

# Irish Foreign Affairs

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

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Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel, said that there were no Palestinian people. The trace of a semblance of truth in that statement is that the people living in Palestine did not wish to be cut off from the people living in Lebanon and Syria in order to live their own lives as a separatist nation. The various peoples living in the Middle East – in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Mesopotamia – lived harmoniously together in the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire without any of them feeling the need to impose their beliefs and ways of life on the others as the only right thing to believe and the only human way to live. Nor did the State feel any need to make them uniform in subordination to a comprehensive ideology of state.

The Ottoman state was the only really multicultural European state. Because it was multicultural it was decreed not to be European. But its capital was in Europe and many European countries were under its government for centuries.

The reason it was judged not to be European was not that it was not governed in the way that we now call democratic. No European country was governed democratically, even if the word is used loosely, until the middle or late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The French Revolution declared democracy to be the only right form of government but France did not manage to establish a functional system of democracy until the failure of its war of aggression on Germany in 1870. And Britain was an aristocracy under the form of monarchy where a minuscule electorate had a choice of two aristocratic parties.

The reason the Ottoman Empire was not European was that it was not nationalist and totalitarian in ideology, and it had no wars of religion, and it was not racist.

English government of Ireland after the 1688 Revolution – which Conor Cruise O’Brien declared to be an English Enlightenment superior to the French Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – was a form of nationalistic totalitarianism. It had the declared purpose of exterminating the Catholicism of the Irish and enlightening them into Protestants. France developed itself into a nationalistic monarchy by means of civil wars which were wars of religion. Spain acquired national uniformity in the war against the tolerant civilization of the Moors and the Inquisition which followed it, which was a Catholic counterpart of the Protestant Penal Laws in Ireland.

And Germany – it was a geographical expression covering a multitude of small states of different kinds until it was driven to establish a national state in 1871 by pressure of the surrounding states. And then it gave profound offence to the culture of the older European states by its major foreign policy initiative, which was support for the Ottoman Empire which the British, French and Russian Empires were intent on destroying and taking for themselves. That German development – bizarre in European terms – was frowned upon as the *Sonderweg* – the ‘Special Way’ that Germany developed, instead of the proper way of the other European states.

The *Sonderweg* failed. The British, French and Russian Empires ganged up on Germany, made war upon it, defeated it, and shared out the Ottoman state among themselves – well, the Russian Empire collapsed in 1917: too soon for it to claim its prize of Constantinople (Istanbul) for having started the Great War by mobilizing in support of Serbia following the Serbian assassination of the heir to the Austrian Empire.

German support for the Ottoman Empire was not the only reason for the Anglo-French-Russian war alliance against it. Britain and France had other reasons for it. But Germany’s Ottoman policy was common ground for the alliance against it.

Germany saw the Ottoman State, representing one of the major cultures of the world, as a necessary part of a stable world order, and the Kaiser emphasized the point with a state visit. Britain saw it as “*the sick man of Europe*”, ready to die, but was concerned that, when it did die, Russia should not be its chief beneficiary. Therefore Britain defended Turkey from Russia while arranging for itself to be the chief beneficiary.

Then along comes Germany, with its *Sonderweg* which, instead of seeing that the destruction of the backward and outmoded Ottoman State is a necessity of progress, takes its continuing existence to be necessary to a stable world order.

The war on Turkey was launched about four months after the war on Germany. Britain invaded Mesopotamia from India, expecting a cake-walk. But it took more than four years of hard fighting to kill off the sick man.

In the first instance Britain refused to have any truck with the vestigial form of Arab nationalism in Mesopotamia that offered itself as an ally. It wanted to gain the Middle East as a clear Imperial conquest. But, after it made little headway during a year of hard fighting, it decided that it needed Arab nationalism after all. But it was not the small groups of nationalist ideologues of the cities that it turned to, but the Muslim religious authorities in Mecca. It secured a declaration of *Jihad*, Holy War, against the Ottoman State. Religious/racial hatred of the Turk was stirred up. The posturing Lawrence did his thing, the Arab State was promised when the Turk was beaten.

The French, who were bearing the brunt of the war in Europe, demanded their bit of the Middle East, and Britain was in no position to refuse.

Then, late in 1917, with its war situation getting desperate, Britain made a bid to turn Jewish world influence against Germany by making an alliance with the Zionist movement and adopting the policy of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.

