majority signifies a large minority, and government of a large minority by a small majority would not do. Democracy required pulverising majorities, if not complete consensus.

Well, General Sisi has delivered a crushing majority which leaves little space for malcontents.

On Election Day the Egyptian turnout was small. The General was dissatisfied with his people. Not enough of them had voted, though those that did vote voted the right way. There was a second day of voting on which to redeem themselves. When they still failed to rise to the occasion, he extended the Election to a third day and gave the electors a reason to vote for him that did not depend on mere political opinion or ideology. He supplied them with material incentives. These included a holiday for civil servants and penalties on failure to vote. He imposed a fine of € 51 on those who did not cast a ballot. By these means a satisfactory result was achieved on the third day.

Read all about it in the indulgent *Irish Times* reports on May 28th and 29th.

The United States condemned the holding of an election in Syria on the ground that the country was disrupted by Civil War, that parts of the country had placed themselves out of reach of the State system and would not take part, and that the calm deliberative state of mind required for democratic elections did not exist.

On the other hand, the USA insisted that it was vitally necessary for an election to be held in post-*coup* Ukraine where parts of the country had placed themselves outside the reach of the *coup* Government in Kiev and Kiev was making war on them, and there was much less evidence of a calm deliberative state of mind anywhere in the country than there was in the greater part of Syria.

There is a Syrian State. It has continued to exist even though it was de-recognised by the US/UK and

their *entourage* a couple of years ago. It is a secular State, established beyond the reach of fundamentalist religion. Bourgeois life in the European mode was widely established in it for a generation before the fundamentalist religious insurrection fostered by the US/UK. That bourgeois life continued to exist in most of Syria during the insurrections. An element in the Western propaganda against Assad focused on his participation in this on-going bourgeois life—suggesting that it was a detached elitist enclave similar to the Green Zone in Baghdad. He was depicted as living a fantasy life in a bubble, and it seems that for a year or so there was genuine expectation in the West that the bubble would burst.

If he had been posturing in a Damascus ‘Green Zone’ fortress while “*killing his own people*”, the bubble would undoubtedly have burst.

It was then recognised that what was happening in Syria was not a megalomaniac dictator in a fortress murdering his own people, but a Civil War.

When US/UK de-recognised the Syrian State, they recognised the assorted medley of religious fundamentalists as the legitimate public authority in Syria. But then the assorted rebels began to sort themselves out and, finding that they were fundamentally in disagreement with each other, they began to make war on one another.

The initial recognition of the rebel groups as the public representative of the Syrian people implied that the Assad regime had alienated the great bulk of the populace, and that it was only a matter of deciding which to support when the regime collapsed.

Later recognition that the conflicts in Syria were a Civil War implied an acknowledgement that Assad was not a dangerously armed dictator in a fortress, and that “*the Syrian people*” did not exist as an overwhelming mass alienated from the State, but were substantially divided about what the State should be.

Even after recognising the Syrian situation as one of Civil War, US/UK continued its de-recognition of the established State in Syria in which normal life continued to be lived, and it continued to recognise the shrinking areas that were in fundamentalist turmoil as constituting legitimacy in Syria.

The Syrian regime, like the Iraqi regime before the invasion, was a liberal, secular regime with a demonstrated ability to draw ambitious people from the religious groups into the apparatus of the secular State. US/UK decided to break up these liberal, secular States, and stir up the fundamentalist religious fervour that was a declining force in them—as it had done previously in Afghanistan.

In Iraq US/UK invaded with overwhelming military force, and a spectacular demonstration of “*shock and awe*”, destroyed the apparatus of the regime, and called on the Shia to attack the Sunni. The Iraqi State was destroyed by external force and a chaos of religious antagonism was developed in its place, and is called democracy.

In Syria the destruction of the liberal secular State was left to the operation of fundamentalist religious forces inside the country, encouraged and armed from outside. The internal opposition failed.

The lesson of Iraq was not learned.

Baathism struck root in Syria/Iraq. It was the vital force in both States.

The destruction of the liberal, secular State of Baathist origin can only be accomplished by the armed force of Western Liberalism.

A second lesson is that democratic States are not constructed democratically. A State is organised power in the first instance. The ‘people’, unorganised by a power structure, have no power, except occasionally a power of destruction.

The word ‘democracy’ tells a lie. It means the power of the people. The people as a mere populace have no power of construction. It must be divided in order to act.

The first functional democracy in Europe, and the one which proved to be the most durable is Britain. And Britain was a highly developed State power before it became a democracy. It democratised its functioning, after a century of stable ruling class Government, by gradually phasing strata of the population into the Parliamentary franchise. Parliamentary Government was aristocratic government from the 1688 Revolution until the 1832 Reform, which enfranchised the middle class. The democratising process then continued gradually until 1918, when a majority of the adult population finally got the vote. It was completed in the late 1920s, when women got the vote on the same basis as men.

The history of democratisation has been written by Paul Foot in a book called *The Vote*. Foot showed how careful the rulers of the state were to refuse mass enfranchisement in response to mass demonstrations, and ensure that new swathes of voters were shaped by the pre-existing system of

politics instead of overturning it as an untamed democratic force.

Foot condemns this procedure. There are good grounds for the argument that the political system brought about in this way should be called something else than democracy. But it is the functional system that actually exists in the world as democracy.

It is a particular historical development. And there is no scientific formula which can put functional democracy into operation wherever it is applied.

Perhaps there has been discussion on these lines within the Oath-bound Directory that controls the *Irish Times*, and that is what lies behind its support for General Sisi’s ingenious electoral practices.

But wherein lay the necessity of overthrowing the elected Morsi Government by military force? The election from which it emerged was orderly—nothing like the chaos of Iraqi democracy. And the Regime of mass terror for which Morsi and his associates are now prosecuted, with capital sentences being handed out by the hundred by subservient Courts, was somehow not noticed before the military *coup*.

The Morsi Government seems to have been regular and competent in its actions—as was the elected Sinn Fein Government of 1919, on which Britain made war with the support of the *Irish Times*. And the crime for which Morsi’s Government was overthrown was that it represented the Muslim orientation of the greater part of Egyptian society. This gave offence to a hothouse elite cultivated by the military dictatorship—not a substantial liberal bourgeois society such as exists in Syria, but something more in the nature of an enlarged Green Zone *a la* Baghdad.

The development of Egypt as a Muslim democracy was aborted by the Egyptian Army which is an arm of US policy.

The rules of the game as set by the USA—forget about the UNO—say that unelected Governments may be overthrown because they are unelected, elected Governments may be overthrown if the ideals of the people they represent are not Western Christian post-Christian, and that the overthrow of elected Government with the object of reshaping the electorate by military rule is transition to right-thinking democracy.

Nicholas Berdyayev, an anti-Communist writer of the Communist era, saw it as a characteristic of democracy that it gave expression to the will of the people, whatever that happened to be. But we don’t allow that kind of democracy. The will of the people must be right in order to be allowed to prevail.

Wasn’t there somebody in our own history who was greatly ridiculed, by circles of Irish politics now supportive of General Sisi, for saying *“the people have no right to be wrong”*?

The refusal of the US/UK, with the EU in tow, to allow independent development of liberal secular States in the Middle East, and their support of fundamentalist religious movements against such States, has necessarily brought about independence movements against the West based on religious fundamentalism. □

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Social Democracy and the Shaping of Germany, 1945-49 Part 4

By Philip O'Connor

Continuing the series of extracts from a thesis written at TCD in the early 1990s.

*This instalment explains how Communist influence was removed from the German Socialist movement, and how members of previously very marginal groups— notably the *Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund (ISK, 'International Socialist Struggle League')* - rose to prominence in the wartime exile SPD leadership under British Government guidance.*

3.5 The “United Socialist” formula and the Western Alliance

The isolation of the SoPaDe in Britain could only be overcome by accommodating to the politics of the “left wing” groups in the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* that enjoyed British Labour Party and Government support as possible agents of a post-war reconstruction of the German labour movement. Ollenhauer, the dogged SoPaDe secretary and inveterate realist, resignedly accepted that the Labour Party had “many foreign policy problems of greater importance for the British Empire than the German Question” and that German socialists would have to work within the framework of that reality.⁶⁶

The ISK was the group in Britain most willing to tailor its plans to emerging Allied perspectives not least because it too sought a radical “ethical” reconstruction of the German labour movement. In tune with British Labour Party thinking, it produced a new programme for a European “Federation of democratic socialist states” to replace the traditional European state system. Germany, rebuilt democratically from bottom up, was to be integrated economically and politically into this federation. Working class power would be based on a radically democratised trade unionism. A “socialist party” should not emerge immediately, but be built from this trade union base and as the “vanguard” of its development, and leading the construction of a politically and economically decentralised and federalised liberal-democratic German state. The aim of German labour politics was to be the achievement of a society enjoying “maximum freedom within a socialist state”. Because of the danger of “totalitarian bureaucratism”, the nationalisation of industries was only desirable where political economic power relationships demanded it. The preference was for a system of democratic public management and accountability.⁶⁷

The ISK made British Labour Party planning and perspectives on Germany its own. Willy Eichler declared that the need to decentralise the German administration also

“applied to the reconstruction of the trade unions. The giant unions, whether inevitably or not, had in any case become such bureaucratic machines that the ordinary trade union member could hardly ever have any idea what was happening in the organisation, not to speak of having any say in framing its policy.”⁶⁸

The ISK sister grouping in Britain – the “Socialist Vanguard Group”, with which it formed a joint “international” organisation – decided in 1943 (in agreement with Eichler) to

dissolve into the Labour Party. Some of its highly politicised members secured key positions in constituency, trade union and policy levels. Several – foremost among them Austin Albu - had the ear of Bevin, possibly not least because of their connections with the unorthodox socialists of the ISK, and were to be given leading roles in rebuilding the trade union movement in post-war Germany along British conceived lines.⁶⁹ The leading figures organising the underground anti-Fascist European network of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) in Germany and Holland – notably Hans Jahn – and important figures in the exile German trade union group – *Landesgruppe deutscher Gewerkschafter* – notably Werner Hansen - were also ISK members.⁷⁰

By late 1942, ISK thinking was aimed at reviving its network within Germany with the assistance of the British military and the International Transport Workers Federation to prepare core groups of worker-based “anti-fascist councils” in various towns so as on the collapse of Nazi Germany “to confront the [advancing] Allies with *faits accomplis*”. These councils would cooperate with the Allies in “denazifying” (sic.) the German administration and economy and simultaneously form the basis for a new “united” and “independent” labour movement replacing the old Communist and Social Democratic Parties, the KPD and SPD.⁷¹ To prepare the ground for this strategy, the ISK not only sought a link to Allied military support, but also exploited the vulnerability of the isolated SoPaDe to propose the signing of an agreement in exile on the creation of a new “united socialist party” to pre-empt and supercede the previous party structures of German working class politics in the post-war situation.

At a meeting of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* in London on 14 October 1942, Willy Eichler, the passionate and resourceful leader of the ISK, presented his “explosive proposal” for a “new united socialist party” replacing the old SPD and emerging in interaction with a “revolution from below” at the end of the war in Germany. It should be recalled that at this stage German forces were at their furthest point eastwards and to all appearances on the verge of taking the city of Stalingrad. But Eichler had no doubt that the economic power of the Allied powers would determine ultimate victory. He rounded confidently on the SoPaDe, declaring that the historical “reluctance [of the SPD] to take [political] responsibility” had been a “direct consequence of the determinist superstition at the root of Marxist theory”, the intellectual “basis of the German labour movement”.⁷²

Given that this came just a week after Middleton had finally and categorically rejected the demand by the SoPaDe chairman, Hans Vogel, for Allied support for a rebuilding of the German labour movement after the war under the auspices of the exiled SPD leadership, the SoPaDe was in no position to reject the ISK challenge. Following several rounds of meetings and discussions, Ollenhauer, on behalf of the SoPaDe, responded to Eichler with a speech abandoning the firm line to date of the sole legitimacy of the SoPaDe as the leadership of the exile German social democrats.⁷³

Germany, he said, faced a “total defeat”, which could only be followed by the “fundamental changes” which “the 1918 Revolution had not been resolute enough to enforce”. Control of the state and economy by “landed property, heavy industry, the reactionary bureaucracy and militarism” had to be permanently destroyed and a radical democratisation of the state undertaken. The new democracy had to be less bureaucratic and more “militant” than Weimar. A “free democratic socialist Germany” must be “linked as closely as possible” with the other “socialist labour movements of Europe”. He accepted the right of the Allies to dismantle German industrial and military power where these were a threat to peace, and “assumed” Allied support for a “free socialist labour movement” that would guarantee a democratic and peaceful Germany.

Ollenhauer, abandoning previous claims of the SoPaDe, now supported the need for a new “Socialist Party” combining a broad democratic spectrum as the “Hitler dictatorship” had given a “new elemental force to the desire for personal freedom, social security, justice and peace”. He also eschewed the traditional Marxism of the party, which SoPaDe had held to consistently in its declarations since 1933. The “new party” would have to be “tolerant of ideological, religious and other philosophically based progressive social outlooks”. The “option of simply linking back into the old organisation no longer exists” and instead “we will be confronted by a myriad of very diverse and locally based ... resistance centres and groups held together by traditional bonds”. These would form the “essential core of the new party” and initially combine both party and trade union roles.

But – in an extraordinary statement by a German from an Allied capital in December 1942 – Ollenhauer (just like Eichler) categorically ruled out a role for organised communists. While many communists would “inwardly support the constructive socialist programme of the new socialist party”, the divide between socialism and communism could not be resolved “by compromise”, he said. Communist parties were undemocratic internally and controlled by the Comintern, “an instrument solely of the Russian dictatorship” and an “organisational fusion” with the KPD would mean simply subjection to the “principles and politics of the Comintern”. This problem in the labour movement was an international one, and could only be resolved at that level, though whether this was possible at all was “debatable”.

Ollenhauer’s extraordinary statement apparently bequeathed the SoPaDe mantle as the leadership of German social democracy to a “new united socialist party” as represented by the *Union of Socialist Organisations in Great Britain*, rejected for the first time even the traditional claims of German nationalism previously defended by the SPD, excluded organised communists from a role in the future German labour movement, conceded Allied hegemony over the economic, social and political reconstitution of Germany and accepted a post-war re-ordering of the labour movement “from below” under Western Allied tutelage and clearly excluding a Soviet role.

This statement and its concessions formed the basis of the programme for post-war Germany adopted in October 1943 – to the hostility of old SoPaDe loyalists in exile elsewhere – by the *Union of Socialist Organisations*, entitled the “New German Republic”. The *Union* adopted a raft of policy documents based on it, including proposals for a Federalist constitution for Germany and a decentralised economy. While maintaining

a functional, low profile, continued existence for the SoPaDe, Ollenhauer allowed the *Union* make the running with these policies, leaving it to operate as the effective voice of non-communist (or rather anti-communist) German socialism in exile for the remainder of the war, politically delineated from both German nationalism and German communism.⁷⁴

The explanation in traditional accounts of German socialism in this period for the adoption of this new politics – which represented such a dramatic break from SoPaDe policy to date – that it was the outcome of political debate and a maturing process, is not convincing. The fact is that it was precipitated by a no less dramatic offer of a formal alliance with Allied military power presented to the SoPaDe. This occurred just as British Labour was withdrawing its endorsement of the émigré SPD body and adopting a policy of “unconditional surrender” towards Germany. The offer of a military alliance came with a condition – that it was dependent on a thorough going accommodation by the SoPaDe with the ISK, its personnel and its politics.

(Endnotes)

66. Quoted in *Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration*, II, p. 764. See also similarly Grzesinski to Vogel, 16.12.1945, in AsD SoPaDe-Emig., Mapped 46.

67. See Werner Hansen’s comprehensive statements of ISK war aims, ‘Bericht gegeben im gemeinsamen M[embers] M[eeting] mit engl[ischen] Genossen am 5.XII.1943, v. WH’; [Hansen], ‘Parteien und Gewerkschaften’, 24.4.1943, and [Hansen], ‘Diskussionsrede während ISK-Konferenz, 1942’, in AsD NL Hansen, Ordner 6.

68. Eichler to Kurt Labischin, 16.9.1944, AsD Best. IJB/ISK, Box 53.

69. A profile of Austin Albu will feature in future extracts.

70. *Biographisches Handbuch*, entries for Hans Jahn and Gottfurcht [?]. On the Socialist Vanguard Group and the positions it occupied in the Labour Party, see the annotated list in ‘Bericht über die Arbeit des Londoner OV [= Ortsverein] des ISK, Mai-Dezember v1944’, AsD Best. IJB/ISK, Box 55; cf. Lemke-Müller, *Eichler*, p. 181 f.

71. [Werner Hansen], ‘Parteien und Gewerkschaften’, and ‘Bericht gegeben im gemeinsamen MM ...’ (as in footnote 67 above).

72. Untitled MS [Speech to MSI by Werner Hansen], n.d. (early 1943), AsD NL Hansen, Ordner 6; see also Lemke-Müller, *Eichler*, p. 173 f.

73. The speech is presented in SPD histories as an inspired annunciation of a new perspective, without the dramatic context in which it was made. See Erich Ollenhauer, ‘Möglichkeiten und Aufgaben einer geeinten sozialistischen Partei in Deutschland. Grundgedanken eines Referats in einer Mitgliederversammlung der Union in London’ (6. Dezember 1942), in *Programmatistische Dokumente der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, eds. Dowe and Klotzbach (1964), pp. 240-56.

74. A collection of these policy statements was issued in 1945 as *Zur Politik deutscher Sozialisten*, which also included the seminal programme of the Union of German Socialist Organisations of October 1943, *Die neue Deutsche Republik*. For the development of individual policies and their reception in émigré circles outside Britain, see the analysis in Röder, *Exilgruppen*, pp. 216-39.

Starving The Germans: The Evolution of Britain's Strategy of Economic Warfare During The First World War—The French Connection Part 7

by Eamon Dyas

[Continuing a series of extracts from a forthcoming book by Eamon Dyas on the interaction of Britain, France and Germany in the years leading up to the First World War.]

Britain and the Agadir crisis.

After the Act of Algeciras in 1905 it had become obvious that the political element under Eugène Etienne (which proved to be the most politically influential section of the colonial movement) were prepared to sup with the devil if it brought Morocco to the French table and towards that end had encouraged increasing commercial co-operation between France and Germany. Etienne proved to be as duplicitous with Germany as he had been with Britain but to realise his Moroccan ideal he was compelled to rely upon the anti-German expression in the French Foreign Office and army to drive the political agenda. Ultimately, his position rested upon convincing both the wider French polity at home and Germany abroad to accept a *de facto* acknowledgement of a French military presence in Morocco. However, he knew that this would require some kind of trade-off with Germany, whether it be easier commercial access to Morocco, a permanent German land presence in the country, or the forfeiture of some other French possession.

On the other hand, although the thing that Britain feared most was a Franco-German rapprochement her second worst fear was a permanent German presence on the coast of Morocco. And, as France was later to learn, Britain's third worst fear was a French presence on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. In fact it had always been British policy that it did not want any European major sea power, whether it be ally or not, occupying ports on the coast of Morocco which could threaten her naval base at Gibraltar, hence her insistence that Spain and not France be granted authority over that area of Morocco under the 1904 Franco-Spanish Agreement and the 1906 Act of Algeciras. However, as it so often the case in imperial adventures, it was her behaviour in supporting the French colonialist invasion of Morocco in 1911 that nearly made her nightmare a reality, both with regards to closer Franco-German relations and a German and French occupation of the coast of Morocco.

From the beginning, because of the way that the French 1911 invasion of Morocco had been authorised without the approval of either the French Parliament or Cabinet, there was always going to be a problem not only for the French colonialists but also for Britain. Legally, Britain, as one of the signatories to the Act of Algeciras, should have disowned the illegal invasion and insisted on a French return to the *status quo ante*. However, this would have created a breach with the militant French colonial imperialists and left her without any coherent body of support within French politics and as Britain was compelled to have such people as allies by dint of her determination to make war on Germany, this was never going to happen. The standing of the colonial imperialist party among the French public was not exactly a positive one prior to the invasion of Morocco in April/May and despite British support it did not immediately bring about any improvement in their fortunes, in fact, quite the contrary. A reaction set in because of the means by which

the invasion was authorised (on an Easter weekend, without Cabinet approval and only endorsed by a clique of two Cabinet Ministers and the Prime Minister, Ernest Monis). Consequently, as relations between France and Germany declined, on 27 June 1911 the Monis Government had been forced to resign.

But even before the extent of the French intrusion into Morocco was known the Liberal Imperialists were calculating possible German reactions. On 1 May, 1911, the Permanent under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Arthur Nicolson wrote to Goschen warning him that "Germany may demand some price, possibly a port in the Mediterranean." This of course was something that Britain would never have tolerated and a storm was blown up in the press to forestall the concession of such a demand by the Monis Government. Then the Monis Government was thrown into turmoil. One of the triumvirate which had authorised the invasion of Morocco, Henri Maurice Berteaux, the Minister of War, was killed on 21 May 1911 when a competitor in the Paris to Madrid aeroplane race crashed his plane into the assembled dignitaries at the Issy-les-Moulineaux aviation ground near Paris at the start of the race. The circumstances of the incident are highly suspicious and Monis himself was also seriously injured in the incident to such an extent that he was unable to attend the Chamber for the rest of his Ministry. This event coincided with a growing apprehension among French public opinion at the prospect of the Moroccan adventure creating a dangerous situation with Germany. Consequently, the resultant political atmosphere in France became less certain from the point of view of the Liberal Imperialists. Then, obviously taking account of the new situation, on 7 June, Nicolson again wrote to Goschen with the outlines of what was to become Britain's preferred option when he said that "a deal between France and Germany about the French Congo would be preferable to Germany's obtaining a port in the Mediterranean". (both quotes in *The Agadir Crisis, The Mansion House Speech, and the Double-Edgedness of Agreements*, by Keith Wilson. Published in the *Historical Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 3, September 1972, p.515).

From a situation where Britain had been confident that she could influence the situation regarding France's relations with Germany in the aftermath of the Moroccan invasion the new circumstances made such influence problematic. Britain's confidence took a further knock with the official resignation of the Monis Government and its replacement by one formed by Joseph Caillaux on 27 June 1911. Having provided unstinted support for the actions of the Monis clique, the British now found themselves in a position where they had far less influence over the new French Government on how the crisis (which was entirely of their making) was going to be resolved.

Caillaux believed that French ambitions could be realised without necessarily antagonising Germany. Although there was general disquiet about the way that the invasion had been surreptitiously authorised this did not carry over into a general antipathy towards its results. The majority in France believed

that Morocco was destined to be a French territory. It would have been impossible for any French politician, without the counter-weight to French public opinion of British opposition to the invasion, to have successfully argued for a French withdrawal from Morocco. What remained for Caillaux was to negotiate a way out of the international problem that had been generated by the French colonialists' action without providing a lifeline to them by the acceptance of a French withdrawal from Morocco.

That Caillaux should undertake these negotiations without providing Germany with territory in Morocco was the main preoccupation of the British war party at this time. In choosing his Cabinet, Caillaux had retained Delcassé from the previous government both as a means of deflecting the influence of the imperialist anti-German lobby as well as addressing British concerns but Britain continued to be apprehensive and the French imperialists suspicious.

None of this would have mattered to Britain if any of it had provoked Germany into a war. But what Britain failed to appreciate was the extent of Germany's determination not to be drawn into a war. The three provocations activated by the French colonialists in Morocco (all with active British support) in 1905, 1907, and 1911 failed to trigger Germany into a declaration of war with France. These were all occasions when France was militarily vulnerable due to the fact that any military support from her ally Russia was problematic (the first two occasions because Russia was still in the process of rebuilding her armed forces in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War and in the third Russia had expressed her lack of commitment in order to chastise France as a result of that country's refusal to back Russia during the 1909 Bosnian crisis). But just as Germany refused to be drawn into a military conflict with Britain at France's behest in 1899-1900, so too in 1905, 1907 and 1911 she refused to be drawn into a war with France at Britain's behest. But of course the obvious lesson from this was not something that the British war party or the anti-German imperialist party in France were eager to make known. Instead, every possible propaganda device was used by both parties to cast Germany in the role of the villain.

In the aftermath of the French invasion of Morocco in April/May 1911, Germany, knowing that the invasion had not been taken at the initiative of the French Government but at the initiative of a small clique within the Government in collaboration with the militant French colonial imperialists, decided to wait to see how the French Parliament would respond. Although she had been the target of much hostility generated by the Monis Government since it came to power in March 1911 (the Government had broken a string of commercial agreements with Germany), she was prepared to await developments in the wider French politics.

Britain was the one component in the evolving situation that could have used her influence with France to halt the degenerating situation. As a major Power signatory to the Act of Algeciras it was her responsibility to insist that France comply with its terms regarding the sovereignty of Morocco. However, she was too much in hock to the perpetrators of the invasion to have done what was expected of her as a signatory to the Act. Her commitment to the French imperial colonialist element was such that, in terms of French domestic politics, she was compelled to act in opposition to those who advocated compliance with Algeciras and were advocating a policy for the peaceful resolution of the situation.