When Turkey was defeated the promised Arab State was proclaimed at Damascus – and was suppressed. Then a development in Baghdad was made war upon and broken.

Instead of the Middle Eastern region of the Ottoman State being replaced by an Arab State, its place was taken by many Arab States created by Britain and France, and dependent on them.

The initial intention in 1914 was that the conquered Middle East should be a kind of extension of the Indian Empire, governed imperially.

But wasn’t Britain supposed to be making war so that nationalism should have free development throughout the world? Wasn’t that what the Irish were told? Nationalism was a good thing, and everyone should have it. And then there was the Jihadist Arab nationalism that Britain had fostered.

There was an incoherent argument about this at Westminster and the effective decision was that the Middle East should not have responsible Imperial government – so to speak – but that

Imperial control should be exercised by the creation of Arab nation states under Imperial hegemony. Not an Arab state, but an array of Arab states, potentially, but not actually, independent. And the Empires formed a League of Nations to be the political structure of the world, and made their hegemony over the new states they were creating legal by giving themselves League Mandates to guide these states.

An Arab State for the Arab nation would have had some prospect of success. It was what was promised in return for the *Jihad* against the Turks. It might be that there was no Arab nation up and ready to take on statehood, but there were peoples who were Arab, amongst other things, and they had been roused by Imperial propaganda and Imperial action into a state of mind of nationalist Arabism and there were enthusiastic leaders eager and willing to have a go at conducting an Arab nation-state, working out in the process what Arab Nationalism was to be – whether it was to be a working out of the *Jihadism* which Britain procured at Mecca or would be in accordance with the ideals of the pre-war nationalist groups in Basra and Damascus.

The fact that there was no organized Arab national movement ready to take state power was no argument against the formation of an Arab national state. There was no organized South Slav national movement yet a South Slav State (Yugoslavia) was established by the Versailles Conference of Victors and its creation, the League of Nations. And likewise with Czechoslovakia.

On the other hand there was an organized Irish national movement ready to take power, which won an election against Britain in December 1918, yet was not recognized as existing by the League of Nations. The party elected in December 1918 to govern Ireland nevertheless went ahead and began doing what it was elected to do. Joost Augusteijn, a Trinity College academic expert on these matters, has said (in the *History Ireland* magazine for academics) that the elected Irish Government was not legitimate because recognition by other Governments is a necessary precondition of legitimacy. It follows from this that Britain was within its rights when it made war on the Irish who had voted for independence without Imperial authority.

Augusteijn's view of the matter was not challenged by the academics for whom *History Ireland* is published.

The principle that Imperial authority is required for national self-determination is being applied by the European Union today with regard to the Russian peoples in the Ukraine who voted to remove themselves from the authority of the Ukrainian State, following an anti-Russian *coup d'état* in the Government of the state which the EU recognized as legitimate.

In 1919, the legitimising condition of recognition by other states amounted in practice to Imperial permission because the world was being remade by the Victors at Versailles. All other Governments were gathered there (apart from the Bolshevik Government in Russia, which was not regarded as legitimate) and Britain did not allow the Irish Election to be put on the agenda.

The 1919 Congress of Victorious Empires, the League of Nations, the Versailles Treaty – which was all the same thing – asserted authority over the world and asserted it imperially and capriciously, creating nation-states where there was no nation, and denying national status where it existed. The American Congress refused to ratify the Treaty and the USA went its own way, a law unto itself. That left the League as a plaything of the British and French Empires, with the British quickly establishing ascendancy over the French.

Four nation states were carved out of the Ottoman Middle East: Lebanon and Syria, over which the French Empire was given an indefinite Mandate by the League, and Iraq and Jordan, with British Mandates. The various peoples in the regions of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul were told on Imperial authority that they were Iraqi nationals – a thing of which they had no suspicion until then.

And Iraq was given a King by Britain. In fact it was told it was to elect a King. Britain had a candidate for the Kingship – a member of the family in the Western desert from which Britain had procured a *Jihad* in 1916. But a local candidate presented himself, and seemed likely to win – Said Talib of Basra. So Britain got him out of the way. Gertrude Bell, a lover of the Arab people and an influential person in the British administration, invited Said Talib for afternoon tea at her villa, where he was kidnapped and whisked away to Ceylon.

The people of Iraq got the message. They voted obediently for the British candidate.