"... the party in France, and a strong party it was, not confined to one section of public opinion, which favoured a complete break with the Delcassé tradition, received no support from the British diplomatic machine. The party of the strong hand, the party of violence, the party which wrecked the negotiations of 1909-1911, the party which drove the Algerian frontier far into the Sultan's dominions, hypocritically declaring its attachment to Moroccan integrity, while it filched town after town, district after district, and having by the proceedings of its agents produced a state of chaos and disruption from one end of the country to the other, marched to Fez over the scattered remnants of the Public Law of Europe thereby rendering a collision with Germany unavoidable – that party it was which, from the first to last, received the support of the British diplomatic machine, and the plaudits of its mouthpieces in the British press." (Morel, Morocco in Diplomacy, by E.D. Morel. Published by Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1912, p.142).

As it became apparent that the French military presence was not going to be temporary and that Britain was openly supporting the action and having also witnessed Spain sending troops to occupy Larache and Alcazar and 20,000 men into the Riff (Mediterranean Morocco), Germany decided belatedly to act. On 1 July 1911 she sent a gunboat, the *Panther*, to make anchor off the coast of Morocco at the closed port of Agadir. The purpose of this action was ostensibly to protect German nationals during the crisis but in fact to assert German claims for consideration in the light of the new situation. But this action was only taken after two countries, France and Spain, had broken the international Act of Algeciras by military intervention and another, Britain, had sanctioned this behaviour.

However, Germany might as well have sent a fleet of battleships as far as the reaction of Britain was concerned. The action was described as a direct threat to France despite the fact that it was not interpreted in that way by France (the President and the Foreign Minister even embarked on a trip to Holland in the immediate aftermath of the arrival of the *Panther* off the coast of Morocco). In contrast to the calm manner in which the arrival of the *Panther* had been received by the French Government the British proceeded to kick up a storm and the sabre-rattling began in earnest. However British hostility was not just directed at Germany but was formulated in a way that France was left in no uncertainty that Britain was not prepared to accept any arrangement between France and Germany that went against her interests—in this instance this meant any permanent presence of Germany in Morocco. The French Foreign Minister, M. de Selves, returned from his trip to Holland on 7 July and immediately set in train arrangements for official negotiations between the two countries. These talks began on 9 July.

Throughout July the press and public airways were full of British warnings and admonitions directed at both Germany and France. The famous (or infamous) Mansion House speech delivered by Lloyd George was delivered very consciously as part of this campaign. Neither Germany or France are named in the speech but conventional historical interpretation has claimed that the speech was directed solely at Germany. However A.J.P. Taylor believed that it was in fact directed against France as a warning against her leaving British interests out of any negotiating position that might be adopted by France (in other words, any consideration of awarding Germany a territorial presence in Morocco). The speech was delivered to a meeting of City Bankers at the Mansion House on Friday, 21 July 1911 and although most of it was taken up with economic issues, part

of it dealt with the international situation in the course of which he said:

“ . . . if a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved . . . by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.”

In its immediate aftermath both Germany or France believed that the message was directed at the other but in the coded wording of British diplomacy and in the context of the ongoing Franco-German negotiations at the time it is apparent that both France and Germany were its target (this is the interpretation placed upon in by Keith Wilson, op. cit.). Significantly the speech had not been cleared with the cabinet in advance but Lloyd George had shown it to Asquith and Grey and Churchill was shown it a short time before it was delivered.

As things turned out, the crisis was resolved by the efforts of Caillaux who in the end signed an agreement with Germany which precluded any territorial concession to that country in Morocco. The Franco-German Treaty of 4 November 1911 involved the concession of some territory in the French Congo (or Cameroon). This was along the lines originally indicated and approved by Britain for its own reasons (reasons which related to its problem with Belgium and the additional leverage it would give them in the context of the Belgian Congo – see

earlier Chapter six). Thus was the price paid for the acquiescence of Germany in the destruction of the Act of Algeciras by France, Britain and Spain.

The signing of the Franco-German Treaty in 1911 not only had profound significance in dissipating the issue of Morocco in future Franco-German relations but it also caused unforeseen complications for Britain’s traditional relationship with a section of the French colonial imperialists. These complications arose from the conflict between the French imperialist perspective of its rights in Morocco and Britain’s continued insistence on its own military interests being preserved in any future outcome based on that perspective. The agreement with Germany confirmed the viewpoint held by colonialists like Etienne that it was possible to gain French ambitions in Morocco with the co-operation of Germany rather than in opposition to her. But this element was not content with having taken Germany out of the picture and now turned its sights on eradicating the residual presence of Spain in those areas of the country which were deemed to be legitimately French. Critically for Britain, what the Franco-German agreement also achieved was the removal of the Moroccan question as a flashpoint in Franco-German relations. In future any advancement of the French colonial cause in Morocco would take place without necessarily having to take account of Germany’s strategic interests. However, in seeking to pursue their objective the French colonialists came up against Britain’s determination to protect her military interests in Morocco, in particular the insistence that no naval Power possess a foothold on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. □

BOOK LAUNCH

Friday 8th August 2014
8 pm
Metropole Hotel
Cork

The Great Fraud of 1914-18

How Britain engineered a World War to destroy
Germany.

By the Author, Dr. Pat Walsh



Illustration from the cover of

The Great Fraud of 1914-18

Review *Castro's Secrets: The CIA and Cuba's Intelligence Machine* by Brian Latell, 2012,

By John Martin

The author of this book worked for the CIA in the early 1990s and as such was obliged to submit his manuscript to his former employers for reasons of national security. While a fact or assertion doesn't cease to be true because a CIA man says it, the reader is nevertheless entitled to be sceptical. On the other hand it could be said that Latell's criticism of the CIA and American foreign policy from an insider's perspective carries more weight than might otherwise be the case.

The overwhelming impression that this book leaves on this reviewer is that the Cuban intelligence service (the D.G.I.) completely outwitted the CIA. Part of the reason was through the latter's arrogance. The CIA could not bring itself to believe that a happy-go-lucky people from a Caribbean island could have such a sophisticated intelligence network.

Ironically, it was only through some of the CIA's intelligence successes that it realised the true extent of its past failures. In 1987 there were rumblings of discontent within the highest echelons of the Cuban State apparatus as a result of Castro's reluctance to embrace Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. In that year there were some very senior members of the DGI who defected.

Among the most prestigious Cuban defectors was a person called Florentino Aspillaga Lombard. The emotion of CIA operatives on winning this prize was bitter-sweet. The author quotes one CIA source as saying that it felt like he had been "kicked in the belly by a donkey". For the first time it dawned on him that the Cubans were "better than us". It was not just "dumb luck" that the Cubans were able to anticipate the "Bay of Pigs" invasion and other CIA operations, the Cubans *knew* the CIA's plans in advance.

At an early stage of the revolution the Cubans built up a sophisticated intelligence network. This was Soviet trained, but the Cubans were quick learners and were capable of improvising. They were particularly successful at deploying double agents. This aspect of intelligence work is the most difficult. The double agent's misinformation must be corroborated by other double agent sources. However, if the information from these sources is too "pat" it can also arouse suspicion.

The author says that Cuban counter intelligence was modelled on the British system, which successfully duped the NAZI high command on the location of the Normandy landing. But there was one major difference. Whereas the Britain system of counter intelligence was controlled by a 20 man committee of university dons and intelligence careerists, operational control in Cuba was in the hands of Fidel Castro.

Latell rates the DGI as among the top four intelligence services in the world. It has the advantage of being more focussed than its counterparts in other countries. For example, Mossad has numerous enemies in the Middle East and elsewhere,

whereas the DGI's targets are restricted to the American State and the Cuban exile community in the United States.

The book might have languished in obscurity except for two matters of historical interest: the first relates to the Cuban missile crisis; and the second offers a tentative hypothesis on the JFK assassination. In both cases the source for the information is Florentino Aspillaga Lombard.

Aspillaga claimed in 1987 that his father, who was also a senior intelligence officer, told him that Castro urged Khrushchev to launch nuclear missiles against the US. The claim was ignored until 1990 when documents released following the collapse of the Soviet appeared to corroborate the story.

Latell quotes from a letter from Castro to Khrushchev in October 27, 1962 at the height of the Cuban missile crisis. The letter begins with Castro considering two types of aggression that Kennedy could instigate. It then continues:

"The first and most likely is an air attack against certain targets with the limited objective of destroying them; the second, less probable although possible, is invasion... If the second variant is implemented and the imperialists invade Cuba with the goal of occupying it, the danger that that aggressive policy poses for humanity is so great that following that event, the Soviet Union must never allow the circumstances in which the imperialists could launch the first nuclear strike against it."

In my view this falls far short of Castro baldly urging Khrushchev to launch nuclear missiles against the US. Castro is asking Khrushchev to consider such an action, but it is only in a hypothetical event, which never arose.

Latell claims that Khrushchev's posthumous memoirs published in 1990 indicate that the Soviet leader interpreted the letter as calling for a nuclear strike and condemned Castro at meeting with him in Moscow in May 1963.

The author goes on to claim that in October 27, 1962, Soviet surface to air missile shot down a U2 spy plane. Khrushchev said in his memoirs (*Glasnost tapes*) that the Soviet commander was acting under Castro's orders. The pilot Major Rudolph Anderson was killed.

The author quotes a CIA source to the effect that "Castro harangued the Soviet commander". The Soviet officer was sent home and arrested. This is why, according to the author, z Khrushchev moved quickly to make a deal with Kennedy. Command and control were breaking down within the Soviet expeditionary forces in Cuba.

Whatever about the truth of the foregoing events, it is indisputable that the Soviet Union continued to have a close

relationship with Cuba. Castro's alleged behaviour did not prevent the Soviet Union from giving Cuba an annual subsidy of between 3 and 5 billion dollars a year.

The author does not claim that Castro conspired to assassinate Kennedy: only that he had foreknowledge of the event. The evidence for this is quite flimsy. He says that Aspillaga, who was still a teenager at the time, was working as a radio officer on November 22nd, 1963. His task was to monitor CIA communications. However, on that fateful day he was instructed to cease his normal duties and tune in to Texas. The author admits that there might have been an innocent explanation for this. Kennedy had made a bellicose anti Castro speech in Miami four days previously. It would be understandable for the Cuban leadership to be interested in what he would say in Dallas Texas.

However, the author does produce other evidence to support his hypothesis. An FBI informant who was a senior member of the Communist Party of the USA met Castro in Havana in May 1964. The informant – Jack Childs – said that Castro had said that when Lee Harvey Oswald had visited the Cuban embassy in Mexico City less than 2 months before the assassination he said to officials there that he intended to kill the President.

The key question that arises from this is did Castro know about this before the assassination. Latell claims that a FBI Report of June 12th, 1964 on Childs' conversation states that Castro was told about it "immediately" (page 144). However, Anthony Summers in his 2013 book *Not in Your Lifetime: the Assassination of JFK* says that the FBI report states that Castro only received a report of this "after President Kennedy was assassinated" (page 573).

Latell goes on to state that a British journalist, Comer Clark, said that Castro told him the same thing in July 1967: that Castro knew about Oswald's threat to kill the President before the event happened.

The Clarke article appeared in the *National Enquirer*, which is not exactly an unimpeachable source. Also, it should be said that Clark was famous for his sensational stories with such headlines as "British Girls as NAZI Sex Slaves" and "German Plans to Kidnap the Royal Family". Summers in his recent book says that the journalist's widow doesn't remember her late husband ever having interviewed Castro (Page 575): a detail which would not be easy to forget!

Latell grasps at straws when he quotes from a CIA transcript of a telephone conversation from a Cuban Embassy official four hours after the assassination. The transcript records Luisa Calderon telling a colleague that she knew about the assassination "almost before Kennedy". But the word "almost" can only mean that she had no prior knowledge of the assassination. If Kennedy had "almost" been assassinated he might have served a second term!

Latell's belief that Castro had foreknowledge of the assassination is speculative. But there is very little doubt that Castro *did* know about attempts on his own life. On the day Kennedy died, the head of the *Special Affairs Staff*, Desmond FitzGerald, was in Paris plotting the assassination of Castro with Rolando Cubela, a hero of the Cuban Revolution. It is now known that Cubela was a Cuban double agent acting on Castro's instructions.

FitzGerald was a distant relation of the Kennedys. The *Special Affairs Staff* was used by the Kennedy Administration to run espionage, paramilitary, and other intelligence operations against Castro. FitzGerald reported directly to Bobby Kennedy but also had access to the White House.

On November 12th, ten days before Kennedy was assassinated, FitzGerald gave a White House briefing on Cuba. Latell comments as follows on the meeting:

"Thus the President of the United States, his brother – the attorney general – and the national security cabinet had all calmly listened to and, without objecting, collectively became complicit in acts that constituted a deliberate and massive campaign of international terrorism" (Page 97).

This is, if anything, too kind to the President. It implies that he went along with a policy that was decided elsewhere. But all the evidence suggests that the policies on Cuba were initiated by the President and micro-managed by his brother Bobby.

Let us assume that Castro did have foreknowledge of the JFK assassination, the reader might well wonder what moral obligation the Cuban leader would have had to prevent an American citizen from assassinating the President. Was Castro the Kennedy brothers' keeper?!

Very understandably the author relies heavily on CIA sources. But he does not consider the completeness of the record. As mentioned elsewhere in this magazine there is a widespread and credible belief that surveillance records of Lee Harvey Oswald's visit to the Cuban embassy in Mexico City were destroyed after the JFK assassination. Foreknowledge by Castro is one thing; foreknowledge by the CIA is quite another. It would be understandable if the CIA dismissed the rants of Oswald as the ravings of a harmless windbag, but it would be less defensible if it subsequently destroyed such evidence.

Nevertheless, Latell's book provides a valuable insight, from a particular perspective, into the conflict between the United States and Cuba during the early 1960s. □

BOOK LAUNCH

Thursday 31st July 2014, 3 pm

West Belfast Festival - Feile Belfast
St. Mary's College, Falls Rd.

Catastrophe

Volume One of The Catholic Predicament
in Northern Ireland
By the Author, Dr. Pat Walsh

(See p. 16 for Information About the Book)

Emergency Hoary Chestnuts and Some Actual Facts: De Valera on Peace and War

by Manus O’Riordan

Mutiny in the RAF – the Air Force Strikes of 1946 — which can be downloaded at www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/duncancontents.htm — was written by one of those mutineers, David Duncan, who related:

“How could twelve hundred RAF personnel in Karachi, in January, 1946, come to defy their commanding officer and take part in what was technically a mutiny? In general, the morale of British forces during the Second World War seems to have been surprisingly good.... Almost without exception, they knew that this was a war that had to be won. They would have expressed this in different ways — fighting for their country, standing up for democracy, opposing aggression or, for me and many like me, fighting fascism. We all wanted the war to be over, but only after victory. A few months after the end of the war the atmosphere had changed.... It was time to get back to Britain and then into civilian life... Some men pointed out that plenty of ships seemed to be available to take supplies to Indonesia to help the Dutch regain their hold on that country... There seemed to be no official answers, and more and more men were convinced that we were being held in India as a matter of policy... The war was over, had been over for five months. To the men, that meant it was time to go home (and they mutinied)... The Royal Indian Navy followed. Three thousand ratings mutinied in Bombay, the principal naval base, and many of them carried the flags of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League when they demonstrated in the city.”

Duncan further explained:

“Except for a few regular airmen, our paybooks showed that we had joined for ‘DPE’ - **the Duration of the Present Emergency**. And to us the emergency was over. The war had been won.”

So, ‘*The Emergency*’ was not a term invented by de Valera to avoid referring to the World War itself; it was also a term used by the British Government in respect its own wartime regulations. Maurice Moynihan, who had served as the Secretary of the Irish Government from 1937 to 1960, was the person nominated by Dev himself as editor of a major 600 page volume, published in 1980, and entitled *Speeches and Statements by Eamon de Valera 1917-1973*, which included his Dáil speech of 2 September 1939 — the day after Germany’s invasion of Poland and the day before Britain declared war on Germany — where Dev explained the purposes of both the Amendment to the Constitution Bill and the corresponding Emergency Powers Bill:

“I am sure all Deputies, like the Government, have been looking anxiously at the European situation and hoping against hope that it was not going to lead to another European war. Until the very last moment, there seemed to be a hope, but now, that hope appears to be dispelled, and we who were anxious not to cause any undue anxiety here amongst our own people, put off, as long as possible, calling the Dáil to deal with the emergency which would arise if such a state of war came into being... Now the emergency has come... Back in February last

I stated in a very definite way that it was the aim of Government policy, in case of a European war, to keep this country, if at all possible, out of it. We have pursued that policy, and we intend to pursue it. On another occasion, when speaking in the House of that policy, I pointed out how extremely difficult it was going to be. In a sense, it brings up for the Government of a nation that proposes to be neutral in a war of this sort problems much more delicate and much more difficult of solution even than the problems that arise for a belligerent. It is not, as some people appear to think, sufficient for us to indicate our attitude, or to express the desire of our people. It is necessary at every step to protect our own interests in that regard, to avoid giving to any of the belligerents any due cause, and proper cause, of complaint. Of course, when you have powerful States in a war of this sort, each trying to utilise whatever advantage it can for itself, the neutral State, if it is a small State, is always open to considerable pressure. I am stating what every one of you knows to be a fact. Therefore, I stated, when I was speaking of our policy of neutrality on a former occasion, that it was a policy which could only be pursued if we had a determined people, people who are determined to stand by their own rights, conscious of the fact that they did not wish to injure anybody, or to throw their weight, from the belligerent point of view, on the one side or the other...

We, like other peoples, individuals, have, each one of us, our sympathies in struggles of a kind like the present. In fact, as war is a great human tragedy, and as wars are initiated usually for no slight reason — there is generally some fundamental cause of sufficient magnitude to make nations resort to the arbitrament of force — it is only natural that, as human beings, we should judge the situation and, having formed a judgment, sympathise with one side or the other. I know that in this country there are sympathies, very strong sympathies, in regard to the present issues, but I do not think that anybody, no matter what his feelings might be, would suggest that the Government policy, the official policy of the State, should be other than what the Government would suggest. We, of all nations, know what force used by a stronger nation against a weaker one means. We have known what invasion and partition mean; we are not forgetful of our own history and, as long as our own country, or any part of it, is subject to force, the application of force, by a stronger nation, it is only natural that our people, whatever sympathies they might have in a conflict like the present, should look at their own country first and should, accordingly, in looking at their own country, consider what its interests should be and what its interests are. I will pass on then directly to the measures that are before you.

The first measure relates to the amendment of the Constitution. That is a very simple measure, and I hope we will be unanimous, if that is at all possible, about it. It arose in this way. When we were considering the powers that it would be necessary to secure for the Government in an emergency such as has arisen, some doubt was expressed by legal officers as to whether ‘*time of war*’ might not be narrowly interpreted by courts to mean a time in which the State was actually a participant, a belligerent. That narrow interpretation I do not think had occurred to any body when the Constitution was being considered in the Dáil. I do not know what view a court might take on the matter, but I think you will all agree that in circumstances like the present, in which you would have several nations all around you

engaged in war, creating conditions of a type here which are altogether abnormal and which could not exist except in a time of such a general war, an amendment of the Constitution, so that that particular meaning will be applicable to it, is in accord with the general idea of the Article of the Constitution. We are, therefore, extending 'time of war' or, if not extending it, we are making it clear that 'time of war' should mean a crisis such as the present, provided, when there are hostilities and conflict about us, there is a resolution both by the Dáil and the Seanad indicating that such an emergency exists... You will, therefore, observe that in that particular measure we are simply resolving a doubt ... that a time of war can only mean a time at which the State is an active participant—we are, under that assumption, extending the meaning to be that which, I think, everybody would reasonably expect it to cover when we were passing the Constitution." (Moynihan, ed, pp 416-420).

"Neutrality" was the heading that Moynihan gave to that speech, while "German Attack on Neutral States" was the heading he gave to a speech Dev gave in Galway on 12 May 1940, two days after the German invasion of the Benelux countries:

"We have been in danger from the moment this war began, and we will be in danger until it is over... I was in Geneva [at the League of Nations – MO'R] on many occasions. When I was there, I used to particularly seek out the representatives of small nations... Just as I was coming in here I was going over in my mind the number of small independent nations that were represented there and the number of them that have, for the moment at any rate, disappeared. Go over in your own minds the list of small nations, and ask yourselves how many of them are now with their old independence or free from the horrors of war. **The representatives of Belgium and the representatives of the Netherlands were people that I met frequently, because we co-operated not a little with the northern group of nations. Today these two small nations are fighting for their lives, and I think I would be unworthy of this small nation if, on an occasion like this, I did not utter our protest against the cruel wrong which has been done to them. We have to see to it that, if there should be any attack of any kind upon us from any quarter, they will find us a united people ready to resist it.**" (p 435; my emphasis – MO'R). Moreover, as I have pointed out in the June and September 2013 issues of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, when he debated with the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk on 1 November 1944, de Valera welcomed him to Dublin as "a distinguished representative of another small nation, which had suffered so cruelly in the War. He hoped that that country's agonies would soon be ended."

Basing himself on the wording of the Constitution cited by Dev when introducing what became the Emergency Powers Act, Robert Fisk had very honestly given his 1983 history of Ireland during World War Two the title of *In Time of War*. But what are we to make of *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45*, the title given by academic historian Brian Girvin to his 2006 Macmillan *magnum opus*? On only three of its 385 pages do we find the barest of references to the Emergency Powers Act itself. The title of Girvin's book, no less than its contents, had instead some very definite propagandist objectives, as proclaimed on the book's cover: "**Brian Girvin vividly tells the story of what in Ireland is known as 'The Emergency' but elsewhere as the Second World War.** (My emphasis – MO'R). In 1939, despite the recently established state of Éire still being a member of the British Commonwealth, de Valera refused to join the war against Nazi Germany and declared the country neutral. To the endless

frustration and anger of Churchill – and later Roosevelt – de Valera pursued an isolationist policy... In this brilliantly argued history, Girvin shows how this policy went against the national interest... Bold, fearless and provocative, *The Emergency* is a unique and important addition to any understanding of Ireland and the Second World War."

Taking their cue from Girvin, the cover of whose book is also labeled "NON-FICTION", tupenny ha'penny journalists have spread the myth that de Valera's Ireland was in denial about the existence of Second World War being waged elsewhere, and that the Emergency was a term Dev had conjured up to sustain that denial. Strange, then, that Girvin's bibliography included a 1946 Irish Government publication explicitly entitled

Ireland's Stand: Being a Selection of Speeches of Éamon de Valera During the War 1939-1945. Stranger still, however, was Girvin's **omission** of any reference to a book published by the Irish Government during the War itself in at least two imprints, in September and October 1944, entitled *Peace and War: Speeches by Mr de Valera on International Affairs*. "Don't mention the War!" was never a feature of Ireland's wartime emergency, and academic/ media suggestions that it was are products of either cynical mendacity or abysmal ignorance. Moreover, there had never been any isolationist refusal on de Valera's part to engage with the outside world. As the Preface to this 1944 book explained:

"The following are the speeches delivered by Mr de Valera at Geneva between the years 1932 and 1938. In addition, there are four broadcasts – three from Geneva and one from Radio Éireann – which deal further with the international events referred to in the speeches. **The years 1932 to 1938 were fateful ones at Geneva. Whether the League of Nations would have the strength and the prestige to enable it to preserve peace in Europe was decided during those years. The present World War shows how the decision went.** (My emphasis – MO'R). The speeches here printed make it clear that Ireland's influence was used consistently throughout that period to secure action by the League which would strengthen its authority and avert the dangers which then obviously threatened the peace of the world." (p 3).

The last three speeches in this book are from September 1938, in Geneva, during Dev's final period in office as President of the Assembly of the League of Nations, at a time when he supported the "peace in our time" approach of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain towards the Sudeten crisis. A misguided view of Chamberlain, then? Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler over Czechoslovakia undoubtedly did not bring "peace in our time" to the European continent, and it would be Chamberlain himself who, twelve months later, would declare war on Germany, two days after Hitler's invasion of Poland. Chamberlain had nevertheless ensured "peace in our time" for Ireland, through his "appeasement" of Dev in vacating the Treaty ports, for which he was roundly denounced by Churchill. The introduction to the final speech in this book expressed what Dev had genuinely believed on that day:

"On September 30th, 1938, at 1.30 am, a Four-Power Agreement on the Sudeten question was come to at Munich, and the war which till then appeared certain was averted. Later, on the same date, Mr de Valera spoke as President at the closing of the Session of the League of Nations Assembly."

Dev stated:

"As the session proceeded, events chased one another, and the nations were, it would appear, brought to the precipice. Is it, I wonder, a true summary of the history of those recent days

to say that, having gazed over the brink, Europe shrank back appalled by the ghastly prospect of what it saw in the abyss? Be that correct or not, one thing at least is certain: the public opinion of the world stood against the making of war on a question which it believed to be capable of peaceful solution.” (p 76).

Dev nonetheless concluded with implicit criticisms of the USSR for religious persecution, Poland for racial persecution, and Nazi Germany for both racial and religious persecution (Poland and Germany were at that time competing with each other as to who could enforce the more severe anti-Semitic measures). Dev further highlighted the refugee problems arising from persecution:

“The peace of the world depends less, however, on formal instruments than on the spirit which gives these instruments life. The question of national minorities has been very much before our minds in recent weeks. We have seen the danger we run by leaving these problems unsolved, but there are other problems almost equally dangerous. Is it not opportune to ask what value any instrument can possess, what influence it can exert, if, in great parts of the world, men and women continue to be persecuted because of their race or their religion? We have refugee organisations, as we have Red Cross organisations, to deal with the consequences of conditions which should never have been allowed to arise.” (p 79).

What Dev had said in respect of world opinion on the Sudeten question was undoubtedly true with, however, one exception. While acknowledging that in respect of that one exception, public opinion would have had next to no autonomy from state opinion, it should nonetheless be pointed out that the USSR was prepared to confront Nazi Germany, if Britain and France had been willing to form an alliance. But they were not so willing. There were two different perspectives from which Chamberlain was open to criticism – the Churchillian and the Communist, but only the latter was driven by anti-Fascism. On March 12, 2005, at the London launch of my late father’s book, *Connolly Column – The Story of the Irishmen Who Fought for the Spanish Republic*, I had occasion to remind an International Brigade Memorial Trust audience in the Imperial War Museum:

“As we head towards celebrations in May to mark the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe, it is incumbent on us to reflect upon and learn from the lessons of history. For neither Fascism nor the Holocaust sprang out of thin air. Nor had there been only one set of appeasers indulging the roots of such evils. During one period of warfare, when more than 100,000 Jews in the Ukraine and Russia had already been massacred, including the complete annihilation of one whole community of 1,500 souls, the Prime Minister of a country closely allied with their mass murderers, began to express some qualms of conscience. Writing to his Secretary of War, who had been the principal architect of that axis of evil, he voiced a certain amount of concern about ‘the treatment of Jews by your friends’. But that same warmongering Minister, in the course of his reply, proceeded to justify those very massacres with the words: ‘There is a very bitter feeling throughout Russia against the Jews, who are regarded as the main instigators of the ruin of the Empire ... This feeling is shared by ... the army of the Don under Denikin.’ No, we are not talking of 1941, but of 1919, and that apologist for genocidal ‘*ethnic cleansing*’ had been none other than Sir Winston Churchill.”

“And neither was 1939 the year in which the Fascism had first waged war outside the boundaries of where it had come

to power. Many years beforehand, the Fascist Axis had in fact already waged such wars on three different continents. Moreover, in the case of each of those wars, Churchill had been very much in favour of the Fascist side: for Japan against China, for Italy against Abyssinia and for Franco’s revolt, supported by the intervention of the Hitler-Mussolini Axis, aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected Government of the Spanish Republic. In September 1936 Churchill would justify his support of Spanish Fascism with the words: ‘*I am thankful that the Spanish Nationalists are making progress ... Better if the Communists are crushed.*’ And since we are meeting today in the Imperial War Museum, it is worth noting an article on the Spanish Anti-Fascist War in the *Army Quarterly* in October 1940, an article published under the Churchill regime and **not** that of Chamberlain. While recognising that the Spanish Republic had won the support of the vast majority of the population and that it was indeed the British-French embargo on arms for that Republic that had enabled Franco to triumph with massive military aid from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, that article derisively referred to the Republic as ‘*the Reds*’, and unashamedly persisted in justifying a British policy which had resulted in the strangulation of the very first democracy that had dared to fight back against the onward march of Fascism. Nobody can ever take away from the inspirational leadership that Churchill gave to Britain itself during the course of the Second World War. But in these coming months of commemorative celebration it falls to bodies like the International Brigade Memorial Trust to set the record straight on appeasement, especially by honouring all those International Brigaders whom we are indeed proud to call not ‘*premature*’ but farsighted anti-Fascists.”

(Mine was but one of a wider set of addresses at that day’s IBMT event, chaired by our President, the veteran International Brigader and trade union leader, Jack Jones. Among those present was the former British Minister for Defence, Michael Portillo, whose father had been a Spanish Republican refugee. Portillo and his brother were accompanying their mother who, during the Spanish Anti-Fascist War, had been active on the Basque Children’s Refugee Committee. The man who had steadily risen under Prime Ministers Thatcher and Major to become a Tory Party hero, until his eventual — and decisive defeat at the polls, said nothing, but Portillo’s brother did say to me: “*Very interesting!*”)

In the September 2011 issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs* I presented a detailed picture of how de Valera’s approach to Non-Intervention was designed to thwart foreign Fascist intervention in Spain at a time when Churchill was supporting Franco. The most valuable aspect of the 1944 edition of de Valera’s speeches is that they show how de Valera was vigorously opposing the appeasement of Japan in respect of its invasion of China and Italy in respect of its invasion of Abyssinia (Ethiopia), at a time when Churchill was supporting both Japan and Italy. As another introductory note in that 1944 Irish Government publication put it:

“On September 18th, 1931, Japan, a member of the League of Nations, attacked the territory of China, another member of the League. It was this attack which led to the occupation of three of China’s North-eastern provinces, afterwards set up as the State of Manchukuo. The League of Nations sent a Commission of Inquiry, under Lord Lytton to report on the matter. On September 26th, 1932, Mr de Valera, who had taken office as President of the Council of the League, addressed the Assembly as its Acting President.” (p 5). Dev said: “Reference must, I feel, be made to the conflict in the Far East. When the Special Assembly began to discuss this question, serious

fighting involving heavy loss of life was actually in progress in the region of Shanghai. This is happily no longer the case. But it is none the less true that the larger problems at issue in that conflict remain unsolved.” (pp 6-7).

Dev knew that the peaceful respite for China was purely momentary. He went on to elaborate on the need for the League to develop effective mechanisms for bringing errant Great Powers to heel:

“The one effective way of silencing criticism of the League ... is to show unmistakably that the Covenant of the League is a solemn pact, the obligations of which no State, great or small, will find it possible to ignore... The avoidance of wars and of the burden of preparatory armaments is of such concern to humanity that no State should be permitted to jeopardise the common interest by selfish action contrary to the Covenant, and no State is powerful enough to stand for long against the League if the governments in the League and their peoples are determined that the Covenant shall be upheld.” (pp 11-12).

This 1944 publication also reproduced Dev’s addresses of September 12th and 18th, 1934, in support of the USSR’s entry into the League of Nations, which was the subject-matter of my article — which can be downloaded at <http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/> — in the very first issue, April-June 2008, of *Irish Foreign Affairs*. The ultimate test of the League of Nations came later that year: What was the League prepared to do to resist Fascist Italy’s aggression against Abyssinia? The 1944 Irish Government publication related:

“From the closing months of 1934 to the end of June, 1935, the Abyssinian Government made several protests to the League of Nations against aggressive Italian acts upon her borders... On August 12th the Emperor Hailie Selassie ... appealed to the peace-loving nations everywhere to help towards a solution which would avoid war. On September 12th, 1935, Mr de Valera broadcast from Geneva to the United States, and four days later, on September 16th, he addressed the Plenary Session of the Assembly.” (p 39).

In his radio broadcast Dev stated:

“This League of Nations, after sixteen years of existence, would now appear to be in imminent peril of splitting on the rock on which previous attempts at international organisations of a similar character have perished. Must there be a few more wars, such as that of 1914-1918, to convince us that peace is sufficiently worthwhile to make the sacrifices which the preservation of it requires? Neither the present nor any other League of Nations can be effective and lasting unless certain basic principles are accepted and all reservations in regard to them set aside. The theory of the absolute sovereignty of States, interpreted to mean that a State is above all law, must be abandoned... Peace and order are impossible within the world community of States if States may hold that self-interest is for them the supreme law, and that they are subject to no other control.” (pp 41-42).

In his Assembly address four days later, Dev’s words became far sharper:

“Today, before the mangled bodies of the youth of the continent [from World War One – MO’R] have yet been mercifully assimilated with the clay, before the anguished hearts of countless mothers have even had a respite, we are here awaiting the result of an eleventh hour attempt to postpone the opening of a conflict which may set the peoples of the world mutilating and destroying each other again — waiting — and expecting little but the relief that must come in exchanging the piteous, melancholy uncertainty of to-day for the steady resolve and active purpose of to-morrow. To be thrown into a

position of enmity with those [Italy – MO’R] with whom we wish to be on terms of friendship ... is the price we may be called upon to pay for that common security without which the peace we need can never be realised. It is a hard price, but harder still and more terrible is the future in store for us if we should fail to be ready to pay for it. The final test of the League and all that it stands for has come. Our conduct in this crisis will determine whether the League of Nations is worthy to survive, or whether it is better to let it lapse and disappear and be forgotten. Make no mistake, if on any pretext whatever we were to permit the sovereignty of even the weakest State [Abyssinia/Ethiopia –MO’R] amongst us to be unjustly taken away, the whole foundation of the League would crumble into dust. **If the pledge of security is not universal, if it is not to apply to all impartially, if there be picking and choosing and jockeying and favouritism, if one aggressor is to be given a free hand while another is restrained, then it is far better that the old system of alliances should return and that each nation should do what it can to prepare for its own defence.** (My emphasis – MO’R). Without universality, the League can only be a snare. If the Covenant is not observed as a whole for all and by all, then there is no Covenant.” (pp 45-46).

The Irish Government’s 1944 narrative continued:

“On October 2nd, 1935, the Abyssinian Government acquainted the League that Italy had invaded her territory at several points, and that general hostilities had begun. On October 7th the League decided that Italy was the aggressor, and on October 10th Sanctions were imposed on Italy by 50 votes to 2. On October 4th, 1935, Mr de Valera broadcast from Radio Éireann.”

Dev drew attention to some unpalatable facts:

“When arrangements were originally made for this broadcast, there was still a hope — a slight hope, indeed, but still a hope — that hostilities, which now appear to have begun in Ethiopia, might somehow be averted. That hope is now gone... Japan’s successful violation of the Covenant a few years ago shook the League to its foundations. It is obvious that if a second similar violation takes place, the League of Nations must disappear as an effective safeguard for individual members. It becomes, in fact, a source of danger — a trap for States trusting in it, leading them to neglect adequate measures for their own defence.” (pp 49-50).

The League of Nations, however, failed the test on Italy. Under the heading of “Withdrawal of Sanctions”, the 1944 publication wrote as follows of the League’s *volte face*:

“On June 30th, 1936, at a special Assembly of the League of Nations, the Emperor Haile Selassie, in a moving speech [was that description authored by Dev himself? – MO’R], described what had happened to his country, and appealed for continuing support from the League. On July 2nd the representative of France, Mr Blum, acknowledged that the League had shown itself powerless to stop aggression. The British representative, Mr Eden, admitted that sanctions had failed and that the continuation of them would serve no useful purpose. On July 4th the Assembly voted for the abolition of sanctions by 44 votes to 1 [the USSR – MO’R]. Mr de Valera spoke at a Special Session of the League of Nations Assembly on July 2nd, 1936.”

At that point, this Irish Government public narrative decided to pull its punches by providing Britain with a camouflage of obscurity which it did not deserve. The purpose of this article has been to knock down some hoary old chestnuts about Irish foreign policy, such as the mythology fostered by the Girvin school of “history”. But there was, in fact, an actual Hoary

bombshell of **British** foreign policy — the Hoare-Laval Pact to appease Fascist Italy — which had sabotaged effective League of Nations action as far back as December 1935. This was the joint proposal by the British Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare and the French Prime Minister Pierre Laval to partition Abyssinia/Ethiopia between a nominally independent state and Ethiopian territories that could be turned into an Italian colony. This proposal was accepted with alacrity by Mussolini, but had to be withdrawn following public outcry. But the damage had already been done, especially when it was made clear that, in any case, Britain did not have the slightest intention of enforcing any sanctions against Italy. On 12 December 1935, Francis T. Cremins, Irish representative at the League of Nations, reported back to the Department of External Affairs:

“I spoke with many delegates and journalists (and officials) this evening in the lobbies, and I must say that the Laval-Hoare proposals as they are understood at present have few if any friends.”

Two days later, on 12 December, Cremins further reported:

“The Anglo-French proposals were only issued here at 6.30 pm. last evening. The actual text does not appear to have dissipated the unfavourable impression given by the Press reports. Last evening, in the lobbies, before the text was released, the general impression appeared to be even more unfavourable than on the previous evening. The loss of prestige sustained by the British was in particular very much commented upon in every quarter, and the British seemed to feel this acutely.... Mr Strang (British representative at the League of Nations) ... said he would give me some information for my background. It was all very well for public opinion to criticise, (he said), but in the last analysis this whole procedure against Italy rested on the British Navy. All their information went to show that Italy was having preparations which could only mean an attack on the navy in the Mediterranean, and, frankly, the navy was not ready for that. The British navy was moreover designed more for manoeuvring in large open spaces than for the confined inlets of the Mediterranean. I asked what about France, and he said that they could not rely on France. French public opinion was against drastic action, and French defences in the Mediterranean were unready. The British had full information regarding that, and it was clear that the British navy would sustain heavy losses, at any rate in the beginning of the hostilities... The USA is benevolent but will do nothing. And France is lukewarm. Therefore it all boiled down to this, that the whole thing rested on the British navy, and they could not take the responsibility, without at any rate going as far as they possibly could for conciliation. He thought that even if the proposals were turned down, the hands of the French would be strengthened by the British adhesion. Then, Laval could say to his public opinion ‘Now you see that the British do not want war — they are prepared to go as far for peace as we are.’ ... What the next moves will be no one seems to know... Everyone realises, however, how much more difficult it might be to deal with Italy after what has happened, especially if before the Council meeting Italy had accepted the Anglo-French suggestions as a base, even if it were considered that the British and French representatives had exceeded their functions.” (To download this report in full, see www.difp.ie/docs/Volume4/1935/1674.htm in *Documents in Irish Foreign Policy*).

On 14 April 1936 (see www.difp.ie/docs/Volume4/1936/1700.htm to download in full) the Irish Department of External Affairs assessed the situation as follows:

“So far as the League is concerned, the principal preoccupation during the year has been the *Italo-Abyssinian* war and the action which fell to be taken by the Saorstát [Irish Free State

– MO’R], as a member of the League, in connection with it.... The first occasion upon which the Saorstát was presented with an opportunity of taking any action in relation to the question was the annual session of the Assembly in September... The following sentence in the President’s (de Valera’s) speech has frequently been quoted since as stating the ultimate justification of the League’s action in relation to the Italo-Abyssinian dispute: **‘If on any pretext whatever we were to permit the sovereignty of even the weakest state amongst us to be unjustly taken away, the whole foundation of the League would crumble into dust.’** This display of feeling at the September session of the Assembly had a decisive influence on the League’s future course of action in relation to the dispute. The Council immediately awoke from its torpor of the previous nine months, and from then on to the 3rd-4th October, when the Italian troops entered Abyssinia, its conduct of the negotiations was characterised by a degree of expedition and firmness for which it would be hard to find a parallel in the previous annals of the League.... In the discussions at the Bureau, the President intervened on more than one occasion in an endeavour to secure that the determination of the League’s action in the face of the Italian aggression should so far as possible remain in the hands of the Assembly and its Bureau, as the best guarantee that decisions would be reached on the basis of the interests of the League as a whole, rather than on the basis of the particular interests of the Powers directly affected by the conflict. This object might perhaps have been achieved if the direction of affairs had remained in the hands of the Co-ordination Committee as a whole; but it has been largely frustrated by the old procedural device of delegating the work of the Co-ordination Committee to nominated, and therefore hand-picked, sub-committees and committees of experts. Side-tracked by this device and **checked by the Hoare-Laval proposals** (my emphasis – MO’R), the original momentum imparted by the Assembly last September has practically ceased to operate.”

It is this background of what were then confidential communications which provides a clearer perspective for appreciating de Valera’s July 1936 address to the League:

“However it may be disguised, it can only be with a feeling of bitter humiliation that each successive speaker has, during these days, come to this tribune. Over fifty nations pledged themselves to one another in the most solemn manner, each to respect the independence and to preserve the integrity of the territories of the others. One of these nations turned its back on its pledges freely given, and was adjudged almost unanimously by the remainder to have been an aggressor, and now, one by one, we have come here to confess that we can do nothing effective about it. Over fifty nations, we banded ourselves together for collective security. Over fifty nations, we have now to confess publicly that we must abandon the victim to his fate. It is a sad confession, as well as a bitter one. It is the fulfilment of the worst predictions of all who decried the League and said it could not succeed... Read the speech delivered here by the Emperor of Ethiopia. Does any delegate deny that, as far as it relates to what has happened here, there is, to his knowledge, truth in every line of it? Perhaps, as the representatives of a small nation that has itself had experience of aggression and dismemberment, the members of the Irish delegation may be more sensitive than others to the plight of Ethiopia. **But is there any small nation represented here which does not feel the truth of the warning that what is Ethiopia’s fate today may well be its own fate tomorrow, should the greed or the ambition of some powerful neighbour prompt its destruction?** (My emphasis – MO’R)...”

“Many delegates have stated the circumstances of the present position and given us an analysis of its development. The representative of Russia [USSR Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov – MO’R] has stated in precise terms the kind of League we would all like to see established as a guarantor of peace, but except to say that the masses must be educated, he has not shown how such a League can be built up. He has not shown how, in the present conditions, the masses can be led to feel any confidence that obligations, no matter how explicitly they may be undertaken on paper, will in fact be carried out when the testing-time comes... Let us face the fact that economic and financial sanctions can be made effective only if we are prepared to back them up by military measures. Let us face the fact that every nation may, when the test comes, have many good reasons for shirking the terrible responsibility of entering upon a war. Let us face the fact that not one of the fifty nations represented here is prepared to face war to preserve the principles of the League in the present dispute. **For the sake of a nation in Africa, apparently no one is ready to risk now a war that would be transferred to Europe. That is the position today, and does anyone doubt that some similar position can occur tomorrow?** (My emphasis –MO’R). Europe is obviously the danger-point. If we want to be realists we will concentrate upon Europe without delay...”

“The peace of Europe depends, as everybody knows, on the will of the great Powers. If the great Powers of Europe would only meet now in that Peace Conference which will have to

be held after Europe has once more been drenched in blood; if they would be prepared to make now in advance only a tithe of the sacrifice each of them will have to make should the war be begun, the terrible menace which threatens us all today could be warded off. The problems that distract Europe should not be abandoned to the soldiers to decide. They should be tackled now by the statesmen... Ten years ago, a Norwegian representative reminded you that you must deal in time with situations that might one day become acute. Two miles above Niagara, he said, it is possible to land, but wait until you are a hundred feet from the Falls and you are lost. How much more necessary is this advice now than then? How much nearer is Europe to the Falls? Will it be said, when the array of tombs which stretch from end to end of Europe has been multiplied, that there had been plenty of time to land, but that the statesmen waited too long and the soldiers took control?... Despite our juridical equality here, in matters such as European peace the small States are powerless. As I have already said, peace is dependant upon the will of the great States. **All the small States can do, if the statesmen of the greater States fail in their duty, is resolutely to determine that they will not become the tools of any great Power, and that they will resist with whatever strength they may possess every attempt to force them into a war against their will.**” (My emphasis – MO’R). (pp 54-59).

Which is precisely the policy that de Valera consistently pursued, during both *Peace and War*. The title of that 1944 compendium of Dev’s League of Nations speeches could not, indeed, have been better chosen. □

The Catholic Predicament In ‘Northern Ireland’, Catastrophe And Resurgence, Volume One: *Catastrophe*, 1914-1968 by *Pat Walsh* .

Published by Belfast Historical and Educational Society

Catastrophe is the first volume of a two part study of the *Catholic Political Predicament in ‘Northern Ireland’*. It traces the predicament that the Nationalists of the Six Counties faced after suffering the disaster in 1920-1 of being forced to endure life in the perverse political entity that became known as ‘Northern Ireland’. That devious construction of the Westminster Parliament was made for Imperial purposes, to serve as a political instrument that had nothing to do with the ‘Better Government of Ireland’ or its people. Before ‘Northern Ireland’ was called into existence, Joe Devlin and his community looked forward to a future in a self-governing Ireland within the Empire, as promised by the British Liberal Government. But that future was aborted—despite the great sacrifice made by the Northern Catholics in Britain’s Great War for ‘small nations’ and ‘self-determination’—after Unionism brought force into politics and won for its supporters in Ulster a territory under a pseudo-state, disconnected from the State within which Devlin had been a rising force.



That pseudo-state, with its simulacrum Parliament, represented a false-front for the British State that remained in Ireland after the Irish democracy had asserted itself between 1918 and 1921. It involved the large Catholic minority playing the part of a permanently subdued community, policed by the majority community that had prevented it from achieving its historic destiny. And even Michael Collins could not save it from this awful nightmare.

The Northern Catholics not only suffered Partition in 1920-1, being cut off from the rest of the Irish Nation, which entered a new phase of development without them, but they were also separated from the UK state and its functional political structures. They were, therefore, trapped in a political limbo

between states, with no means of escape.

And, as this book shows, their escape attempts were barred not only by the British State that had consigned them to this political quarantine but also by their brethren in the Irish State and its major party, Fianna Fail.

This was an impossible predicament within a deeply dysfunctional arrangement that was bound to end in tears for all concerned. And indeed it did, in August 1969, after the Nationalists had engaged in the Sean Lemass fantasy that they could improve their position by playing “Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition” in Stormont.

Towards a Eurozone Parliament?

- an EESC report from Manus O’Riordan

In previous issues of *Irish Foreign Affairs* I have related some dreadful pronouncements at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on disastrous foreign policy developments from Libya to Ukraine. For a change, let me briefly report on a positive development in respect of the appropriate political structures required for effective economic governance in the Eurozone.

The website for the retiring UK Liberal Democrat MEP Sharon Bowles is not so retiring in its self-description:

“MEP for South East England and Chair of the European Parliament’s Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee. Sharon is regularly named by the media and industry as one of the most influential Members of the European Parliament. Her expertise and hard work have received many plaudits. **She is the first Briton and first Liberal to ever chair the Parliament’s powerful Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, where she plays a leading role in responding to the Eurozone financial crisis.**” (My emphasis – MO’R).

Bowles was a keynote speaker last year at the EU’s Brussels Economic Forum held on 19 June 2013, in a panel discussion chaired by Dan O’Brien, then of the *Irish Times*, but now of the *Irish Independent*, on the topic of “Towards a Genuine Economic and Monetary Union: Looking Closer at a Fiscal Union”. The Forum’s own website says that she “talked about looking realistically at the monetary union”, and quotes Bowles as having said: “The starting point ... is that the monetary union was incomplete, and we have or are in the process of achieving better discipline now over budgets, this is harder to do when times are difficult, but then again may not have been done if these were not difficult times.”

I was a member of an EESC delegation at that particular Forum. In my own intervention I stated that, no matter how well disposed Ms Bowles might be towards the European Union, I had a problem with **any** UK MEP chairing such a key Committee concerned with the Eurozone. The fact of life that had to be faced up to was that not only had the UK steadfastly refused to join the Euro, but it reserved the right – as well as having exercised that “right” in the past – to operate a currency policy that should be regarded as in conflict with the principles of the Single Market, the competitive devaluation of Sterling against the Euro (with particularly damaging consequences for Irish manufacturing).

At the end of last year the EESC set up a Study Group, of which I was a member, to draft an opinion: “Completing EMU – The proposals of the European Economic and Social Committee for the next European legislature.” At its first meeting on 26 November I emphasised how essential it was for the Study Group to address the need for a fully fledged system of governance for the Eurozone itself, distinct from the wider EU, and including a parliamentary tier which would deny any voting rights to non-Eurozone MEPs. The resulting draft opinion was debated at a meeting of the EESC Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion, which was held on this past 19 May. I stated my appreciation of how well the joint *rapporteurs* had integrated my proposal. I reminded members that I had been opposed to a role for even such an enthusiastic supporter of UK membership

of the EU as Sharon Bowles in any decision-making in respect of the Eurozone. (I should have added, but forgot to make the point, that while far from being a Eurosceptic, Bowles was nonetheless a Euro-sceptic, with the hyphen, insofar as she supported the UK remaining outside the Euro). I argued that this draft opinion could not have been more timely, in view of the fact that the European elections in four days time would see the return of even more UK MEPs bent on wrecking the EU.