Egypt was an independent state – governed by the British Ambassador. It was a former region of the Ottoman Empire, recognized as independent by Britain, and governed by the British Ambassador. That was how it had been for a generation before 1914, and how it continued to be until the 1950s. It was an independent state that was a lynch-pin of the British Empire. There was an Egyptian Government which was told what to do by the Ambassador. Turkey's notional sovereignty over Egypt does not appear to have been officially revoked until the 1950s. On the instruction of the British ambassador Egypt made war on Turkey – in 1914, and on Germany in 1914 and 1939.

And then there was Palestine, for which Britain took the League Mandate. The supposed principle of the Mandate system was that the Mandated Empire should develop in the backward peoples of the territories a capacity for self-government. But when? This year, next year, sometime, never.

In the case of Palestine the Mandate was qualified by the Balfour Declaration, which was adopted by the League.

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When the Declaration was issued, Palestine was occupied to the extent of 90% by people who were not Jews. The Ottoman State had not discriminated against Jews. It was free of the Anti-Semitism that characterized Europe. Jews went about their business in various cities of the Empire, and pious Jews who wanted to live quietly in Jerusalem were allowed to do so. But Jewish nationalist political colonization which would disrupt the lives of other peoples in Palestine was not allowed. And, after the Balfour Declaration made the Zionist Organisation one of the privileged bodies of the Imperial world, opposition to Jewish colonization and conquest of Palestine was declared to be anti-Semitic.

(Today the British Chief Rabbi declares that, while it is theoretically possible to oppose Israel without being anti-Semitic, it is not possible in practice.)

Britain instructed itself, by its League Mandate, to lay the basis for a Jewish State in Palestine without interfering with the rights of the existing population. This was obviously an impossibility. And the operative part of the Mandate was the Jewish State. The Jewish Agency was given special status under the British administration, and large-scale colonization was organized. This led to a rebellion of the Arab population which Britain had to fight a small war to suppress. After the Rebellion, Britain began to reconsider the advisability of the project. It began to be said that the Declaration committed Britain to establish a “*national home*” for the Jews, not to establish a Jewish State. But members of the Government which issued the Declaration, including Lloyd George and Churchill, said that what they had meant was a Jewish State.

Balfour himself, in the early 1920s, had admitted that the Declaration had been made in breach of the principle of national self-determination for which the War had supposedly been fought. The justification of that breach, he said, was that the Jews were an extraordinary people for whom extraordinary provision must be made. The actual reason seems to have been a mixture of Anti-Semitism and War strategy. The Jews were reckoned to be an influential people, closely identified with Germany at the time, whom it would be advantageous to bring onto the Allied side. And Churchill a short while later saw the Bolshevik state in Russia as an essentially Jewish construction, intent on turning the world upside down, from which Jewish energy might be diverted into the conquest of Palestine. Then, in the thirties, when Whitehall, stimulated by the Arab revolt, was expressing concern for the rights of Palestinians, Churchill dismissed the natives by comparing them to the *dog in the manger*, who tried to prevent others using it, though he had no use for it himself.

Whitehall did try to scale down the project in 1939, and it lay in abeyance for a few years. Then in 1945 the British administration was faced with a Jewish nationalist terrorist assault with no holds barred.

In 1945 Ernest Bevin was made Foreign Secretary in the first majority-Labour Government. In the 1930s he had been one of the first active Anti-Fascists, and he had gone against the grain of the Left by supporting increased armament for a major war. During the War he had run Britain as Minister for Labour, laying the basis for the post-War Welfare State, and ensuring victory in the General Election of 1945. Then he was transferred to the Foreign Office, for which he was ill-fitted, and was required to fight dirty wars for the empire. The Malayan War which was not called a War but an Emergency, so that it might not come under the Laws of War supposedly established by the Nuremberg Trials of the Germans – was fought by methods resembling German methods in Eastern Europe.

But Bevin balked at implementing the Unionist policy of his Party.

It seems that he had paid little attention to the Zionist resolutions adopted at Labour Annual Conferences until he was faced with the task of putting them into effect. Then it seems that he was appalled by the idea of throwing the inhabitants of a country out of their country in order to set up a religious state in the territory which would then be populated, by means of mass immigration, of believers in that religion.