And so it has turned out. In the outgoing European Parliament, Sharon Bowles had been one of 11 Lib Dem MEPs for the UK, including a second MEP in her South East England constituency, Catherine Bearder. UKIP MEPs had fallen from 3 to 2, because while both Nigel Farage and Marta Andreasen had both been elected for UKIP in that same South East constituency in 2009, Andreasen defected to the Tories in 2013. Bowles bowed out of the contest this 23 May, and Bearder was now not only the sole Lib Dem candidate in the constituency, but also the only MEP to be elected for that party in the whole of the UK. In contrast, UKIP shot up from 2 to 11 seats, with Farage being joined in the South East constituency by 3 other UKIP victors, as Andreasen also lost out for the Tories.

The draft opinion, which had taken on board my proposals, stated:

“The EESC believes that it has become obvious that the current rules are not adequate and have not worked as expected, and that intergovernmental action is not up to the challenges facing EMU. Nor should we delude ourselves that, as the crisis recedes, the stabilisation mechanisms hurriedly put in place as the storm was raging will be sufficient to move forward and prevent new crises. The only way to avoid a recurrence of such situations is to change the rules and the decision-making process governing the euro area so as to make it more transparent and democratic: Put someone in charge of the euro who can speak with a single voice, by institutionalising the euro group. To improve governance of the euro area, the euro group should be able to take quick decisions and intervene in the event of a crisis... By having a single presence in international organisations; **The actions of this governing body should be supported and voted on by members of the European Parliament from the euro area (Euro-parliament), which other members could also attend but without the right to vote.**” (My emphasis – MO’R).

At the Section meeting on 19 May this draft opinion was adopted by 72 votes in favour, only 2 votes against, and 5 abstentions. □

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Thoughts About D-Day

By **Brendan Clifford**

Whatever Britain's reason might have been for declaring war on Germany in 1939 on the issue of Danzig, and fighting it as a World War instead of a war in defence of Poland, the outcome of the War bore no resemblance to its origin.

There were five major Powers in the world in 1939: Britain, the USA, Japan, the Soviet Union and Germany. (Germany had been restored to the status of a major Power through the active collaboration of Britain with Hitler between 1933 and 1938). And there was a sixth major Power, which one tends to forget: France.

The reason one tends to forget France is that in 1919 Britain deprived it of the fruits of victory in the Great War and demoralised it. France had borne the main cost of the 1914 War on Germany and should have become the hegemonic Power in Europe as a consequence. Britain, however, decided this should not be the case. There was a contest of wills between the two in 1919 and the early 1920s. And France was deprived not only of the hegemonic influence which should be the natural result of victory in a Great War, but of the secure frontier against Germany, which was its basic requirement. Therefore it was demoralised.

Nevertheless Britain intended that France should again bear the main burden of another war on Germany in 1939—a war that could happen only because Britain had subverted France's Continental policy in 1919, and had restored Germany (which it had demonised in 1914-19) to the status of a major Power.

Britain's reliance on demoralised France—on the France which it had demoralised—to do the bulk of the fighting when it decided to demonise Germany for a second time led to the fiasco of 1939-40. British propaganda in July 1940—and ever since—blamed the fiasco on a Nazi Fifth Column in France which opened the Front to the Germans.

The truth is that neither country had the will to fight—neither Britain which declared war, nor France which seconded its declaration of war. Having declared war, both stood idly by in September 1939 while the German/Polish War, precipitated by Britain's spurious Guarantee to Poland, ran its course. They let the declaration of war stand when the Polish state collapsed and the Soviet Union occupied the territory it had lost to Poland in the War of 1920. During the Winter of 1939-40, while maintaining a formal state of war with Germany, Britain tried to get involved in war with the Soviet Union in Finland. When that did not work out, Britain set about breaching Norwegian neutrality with the object of stopping trade between Sweden and Germany.

It was only then that Germany responded to the declaration of war on it—having had eight months to consider what to do, while Britain and France did everything but prosecute the war which they had declared.

Britain declared war with the intention that France should fight it. Having done this once—and been given a salutary lesson on British foreign policy statesmanship—France waited for Britain to lead by example the second time round. But Britain had no intention of leading by example. It effectively decided to make war on Germany in March 1939, with the

Polish Guarantee, but by May 1940 it had only put a minimal army in the field in France.

After a couple of weeks' fighting it took its army home but refused to call off the War. The Royal Navy still dominated the seas, and it was used to keep the war going with interventions here and there. The object was to keep Europe in an unsettled condition and spread the war.

When Britain withdrew its army from France, France made a provisional settlement with Germany, pending a general settlement in which Britain's declaration of war would be called off. Britain denounced this French action as betrayal. The British demand seems to have been that France, having declared war on Germany and having been defeated in battle, should launch a general uprising in which warfare by regular armies would be replaced by guerrilla warfare. When the French decided not to do this, but to accept the outcome of formal battle in the war which they had brought on themselves, an Anglo-French War began within the British war on Germany.

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The British war on Germany then took the form of an intervention in the Italian/Greek War, in which the Greeks were doing rather well.

The Greek leader, General Metaxas, had refused the British offer of military support, because it was not needed, and because he saw that it would bring Germany in on the Italian side. Metaxas had been Chief of Staff in 1915 when Britain demanded that Greece should join it in the war on Turkey, to be rewarded by Turkish territory in Asia Minor. He had supported the King in maintaining a policy of neutrality. The Greek neutralists were denounced as German agents. Britain overthrew the King's Government and installed a Government which declared war on Turkey. When Turkey was defeated and the Greeks embarked on the conquest of Asia Minor, they came up against Ataturk's national resistance, were abandoned by the British who had incited them to this war of conquest, and were driven back to the sea, with catastrophic consequences for the old Greek cities in Asia Minor.

In 1940 General Metaxas was the Greek leader. His Government has been called a dictatorship. And he has been described as a Fascist. He was at any rate a competent soldier and an experienced politician who knew how to calculate realities. He refused British support on the ground that it would merge his local war with Italy into Britain's war with Germany—which, of course, was Britain's object.

But Metaxas died early in 1941. His successor succumbed to British pressure. The Greek/Italian War was submerged into Britain's World War, with catastrophic consequences for Greece both during and after that War. And it also led to the break-up of Yugoslavia and the alliance of Croatia with Germany against Serbia.

Britain could not allow the Italian/Greek War to be a local war to be settled by arbitration in the light of military facts, in the traditional way. It needed to bind it into its war on Germany, which it had never been willing to fight by direct action against Germany.

Britain's war began to be called a War on Fascism, but it never became so in fact. And the Greek/Italian War was particularly unsuitable for characterisation as an anti-Fascist War, since it was a war between fascist states. It was also a war which had roots in British duplicity in the Great War. Both Greece and Italy were allies of Britain in the Great War, the Greeks having been forced into the British alliance by invasion and the Italians lured into it by lavish promises of Austrian territory. Neither got what it was promised, so there were matters to be sorted out between them.

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It might be said that everyone should have abided by the decisions of the Versailles Conference in these things, even if they felt that they had not got their entitlement as participants in the victorious *Entente*. But, with the rejection of Versailles by the American Congress, and the demoralising of France by Britain, Versailles was effectively Britain. And Britain had subverted Versailles by collaborating with Germany—not with Weimar Germany but with Nazi Germany—to break the conditions which it imposed on Germany.

Britain collaborated with Hitler in many breaches of Versailles: it authorised the building of a German Navy, allowed the expansion of the Army, the militarisation of the Rhineland, the merger with Austria, and it intimidated the Czechoslovak Government into giving Hitler the Sudetenland, which had never been part of the German state. Then it decided to make the comparatively trivial issue of Danzig into a war issue.

Britain had refused requests from Germany and Austria to merge when both states were democracies, but it allowed the merger, when both states had become Fascist. This had a particularly alienating effect on Italy, which had been a supporter of Austrian independence, and had been prepared to act in defence of it until Britain sold the pass.

(And it might be mentioned that, following the decline of Social Democracy, Austria was governed by a patriotically Austrian form of Fascism that was in conflict with the German form, and that some of these Austro-Fascists later took part in the 'Anti-Fascist War'.)

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After taking its Army out of its War in July 1940, Britain would not allow other wars to run their course as local wars. It needed to pull them into the ambit of its own War, which it was intent on developing into another World War. That was its policy of spreading the War.

At the same time it put a major effort into persuading United States public opinion that Germany was intent on a conquest of America. It was an absurd idea which had little influence on American neutrality. The US made good business out of the War, making weapons for Britain and taking its assets in payment. When it went to war it was for its own purposes. Its "*manifest destiny*" had told it for a generation that it must make war on Japan—which had been driven into the conflicts of world affairs by American warships in the 1850s. It set up its war with Japan—whose outcome was never in doubt—and Hitler conveniently declared war on it as a nominal ally of Japan, although Japan was neutral in the German/Russian War.

The USA was the great prize in Britain's campaign to spread the War. But, by the time Germany declared war on the USA, the character of Britain's War had been changed utterly by the acquisition of Russia as an ally.

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The Anti-Fascist War was the Russian war of defence against the German invasion.

Fascism had developed after 1918 in the European states whose internal life had been disrupted by the Great War and in which the fundamentalist class-war socialism of the Bolshevik Revolution was becoming a mass movement. Pre-War European Liberalism, reduced to tatters by the War, had little power of resistance. Western capitalist civilisation was saved by the Fascist movement, whose originator was Mussolini—so said the great Western hero of the Anti-Fascist War, Winston Churchill.

Mussolini's Fascism had its roots in his alliance with Britain at the start of the 1914 War. The Italian Government, supported by the Catholic Church and the Socialist Party, declared neutrality in the War. Mussolini, a prominent figure on the revolutionary wing of the Socialist Party, founded a movement to enter the War as an ally of Britain for an irredentist nationalist purpose. That combination of radical Socialism and militant Nationalism flourished in the post-1918 situation when Britain denied Italy much of what it had been promised in 1915.

National Socialism, which reconciled the disrupted masses to the continuation of the capitalist market with some modifications, and which overcame the chaos of fundamentalist party conflict by the establishment of authoritative government by a Party drawn from Left and Right, saved Capitalism from Communism between the Wars, and was widely recognised as having done so.

Then, as a consequence of the bizarre conduct of British foreign policy, Britain found itself in a dependent alliance with Communism against the force which Churchill had recognised as having saved Europe from Communism.

And then there was nothing for it but to churn out the propaganda of the Anti-Fascist War—the Communist war against Fascism. British propaganda had to appear to be committed to the Soviet account of the War while waiting for a return of the situation in which anti-Soviet propaganda could be resumed. And so for three years it saturated the world with Soviet propaganda and helped to generate a strong Communist movement in Europe.

Then, with the defeat of Germany, it reverted to the *status quo ante*. The Anti-Fascist War led to the development of a strong, militant Communist movement in Greece. And so, after the War, liberal-democratic Britain had to take part in the Greek Civil War and help the Fascist collaborators to put down the Communists.

Fascism was not formally rehabilitated after the "*Anti-Fascist War*" of the West had served its purpose, but situations requiring Fascist treatment recurred and were supported. The name was out of favour, but not the thing. And there was a discreet pretence that the Fascist regimes in Spain and Portugal, which continued for a generation after the War, were not really Fascist at all.

(And Professor Tom Garvin of UCD went as far as saying that the actual Fascist Party in Ireland was the anti-Fascist Party, Fianna Fail, while the party that said it was Fascist, Fine Gael, was the democratic party.)

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The Second World War streamlined the world. It cast aside the multi-polar structure of five or six major Powers and divided the world between two Superpowers. And, looked at from a Western viewpoint, it reduced political culture, or ideology, to a simple spurious division between Freedom and Communism.

There was no integrity in the War which produced this simplification. What it was about changed from year to year.

And there is no integrity, and no realism, to the ideological straitjackets into which the post-War world was set. And this lack of integrity has become particularly evident since the collapse of Communism and the triumph of Freedom 25 years ago.

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The occasion of the German/Polish War of September 1939 was the Polish refusal, under British encouragement, to negotiate a transfer of the German city of Danzig from a purely notional Polish sovereignty to the adjacent German territory. The Polish refusal to negotiate was encouraged by the British Guarantee, seconded by France. The Guarantee appeared to put the military resources of the French and British Empires at the service of the Polish Government. It also put Germany under military encirclement by the armies of three states. That act of hostile military encirclement altered the game of European politics fundamentally, superseding the particular issue of Danzig.

Assuming that the future is not a pre-written scroll which unrolls over time, but is a blank page which is written on year by year, the writing being determined by action in the present, then it follows that the course of affairs in the world would not have been as it was either if Britain and France had not placed Germany under hostile military encirclement in the Spring of 1939, or if they had acted as the Poles expected them to act when the encirclement predictably led to war.

This goes against the grain of Western Christian understanding of the world. It is also unacceptable to the post-1945 British ideology of the War, into which Irish understanding has now been incorporated. But, if one does not assume that the future is not predetermined, but is determined by action in the present, thought becomes impossible and is replaced by rituals of mythology.

And if one assumes that the future is not predetermined but is caused by action in the present, it follows that what Hitler did was influenced by the context set for him by the masters of the world in the late 1930s—the two great Empires.

The Anglo/French/Polish military encirclement of Germany, combined with the view of German Intelligence that Britain and France were not making practical arrangements to deliver on the Guarantee to Poland, led Germany to break the encirclement by making war on Poland. Anglo/French failure to deliver on the Guarantee led to the Polish military collapse, the flight of the Polish Government, and the occupation by the Soviet Union of the Russian territory lost in the 1920 War.

Poland had taken part, along with Germany, in the dismantling of Czechoslovakia masterminded by Britain in October 1938, and in 1939 it had chosen war with Germany, in a military alliance with Britain and France which proved to be illusory, in preference to negotiating a transfer to Germany of the German city of Danzig over which it had no actual authority. Thus, in the course of a year, British foreign policy led to the disappearance of two crucial Versailles states: buffer states between Western Europe and Bolshevik Russia.

Eight months later the futile French declaration of general war on Germany, in place of action in support of Poland, and the abortive attempt to engage in actual war with Russia in Finland, led to the occupation of France and the withdrawal of the British army. British policy then drew Germany into Greece and Yugoslavia. Suddenly Europe was German from the Pyrenees to the Russian border.

This remarkable expansion of German power was not the fruit of a systematic plan of conquest put into effect by an immensely powerful army. Militarily it came about through

a series of defensive actions by an Army which at the outset could have had no serious thought of conquering Europe.

Through that series of defensive actions the German Army grew in expertise, in bulk and in armaments. There was then only one Power in Europe, in the world, capable of engaging it in serious battle: Bolshevik Russia—the very thing Fascism had arisen to oppose.

If one believed in Providence, one could see it as having nurtured Germany through a series of practice wars for the moment when it could strike at Bolshevism at its source. And it would be surprising if somebody within the British power structure—which had some idea of itself as the force of Providence—had not seen it that way.

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The Anti-Fascist War began in June 1941—the defensive war of Bolshevism against Fascist invasion.

Fascism, which had saved European civilisation from Bolshevism, embarked on a war of destruction on the Bolshevik state. And Britain, which had set off this bizarre series of events by giving Czechoslovakia (with its strong natural border and advanced arms industry) to Germany in October 1938, formed an alliance with Bolshevism against Fascism and broadcast Bolshevik propaganda for four years, before reverting to the view that Bolshevism was the fundamental enemy of Western civilisation.

Nazi Germany did not cease to see itself in the role of defender of Western civilisation against barbarism when Britain joined the barbarians. Therefore the war in the East—which was *the* war for three years—was a war without rules, or quarter, or restraint. When civilisation is at war with its enemy there can be no restraint. Witness the ‘Indian Mutiny’.

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The bizarre conduct of the British Empire as the Superpower of the inter-War years, and the controlling Power of the Versailles settlement, inclines post-War British historians towards mythology, and has led to the selecting out of the attempt at exterminating the Jews as the centrepiece of the War.

Though it cannot be argued that Britain declared war on Germany in order to save the Jews, the fact that it was at war with Germany when the attempt to exterminate the Jews was undertaken is used as a justification of the War which stops further questioning by right-minded people. If you persist in wondering whether the War was really a Good Thing, after the Holocaust has been mentioned, there must be something wrong with you.

And yet it is a fact that cannot be denied that the attempt to exterminate the Jews was undertaken in the particular circumstances brought about by the War, and especially in the circumstances that came about when Britain used its Naval dominance of the world to keep the war situation alive after June 1940, when it had lost the ability to carry the war to Germany—it had never had the will to do it.

It was the strategy of spreading the War, after the defeat of France, that led to the German invasion of Russia. And it was in the hinterland of that War, outside Germany and in occupied countries in which there was widespread spontaneous anti-Semitism that needed no propaganda to stimulate it, that systematic extermination was put into operation by the SS from late 1941 to 1944.

The British Government knew about the extermination process, having broken the most secret German codes at the start of the War, but refused to do anything about it. It was not

made a central war issue until after the War. And elements of the Polish Resistance who, at considerable risk, carried direct information about the Extermination Camps to London and Washington were fobbed off.

The Jewish issue became the post-War issue of the War. During the War the Jewish Problem was understood by the Western Allies to be a real problem. An *Oxford War Pamphlet*—which was as close to being a statement of official policy as there was—said that, after the War (assuming a Western Allied victory), a quota system would need to be applied in Europe to keep the Jewish percentage of the general population below the level at which, as a matter of objective fact, Anti-Semitism would be generated. (See J.W. Parkes, *The Jewish Question*, Oxford War Pamphlets 1941.)

A Jewish writer in the late 1930s explained the prevalence of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe as a consequence of the Versailles policy of setting up nation-states in place of the Hapsburg Empire. The Jews constituted the bulk of the commercial and professional classes of the Empire. When the Empire was broken up and nation-states with undeveloped nations were put in its place, the Jews could not play the part in these states that they had played in the Empire, and they were squeezed by the post-state nationalism of the native middle classes. (See O. Janowski, *People At Bay*, London 1938.)

The Extermination Camps were sited between the borders of Germany and the front-line of the War in Russia. And, in some areas, the mass killing of Jews in public was popular entertainment.

An unusually thoughtful English intellectual, John Gray, wondered recently on Radio 4's *A Point Of View* (23.9.2011, *Churchill, Chance And The 'Black Dog'*) whether it was unquestionably a good thing that it was Churchill who succeeded Chamberlain in May 1940 and continued the War, rather than Halifax who would probably have called it off after the retreat from France. Could it be that the Holocaust and all the other great catastrophes happened because England kept the War going after it was defeated in battle.

It was a daring thought for a mind in the English media Establishment to have entertained even for a moment. And Gray discarded it quickly. He had the knowledge that Hitler would have done exactly what he did, even if Britain had called off the War in July 1940. It was a comforting thought: that Hitler was driven by a power that was somehow independent of circumstance. (See: Brendan Clifford, *The Cost Of Continuing The War: Churchill & John Gray in Irish Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 6 No. 1, March 2013.)

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Martin Mansergh, the Englishman who functions as the Irish political intellectual, had a similar thought. He knows, somehow, that Hitler would have gone on to do what he did, even if the Danzig anomaly had been dealt with by transfer to East Prussia in 1939, instead of being used by Britain as the means of starting a World War. Hitler's terms for a Polish settlement were more moderate than the terms of the German democracy had been: transfer of Danzig to East Prussia, and an extra-territorial road across the Polish Corridor to establish a land communication between the two separated parts of Germany.

It is hard to see how the circumstances established by such a settlement could have facilitated Hitler's plan for world conquest—supposing he had such a plan. But the circumstances brought about by military encirclement etc. laid on a war for Hitler, which led in the course of two years to a phenomenal expansion of German military power.

It requires a great power of belief, lying far beyond what is usually required in the affairs of life, to have this certainty that things would have turned out much the same if the relatively small matter of Danzig had been resolved on Hitler's terms, the Polish border stabilised, and the last irritant of the Versailles system removed.

Where does this extraordinary power of belief come from?

Not from a review of the probabilities of circumstance, but from a desperate spiritual need to understand Britain's conduct of world affairs, following its victory in its Great War, in counterfactual terms.

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The 70th anniversary of the D Day landings is currently being celebrated in Britain, with Ireland in tow. It is being asserted that Freedom depended on it.

A German historian was invited to take part in a discussion of it in BBC's *Newsnight*. She was asked how largely D-Day figured in German awareness. She was brave enough to say it was hardly noticed. For Germans the watershed event was Stalingrad.

When the USA entered the war on Germany it wanted to fight it. Britain did not. American efforts to engage in battle in France were thwarted by Britain in 1942 and 1943.

1942 was Stalingrad. 1943 was Kursk. After Kursk the outcome of the War was as certain as it ever is in warfare. Russia had developed a military expertise equal to that of Germany, and Russian resources were greater.

If, after Kursk, the Second Front had been delayed for a further year, the probability was that the War started by Britain would simply have been won by Russia—the Anti-Fascist War would have been won by the force which Fascism had arisen to save Western civilisation from.

That is not a certainty, of course, but it is very much more probable than that Hitler would have done what he did, if the Danzig issue had been settled by negotiation.

Therefore Britain allowed the Second Front in 1944 and a Western presence was established on the Continent (with Britain acting as a drag on American energy), though the hard fighting continued to be done by Russia.

Britain had been calling the US/UK alliance with Russia “the United Nations” since 1942. In 1945 a world organisation called the United Nations was established and grandiloquent statements of Rights were issued by it. These statements were understood in essentially different terms in Russia and the West. Russia had no more intention of giving up Communism than US/UK had of giving up Capitalism—it would be surprising if it had, since it was only Communism which had the power to resist and defeat Nazism.

Fascism had been recognised frankly by Churchill as a force within capitalist civilisation, which dispensed for the time being with the conflict of parties in the Parliamentary system which had become anarchic in the disrupted condition of Europe after the Great War, in order to save the system. (See for example *The Times* report of Churchill's speech in support of Mussolini in Rome, 21.1.1927.)

Erratic and destructive conduct of foreign policy by Britain led it to declare war on Nazi Germany, with which it had been collaborating for five years. Then Fascism came to be depicted as a common enemy of humanity that had somehow risen above the conflict of Capitalism and Communism and was the deadly enemy of both. And it was pretended that the UN

declarations related to a common medium of life created by common opposition to this transcendental enemy.

Churchill understood that this was nonsense. He had to play along with it, but he was looking for ways to resume the old conflict before the War ended. When the War ended with Communism in control of central Europe he favoured strong measures against it, but the power to apply those measures lay elsewhere, and the US was not ready to use them until it was too late. Russian development of nuclear weapons determined that the war within the unprincipled alliance against Germany should be a Cold War in Europe, fought by small proxy wars elsewhere.

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That Fascism was as Churchill depicted it in the 1920s and 1930s was demonstrated by the easy transition to capitalist democracy arranged by the Spanish Dictator, Franco—and by the rapid establishment in Germany, after only token ‘de-Nazification’, of functional multi-party democracy, utterly unlike the chaos of Weimar ultra-democracy.

Fascism, while curbing fissiparous party-politics that had become destructive of social cohesion, always allowed considerable scope for individualist economic enterprise. And free enterprise, combined with a narrow range of party politics in which nothing fundamental is ever at issue but much is made of slight differences, appear to be the essential components of what the Western Allies meant by Democracy. It was not what was meant by the Eastern Ally which broke the power of Nazi Germany.

Franco, in the course of a generation of Fascist dictatorship, scotched the divisive political elements and made possible the transfer of Spanish life to party-political democracy within a strong, unquestioned national state under the form of constitutional monarchy

Spain had been neutral in the World War during the two years when Britain was running it. But it might be argued that he saved Britain in that period by refusing Hitler’s urgent offer of a joint campaign to return Gibraltar to Spain. If the Straits had been closed to the Royal Navy, the widely scattered pieces of the British Empire—the *Elsewhere Empire* as Casement called it—would have lost their hub, and the great wheel would have collapsed.

In June 1941, when the War changed its character and became the Anti-Fascist War, Franco joined it on the Fascist side. He had deplored the Anglo-German War as a kind of Civil War. When Germany invaded Russia, he joined it—but without prejudice to his neutrality in the Anglo-German War. He denied that there was any integrity to the combination of those two Wars by the Anglo-Russian alliance.

After the War Spain, while still a Fascist dictatorship, became an important member of the military alliance of Western democracies against Soviet democracy, NATO, demonstrating that capitalism was the fundamental thing in Western democracy.

There was an easy transition in Spain from Fascism to Western democracy because the capitalist infrastructure of democracy was in place. When the Soviet system broke up under Western pressure in 1990 and Westernising set in, the result was a grotesque caricature of Western democracy because there was no capitalist infrastructure.

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The post-1945 combination of East European states under Russian hegemony was called an Empire by the West. If it was an Empire, it was essentially unlike the Western Empires. It came into being in the first instance as a consequence of effective Russian defence against German invasion. Russia

had to fight its way through to Berlin in order to end the War, and so it found itself in possession of all the countries east of Germany.

The experience of the Anti-Fascist War had generated in each of those countries a layer of people predisposed towards the Soviet system. The capitalist classes of those countries had on the whole collaborated with the Fascist occupation. Fascism was depicted by the Western war propaganda as the enemy of civilisation in general. In these circumstances it was possible for Moscow to construct a line of states from the Baltic to the Adriatic based on its own socio-political system.

In none of these states was there Military Government—the very doubtful exception of Poland a generation later. Those Eastern regimes were constructed largely by the application of Anti-Fascist measures.

(In the Western zones of Germany, a functional State was quickly restored by the neglect of Anti-Fascist measures. “*De=Nazification*” was merely cosmetic, and Anti-Fascism was suspect. Communism—the force which had broken Nazi power—was suppressed, and Communists were effectively excluded from political and civil life.)

The Western democratic states were Empires of a different kind: Britain, France, Belgium, Holland. They all held overseas possessions, gained by military conquest and governed imperially by the home democracies. There was no common Belgian-Congolese political stratum by which both Belgium and the Congo were ruled, and Belgian rule in the Congo did not seek to reproduce the Belgian mode of political and economic life there. Nor was there a French-Algerian governing stratum, or a Dutch-Indonesian. And, although Britain had been ruling India for centuries, India had no say in 1939 about whether it should go to war or not. The decision was taken in Whitehall, and Indian political leaders with sophisticated English education and Fabian delusions were suddenly confronted with the fact that they counted for nothing.

But the war propaganda, with which the entire world had been deluged, had changed the mind-set of natives everywhere, even though the rulers who churned out that propaganda had apparently been unaffected by it. Therefore there was a spate of democratic wars—wars by democracies—in defence of Empires in the years after 1945. Dirty wars. Wars in which it was not supposed that such things as innocent civilians existed.

The French war on the Algerians began straight away in 1945.

The French wartime Resistance against the German Occupation was in power. It had punished French collaborators. Collaborators were people who, after the elected French Government had declared war on Germany and lost it, accepted the settlement made by the Vichy Government as legitimate.

The Vichy Government was established by an overwhelming vote of the democratically elected French Parliament in 1940, to cope with the situation resulting from the loss of the War declared on Germany. It governed the part of France not occupied by Germany. The German occupation was in the shape of an L along the North and West of France. It was to be temporary occupation pending a settlement with Britain. Since Britain refused to settle, preferring to extend the War by Naval action in the hope of gaining a substantial ally, the German occupation of France continued throughout the War. The Vichy Government of the unoccupied part was democratically established but was not recognised by Britain as legitimate.

In the 20th century democracy was only one of a number of possible grounds of legitimacy for Britain.

In the Summer of 1940 the joint declaration of war on Germany by Britain and France had absolute priority over other considerations in British policy. The British view was that France was legally and morally obliged to continue fighting the war, even though its Armies had been defeated and the British Army had gone home. On that view, the Vichy development was a kind of treason. Britain therefore made war on Vichy France.

The United States, however, was impervious to British war propaganda. It was making a handsome profit from Britain's continuing war effort, selling it arms and lending it the money to buy them, but it did not see that as any reason for refusing to recognise the legitimacy of the Vichy regime in France. It continued to have diplomatic relations with Vichy after entering the War against Germany. And, even after it landed forces in North Africa and came into conflict with Vichy, its preferred option was to try for a deal with Vichy, rather than engage in all-out war with it. US foreign policy was not then the blindly destructive force that it became in the hands of G.W. Bush and Obama.

Churchill made the grand declaration in 1940 that, if a German Army followed the British in its retreat from Dunkirk, and defeated the British Army at home, the British people would fight it in the ditches etc.

It later came to light that he had ordered the development of an underground army led by a Communist (Tom Wintringham) which, in the event of a German occupation, would carry on the fight by irregular methods—terrorist methods in present-day parlance. The local leaders of this terrorist force were under orders to start by murdering the leaders of the community in their area—Council leaders, Chief Constables etc. The realistic assumption behind this order was that the stratum of leaders of civil life throughout the country would collaborate with the military victor. This assumption is not compatible with the statement about fighting in the ditches.

About 30 years later it became known that the British espionage operation—a crucial apparatus of the English State since the time of Elizabeth and the Cecils—had broken the most secret German codes. This fact was a tightly preserved State secret until it was revealed by one of its major operatives.

The implication is that Churchill had a pretty good idea, when making his famous speech, that the occasion for fighting in the ditches would never arise. Hitler was trying for a settlement, not making serious preparations for invasion. He was strongly Anglophile and he saw the British Empire as a necessary part of world civilisation.

One is entitled to the opinion that, if the prospect of fighting in the ditches ever seemed likely to come about, Britain would have made a settlement—and also that it would have been Churchill himself who made it. If he was unwilling he would have been replaced.

The last thing Britain is, is suicidal.

But Britain required of France that it should fight in the ditches after losing the War. By failing to do that, it made itself a treacherous enemy, fit only to be made war upon.

In France the mythical honour of the nation was saved from its actual conduct by the desertion of General De Gaulle, who left his command, escaped to England, where he raised a French Army in exile. In the circumstances the British could not repudiate him, but they considered him a nuisance. When the Americans entered the War, they were hostile to him. They hoped to sideline him by reaching an agreement with Vichy.

But De Gaulle survived to return to France after D Day and weave the myth in which France has lived uneasily ever since.

There was substantial continuity in actual history between Vichy France and the France of the Fourth Republic established in 1946, but in written history there was total rupture. Between the two there lay a watershed of capricious popular bloodletting, superficially reminiscent of 1793 and conducive to myth-making.

Internal French Resistance to the Occupation and to the Vichy regime was slight until the invasion of Russia brought the Communists into it. At the end of the War, the Resistance (internal and external, Gaullist and Communist) came to power, but the State was in substance the State preserved by the Vichy regime.

The Vichy Government was the Government of France and its Empire. Germany left the French Empire intact. Britain made war on it. There was war in Syria in 1941. It was war between Britain and France. Britain conquered French Syria and left it under the control of the French Resistance for the duration of the War, and then declared it independent.

Other parts of the Empire, lost during the War, were restored when the Resistance took over from Vichy. Resistant France had never ceased to be Imperial France. In May 1945 popular celebrations in Algeria of the defeat of Nazism slid over among Algerians to demonstrations in support of national self-determination in the city of Setif. It was bombed by the Anti-Fascist Government and dozens of villages in the region were destroyed.

Then in French Indochina Independence was declared by the movement led by Ho Chi Minh, who had taken part in the Anti-Fascist war, and Anti-Fascist France made war on it. That was the first Vietnamese War. It ended in disaster for the French at the battle of Dien Bien Phu, after which the cause of Western civilisation there was taken up by the United States.

Britain's first Imperial War after victory in the Anti-Fascist War was fought against the Anti-Fascist movement in Malaya. The Anti-Fascists in Malaya imagined that the defeat of Fascism opened the way for Malayan Independence. The British Labour Government thought otherwise. Britain had virtually bankrupted itself to keep its war on Germany going and it absolutely needed Malayan tin to make itself solvent again. Its war on the Malayan Anti-Fascists was a dirty war fought with Concentration Camps, population controls, and racist policies designed to pit the Malays against the Chinese.

When Malaya was saved for Western capitalist civilisation, Britain had to fight another dirty war by similar methods to retain control of Kenyan rubber and reinforce the recently-established White Colony (which still remains and retains control of the better land). It has been reckoned that a third of a million Kenyan natives were killed by one means and another in that War.

The Malayan and Kenyan Wars were not called Wars. It was thought that calling them Wars might bring them under the jurisdiction of the international law system said to have been established by the Anti-Fascist Powers by the Nuremberg Trials of German leaders, so they were called *Emergencies*.

(Writers of the Revisionist Establishment declare, without a shred of factual foundation, that the existence of a World War was denied in Ireland during the War, and that the War worked up by Britain between 1939 and 1941 was called *The Emergency*. See for example Professor Brian Girvin's book, *The Emergency*, and Dr. Ferghal McGarry's article in *Irish Historical Studies*, Nov. 2005.).

In my experience—and I was there at the time—the World War was invariably called the *World War* both in general

conversation and in the newspapers, and its progress was reported in the papers. Many of the papers are now available on the Internet and what I say can be checked by the touch of a button. What was called *The Emergency* in Ireland during the War was the footing on which Irish life was placed by the War. The Wars whose existence was officially denied by being called Emergencies were the British Wars in Malaya and Kenya.)

The United States had few Imperial possessions to defend. It was Anti-Imperial. Nevertheless it fought a war to retake the Philippines. In general its object was to gain the possession of the European Empires as markets. It stood for the free development of market economies. But a free market economy was, to its understanding, one to which American capital had free access. Interference with the operation of American capital was denial of Freedom. If this was done by Governments nationalising enterprises in the interests of the national economy, that was Socialism, the ante-Chamber of Communism. And Communism was European and therefore came under the prohibitions of the Monroe Doctrine (against European interference in the affairs of American states).

In 1954 the Guatemalan Government tried to restrict the operation of the *United Fruit Company*. It was an elected Government. Washington intervened and installed a Government which kept the Guatemalan economy freely open to US capital. That was the first of many interventions. Some of them are related in *The Political Economy Of The United Nations Security Council* by J.R.Vreeland and A. Dreher, Cambridge 2004.)

Fascism was incidental to the British war on Germany in 1939. The Anti-Fascist War was the Communist defence against invasion by the political force which had arisen against it in 1920, and which had been recognised by democratic leaders as the force which saved Europe from Communism in the disrupted conditions brought about by the Great War.

After 1945 the Western Allies acted, in defence of their Empires, in the way which in their wartime propaganda they had described as specifically Fascist.

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The Communist system beyond Russia was not based on military conquest operating by military rule, but on an influential political stratum sharing the general outlook of the Soviet State and willing to construct national regimes in alliance with it. Russia was in military possession of the territories in which those States were established by virtue of having defended itself against German invasion.

The Western Powers were anxious that Russia should not make a separate peace with Germany, when it had recovered its own pre-War territories. They wanted continuing Russian action beyond the borders of pre-War Russia until the unconditional surrender of Germany—the Western war aim agreed at the Casablanca Conference by Churchill and Roosevelt—was achieved. The unconditional surrender demand maximised German resistance, and this—combined with British dilatoriness in prosecuting the War—ensured that Russia was in military possession of a large tract of territory beyond its borders when the War ended.

The Western Powers recognised in 1945, up to the moment of German surrender, that Russia had the right to guarantees about the post-War conduct of the East European states, in the light of the part they had played in bringing about the German invasion. But, once Germany surrendered, the Anti-Fascist dimension of the Western war effort—the representation of Russia in Western propaganda in a way that was acceptable

to the Soviet Government—was discarded. The fundamental antagonism against Russia revived even as the Red Army was capturing Berlin. And the implication of what soon became the Western *Cold War* view was that Russia, having broken German military power, was somehow obliged to facilitate the establishment of regimes hostile to it in the countries it had freed from Nazi rule.

In the light of the military and political reality of the 1945 situation, this expressed an infantile morality of understanding. It was therefore not often expressed clearly and simply, but it was the attitude underlying Western conduct.

In different circumstances, the political neutralisation of Eastern Europe and Germany, with effective guarantees, might have been arranged. But that was not a practical possibility in 1945.

*

It is Poland's geographical destiny to exist between Russia and Germany. In the game of Powers it had the opportunity to become one of the Great Powers, but its refusal to allow its aristocratic libertarian political system to develop into a State prevented it from becoming a Great Power—or from consolidating itself as the major power that it once was—while Moscow and Berlin developed into major States.

The Polish state was dismantled in the 1790s in the famous Partition between Russia, Germany and Austria. It became customary to condemn the Partition as one of the great atrocities of European history, but an English statesman of the mid-19th century commented realistically that a state behaving as Poland did was a nuisance.

The restoration of the Polish state began in 1914 when the Polish national socialist, Pilsudski, went to war against Russia in alliance with Germany, with an army raised in Germany and Austria. (Pilsudski's Polish Socialist Party was the only European party praised by James Connolly in both runs of his *Workers' Republic*, 1898 and 1915.)

In 1920 Pilsudski beat off an attempt by Lenin to set off a European socialist revolution by going through Poland, and he captured a large tract of Russian territory. In the mid 1920s Pilsudski took more or less dictatorial power in Poland and governed more or less as a Fascist. In 1934 he made a Treaty with Hitler which ended the German/Polish border dispute. The Treaty recognised the Polish Corridor (a tract of territory giving Poland access to the sea but separating East Prussia from the rest of Germany) as part of the Polish state, leaving aside the question of the city of Danzig for future resolution.

Following the Munich Settlement of October 1938, in which Britain broke the national will of the Czechoslovak State, Poland joined with Germany and Hungary in taking parts of it. Hitler then suggested that the time had come to tidy up the Danzig issue.

Danzig was a German city under national Polish sovereignty and League of Nations administration, on which Polish politics had failed to gain any purchase. Its transfer to adjacent East Prussia would have been a very slight alteration of the situation, compared to the alterations in which Britain facilitated by Hitler. But Britain chose that moment to offer Poland a military guarantee such as it had never given to any other state. And Poland, under post-Pilsudski leadership, accepted the offer—thus ending its 1934 Treaty with Germany, and began to dream of a march on Berlin as Britain and France attacked from the West.

Britain, keeping its cards close to its chest, half-heartedly suggested an agreement with Moscow. But the Polish

Government wouldn't hear of it. It refused to choose between Russia and Germany. In the false confidence raised by the Anglo/French Guarantees it treated both as enemies.

There was an understanding that there would be French action three days after the start of hostilities and a general offensive within 15 days. No hostile Anglo/French action against Germany was undertaken during those 15 days. By the end of them the Polish armies had been defeated, French action had not begun, and, the Polish State having ceased to exist as an organised force in Poland, the Soviet Union occupied the territory it had surrendered to Pilsudski in 1920.

During the period of the German/Polish Treaty, Poland acquired a copy of the German Enigma coding machine. When the Treaty gave way to the British Guarantee, the Enigma machine was given to Britain along with work done on it by the Poles. Polish émigrés joined the British Army. And a Polish Government-in-exile was maintained by the British Government.

After June 1941 a Polish Army was formed in Russia from Prisoners-of-War taken in the occupation of September 1939, and a Polish Government consisting of Polish Communists was formed.

Which Government-in-Exile became the Government in Poland obviously depended on which Army—the British or the Russian—drove the German Army out of Poland. By the end of 1943 it was clear that it was going to be the Russians: Britain had not yet crossed the Channel.

The Polish Government which had refused to choose between Germany and Russia lived in London and contributed to a British War that had nothing to do with Poland. This War was bringing the Red Army onto Polish soil in 1944. Britain had contributed nothing to the defence of Poland, but the rubble of the Polish State was integrated into the British army and Air Force, and the Polish gift of the Enigma machine had opened the secrets of the German High Command to Churchill.

On 4th January 1944, Russian troops commanded by a Polish General, Rokossovski, crossed the Polish frontier. That is, it crossed the Polish frontier of August 1939. But, unknown to London's Polish Government, that was no longer the Polish frontier. By a secret agreement made at the Tehran Conference by Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill a month earlier, the Polish territory occupied and annexed by Russia in the second half of September 1939, and denounced at the time by the West, was now agreed to be Russian territory.

London's Polish Government had no diplomatic relations with Russia, and London only told it as much as was good for it at any given moment.

About six months later, in mid-July, the Red Army had advanced to the new Polish frontier and crossed it, set up its Polish Government in the city of Lublin, and headed towards Warsaw.

At this point the London Polish Government (LPG) decided to launch an insurrection in Warsaw. Its underground Army, the Home Army, had been accumulating arms for this moment. The insurrection succeeded quickly and easily because of its unexpectedness. But who was it directed against, the Germans who were making preparations to leave? or the Russians whose guns could be heard?

The Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw had risen the year before. The rising was beaten down and the Ghetto destroyed, but it was better than waiting. The Ghetto would have waited for the Red Army but it was still far away in Russia, its dominance

not yet decisively established, and the extermination was being undertaken in earnest, so why wait quietly?

The LPG bided its time as the Ghetto Rising was dealt with. It was not the issue to act on. There was extensive anti-Semitism in Polish life, as there was in all the other states into which Versailles had broken the Hapsburg Empire, and in the Baltic states. The Jews were at home in the Empire, but were alien in the prematurely delivered nation-states established by the victorious Empires as punishment of the Hapsburgs.

The LPG waited until the Russian enemy was near before launching its insurrection against the occupying German enemy, which was preparing to retreat. The object was to present the Russians with the accomplished fact of the pre-War Government in command of Warsaw.

It would have made sense as the opening action of the Third World War that had been latent in the Second ever since Britain recklessly spread to Russia the War which it had declared but had lost the will to fight in earnest.

Churchill was on the lookout for an opportunity to rescue Britain's war from the Communist complication of it which he had brought about. But in August 1944 he did not back the LPG action. The situation had not yet ripened for a breach. The Anglo-American Armies were still in France, making little headway.

And so Britain let the 1944 Battle of Warsaw run its course without interference, just like in 1939. As did Moscow.

But the political circumstances were not similar. Britain was under Treaty obligation to fight in support of the Polish Government in 1939, while the LPG was hostile to Moscow.

It was pleaded, in extenuation of British failure to deliver on the Treaty obligations in 1939, that it lacked the means of acting. But, if so, why the Treaty?

It did have the means of acting, of course. It had an army in place, alongside the French, on Germany's weakly-defended western border. It had bombing planes. It had the strongest Navy in the world. It *chose* not to act.

But, it was said, it could not have reached Danzig to defend it.

Tom Wintringham thought otherwise. He was the only member of the British Communist Party with a military mind—and he was the man Churchill chose to command the Underground Army to wage a campaign of terror against collaborators under a German Occupation. Wintringham pointed out the obvious: the Royal Navy still ruled the waves.

Hitler had been authorised by Britain, in breach of Versailles, to construct a Navy a third of the size of Britain's, but he had not bothered to do so. Wintringham reckoned that the Royal Navy could have forced entry to the Baltic and presented itself at Danzig. And, if it had lost warships to the extent of the entire (inexperienced) Germany Navy, it would still have been naval top-dog in the world.

We are told insistently that Britain "*fought alone*" for a year in 1940-41. Well, it kept the war going alone, while spreading it to others—which is not quite the same thing. It was the Poles who *fought* alone. And the London Poles were left to fight alone again in 1944.

Moscow condemned the Rising as a reckless anti-Soviet adventurism. Nobody doubted that its purpose was anti-Russian. The British made a gesture towards supporting it with air drops, but could not make the return journey without landing to refuel, and Moscow would not cooperate. After the War, much was made of the inhumane conduct of the Red Army

in not rushing to the assistance of its enemies in Warsaw—as if such things were ever done in war. But Churchill at the time refused to say a word in criticism of the Russians. A separate peace in the East would still have left him with too much war to fight.

The Red Army was systematically pushing the German Army westwards along a very wide Front, concentrating on this or that part of the Front as local military circumstances indicated. Such a sustained advance on such a wide Front conducted without serious reverses was without precedent in military history. Whether the Red Army delayed its assault on Warsaw because of the Rising, or took no account of the Rising and simply dealt with military facts as they presented themselves, is an argument that can go on forever.

Britain's destructive role in the EU

Public interest in the European elections is low. People do not understand how 'Europe' works, they think decisions are made by 'Brussels', whatever that is. A new development is beginning to change that. For the first time, the majority group in Parliament will nominate the President of the Commission. That makes sense and resembles what happens in national parliaments. The person put forward by the majority group will become known by the public as the person chosen as a result of the elections. The European People's Party (EPP) at its Congress in Dublin on 7 March 2014 elected Jean-Claude Juncker as the EPP's candidate for President of the European Commission, ahead of the May European Parliament elections (see <http://dublin2014.epp.eu/>).

The EPP said on that day that Jean-Claude Juncker would now spearhead the EPP's EU-wide campaign leading up to the 2014 European elections. Upon winning the elections, Jean-Claude-Juncker would have the democratic mandate to assume the presidency of the European Commission.

The British Prime Minister has decided that this new rule should not apply. This has provoked Michel Rocard (former Prime Minister of France, 1988 -1991) to write a strong condemnation of Britain's role in Europe from the beginning of the Common Market, in *Le Monde* of 5 June. The *Daily Mail* reported on this as follows:

'Get out of Europe before you kill it': Former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard launches extraordinary attack on Britain

Socialist pro-European says UK only joined Europe to help banks

Attacks David Cameron for 'pretending' to want to leave and provoking crisis

Claims Britain used to be held in high esteem but has lost its 'elegance'

Here is an abridged version of Rocard's article:

Michel Rocard (former Prime Minister 1988 -1991); [he starts with Britain's good points]:

We owe Britain a lot historically but we have had too much of her contempt for us and her double-dealing.

Churchill in 1946 at Zurich had suggested that the Europeans created a united states of Europe, supported by the British community of nations, the USA and the Soviet Union.

De Gaulle also wanted that.

But you wanted to trade, and thought only of that. After you joined, you have never allowed the smallest step toward integration, towards really taking decisions together. A trade Community suited you, but in matters that are at the heart of the economy, that is, tax, conflict resolution, representation of social partners, you

It seems that Hitler took the Warsaw Rising personally. He saw the Poles as having acted treacherously in 1939 in breaking the Treaty which recognised Polish sovereignty in the Corridor and making a Treaty with Britain and France on the issue of Danzig, a city which was not under Polish actual government and was never likely to be.

He assembled a special force to deal with the Rising, and took two months, during which there was so much else to be done, to crush it utterly and pulverise the city. Then he abandoned it, leaving it a ghost town for the Red Army to move into at leisure some time later.

And that is how the War, which Britain started—supposedly over Poland—ended in Poland after five years. □

have imposed unanimity as the only way of taking decisions. That way you have created paralysis, which is what you wanted.

You have supported every enlargement, diluting the community.

In matters of diplomacy, defence and justice, you have made it so that only intermittent common actions are taken, without a true common policy.

Thanks to you the Maastricht treaty was a failure, as were the Amsterdam treaty of 1997 and the Nice 2001 and the Constitutional treaty, since they simply continued the paralysis you had guaranteed.

To its shame, Europe has had no presence in Yugoslavia, Africa or in the matter of Palestine.

You went further and worse. When you didn't like the rules, you broke them with derogation agreements ("I want my money back" or the English cheque, then the right to leave as you pleased: 'opting out').

But you have been more shameless still. Such paralysis provoked anger, and powerful leaders with strong characters were chosen.

Jean-Luc Dehaene or Jean-Claude Juncker posed no threat to you from the excessive weight of their countries of origin, Belgium and Luxemburg. But they are federalists, have a strong character and speak firmly. You vetoed them twice in 10 years. That took some daring, but you dared.

This is what is killing Europe. The recent elections confirmed it. Even the Euro, the only creation you have not been able to avoid, but with rules of management written with you, therefore with your trademark, is weakened and threatened by the absence of leadership which you have been able to impose on Europe.

I know you are not alone. Refusing to recognise common European interests, giving priority to national interests at every opportunity: you reintroduced these attitudes into Europe, and the contagion spread. No one is perfect, but you deserve the top prize.

There has been a slight move towards more democracy in European institutions: Parliament will now form the majority in the Commission; it's not much, but a start.

I personally wanted Martin Schulz; but the voters have given a majority and the leader will be Jean-Claude Juncker. Democracy demands that he be president of the Commission.

You want to stop this. You are trying to stop a democratic process appearing in Europe. What you want is a weak leader, as any leader chosen in the conditions you are creating would be. It is clear that is what you want.

You show us great contempt. Beware, contempt will be directed back at you.

You are pretending to want to leave. But your banks still have some profit to make from the disorder you are creating.

You should leave before you have destroyed everything. Elegance used to be your forte. Let us rebuild Europe. Rediscover your traditional elegance by leaving the EU, and we will esteem you once again.

[It's not often that we find ourselves praising any part of the Irish media but the continuation of this correspondence in the *Cork Evening Echo* deserves acknowledgment and appreciation for the newspaper that has facilitated these debates on WWI. We sincerely hope it has helped their sales.

It has already broken some of the rules of newspaper correspondence - as we have come to be aware of them- in relation to the media. Most significantly it has allowed discussion on World War I for several months showing a real appreciation of the importance of the issue. This has in turn generated a wide ranging discussion from here and abroad and it shows signs of minimum editing which further encourages participation.

It has shown that there is a very long attention span by readers, on this issue at least, that may last as long as the war. Those who wished us all to 'remember' may become aware that the remembering will be much more comprehensive than they ever imagined and will soon realise that their remembering will be seen to be very elective indeed. In fact that their remembering will be seen to involve a lot more forgetting than remembering. This will be most encouraging.

The originator of the 'remembering' in Cork, Quartermaster Gerry White, Chairman of the local branch of the Western Front, has already withdrawn from the debate and the centenary of the War has not even arrived yet! How will he and they put up with 4 more plus years of remembering! Contributors to this debate seem prepared for a longer war than the Western Front. We look forward with interest to the continuation of this 'war'.]