As the creator of a major Trade Union, Bevin abhorred all forms of religious bigotry, including Anti-Semitism. In his youth people who were called Anti-Semites asserted that Judaism was not just a religion like any other, with members in many nation-states in which they were good citizens, but were a separate nation whose members accorded only a limited allegiance to the nation-states amongst which they were dispersed. But, after the Balfour Declaration and its being adopted by the League of Nations, the meaning of Anti-Semitism changed fundamentally. It now became anti-Semitic to deny that the Jews were a nation where it had previously been anti-Semitic to assert that they were a nation.

The Zionist Organisation asserted what had previously been the Anti-Semitic position. It asserted that the Jews were not just a religion but were a nation, and that there was an irreconcilable antagonism between the Jews and the Gentile nations amongst which they lived.

Bevin knew what the Anti-Semitic position had been and he could not bring himself to adopt it – not after the War against Fascism, of which he had been one of the advocates and in which he had played a major part. So he was branded an Anti-Semite – and his influence on British Socialism was subverted to its great disadvantage.

He refused to continue the project of creating a Jewish State. But he failed to act decisively against the Jewish terrorist movement in Palestine, dedicated to the establishment of the Jewish State. If he had persisted in the attempt to crush the terrorist movement, he would undoubtedly be branded the new Himmler.

What he did was resign to the newly-created United Nations the Mandate which Britain had given itself through the League. He washed Britain’s hands of the monstrous project which Britain had inaugurated in 1917. But so much had already been done towards the realisation of the project that this only made the situation worse.

A quarter of a century of large-scale Jewish immigration had built up a substantial Jewish population different in kind from the pious religious Jews who had been there in 1917. It was still very far from constituting a majority, but it was highly organized for war, had influential supporters in international politics, had been trained in terrorist wars on Arabs in the 1930s by a British officer, General Wingate, and had been surveying the territory in preparation for the moment of victory in its War of Independence against the British administration when the Arabs would be at its mercy.

Britain did not resign its Mandate to the Security Council, which is the effective part of the UN, but to the General Assembly. It sacrificed the Palestinians in the hope of maintaining hegemony over its Arab States and Egypt, which was being eroded by events in Palestine. On the Security Council it would still have been responsible, because of the Veto, for what was done with Palestine. That is why the matter was referred to the General Assembly for decision by two-thirds majority.

The UN decision was to divide Palestine into two states, awarding the greater part to the Jewish minority. The vote in favour of the Jewish State was carried by the USA and its client states in South America, by Russia and its client states in Eastern Europe, and some states of the British Empire.



The territory awarded for the Jewish State had a bare majority of Jews in it. It could not have been a Jewish State in the intended sense as a democracy with a 49% non-Jewish minority. The first task of the Jewish authorities, therefore, was an extensive campaign of ethnic cleansing. This was followed by expansion into the territory allocated for the Arab State, and further ethnic cleansing. The UN stood idly by, the General Assembly having no Executive power.

Jewish expansion was stopped in 1948, chiefly by the intervention of the British-officered Arab Legion from Jordan, which was heavily under British influence. That Ceasefire line, which included within Israel much of the territory awarded by the UN to the Palestinians, now seems to be regarded internationally as the border of Israel proper, and only the further conquests of 1967 as Occupied Territory. But Israel itself has refused to define its borders, and it does not accept that the Occupied Territories do not belong to it.

An article in the *Jerusalem Post* of July 31st, 2014, by Martin Sherman, proposes that the open ethnic cleansing practices of 1947-8 should be resumed as a means of dealing with the Occupied Territory. It concludes: *“To prevent an even more brutal and extreme successor from taking over, Gaza must be dismantled and the non-belligerent populated relocated”*.

Ethnic cleansing of the Arab population of Palestine to make way for a Jewish nation-state was the British Labour Party policy which Bevin refused to implement. Proposing the Zionist motion at the Party conference in December 1944, Hugh Dalton said there must be unlimited Jewish entry to Palestine, so that there should be a Jewish majority. *“There was a strong case for this before the War. There is an irresistible case now”* because of what the Germans had done. *“Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out, as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely for their land... The Arabs have many wide territories of their own; they must not claim to exclude the Jews from this small area of Palestine less than the size of Wales. Indeed, we should re-examine also the possibility of extending the present Palestinian boundaries, by agreement with Egypt, Syria or Transjordan...”*

In December 1944 the world was dominated by the War, and Dalton was a great warmonger. Agreement of Egypt, Syria and Jordan only meant Imperial agreement of Britain and France – Syria being French. When the matter was referred to the UN three years later a great post-War change was under way. France had been made let go of Syria by Britain, and it had to be careful what it did in Egypt and Jordan. The UN decision about the Jewish State was opposed by all Middle East Governments.