EVENING ECHO, CORK — 13.3.2014

IN recent months, historians in the UK and Ireland have been debating the involvement in the Great War. A similar debate has been raging on this page and there have been a number of opposing but objective contributions made by people such as John Dolan of the Echo, Jack Lane of Aubane and Denis McCarthy of Wolverhampton. I believe such debates can be useful as they enable a better appreciation of our history and serve as a timely reminder of the horrors of war. They also help us remember the enormous sacrifice made by the Irishmen who fought in the war.

However, I don't believe anything can be gained from labelling the Irish who fought in the war as 'gullible', 'mercenaries' and 'psychopaths'. Unfortunately, this is what Pat Maloney, the editor of Labour Comment, did at the early stages of this debate.

I didn't think there was much more he could do to tarnish the memory of these men — until I read his letter of February 17, where he compared the Western Front Association, a historical association that remembers those from ALL countries that fell in the war, with some fictitious Dutch organisation he concocted called the 'Eastern Front Association', formed to commemorate Dutchmen who fought with the Waffen SS in World War II. To even imply some similarity between the Irishmen in the Great War and Dutch members of the Nazi SS would be outrageous if it was not so ridiculous.

About 50,000 Irish died in the Great War and in the years that followed their relatives and descendants have remembered them on the anniversary of their death and on occasions such as

our National Day of Commemoration, Remembrance Sunday, and at religious services of remembrance.

I think it is sad that having labelled the Irish who died in the war, Mr Maloney found it necessary to describe those people who remember them as 'deluded' and 'hypocrites'. Remembrance is in people's hearts and minds and they should be free to remember a relative who lost their life in the Great War in whatever manner they choose without fear of ridicule.

For someone who is obviously so set against the principle of remembering the Irish who died in the Great War, Mr Maloney can't seem to forget them. Even though it is almost 100 years later and the world is a different place he still seems to get agitated about 'Imperial-style' symbols as if the British Empire still existed and was threatening to swallow up Ireland.

In his latest letter, he also said there was an onus on me to convince people that Britain and Ireland's Great War was 'just'. As an example of a 'just war' he mentioned Finland's fight against the Soviet invaders in the 1939-40 Winter War. However, he neglected to tell us that in 1941 the Finnish Army fought side by side with Hitler's Nazis when they invaded the Soviet Union. This, and the fact that Irishmen such as Tom Barry joined the British Army to 'get a gun and feel like a man' — something which according to Mr Maloney's criteria clearly made him a 'psychopath' — only goes to prove how complex history can be.

For my part, I don't believe Barry was a psychopath. I do, however, believe war could have been avoided by any of the major powers acting differently during the 'July Crisis' of 1914. I also believe that once Germany invaded France and Belgium, war with the UK was inevitable, if not then that at a later date.

Despite what Mr Maloney has said, I hold firm to my belief that the overwhelming majority of Irish who fought in the war were honourable and enlisted because they genuinely believed they were serving their country in a time of crisis.

Over the years, the people of France and Belgium have never forgotten the debt they owe to the Irish who died in the Great War helping to liberate their countries. Every day at 8pm the people of the Belgian town of Ypres gather at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing to remember 54,000 Allied servicemen whose names are inscribed there. Many came from Cork.

In 1928, Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch wrote "Some of the flower of Irish chivalry rests in the cemeteries that have been reserved in France, and the French people will always have these reminders of the debt France owes to Irish valour. We shall always see that the graves of these heroes from across the sea are lovingly tended, and shall try to ensure the generations that come after us shall never forget the heroic dead of Ireland."

If France and Belgium can remember their sacrifice, and former foes such as Kemal Ataturk had the generosity of spirit to pay tribute to them, surely people in this country should be free to do the same.

'Great-uncle Finbarr' that Mr Maloney mentioned proved himself worthy of the tributes of France, Belgium and Kemal Ataturk. He deserves to be remembered — and he most certainly does not deserve to be compared to a bunch of Nazis.

Gerry White, Chairman, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

TWO letters recently appeared in the Evening Echo responding to my letter of February 24.

Instead of the usual generalisation on perceived British Imperialism, Mr de Paor lucidly referred to a point I made regarding German aggression in the Prussian-Franco War of 1870.

He is certainly correct that France instigated military operations but must remember Bismarck wanted to shell Paris indiscriminately and target civilians scavenging for food.

Germany also insisted that France pay 5,000,000,000 francs before they had any intentions of going home. Also, previous Prussian aggression was one of the main causes of the war.

Mr de Paor mentioned the size of the British Navy and its influence. Historically, Britain did rule the waves but the British Navy did not solely win the war. It certainly caused shortages in Germany, but this was compounded by movement of German resources to the Western Front. Its resources were also hit by strikes in April 1917, when German Spartacists were influential in causing work stoppages in Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin.

The proposed Baghdad railway has long been mentioned as a possible cause for the Great War. In 1914, it was decades away from being completed and a variety of agreements between Britain and Germany as well as the Ottoman Empire had already been reached.

I must disagree that Britain was the aggressor in 1914, but it is encouraging Mr de Paor offers another opinion as to the causes and aggressors of the Great War. This type of contribution can only enhance debate while remembering those who fell.

On reading Mr Maloney's response, I am extremely glad he has finally recognised that Irish soldiers joined up for a number of reasons, including liberating Belgium from German occupation. However, while he frequently mentions the imperialistic aims of Britain, it should be remembered that for centuries, empires such as Rome and Spain also sought to expand their empires. At the start of the 20th century, Germany too was in the process of expanding its empire. Indeed, German historian Fritz Fischer argued that German war aims included gaining and annexing territory.

Mr Maloney must again be corrected on some facts. The Belgian Army at the outbreak of World War I was not 'large' but one of the lowest standing Armies in Europe, totalling a mere 117,000, compared to the invading 4.5 million strong German Army.

He is correct that Pope Benedict's peace proposal of August 1, 1917 was rejected by Britain. Unfortunately, he failed to mention it was also rejected by Germany and all warring nations except Austria-Hungary. Italy itself rejected Pope Benedict's peace proposals in the London Treaty of 1915 and indeed advised all nations to reject any overture by the Pope.

Mr Maloney neglected to mention the Greece-Serbia treaty of 1913. Greece failed to honour this and King Constantine I (brother-in-law of German King Wilhelm II) saw Greece leaning to the German position. Britain was originally invited into Greece by the Greek Prime Minister to help the Serbs in their battle against Bulgarian forces.

Mr Maloney asks, if Britain was fighting to free Belgium, why did its army go to France? I should point out the first battle Britain was involved in was at Mons, which is actually in Belgium. Here, Lieutenant Maurice Dease of Co. Westmeath got the first Victoria Cross of the Great War, when he defended the bridge at Nimy, despite being shot five times. However, Mr Maloney would rather we didn't remember this bravery. Most of the British Army did find itself on Belgian territory on a more permanent basis after late 1914. Indeed, the 16th (Irish) Division spent most of its time around the Belgian area of Ypres.

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The spoils of war and consequences can only be considered in the aftermath. If Mr Maloney has attended the Last Post at the Menin Gate, he will see how the Irish contribution to the war is appreciated. This remembrance is not imperialistic, as Mr Maloney suggests, but honours soldiers from various countries.

The Western Front Association was formed with the aim of furthering interests in the Great War. Mr de Paor's response certainly adds to that debate — a debate examining the part Ireland played in the Great War should be encouraged.

However, to refuse to remember the Irishmen who fought and died in World War I is to refuse to acknowledge the contribution they made in defeating German aggression.

Denis McCarthy, Stalybridge, England

EVENING ECHO, CORK — MARCH 20, 2014

Objective?

I AM perplexed by the reference in Gerry White's recent letter where he says: "In recent months, historians in the UK and Ireland have been debating the involvement in the Great War. A similar debate has been raging on this page and there have been a number of opposing but objective contributions made by people such as John Dolan of the Echo, Jack Lane of Aubane and Denis McCarthy of Wolverhampton." (Letters, March 13).

I argued that Britain intervened in a European conflict in 1914 and thereby turned it into a World War as only Britain could have done so, being at the time the most powerful Empire in the world.

Its purpose was to curtail Germany's economic and political growth and to add substantially to the British empire by spreading the war to Turkey and elsewhere.

Messrs Dolan and McCarthy claim that the World War was not at all Britain's responsibility.

These are diametrically opposed views and I can't see how they can both be called "objective contributions".

Perhaps Gerry White could explain?

Jack Lane, Aubane, Millstreet, Co. Cork

Remember...

THIS year is the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I and the rights and wrongs will again be debated for a time, and have been recently in letters to the *Evening Echo*.

Cork's Lord Mayor Cllr Catherine Clancy recently visited the largest WWI cemetery, Tyne Cot cemetery near Passendale in Belgium, where 11,954 are buried, of whom 8,367 are unknown. She saw a headstone erected by Cork parents to their son aged 21 from Blarney Street.

Another headstone there is to Second Lieutenant Arthur Conway Young and reads "Sacrificed to the fallacy/That war can end war".

It was said in 1918 that it was the war to end all wars. World War II followed 21 years later with millions to die again. War is never good news and rarely one of glory.

I think that the dead soldiers from all countries in World War I deserve to be remembered on this 100th anniversary, because of the horrors they endured.

M Sullivan, College Road, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK — MARCH 27, 2014

MR Gerry White of the Western Front Association suggests (Mar 13) there is no such thing as an Eastern Front Association.

But the *Verbond van Vlaamse Oud-Oostfrontstrijders* (Association of Flemish Former Eastern Front Fighters) and its successor organisations are a very real part of the political scene in Flanders. They do not get much popular support because the people of Flanders are not proud of their countrymen who joined the occupation forces and who, as part of the *Waffen SS*, engaged in an unjust war of aggression against other countries in which many terrible atrocities were committed.

Mr White's Association, whose luminaries include a Haig, a Kitchener and a Farrar-Hockley, has even less popular support in Ireland.

The Flemings do not believe their countrymen who enlisted voluntarily in the *Waffen SS* fought in a good and worthy cause. But the Finns believe their Winter War of 1939 was just.

Was Britain's (and Ireland's) Great War fought in a good cause? This is the issue Gerry White has evaded throughout this correspondence.

Much of the war is easily understood. France wanted a replay against Germany to regain Alsace and Lorraine. Russia wanted a replay against Turkey having lost (for instance) the Crimean War in which Britain was Turkey's ally. And so on. Such intermittent warfare, though terrible, was relatively limited; 'replays' might not have injured mankind in the way a World War did.

The mystery is why Britain and its empire chose to set the world aflame in 1914. Other *Echo* correspondents have argued convincingly that Britain's Great War was an aggressive war of choice whose aim was not just to extend its vast empire, but to destroy a commercial rival which it could not outdo in peaceful trade. The best Mr White can come up with in refutation of this is his unsupported assertion that "once Germany invaded France and Belgium, war with the UK was inevitable, if not then than at a later date". This is his now-familiar form of evasion: the Great War 'happened', and Ireland 'found itself at war'.

Unless Mr White can convincingly disprove the counter-argument, to show Irish Great War soldiers were fighting in a just cause, we must conclude his talk of heroism and sacrifice is hypocritical cant, expressed in the war-mongering jargon of Haig, Kitchener and Farrar-Hockley.

Young men enlist as fighters for all sorts of reasons — money, the thrill of violence, and for various political ideals and objectives. Mr White professes to be outraged by this truism.

Britain's Great War was fought not just in Flanders, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, but in Dublin, India, Singapore and other places where the Irish and Indian independence movements, with the aid of "gallant allies in Europe", took up arms in a just cause. Britain's Irish soldiers were sworn to fight "wherever the firing line extended". That must include Dublin and Singapore. Despite this, Mr White denounces any questioning of their cause and motives as sacrilege.

The Irish as a whole, not wishing to speak ill of the dead, generally regarded these men as tragic dupes of imperial war-mongering, and tended to draw a forgiving veil of oblivion over the sorry episode. This kindly instinct is now condemned by spokesmen of British Remembrance as shameful neglect, comparable to the mistreatment of Magdalene women. But these very same spokesmen uncritically espouse those who actually caused the Irish Great War torment — British imperial warmongers and their Irish allies such as John Redmond.

All Irish soldiers of the Great War are now dead. Nothing we say about them now can cause them the slightest pain. Thanks to the men and women who fought our War of Independence, we are free to dismiss the bogus outrage of Imperial Remembrance fanatics, and debate openly the real roots of Ireland's Great War.

In recent years, the motives and actions of Irish independence fighters such as Tom Barry at Kilmichael have been subjected to intense scrutiny and criticism. All such examination should be welcomed and rigorously pursued to a fair, honest conclusion.

So perhaps there can be agreement with Mr White on one point. In this centenary year there should be an end to the silence about the dark and unsavoury side of Ireland's Great War. The veil of oblivion should be lifted to allow healthy public discussion.

Tom Barry was brutally honest about his personal motives as a 17-year-old joining the British Army in 1915. Why shouldn't we be equally candid and truthful.

Pat Maloney, Editor, *Labour Comment*, Roman Street, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK—MARCH 28, 2014

WRITING about World War I (Feb 15), 'Herr McKeon' says 'everyone who died should be remembered forever'. Statements such as this continue to emanate from those who regard the catastrophe as something to be honoured with memorials (monuments, poppies, etc.) to the participants.

The statement is puzzling, too, in that only 'those who died fighting' are to be remembered. What if they had first committed atrocities, or designed and built murderous weapons (conventional and chemical), or caused starvation whilst serving on ships engaged in naval blockades, or killed civilians, or otherwise did their part in keeping the wheels of war turning for the most doubtful of causes? Should they be honoured for having become a casualty of war?

This 'commemorative' fervour is not properly thought out. It seeks to glorify as heroes those who killed and/or died in a clash of imperialist powers whose motives were hardly understood by those signing up as cannon fodder, and which even today seem to be poorly understood by many clamouring for memorials.

Remembering history is critical, if only to avoid repeating its darker moments. I think it is unhelpful to attempt to regenerate the fervour that ended in bloody tragedy a century ago.

Dominic Carroll, Ardfield, Co. Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK—MARCH 29, 2014

THE arrival of the centenary of the outbreak of World War I has led to a heated debate on various aspects of the conflict. In many cases, people with fundamentally different views have retreated to opposing trenches and engaged in a war of words on its legacy and morality — or lack of it.

Battles have raged on these pages as opposing sides have projected various motives on those who fought. There have even been salvos fired regarding the justification used by belligerent nations for entering the war.

People have referenced other conflicts to strengthen their argument and evoked the social values of 21st century Western Europe to justify or condemn the actions of those who lived and died 100 years ago.

It seems many contributors have missed the whole point of history. We who live today are a product of history in every sense. We are a product of our own personal history, the events that happened in our lives have shaped the people we are. And the society we live in has been shaped by the momentous events of the past.

World War I was one of those events. It shaped our world and continues to have easily recognisable consequences. The estrangement of Russia from the rest of Europe can be traced back to the October 1917 Russian Revolution; the fragmented Arab society we have today came about as a result of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement: the Arab-Israeli conflict had its roots in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the break-up of the former

Yugoslavia can be traced back to the dominance of Serbia when the country was formed in 1919.

The war exposed 19th century European imperialism as an anachronistic social system, irreconcilable with the progressive democratic liberal values that had been evolving in the West since the second half of the 18th century. Canada, Australia and New Zealand forged ahead as more confident democracies in the war's aftermath. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which had worried the European powers since the age of Napoleon, though painful, was successfully negotiated. The anti-militarist and pacifist beliefs of an extreme minority before the war are now widely held and expressed views.

Most commentators feel to some degree that the Armistice and subsequent treaty in 1918 did not resolve the fault lines in Europe that led to the conflict. As a consequence, the vacuum left by collapsing empires was filled by the growth of extreme nationalisms. Within 21 years, a greater more terrible war would engulf the world; this too is part of the legacy of World War I.

Like the rest of Europe, Ireland was transformed by the war. The radical brand of nationalism which had been the creed of a minority in 1914 had been embraced by an overwhelming majority by 1918. In the Ireland of today it seems many of the contributors to this debate do so because of their nationalist beliefs and their fear of any remaining vestiges of imperialism in Irish society. It could be argued that these people are studying the wrong war. Just as World War I exposed the failings of imperialism, the last world war highlighted the xenophobic prejudices that lurk at the heart of nationalism.

In Ireland we tend to use the words 'nationalism' and 'republicanism' as interchangeable terms. This is a great error on our part. Nationalism is an ideology, exclusive to particular ethnic or racial groups. But it is not innate or inherited at birth. For its successful propagation, it romanticises the social bonds that bind communities together and exploits fears these communities perceive as a threat to their cohesion.

Republicanism is a philosophy; one of its fundamentals is the concept of pluralism. In a pluralist society, those remaining vestiges of imperialism that may remain in society could be accepted as harmless anachronisms that reflect one of the shades from the palette of history that makes up our colourful past.

We who are blessed with the benefit of hindsight should be careful when we judge the actions of those who had to make decisions without it. It is worth remembering that when we judge people from a different time, our views have been shaped by their actions.

Those Irish who fought in the war were like us, products of their history. They are now long dead and our attempts to project motives on to them for going to war probably reveal more about us and the way we have been shaped by the subsequent events of history than it can ever reveal about them. They must now remain forever silent. I hope the one thing we can all agree on is the sincere wish that they all Rest In Peace.

Pat Murphy, address withheld on request

EVENING ECHO, CORK—MARCH 31, 2014

War excuse

KEN Mulcahy ('War dead gave their today for our tomorrow', Mar 22) regards "wanting to better oneself" or rather, wanting to better one's material conditions, sufficient justification for attacking, even killing one's neighbours, however much those neighbours are innocent of malice towards him and his community. He is, to put it bluntly, an apologist for mercenary militarism.

Donal Kennedy, Belmont Ave, Palmers Green, London

EVENING ECHO, CORK—2.4.2014

THE Echo's Great War debate was sparked by the Remembrance issue — whether Irish society as a whole should pay official tribute to Ireland's war with Germany and other countries.

The moral question posed by Pat Maloney can be expressed thus. If a man is killed while defending his household from an armed robber, his family is likely to honour and remember him with pride. On the other hand, the robber's memory is tainted with shame, whether he lives or dies.

Which category does our Great War fall into?

Arthur Balfour was British Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905 when a detailed conspiracy for war against Germany was first hatched among the elite of the armed forces and the governing parties, in the Committee of Imperial Defence which was formed for this purpose. In 1910, Balfour spoke openly to Henry White, the United States Ambassador in London.

Balfour: "We are probably fools not to find a reason for declaring war on Germany before she builds too many ships and takes away our trade."

White: "You are a very high-minded man in private life. How can you possibly contemplate anything so politically immoral as provoking a war against a harmless nation which has as good a right to a navy as you have? If you wish to compete with German trade, work harder."

Balfour: "That would mean lowering our standard of living. Perhaps it would be simpler for us to have a war."

White: "I am shocked that you of all men should enunciate such principles."

Balfour: "Is it a question of right or wrong? Maybe it is just a question of keeping our supremacy."

Source: *Thirty Years Of American Diplomacy*, by Henry White and Allan Nevins, 1930.

All the evidence proves Belgium was the excuse, not the reason, for Britain's declaration of war; Britain had planned a war to destroy Germany for reasons of greed and economic domination. Belgium, small nations, freedom and democracy had nothing to do with it.

So Britain was the violent criminal and, with Redmondite assistance, recruited Ireland. But maybe the actual conduct of Britain's Great War was a good, clean fight? Or did the armed criminal focus his attack on the helpless wife and children rather than the adult male householder?

Britain's Royal Navy was what made it uniquely super-powerful. In a 1908 letter, the Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Rear-Admiral Charles Langdale Ottley, wrote to Reginald McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty:

"The geographical position of this country (an island invulnerable to attack or invasion, P.L.) and her preponderant sea power combine to give us a certain and simple means of strangling Germany at sea... the mills of our sea-power (though they would grind the [civilian] German industrial population slowly perhaps) would grind them 'exceedingly small' — grass would sooner or later grow in the streets of Hamburg and widespread (civilian) death and ruin would be inflicted." In the House of Commons on February 15, 1915, Churchill declared: "We shall bring the full force of naval pressure to bear on the enemy. It may be enough without war on land to secure victory over the foe."

What that meant was described in an article entitled *The Huns of 1940* by Northcliffe press correspondent F. W. Wile in the *American Weekly Dispatch* newspaper, September 10, 1918: "What is the effect on the German civilian population

of the practically complete stoppage of imported foodstuffs? ... GERMANY TODAY IS A LAND OF PLAGUE [Emphasis in the original]... I should say that for every more or less normal infant life preserved in Germany under present conditions, three or four infants who are condemned to live and grow into DAMAGED HUMAN GOODS, so to speak. That means that in 1940 there will in all probability be a race of German physical degenerates.”

A million of the most vulnerable German civilians were murdered in this way by the Royal Navy, at least a quarter of a million AFTER the Armistice. Germany was thus taught a terrible lesson by Britain on how winners wage war, a lesson learned only too well, as demonstrated in its terror war on civilians on the eastern front in 1941-45.

The Allies showed no remorse. To this day, civilians are subjected to cowardly drone attacks, depleted uranium, and other horrific practices. Twentieth century warfare was pioneered in Europe by Britain's 1914-19 terror war on civilians.

In this centenary year, Pat Maloney has done us a timely service by making us confront these questions.

Peadar Laffan, Ash Street, Youghal

EVENING ECHO, CORK—3.4.2014

Petty view

HAVING read yet another letter from Tom Maloney regarding his views on Ireland's role in World War I, I feel he has once again taken a step too far — this time by suggesting that because all Irish soldiers of that war are now dead, “nothing we say about them can cause them the slightest pain”.

Perhaps, but what about their families? One of my grandfathers served in the British Navy. One of my wife's also and thousands of other families similarly.

Even if he would not like to believe it, the fact is that thousands more Irishmen served in Britain's armed forces in the 20th century than ever served in Irish Republican forces, for all sorts of reasons, and I will not judge them for that, I would not be that arrogant.

I am curious as to his politics? I am not familiar with the publication Labour Comment or its view on politics, but I would hazard a guess that neither was best pleased with the Queen's visit or the welcome she received from an Irish public not dwelling on past grievances.

It is my opinion that his view of the history of World War I, in particular Britain and Ireland's role, is narrow-minded and one-dimensional. His obvious antipathy towards Britain has compromised his objectivity.

I get the impression Mr Maloney is inclined to define his brand of patriotism more on his hatred of Britain than on his love of Ireland.

The pity of it is that in the end, he has shown himself to be nothing but petty and mean-spirited.

Jim Dooley, Banduff, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK—APRIL 5, 2014

DENIS McCarthy's case on the Great War is that Germany, not Britain, was the aggressor. Initially (Feb 24) he claimed Germany was a serial aggressor, instancing the 1870 Franco- Prussian War; and that Britain was poorly armed in comparison with other world powers.

I pointed out (Mar 8) that France attacked Germany in 1870, and that by any calculation Britain was the world's superpower in armaments.

Also, in comparison with other major states, for centuries Germany/Prussia had the lowest involvement in warfare while Britain had the highest. There can be no doubt that Germany was the most peaceable large country in Europe, and that Britain was the best-armed and most aggressive.

In his contribution of March 19, Mr McCarthy said France's 1870 aggression (a fact he now apparently accepts) was the result of earlier German aggression which he leaves unspecified. In fact, the most recent war between France and Prussia/Germany was when Napoleon invaded and conquered German/Prussian lands prior to his invasion of Russia.

This experience, in the wake of several centuries of even more devastating invasions of Germany, finally produced a movement to unite the dozens of small, defenceless German states into the German Empire or Reich, a defensible federation of all the German states (except for Austria which was the German component of the multi-national Austro-Hungarian Hapsburg Empire which fought along with Germany in the Great War).

Mr McCarthy also says Germany rejected the peace proposals of Pope Benedict XV. The Pope made many efforts to end the war, receiving the assent of Catholic Austria, but rejected by Redmondite Ireland. The Entente wanted the war to continue and greatly feared the effect of the Pope's peace initiatives on Catholic Italy, which was initially neutral but which in 1915, heavily influenced by the other great Allied Catholic belligerent (Redmondite Ireland), entered the war against Germany.

To ensure a fight to the finish, secret provisions of the 1915 Treaty of London bound the Allies to reject any papal peace initiative. What about Germany? On the first anniversary of the start of the Great War, Benedict made a peace proposal. Three days later German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, announced his readiness to discuss peace terms.

A papal peace proposal in the spring of 1917, rejected by the Allies, was welcomed by Austria-Hungary and Germany. This involved, as a starting point, disarmament, arbitration machinery to prevent future wars, and freedom of the seas for all nations. These measures were the basis of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Point Plan which was accepted by Germany as the basis of the 1918 ceasefire or Armistice, but which was reneged on by the Allies.