Because of what the Germans had done, a safe haven must be found for the Jews. And the safe haven that was chosen was a territory that could only be made available by ethnic cleansing of its inhabitants, and when established would be surrounded by Governments which resented its imposition in their midst.

The realistic implication of this was that the safe haven would be one of the least safe places on earth for Jews, if the Jewish state was not made a military Superpower in the region, capable of crushing all its neighbours. And so it was.

The European Powers and nations had all behaved badly towards the Jews. All except the Soviet Union had. That means that all the democracies had. Then the democracies made virtuous amends by supporting the Jewish conquest and ethnic cleansing of Palestine. The thought of creating an empty space in Europe for a Jewish State never occurred to them.

And the United States, which had carried out the greatest ethnic cleansing of territory in recorded history, creating vast empty spaces, did not offer any of them as a site for a Jewish State that would actually be a safe haven – wouldn't it? It had behaved badly when the Jews were in trouble, restricting their immigration quota. And now, after 1945, it took over the role of the British in imposing them on the inhabited country of Palestine, surrounded by countries which did not want a hostile, expansionist state inflicted on them as a neighbour.

But it must be admitted that the USA followed through on the logic of providing the Jews with a *“safe haven”* in what was probably the most hostile environment in the world. It provided the Jewish State with the means of exterminating its neighbours.

\*

We read in an anti-Zionist Jewish pamphlet published in 1917, a few months before the Balfour Declaration was issued:

*“From a practical point of view the existence of Palestine as a homeland will not solve the problem except as a refuge for those Jewish dreamers who will consecrate themselves to make their Jewish dreams come true. But they are not the only dreamers. The dreamers of Israel have lived and suffered, and made their Jewish dreams come true for the world without a Jewish State, and they will still exist and their dreams will have a spiritual quality, as distinguished from a mere romantic one, to contribute to the profoundest problems of life, which are, in the final analysis, spiritual and religious...”* (Zionism No Remedy by Henry Moskowitz, 1917.

That writer apparently envisaged the Jewish State as a self-indulgently pious Jewish retreat from the busy world in which the main body of Jews were active. He could hardly have envisaged the way the Jewish State was actually constructed. Only the 'Revisionists' envisaged that and committed themselves to it. And because they imagined the Zionist project in the realities of the world, and saw it as a colonial project which would be resisted by those who were to be displaced by it, and nevertheless had the will to carry it through, they were condemned – or were at least frowned upon – as Extremists. But, in the working out of the project, the Moderates, who said that it could be achieved in a more pleasant way, always managed not to come into antagonistic conflict with the realistically plain-spoken extremists.

It needs to be emphasised that Zionism was set in motion as a practical project of colonization and ethnic cleansing long before the Nazi Party came to power, and even before it was formed. Whether Nazi Jewish policy was to any degree a response to the policy of establishing a Jewish-national State in Palestine is something we have never seen investigated. We assume that it wasn't, but since it would be a thought-crime even to consider that possibility, we leave it.

There was, however, a coincidence between the Zionist and Nazi views of the Jewish question. Both asserted that the Jews were a nation, or a race, apart and could never be absorbed into the nations in which they lived. And the Zionist organization was the only party, other than the Nazi Party, which had legal existence in Germany after 1933. The Zionist project was compatible with Nazi policy.

The source of antagonism in Europe – intensified by the Allied destruction of the Hapsburg Empire in 1918 – was not the separatist ambitions of Zionism, but the influence of integrated Jews in the European world, which was praised by Moskowitz.

The Normans in Ireland became “*more Irish than the Irish*”. And the Jews in Europe became more European than the Europeans, especially after the destruction of the Hapsburg Empire and other acts of the Versailles Treaty.

The Jews were in the forefront of progressive development in Europe while Europe was progressing. Evolutionary progress in Europe was stopped short by Britain’s World War on Germany, Austria, and the Ottoman Empire in 1914, and the establishment in 1919 of a welter of ‘nation-states’ based on inadequate national development. (Casement summed up the situation well in 1914 when he described Britain’s prepared war on Germany as a *Crime Against Europe*).

\*

Shortly after the Balfour Declaration was issued, a pro-Zionist book was published in England by a *Manchester Guardian* journalist close to Lloyd George’s circle: *England And Palestine: Essays Towards The Restoration Of The Jewish State* by Herbert Sidebotham. It reviewed the history of Jewish States and, taking it that the Jewish nation, having preserved itself for two thousand years since its last State was put down by the Romans, was still essentially the same as it had been then, considered whether it would be responsible to facilitate the establishment of another Jewish State. Jewish States in the past had been intolerably belligerent towards their neighbours, and Sidebotham did not think that the Romans had been wrong in suppressing the last one. But he thought this one would be

different as it would be set up by the British Empire and guided by it, and prevented from getting out of hand. Thirty years later, of course, when the moment of truth came, Britain abdicated responsibility for what it had brought into being, and gave it free rein. But it must be admitted that some serious thought was given to the matter at the outset.

The Irish Party, led by John Redmond, had over 70 MPs in Parliament when the Balfour Declaration was issued, and they supported the Government in the War because it was, they said, being fought on the principle of national rights. The Balfour Declaration was a war measure that contravened national rights – and it wasn’t the first war measure that did so.

We are now in the midst of a Redmondite cult. A two-volume biography of him has been published. A former Taoiseach says it was a tragedy that the Redmondite Party was displaced by Sinn Fein.

The obstacle to the implementation of Redmondite Home Rule was a colonization of Ulster three centuries earlier. What did Redmond’s Party say when the Government they were supporting proposed another colonization and the displacement of another people?

The neo-Redmondites do not tell us. We’ll have to find out for ourselves. And review Sidebotham’s remarkable book, and a book published by Socialist MP Richard Crossman in 1947 as a contribution to the construction of the Jewish State. All of this is not ancient history. It is current politics. □

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## Social Democracy and the Shaping of Germany, 1945-49 Part 5: The ISK Group and the Office of Strategic Services.

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By Philip O’Connor

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

*This instalment shows how the Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund (ISK, ‘International Socialist Struggle League’), which had acquired a dominant role in the small exile German socialist leadership group in London through its relationship with the British Government, forged an alliance with Allied intelligence services; the aims of the alliance were to extend this dominance over the exile movement internationally and to realise a return to Germany before the end of the war to pre-empt local developments and determine the direction of post-war German socialism on an anti-communist, American-aligned basis. Even before the end of the war, this led it to write off Eastern Germany and plan a post-war social democracy confined to the Anglo-American occupied zones.*

### 3.6 Alliance with the OSS

The “Office of Strategic Services” (OSS) was established by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in June 1942 to prosecute irregular warfare in the service of the wider policy agendas of the US State and War Departments. It was dissolved in September 1945 at the end of the war, its functions and personnel transferring back to these two Departments, only to re-emerge with much the same staff in 1947 as the “Central Intelligence Agency” (CIA), a central pillar of the “National Security State”. Despite the many wartime military and subversive adventures of the Office of Strategic Services, executed with varying degrees of success, its political function was regarded as paramount from the start. “*In a global, totalitarian war*”, its

director, the Irish-American Colonel William “Bill” Donovan declared, “*intelligence must be total and totalitarian*”. The OSS command, despite the “Big Three” Alliance of the war years, shared the State Department’s traditional anti-communism and hostility to the Soviet Union, and was sceptical from the start of the Alliance and the “internationalism” of the Roosevelt Administration.<sup>51</sup>

This was evident even among the “left wing” staff of the OSS “Labor Desk” which had been created to assist the war effort and develop relations with resistance movements and émigré circles. The Desk was staffed by officials of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the traditionalist wing of the trade union movement which under Roosevelt had achieved a substantial role in American state policy. The more radical Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO), representing the newer industrial unions, focused its international relations not through State organs but international trade unionism. Unlike the AFL, it supported the British TUC position of an alliance with Soviet trade unions in the post-war world and the establishment of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), eventually realised at the end of 1944. The AFL, on the other hand, maintained its anti-communist position and promoted the universalising of liberal capitalist conditions and “free trade unionism” as integral elements of US foreign policy. It remained aloof from the WFTU. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) was also the dominant US presence in the International Federation of Transport Workers (IFT) and provided the OSS with extensive international networks of contacts through it. The AFL was determined to influence the shaping of Europe’s post-war labour movements in a manner