Eamonn de Paor, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford

EVENING ECHO, CORK—APRIL 5, 2014

KEN Mulcahy (Mar 22) states Britain was ‘in splendid isolation’ by the time of World War I, resting on its laurels having amassed a vast empire.

Leaving aside the issue of how it came to amass this empire, Mr Mulcahy adds that Britain had ‘forged alliances with France and Russia’ prior to World War I but extraordinarily, does not seem to connect how this contradicts his contention that Britain was in ‘splendid isolation’.

The Triple Entente alliance was forged precisely to contain rising German might.

There is no other way to interpret this than the hallmark of a country determined to actively shape European and international events in a manner best suited to its own needs.

Such an alliance would draw it into any conflict in which the other allied nations got involved.

If Britain really wished to remain aloof and uninvolved from European and international conflicts, it would never have added its signature to any such alliance.

In any case, it is barely meaningful to speak of 'splendid isolation' when referring to a country whose interests and military dominated a quarter of the globe.

The reality, then as now, is that Britain wanted to be a major player in world affairs.

Nick Folley
Ardcarrig,
Carrigaline, Co.Cork

EVENING ECHO—APRIL 9, 2014

IN his letter on Ireland and the Great War (Mar 27), Mr Pat Maloney, editor of Labour Review, raised a number of points which I must respond to.

First, his attempt to compare the Association of Flemish Former Eastern Front Fighters to the Western Front Association (WFA) is wrong. The former was comprised of veterans who fought alongside the Nazis after they invaded the Soviet Union in World War II, while the WFA is a historical association comprised of people all over the world who have an interest in the Great War of 1914-18.

I do agree that the people of Finland were right to defend their country when it was invaded by the Soviets in 1939. However, he failed to respond to my comment that Finland subsequently made a pact with the devil in the shape of Adolf Hitler when its forces fought alongside the Nazis during Operation Barbarossa in 1941.

Mr Maloney raised a number of points concerning the origins of the Great War and stated that France and Russia wanted a 'replay' against Germany and Turkey to regain territory lost in the Franco-Prussian and Crimean wars. Although there is some element of truth to this, the origins of the war are not a simple as that.

He also claimed that "Britain and its empire chose to set the world aflame in 1914". Here, I think it is important to remind readers of a number of facts: On June 28, 1914, Gavrillo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary in Sarajevo; on July 5 Kaiser Wilhelm II issued Austria-Hungary his 'blank cheque', assuring it of Germany's support if it went to war with Serbia; on July 28 Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia; on August 1 Germany declared war on Russia; on August 2 Germany invaded Luxembourg and sent an ultimatum to Belgium demanding that its forces be granted unrestricted access through that country, and on August 3 Germany declared war on France and invaded Belgium.

These undeniable facts prove Germany was the first country to dismiss diplomacy and unleash the dogs of war; that a number of European powers and their empires were at war before Britain entered the conflict on August 4.

For most of July 1914, the British government was preoccupied with the threat of civil war in Ireland. On July 26, Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, urged Austria-Hungary to suspend its offensive against Serbia and suggested a four-power conference to stop war spreading. Not exactly the action of a government wringing its hands with glee in anticipation of war with Germany to "extend its vast empire and destroy a commercial rival".

On August 4, King Albert I of Belgium sent an appeal for help to Britain and France as guarantors of Belgian neutrality according to the 1839 Treaty of London. That day, Britain sent

an ultimatum to Germany demanding it withdraw its troops from Belgium. When it was ignored, Britain declared war on Germany.

Could war have been averted by any of the major powers acting differently in the July Crisis? Of course. Equally, it would be correct to say that in declaring war Britain was acting in what it considered to be its national interest — as were all major powers. But to place the blame solely on Britain and its empire for choosing to "set the world aflame" is a distortion of history. Of all countries involved in the war, Germany must shoulder much of the blame for starting it. This was confirmed by German historian Fritz Fischer, who wrote: "As Germany willed and coveted the Austro-Serbian war and, in her confidence in her military superiority, deliberately faced the risk of a conflict with Russia and France, her leaders must bear a substantial share of the historical responsibility for the outbreak of general war in 1914".

Mr Maloney correctly identified Dublin as a battlefield of the Great War. At Easter 1916 the brave men of the Irish Volunteers and their allies in the Irish Citizen Army launched a rebellion to establish an independent republic. Many consider Germany to be one of the 'Gallant Allies in Europe' cited in the Proclamation. The reality is Germany was not serious about its support for the rebellion and acted in its own national interest in trying to stir up trouble in Ireland.

The 20,000 captured Russian rifles and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition transported to Ireland on the Aud fell far short of what Joseph Plunkett and Roger Casement sought from German High Command. Casement was so convinced these weapons were not enough to secure victory that he tried to postpone the Rising.

Mr Maloney has challenged me to prove the Irishmen with the Allied armed forces were fighting in a 'just' cause. What criteria does he use to describe a 'just' cause? Does he think the German cause was just?

Historical events must be looked at in the context of their own time, not with the benefit of the hindsight that Mr Maloney, myself and other contributors to this debate enjoy.

In this regard, it is not important what we think. What is important is what those Irishmen who fought in the war thought and while Mr Maloney's contribution to this debate has been thought-provoking, I believe those Irishmen thought they were acting in the best interest of their country.

Gerry White, Western Front Association

EVENING ECHO, CORK—APRIL 15, 2014

I SEE that Gay Byrne has joined other commentators who peddle the canard that the Irishmen who joined the British forces in the First World War were written out of history following the establishment of the Irish Free State and that the Christian Brothers (who taught many who served in those forces, and who themselves had blood brothers serve in them) were instrumental in that alleged disservice to history.

I think many of Mr Byrne's contemporaries will bear witness that their own family histories, and experience of school in the 1940s and 1950s were not dissimilar to mine.

Like Gay Byrne, I was taught by the Christian Brothers. One of our history textbooks, Carty's *History of Ireland*, quoted General Von Sanders, the German officer who commanded the defence of Gallipoli, who paid a glowing tribute to those Irishmen in the British Army who fought and died opposing him.

I have amongst my souvenirs a recording of the Irish No.1 Army Band, conducted in 1930 by the former German Officer

Col. Fritz Brase, playing (as part of 'An Irish Fantasia') The Foggy Dew which, while praising the 1916 Insurgents, also remembers those Irish whose "lonely graves are by Suvla's waves, or the shores of the Great North Sea".

In May 1916, my uncle Jack, six weeks shy of his 17th birthday, was badly wounded by a German shell which killed most of the men around him, serving with the British Navy off Jutland, by the shores of the Great North Sea.

His elder brother Ned was sent home to die in 1918, after being gassed as he served with the Dublin Fusiliers in Flanders, but was nursed back to survival by his family.

In July 1914, Ned had helped unload the ASGARD at Howth, as a member of Fianna Eireann.

Their youngest brother, Leo, was killed by the Japanese in Singapore February 1942, whilst serving with the British Army.

Their eldest brother, Denis, was already (presumably) a man of violence even before the fatal shots were fired at Sarajevo in 1914, for he enlisted as an Irish Christian Brother and served with them, until his death in 1971.

Gay Byrne's Irish Fantasia does not harmonise with that of Col. Fritz Brase nor the historical narrative of James Carty, B.A. on which much of his and my generation was reared.

Donal Kennedy, Belmont Ave, Palmers Green, London

EVENING ECHO, CORK—EASTER SAT. 19.4.2014

IN Flanders, there is no pride in the memory of their volunteers to the Waffen SS, or in the Eastern Front Association later formed in remembrance of their actions.

No doubt these men thought at the time that they were "acting in the best interests of their country" — which is exactly what Gerry White of the Western Front Association says (April 9) about the Irish soldiers in Britain's Great War. He says that what is important is not what WE think about it, but what THEY thought they were doing at the time.

Actually, this should be the other way around. The people of Finland believe their 1939 Winter War soldiers fought and died in a good cause. But the people of Flanders now think those who enlisted in the Waffen SS did not fight and die in a good cause, no matter how heroic they were, how grievously they suffered, or what they thought they were accomplishing "in the best interests of their country".

Actually, Mr White knows this full well. Because, while acknowledging that, at least for the Finns themselves, their Winter War was justified, he goes on to denounce their subsequent attack on Russia in 1941. I do not know how the Finns now feel about this, or about their switching sides in 1944. But Mr White has a very well-developed sense of which wars were justifiable, and which were not. So why is he so coy about Ireland's Great War? Was it fought in a good cause? Suppose for a moment that Britain did NOT go to war in 1914. If there was a good cause to fight for, surely Ireland should have gone to war regardless. Would Redmond have urged Irishmen to join the French army? Or the Russian army, which was on the same side? And if not, why not? If a great wrong was in progress, surely Ireland should have stood up for justice in any and every way it could, and done its duty regardless of what Britain did? What would Mr White's counsel have been in such circumstances?

He asks whether Germany's Great War was just. It is perfectly legitimate to pose this question. Likewise, it is legitimate to query whether the 1916 Easter Rising and Ireland's War of Independence were justifiable. But these are not the questions at issue in this discussion. In the Remembrance controversy we are asked to pay honour and tribute, not to soldiers who fought for Germany or Ireland, but to those Irish who killed and were killed for Britain in 1914-18.

But where is the honour in Britain's Great War? Why did it fight, and how did it conduct itself in the fighting?

Other contributors to the *Echo's* Great War discussion have demonstrated convincingly that, in planning and preparing its war of destruction of Germany, the freedom of small neutral nations was not an objective for Britain.

While preparing its own invasion of neutral Greece, Britain sought to starve the Greeks into submission by naval blockade. In advance of the Great War, Britain and Russia invaded and occupied neutral Persia leading to a desperate famine in which many millions of innocent Persians died.

Britain's primary method of war against Germany was starvation of civilian men, women, children, the elderly, hospitalised, invalids and babies. So perhaps the link with the Waffen SS Eastern Front Association has some point.

Mr White says that, far from instigating war, Britain sought a peace conference in July 1914. But here is what George Bernard Shaw said about this proposal in a letter to the press: "After having done all in our power to render war inevitable it is no use now to beg people not to make a disturbance, but to come to London to be kindly but firmly spoken to by (the Foreign Secretary) Sir Edward Grey."

Describing the war as "the war of a pirate upon the German nation", James Connolly wrote that "(Britain) was determined that since Germany could not be beaten in fair competition industrially, she must be beaten unfairly by organising a military and naval conspiracy against her... The British capitalist class has planned this colossal crime in order to ensure its uninterrupted domination of the commerce of the world." (The Irish Worker, August 29, 1914.)

And this is how Roger Casement put it: "England fights as the foe of Europe and the enemy of European civilisation. In order to destroy German shipping, German commerce, German industry, she has deliberately plotted the conspiracy we now see at work. The war of 1914 is England's war." (The Crime Against Europe, September 1914.)

Sadly, the truth about the Great War now lies hidden beneath the propaganda of the victors, served up afresh by the advocates of Remembrance. This is what we must contend with in the centenary period.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK—23.4.2014

THERE has recently been a spate of letters in the Evening Echo debating the merits or demerits of World War I.

I think that it is interesting to read what Mark Twain said about war in 1865, in a short story called *The Mysterious Stranger*.

The story concerns an angel named Satan who befriends three boys. Satan has a very low opinion of the human race, considering them less civilised than all of the species in the animal kingdom.

Talking about war, he said: "There has never been a just one, never an honourable one on the part of the instigators of the war. I can see a million years ahead and this rule will never change in as many as half a dozen instances. The loud little handful, as usual, will shout for the war. The pulpit will warily and cautiously object at first. The great big dull bulk of the nation will rub its sleepy eyes and try to make out why there should be a war and will say, earnestly and indignantly, 'It is unjust and dishonourable'. Then the handful will shout louder.

"A few fair men on the other side will reason against the war with speech and pen, and at first will have a hearing and be applauded, but it will not last long. Those others will out-shout

them and presently the anti-war audience will thin out and lose popularity. Before long you will see this curious thing, the speaker stoned from the platform and free speech strangled by hordes of furious men when their secret hearts are still at one with those stoned speakers as earlier but do not dare to say so.

“And now the whole nation, pulpit and all, will take up the war cry and shout itself hoarse and mob any honest man who ventures to open his mouth, and presently such mouths will cease to open. Next, the statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that is attacked and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing falsities and will diligently study them and refuse to examine any refutation of them and thus, will, by and by, convince himself that the war is just and thank God for the better sleep he enjoys after this process of grotesque self-deception.”

Iraq, Afghanistan and Crimea?

Denis Leahy, Farranferris Avenue, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK—26.4.2014

No ‘honour’ in British cruelty in India

THE Evening Echo is to be commended on its unique coverage of Irish participation in World War I.

I would like to comment on the related issue of Joe Duffy’s much promoted work on the “child victims of the 1916 Rising”. In itself, this is a commendable look into a tragic side of war. But, alas, it is not just that, for Duffy, while casting a sad shadow over 1916, has simultaneously promoted an uncritical admiration of Irishmen who fought with the British Army, not just in WWI, but throughout the period before it when it was the army of what he calls the “legitimate Government” of Ireland.

It is important to recall what those Irishmen were involved in during the half-century before WWI. The Royal Dublin and Royal Munster Fusiliers were created in the 1880s from Irish-British soldiers in Britain’s “Indian Army”. The Irish-British elements of the Bombay and Madras Fusiliers formed the Dublins while those of the Bengals formed the Munsters.

These units were centrally involved in suppressing the ‘Indian Mutiny’ of 1857-59 (commemorated in India as its ‘First War of Independence’). This involved more than the usual slight British casualties — including 1,000 British soldiers and colonial civilians. But losses on the Indian side were on a colossal scale, at least in the tens of thousands, with over a million more killed by hunger and disease during the savage British ‘scorched earth’ campaign that followed.

The actions of Irish-British soldiers in that campaign are reminiscent of some of the worst atrocities on the Eastern Front in World War II. In his memoirs, Captain Jones-Parry, an officer of the Madras — later Dublin — Fusiliers, described how in re-taking Lucknow, the final 2,000 Indian defenders were trapped in a yard where the troops “fired volley after volley into the dense mass, until nothing was left but a moving mass like mites in a cheese.” (An Old Soldier’s Memories, 1897).

Anglo-Irish General Frederick Roberts (later Lord Roberts of Kandahar and Waterford) revealed in a private letter a detail diplomatically omitted from Jones-Parry’s memoirs — how these men, “a heaving surging mass of dead and dying inextricably entangled”, were then doused with oil and set on fire, “and to hear the living ... calling out in agony to be shot was horrible...” (quoted in Saul David, *Indian Mutiny: 1857, 2008*).

Lucknow, Jones-Parry relates, was then “given up to plunder... It was perfect pandemonium, a chaos of loot” (Memories). Thus were the exotic eastern collections of many a British (and Irish) ‘Big House’ amassed!

The war became a campaign of annihilation. As Colonel Smith Neill’s Madras Fusiliers advanced to Kanpur, they carried out a string of massacres and burnings of villages and crops in revenge for real and alleged killings of British civilians. Thousands of

civilians died and surviving women and children faced certain death by starvation. His methods, according to historian Michael Edwardes (*Battles of the Indian Mutiny, 1963*) were “ruthless and horrible”. One soldier wrote home how, in one village, the people pleaded to be spared. Troops were ordered to surround them and set the village on fire. Men, women and children trying to escape were shot dead. An officer in General Sir Henry Barnard’s force wrote home: “We burnt every village ... and hanged all (suspect) villagers... until every tree was covered with scoundrels hanging from every branch.” (Saul David, *The Indian Mutiny 1857, 2003*). Another described how his unit once returned with 76 prisoners — his men, he said, were simply exhausted from the killing and needed a rest. After a quick trial even these were shot.

In a march through the Punjab, Anglo-Irish General John Nicholson’s force scorched and killed everything in his path. He is credited with introducing spectacular mass executions in the form of “blowing away” of “mutineers” strapped to cannon mouths.

After re-capturing Delhi, British forces perpetrated mass killings of ‘rebels’ and a letter in the colonial Bombay Telegraph recounted: “All the city people within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot. These were not mutineers but residents who trusted to our well-known mild rule for pardon. I am glad to say they were disappointed.”

The Madras and Bengals, Dublin and Munsters, were involved in many other brutal “colonial policing operations” in Asia and Africa. Hitler, an admirer of the British Empire and how it came about, once stated: “Russia is our India” (H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941–1944, 1953*). This is also the history of the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers, which many demand we now honour.

Perhaps, in the interests of balance, Joe Duffy will now investigate the many thousands of “child victims” of Irish soldiers of the British Army?

Philip O’Connor, St Peter’s Tce, Howth, Dublin 13

ECHO, CORK—TUES. APRIL 29, 2014

Racist army

WE should bear in mind that Irishmen serving in World War I were not respected by the British Army’s officer class. They were regarded as a racially inferior category compared with English, Scottish or Welsh soldiers, or soldiers from the white dominions.

One clear indication of this is the proportion of death sentences.

Irish soldiers were roughly four times as likely to be sentenced to death as any of the others mentioned above.

Gerald Oram presented the figures in his book *Worthless Men: Race, Eugenics and the Death Penalty in the British Army during the First World War*.

How can this extraordinary difference be explained? Oram puts it down to the influence of racial ideology. Ideas of superior/inferior race were powerful in the army, as in British society generally, and according to this thinking the Irish or Celts were inferior human types.

This surely needs to be taken into account when deciding whether to give some mark of public respect to those soldiers who, despite their bigoted superiors, fought bravely and as decently as they could.

There's one serious problem about that. The problem is that looming over all such commemorations in these islands is the tradition of British militarism, which used these men but did not respect them at all.

John Minahane, Bakosova 40, 841 03 Bratislava, Slovakia

EVENING ECHO, CORK—SAT. MAY 3, 2014

OVER the past few months, a debate on Ireland's involvement in the Great War and remembering the 50,000 Irish servicemen who died in that conflict has been raging in the pages of the Evening Echo.

First became involved in this when Pat Maloney, editor of Labour Comment, described the Irish who fought with British armed forces as "psychopath", "gullible" and "mercenaries". He subsequently went on to describe Irish people who attend Remembrance ceremonies and services as "deluded" or "hypocrites".

I disagreed with Mr Maloney, and over a series of letters, put forward my opinion that an overwhelming majority of these men believed they were acting in the best interest of Ireland when they enlisted. Considering the number of Irish who died in the war I genuinely don't think they enlisted to commit mass suicide. For the record, I also think the Irishmen who fought the forces of the Crown in the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence also believed they were acting in the best interest of their country.

During the debate, it has also been implied that there were similarities between the Irish who fought in the war and Dutchmen who fought with the Nazi Waffen SS in World War II. I was extremely saddened when I read this. The Waffen SS were part of an odious, bloodthirsty regime that deliberately embarked on a war of conquest resulting in the deaths of millions of innocent men, women and children; that introduced a policy of euthanasia to 'rid' itself of the mentally ill and others it considered to be 'sub-human', and that initiated a deliberate policy of genocide that led to the deaths of more than 6,000,000 Jews. There is NO comparison between the Irish who fought in the Great War and the Nazis.

"Suppose Britain did not go to war in 1914. If there was a good cause to fight for, surely Ireland would have gone to war regardless". This was the question posed by Pat Maloney in his last letter (Apr 19). In response, I have to say that history is about fact, not fantasy. In 1914, Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom with political representation at Westminster. Although many may wish it had been otherwise, this is historical fact. Therefore, when Britain went to war on August 4, 1914, so did Ireland. Thousands of Irish people could have risen up in protest against it, but they didn't. However, thousands did rush to join the British armed forces.

It must also be remembered that the majority of people on this island initially supported the war effort. It was only in April 1918, after Britain threatened to introduce conscription that they rose up in protest. By then people all over Europe were sickened by the war and the millions of deaths it had caused. This was a factor that led to the Russian Revolution of 1917, the German Revolution of 1918 and the Sinn Féin election victory that year.

Pat Maloney seems to believe that what the Irish who fought in the war thought at the time wasn't important. I disagree. What they thought had a huge impact on their lives, the lives of their families and on the world we live in today. To give them

the justice they deserve we should only examine their actions in the context of their time, not with the benefit of hindsight.

For years the Irish who fought in the Great War were effectively airbrushed out of our history. The reasons this happened can be found in the manner in which the British Government treated the leaders of the Rising and the brutal tactics employed by the forces of the Crown in the War of Independence. While this is understandable it must be remembered that the Great War started BEFORE the Rising and the War of Independence.

There has also been much comment on the nature of Remembrance services and ceremonies. As far as I am concerned the most important date in this country is our National Day of Commemoration in July. Ceremonies are also held on Remembrance Sunday and other key dates such as ANZAC Day on April 25. The desire to remember our dead is as old as history itself and Irish people should be free to remember those who died in the war without fear of being insulted.

I have nothing further to add to this debate. Nothing written in these pages has changed my views. The debate has served to focus people's minds on the Irish who died in the war. Therefore, it too can be considered to be an act of Remembrance. In this regard I would like to thank Pat Maloney and all the contributors for helping the readers to remember the fallen.

In conclusion, let me say the story of the Great War is part of our story. The Irishmen who fought and died in the war were our people, they genuinely believed they were doing the right thing for their country. To remember them is not to justify or glorify the war. When we remember them we are reminded of the scale of that tragedy — and the futility of war.

Gerry White, Chairman, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

EVENING ECHO, CORK—SAT. MAY 17, 2014

I WRITE about World War I, the Rising of 1916 and the people who took part. I pay no disrespect to Mr Gerry White and others about the views they hold, because war never solved anything. It's just an excuse to try and make something right, but only adds to the original problems, only to start all over again at a later stage.

So it was for World War I and World War II; the Rising of 1916 and the Troubles in the '70s and '80s.

But at last we have found that peaceful ways to problems can work. As an island we are at peace, moving from strength to strength as a nation. As a people North and South, we should take pride in this.

Even as I write I hold the belief that not too far into the future the people of the whole of Ireland will be happy to be as one people and one nation — that's how far I think peaceful methods have taken us.

The people of Ireland of 1914-1916 were a different people to what we would have liked them to have been. They were citizens of Britain, that's what they were born into, and did not know anything else. The middle class and up did well, but if you were a lower class you were poor.

For them, life was not easy. Food was hard to come by and the best job was to enlist as a soldier, with guaranteed wages and daily rations.

Then the war started and you had no choice, as a soldier you did your duty. You fought for your country, but knew your family were looked after.

These men belonged to the Dublin Fusiliers, Munster Fusiliers, the Leinster Regiment, and deep in their hearts were all Irish citizens, the same as you and me, no different.

An idea at the time was that a Rising against the British state would force its hand for a separate Ireland, but it backfired for the men and women of 1916 who lost their lives.

Britain, at war, could not be seen to be weak against a Rising in one of their states, so they executed the leaders of the Rising to make a statement. It turned out to be the wrong decision, only helping to promote the cause for Ireland in time. But the soldiers of British state Ireland were fighting a major war and could do nothing about what happened back home. Both my grandfathers fought in the Ireland of the time. My mother's father, with the Leinster Regiment based at Victoria Barracks (Collins Barracks), was killed in Flanders in 1914, and my father's father, with C. Company Old IRA, fought in the GPO, was shot in the neck but survived. He died in 1955. I have a great feeling of pride for both of them for what they did.

My father's father had a grocery shop in Dublin, so would have fared well compared to most. After the Rising he became a live-in caretaker with his family in a new apartment complex and life returned to normal.

My grandfather's family lived at Easons Hill off Shandon Street. He was a career soldier. The family were tailors and worked together with a family next door — Jack Lynch's family, who my mother grew up with.

In my view, they were part of the British Empire at that time and just got on with life and brought up their families the best they could. After the war and Rising, life became harder in this country, and even harder after we gained our independence. But as a people we survived and we have the Ireland of today.

We are a proud people and get on with life, no matter what comes our way. Even now our young generation are facing emigration and financial ruin because of the Celtic Tiger and banks'/builders' bad dealings, but this time the Irish people inflicted this on their own. Being Irish we will overcome all of this.

My last point is that some of your letters referred to the Irish men and women that fought in World War I as traitors to Ireland. I find it very hard to believe any Irish man could say this about their own country men. It is very sad to hear Irish men express these sentiments about their people, who went and gave their lives so that children could live and grow up in a free Ireland to be proud of.

My grandfather who fought in the Rising said one time to my father, in hindsight, he wondered were they right in 1916, for the tragic loss of life they brought upon their own people, with the leaders executed. The poor people of Ireland felt the backlash, and it was left to returning soldiers from the war to take on these British forces. My grandfather wondered if we would have got our freedom through peaceful means in time.

I do not look at the poppy, lilly and shamrock as reminders of the wars we fought, but as a sign of what we are today, free to grow and cherish our country That is what it's all about.

I would love if Mr White and others could leave the past behind them, and be happy with what we have today.

John C. Hughes P.C., Passage West, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK — TUES. MAY 20, 2014

Vital debate

I HAVE been following, with I assume many others, the debate taking place in your letters page since October/November last year.

This has, of late, become an annual event about the status and meaning that comes with wearing the red poppy.

Usually the debate revolves around whether the poppy is a badge of remembrance or is used to support British war efforts which are recent or current.

I happen to believe that, as the picture above shows, the poppy is not exclusively used to remember the dead of World War I (there were not too many Irish men killed running for helicopters at the time, I would imagine).

However, this year the debate was lengthy and most interesting; expanding, as it did, into the wider issues involved in people's understanding of the conflict, its causes and outcomes.

Regardless of the positions of the readers, I am sure that most would have found it an informative and lively debate.

Now, it seems that one of the correspondents has decided to withdraw from the debate. Gerry White has said that his mind has not been changed, and I am sure Pat Maloney remains likewise.

I did not think that their debate had the aim of changing each other's minds but stated reasons for their respective positions.

I would like to make a suggestion to the editor, if I may?

The debate, as we know, has been lengthy and had numerous contributors. It would be very interesting if the Evening Echo was to publish the letters in chronological order of their publication.

I think it would be a useful resource for members of the public, your readership, who may have joined the debate late or missed parts for whatever reason.

I would also suggest that in the event of the Evening Echo publishing such a collection, that any funds raised would go to a charity, perhaps Penny Dinners or the Simon Community, which I am sure both sides of the debate would deem to be neutral on the issue.

And, perhaps, you could avoid launching the volume on a date which has direct connection to World War I, lest this itself would serve to be contentious.

Finally, might I suggest that the two main contributors be afforded a full page each in the Evening Echo, on the same day and facing pages, to give a final summation of the merits of their particular position. This could be used as an introduction to the letters collection.

In parting, I would like to thank the Evening Echo for allowing the debate as in many other sections of the media the topic is often clouded with cliché and soundbites rather than intensive and informed discussion.

Caoimhín de Bhailís, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK — THURS. MAY 22, 2014

THOUSANDS of young men from all over Ireland fought in the first world war of modern times. It was preceded and followed by other terrible wars, when worried families in every parish, town and village waited fearfully for news from survivors.

Ballads were composed, songs were sung, grief-stricken parents mourned the tragic fate of their fallen sons. But these days there is almost universal ignorance of these terrible conflicts of previous centuries when the Irish fought in foreign armies.

There is endless public discussion of the Somme, Arras, Menin Gate and related events, memorials and ceremonies. But who remembers the events of Cremona, Oudinard, and Malplaquet in which countless heroic Irish soldiers shed their blood?

The word Fontenoy may still strike a chord in some minds because of the almost forgotten words of the Mallow poet, Thomas Davis:

On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, like eagles in the sun,

With bloody plumes the Irish stand — the field is fought and won!

But who remembers that at Fontenoy, Ireland won revenge for the defeat at Culloden, Scotland, in 1746, a few months previously?

Why this shameful silence and neglect of our heroes of World War I? Yes, the Irish fought in the first world war of the 20th century, just under 100 years ago. But just over 200 years ago they also participated in the actual first world war of the European peoples, the Seven Years' war, fought across Europe, America and Asia from 1756-1763; which decided the future of the mankind to an even greater extent than the world war of 1914-1918.

Irish participants in the foreign armies of both these wars are now dead. So what is so special about one group, that it should be held up for remembrance and admiration while the other is neglected and forgotten? Is there a hierarchy of the fallen?

The clue is that in 1756-63, Ireland fought in the army of France, but in 1914-18 we fought for Britain. So the latter war is endlessly served up to us for political reasons.

For Mr Gerry White of the Western Front Association there is, at least, no hierarchy of the Great War and the Irish War of Independence. He wants us to remember both, he says. For him there is parity of esteem between those people who fought in Britain's army and those who fought in the Irish volunteer army against the very same British forces.

Mr White is at pains to emphasise his simple, straightforward and unpolitical concern for the memory of the Irish dead of the Great War. His parting words in his letter of May 3 are "the futility of war".

All war should be avoided. Should Ireland have supported France against Britain in the first world war (1756-63)? Mr White says "in 1914, Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom with political representation at Westminster", presumably implying it was thus right and proper that Ireland should join in a criminal attack on other countries.

By the same token, in 1756 the Kingdom of Ireland, which had its own Parliament, participated in the first world war alongside the kingdom of Great Britain. But the people, through their "Wild Geese", fought for the enemies of the kingdom of Ireland. So Mr White's case for Ireland's participation in 1914-18 does not stand up.

Certainly, some wars are futile. However, some are NOT, but are necessary and worthwhile when all else fails. These are the just wars which Mr White recognises perfectly well, but refuses to discuss when it comes to Britain's 1914 war of aggression.

Before he sold his soul to Britain, John Redmond declared many times in the House of Commons that Ireland had the right to take up arms to liberate itself from the system of overwhelming British force.

Yet Mr White puts Britain's genocidal 1914-18 war of destruction against Germany on the same level as the war of liberation forced on Ireland by the brutal occupation forces, the same forces into which thousands of young Irishmen were earlier enticed by the treacherous propaganda of Redmond.

Far from being a simple, honest soldier, Mr White is very political indeed — in the political interests of Britain and its reputation.

In his 2005 book, *Baptised in Blood* Mr White describes how Capt Talbot Crosbie, leader of the Irish Volunteers in Cork, made an emphatic commitment that the Volunteers would not fight overseas in Britain's wars, but would defend the shores of Ireland.

Like Redmond, however, Crosbie showed his true colours as soon as Britain launched its Great War.

These two sent thousands of Irish to their deaths. Mr White's campaign for parity of esteem between Britain's Irish

soldiery and the Irish resistance army is a calculated political intervention seeking to downgrade the Irish independence movement from its primary place of honour in Ireland.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

EVENING ECHO, CORK—SAT. MAY 24, 2014

I HAVE read with interest the lively exchange of letters on this page over the last while, on the subject of World War I.

It seems the debate has polarised into two diverse points of view and I think it reveals a subtext which says a lot more about modern Ireland than it will ever reveal about World War I.

Those of us with an interest in history eventually come to the conclusion that to appreciate and understand the subject fully, we must strive to be as objective as possible. Of course, most of us carry some kind of moral compass and despite thousands of years of ethical debate, philosophers have failed, in the opinion of most rationalists, to confirm the existence of an objective source of morality.

I hold my hands up, I'm with the rationalist on this. So if the rationalists are right, we all come to the table of history with the burden of moral subjectivity.

If we apply a moral standard as a justification for our position on the subject of World War I, we have to accept that our moral standards may not be shared by anyone and we are left depending on the eloquence of our prose to prop up our argument, or we may even have to quote retired Australian politicians. I suppose in the current climate it would help no one's argument to quote one of our own. We could apply the utilitarian principle to support our argument — the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number. Utilitarianism is a kind of morally neutral device. On moral grounds, I find this principle a bit dodgy — if you don't fall into the 'greatest number' you could wind up in deep trouble. I'm sure the Nazis could apply utilitarian principle to the Nuremberg Laws.

So, knowing my moral compass may only work for me, I will say that I try to apply the ethics of humanism, the principles of pluralism and the values of progressive social liberalism when I access the process of the development of human history. And from this position I think that, generally, when the Great Powers went to war in 1914, all were equally guilty of not doing enough to defuse the tension, and equally innocent of having foreknowledge of the ultimate cost the war would place on the people of Europe.

I believe the Imperial regimes, including the French Republic, were at similar stages of social progress at this time. The UK and France may have been a little ahead of Germany and Austria, while Russia and the Ottoman Empire lagged some way behind. But on the whole, all had achieved some degree of social progress in the decades leading up to the war.

This brings me to the point of why I write this: That there are people in the 21st century in Ireland who think there is a moral comparison between those who fought in the British Army in World War I and those who fought in the *Waffen SS*, is frightening.

To strengthen this argument, one contributor implied that Dutch recruits who joined the *Waffen SS* in 1941 did so not realising the nefarious nature of the Nazi regime. I would remind readers that in his book, *Mein Kampf* (1925) Hitler made no secret of his nihilistic, anti-Semitic world view.

In 1933, Anne Frank's family knew enough about the evil nature of Nazism to flee Germany for the safety of neutral Holland. The Nuremberg Laws were enacted in 1935. In 1940, the Nazis invaded Holland. In 1941, Jews were being arrested in Amsterdam and in 1942 Anne's family were forced to hide in an attic in the city.

In further defence of Dutchmen who joined the Waffen SS, this contributor says it did not run the death camps. I will not waste newsprint explaining the term Totenkopf Division but would advise this contributor to look it up. The SS were political soldiers dedicated to Nazism's creed. I am afraid there was no good branch in the SS.

Nazism was the most retrograde step in human progress since the dark ages. Those who wish to remember the people from Cork that died in World War I seem to be doing no harm.

Those who think the Dutch who fought in the SS are just as worthy of remembrance might be better employed remembering the six million innocent civilian victims of the SS. A good starting point might be giving Anne Frank's diary a read. I wouldn't recommend Mein Kampf, if it was the only thing we'd ever heard of Hitler, we'd be sure he was an idiot.

Pat Murphy, address withheld on request

EVENING ECHO, CORK. WEDNES., JUNE 4, 2014

THE debate on the question of whether we should commemorate the memory of those Irish who died in World War I, I think goes to the heart of the fragile nature of Irish identity.

National identities are to a great degree relatively modern constructs, to understand their origins we need to try to see beyond the highly romanticised myths that sustain them.

An example of the strong hold romanticised versions of history can have on our imaginations was seen recently in these pages, when a commentator suggested the Irish who served the Bourbon Kings would be more worthy of remembrance than those Irish who died in the Great War. He made particular reference to the Battle of Fontenoy, seen as an opportunity for the Irish Brigade to avenge the Jacobite defeat at Culloden.

Putting aside the fact that Fontenoy happened 11 months before Culloden and that Culloden was a battle between two claimants to the British throne. I found his failure to include 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, an Irish regiment serving in the allied army at Fontenoy in his list of those worthy of remembrance, quite revealing.

Of course, the origin of modern Irish identity is strongly tied to the Roman Catholic belief of the majority of the population in Ireland in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the concepts of that identity were being forged. So it is no accident that we might be tempted to sympathise with the Catholic Stuarts at Culloden Moor with their 300 Irish Picquets of the Irish Brigade rather than the Protestant Hanoverians with their Irish contribution coming from the 300 men of the 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot.

When we do express this sentiment, however, I think we expose the sectarianism that festers at the heart of Irish nationalism. When we tell others that we think they should not remember the Great War dead or that we object to their wearing of the poppy, again we fall into this trap.

The poppy is a relic of an element of our past I do not identify with. But if I believe in the fundamentals of true republicanism I must defend the rights of others to think otherwise.

The tragedy of it all, of course, lies in the sectarian origins of British identity. As the divergent ethnic groups of these islands forged a common identity in the 17th and 18th centuries, a Protestant ethos was a vital component of that. The failure of the Reformation to take a firm root in Ireland would insure the majority of Irish people would feel excluded from this identity. The enactment of discriminatory laws against Catholics would give legal expression to this exclusion and remain an enduring weakness in the unity of the United Kingdom.

In the 19th century, Ireland became a fertile place for the growth of nationalism and Catholicism became the scaffolding supporting that. As nationalism became entrenched, it, like all group identities, developed foundation myths. It identified with events in the past it could reconcile with the nationalist narrative. The pantheon of Irish national heroes would include strange bedfellows such as supporters of Stuart kings and pretenders, anti-parliamentarian royalists, Norman and Gaelic lords who rebelled against the Crown and even back to the pre-feudal tribal Chieftains who resisted the Norman expansion. Unfortunately, Irish nationalism finds itself incapable of including men who severed in the British Army, in the above list.

This example of the fragility of Irish identity is ironic as now British identity too is in crisis. If Scotland does not leave the Union in the September referendum, it properly will do so in the next decade. It seems identities based on common religious beliefs do not provide sufficient cohesion to survive in the modern world.

Irish identity will only survive if it evolves to be more inclusive. We must recognise that the complex history we share, binds us together as neighbours, and respect our differences.

The commentator who suggested we should remember the Irish Brigades in French service is right, but we should also remember the Inniskilling Regiments at Fontenoy and Culloden and any other aspect of our history people wish to remember.

The one event all Irish people should celebrate is the Williamite victory at the Boyne. More than any other, it shows the complex forces of the past that make us what we are today.

Unionists see this as the Genesis of their identity. But as well as a victory against the divine right of kings, here too lay the origins of Irish Republicanism. If Catholic James had won, the Counter Reformation may have taken root on these Islands. Monarchs would have favoured Catholic elites and the penal laws would target Protestants. The separatist tradition would be the preserve of Protestant communities who survived the Divine Kings enthroned at Westminster and would not have taken root in southern Ireland.

Pat Murphy, address withheld on request

EVENING ECHO, Cork SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2014

DONAL Kennedy's letter ('War points', May 29) cites Carty's Class-Book of Irish History, the pre-eminent history text used in Irish schools subsequent to the War of Independence. The section on Irish soldiers in the Great War is worth quoting in full:

"It has been estimated that over 50,000 Irishmen lost their lives in the Great War, and this estimate does not include the Irish who had been living in England. Three special Irish divisions were formed — the Ulster Division, the Tenth (Irish) and the Sixteenth — all of which had magnificent military records.

"One tribute may be quoted to the bravery of Irish soldiers during the most terrible war in history. It is from General Gourand, who commanded the French troops at Gallipoli. The Allies (Britain and France) succeeded, at appalling cost, in landing troops on the Gallipoli Peninsula (Turkey), which was held by the Turks and Germans.

"In Turkey, even the younger generation has heard the story; for fathers who fought have not hesitated to tell their children of the marvellous heroism of these strange foes from over the seas, and to hold them up as examples to all who would be true to the traditions of a fighting race.

"I myself was an eye-witness to the magnificent heroism of your deathless Dubliners (the Dublin Fusiliers). When I met General Von Sanders, who had directed the defence of Gallipoli, he told me that he had marvelled that men should have carried

themselves as your men did on that day. 'If ever you have occasion to speak to Irishmen', he said, 'I wish you would tell them from me that I have never seen anything so fine as the bearing of those men on that day. They did something that was deemed impossible, and they proved that there are no limits to what human valour will attempt against the most fiendish devices of modern war'."

Carty's account of *The Irish Abroad* includes Irish migration to British industrial cities, the Irish Brigade ('Wild Geese' in the army of France), the Irish Legion (with Simon Bolivar in Bolivia, Venezuela, Peru and Chile), Irish in the armies of Napoleon and Wellington, and an Irish Brigade which defended the Papal States in Italy in 1860. But the Great War bit is the most prominent. Subsequent school textbooks up to the present day give comparable accounts. This gives the lie to any claim by Remembrance devotees that the Great War was omitted from the academic education of Irish children.

On the other hand, the academic contribution is conspicuous by its absence from the substantial *Evening Echo* letters debate on the Great War. An honourable exception is a history student writing from England who accepted correction in these pages with good grace.

In our own city university, there is a distinguished department of history with several dozens of members whose annual total salary from us is a couple of million euro, give or take a million or so. Some of them are specialists in 20th century warfare.

UCC is not usually so reticent. Some of the most notable academic spokesmen and partisans of the morality and justice of the episodes of warfare affecting Ireland in the 20th century, such as 1918-23 and 1969-94, are citizens of Cork. Even our abstention from world-scale violence has called down condemnation of Ireland from the moral high ground of Cork academia.

1914-18 was the bloodiest and most brutal episode in 20th century Irish history. It is especially interesting from the moral point of view, since official Ireland summoned us into it on moral grounds, while the majority of people rejected it within a matter of months on the very same moral grounds.

The UCC History Department web page has as its lead item a webcast recording of a TV interview on 20th century war. The same page boasts that prominent academic staff comment regularly on history and current affairs for British and Irish newspapers and American media outlets. So why is our own Cork newspaper unworthy of their wisdom and expertise?

How long will Cork academia continue to be the moral watchdog that refuses to bark in its own backyard.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork city

EVENING ECHO, Cork. MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2014

No fanatic

IT has been estimated that some 3,000 French civilians were killed on D-Day and some 20,000 during the battle of Normandy, mostly from Allied bombardment. The Allies didn't relent until the Germans were defeated in France after many more civilians there were killed.

I've never heard that the Allied leaders or Generals favoured relenting, nor that they later repented. And I've never read or heard commentators condemning them nor suggesting they were fanatics wedded to the idea of blood sacrifice.

The sight of civilians falling to British gunfire moved Pádraig Pearse to order the 1916 insurgents to surrender, although not a single insurgent garrison had been overrun by the British. In almost a week's fighting the insurgents had inflicted far more

casualties on the British than they themselves received, and they were still capable of holding their positions for a further period.

The discipline of the insurgents, already proved in combat, was further proven by their readiness to surrender to save the lives of Dublin's citizens.

Yet Pearse has been portrayed as a blood-crazed fanatic, not just by tiresome ignorant gentlemen but scholars who know better.

Barely a month before the Rising, he said that if England said "you can have your freedom" it would be silly of Irishmen to say "No, we'd rather fight you for it." But, as things stood, Irishmen should be prepared to fight for it.

Pearse was a qualified barrister, and his opinion strikes me as prudent counsel.

Donal Kennedy, Belmont Ave, Palmers Green, London

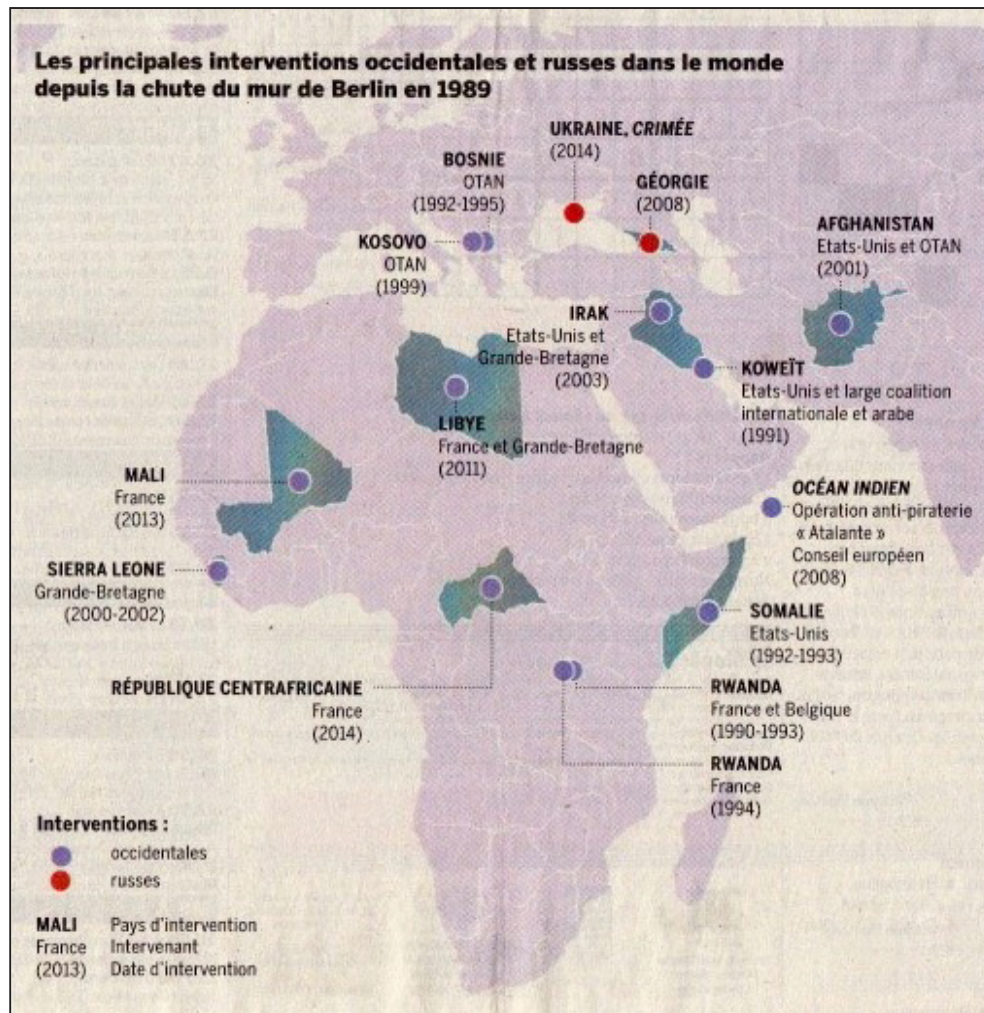
Following from Jenny O'Connor's article in the last issue of IFA, *Central America's Protestant Reformation?* readers might be interested in Radio 4 Thought for the Day - 09/06/14 - by Clifford Longley on the topic of **Pentecostals and Catholics in Latin America.**

"In Britain people have called football the national religion; in Brazil it seems to be the other way round. Many of their best players are devout, and like to demonstrate that fact in front of their fans. At one point, Fifa had to ask them to tone it down. Those who are Pentecostals belong to a branch of Protestant Christianity which is growing fast in Brazil. Some of them advocate what has been called the Gospel of Success, or Gospel of Prosperity. Work hard, live a clean life, praise Jesus and give him thanks on all occasions, and God will reward you with success. It's a simple creed and it appears to work, on and off the football field - at least some of the time. But other Pentecostals think it is not true to the Bible - off-side, you might say.

There's an interesting history behind all this. Pentecostalism, originally imported from the United States, seemed to offer what Catholicism didn't, namely a way out of the favelas - the slums or shanty towns where very poor people live, often next door to the very rich. The Catholic Church's answer, in so far as it had one, was to call for structural change, starting with the departure of the right-wing military dictatorships which had plagued Latin America for a generation. The left-wing Archbishop of Sao Paulo for nearly thirty years, Cardinal Paulo Arns, was a leading advocate of the so-called theology of liberation. He was a brave opponent of the regime's use of torture to subdue its enemies, and he even sold his palace to build a welfare centre for the poor. All this set him at odds not just with conservative Brazilian Catholics who were hand-in-glove with the powers-that-be, but with the Vatican itself, which was alarmed by the way liberation theologians seemed to be turning Marxist. So efforts were made to stamp it out, which seemed for a while to have succeeded. In the view of Cardinal Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict, it was the Church's concentration on the political rather than the personal which drove many Catholics into the arms of the new Pentecostal movements.

Relations between these two varieties of Christianity in Brazil are still uneasy, but they get along well enough on the football field. Look for players making the sign of the cross, for instance before a penalty or after a goal. They are the Catholics. Look for those who kneel to pray, and maybe try to display some undergarment with the word "Jesus" written prominently on it. They are the Pentecostals. Whose side God is on I can't tell you, except to say he probably has more sympathy for the losers than the winners. As for liberation theology - thanks to the arrival of the first Latin American Pope, it's now back in fashion. Just to show, which may be some comfort to England fans, that where God's concerned, there's no such thing as a lost cause."

Principal Western and Russian interventions in the world since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989



In capital letters e.g. MALI: country where intervention took place.

In lower case, e.g. France: country doing the intervention.

In brackets (2013) date of intervention.

This map accompanied an article by Hubert Vedrine in *Le Monde* of 6 May 2014, entitled: 'Let us rethink interventionism'.

Hubert Vedrine was minister for Foreign Affairs (1997-2002) He opposed the war in Iraq.

Here is a summary of his article:

Let us rethink interventionism.

Since the end of the Soviet Union, western countries have intervened in other countries, violating their national sovereignty for humanitarian reasons or for reasons of international law. There have been over ten interventions, led by the United States, Britain or France. France has been very interventionist, perhaps because her elites believe in her 'universal mission'. The results of these interventions have been, with a few exceptions, mixed, fragile or counterproductive.

These interventions are more and more criticised by the emergent countries such as China, India, Brazil or South Africa, who see these actions by Western countries as illegitimate.

And on the other hand, the neoconservatives, the 'liberal hawks' or supporters of intervention, are less and less able to bring Western public opinions to fever pitch, through the media they own, and thereby force decision makers to go to war.

The West claim a monopoly of indignation and ethics, but they do not have a monopoly of power; it will become harder and harder for them to intervene. Public opinion will not be convinced any more. It will only support military action in case of imminent attack on their own territory, or on vital interests.

When you see how France is vilified after intervening in Rwanda, when in fact it was the only country in the world who tried to stop the civil war and actually saved lives, one is tempted to recommend as few interventions as possible in the future.

Ukraine is not another bout of Western interventionism. The West will have, in future, to admit it is powerless and swallow humiliations, although it is difficult for the West to exist without its proselytism and its universal ambitions, and defend only its vital security and economic interests.

With the United States and Britain we must get together, draw the lessons of past interventions and decide in what circumstances future interventions could take place. Otherwise, for better and for worse, Western public opinion will put a stop to them.