8444

Angeregt Kontakt mit Fichler, Kramer, Ollenhauer und Go. ergibt, dass Anwesenheit Goldberg in London.  
Ergebnisse: Pratt wieder gesucht werden soll. Aussprache wird  
Regelmaessige Aussprachen erwuenscht, die ueber das technische hinaus-

gehen. Bereitwilligkeit, die genannten 4 als repraesentativ anzusehen.  
C.A.-Leute stehen Gewerkschafts-Problem mit Sympathie gegenueber. Erste  
Arbeit sollte eine kurze Denkschrift ueber die Gewerkschaftsfrage sein.  
Van Arkol wird als P's Vertreter fungieren, Margolies wird unter ihm  
arbeiten. Lt. Gould uebernimmt die Schule.  
(G. J. Gollub / VA / P.-Ln //)

2/18: Repr. in gleichen Kreis:  
1/ T.U. Statement, gewisse Abänderungen.  
2/ Emergency Programm (Kramer inbandiment Ausschuss)  
3/ Beziehung zu Frau. Ges. etc. (Eichler)

12/9/44  
04./10/50 / Marg. / an.  
Scheme re people for liberated parts.  
problems: freedom of movement, status.  
groups: a) leading people  
b) reference  
c) general

Scheme Lib.

IV

It is understood that the people engaging in activities as outlined under I and II must be acquainted and kept acquainted with the material and publications, discussed and published by the bodies with which the undersigned are associated. As long and in as far direct supply is impossible or inadvisable the Allied authority concerned will act as an intermediary.

V

We submit this memorandum as a summary of our understanding of the discussions on the subjects in question. We do not claim that every minor point is covered in this document, and we are fully aware of the fact that the spirit of confidence into each other has to be the most important basis of the envisaged activities.

London, 23rd February, 1945.

Wim. G. Eichler. Hans Gottfurcht. S. Ollenhauer

British and American War-time Preparations for the Reshaping of Germany. (See article p. 6)

Top: a page from the Gottfurcht Notebook titled "8444" (the Office of Strategic Services phone number in the US Embassy in Mayfair) describing meetings between ISK-SoPaDe leaders and the OSS, including on "Scheme re people for liberated areas". Below: memorandum of February 1945 outlining arrangements agreed with OSS for selected ISK-SoPaDe members to accompany Allied armies as "Guides" during military operations, assist in establishing local administrations under Military Government and also undertaking tasks for the organisations "represented by the undersigned". It is signed by Eichler (ISK), Gottfurcht (Trade Union Group) and Ollenhauer ('SoPaDe', the rump SPD exile executive). Source: Hans Gottfurcht Papers, Box 37, Hans-Boeckler-Stiftung, DGB Cologne.



conducive to both US foreign policy and the AFL role within that, and used the OSS Labor Desk for this purpose.<sup>52</sup>

The London office of the OSS Labor Desk was established in autumn 1942 in the US embassy and was immediately put in contact with the ISK circle in London by the two men in London who organised the underground European networks of the International Transport Workers Federation, Hans Jahn and Jan Oldenbroek, who in German émigré politics were themselves aligned to the ISK. As was seen in previous instalments of this series, the ISK (“International Socialist Fighting Federation”) was a small group of little more than a dozen unorthodox German socialists who had achieved considerable influence in wartime British political circles. On October 14, the same day that the ISK leader Willi Eichler presented his radical programme proposals to the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* (see the previous article in these series), Hans Gottfurcht, the head of the German trade union group in London (*Landesgruppe deutscher Gewerkschafter*) and its representative on the ‘Union’, met with the head officials of the OSS Labor Desk, George Pratt and Arthur Goldberg – both seconded AFL officials – to discuss “possibilities of cooperation”. The same week, Fritz Heine, the SoPaDe secretary, took up a full time post as a policy analyst with the “SO1” section of the British intelligence services, analysing German media for use in its black propaganda operations against Germany.<sup>53</sup> The ISK circle and the remnant of the old SPD Executive in London, the SoPaDe, that jointly led the *Union of German Socialist Organisations*, had found a new avenue for political advance through the OSS and were moving to maximise its benefit. Accommodating political programmes to ensure a fruitful alliance was a precondition for success and this was done promptly and efficiently.

The details of the relationship that developed between German émigré socialist and labour circles with the OSS have left little trace in German archives, and indeed were to be vociferously denied for decades after the war. The otherwise copious papers of the SoPaDe and private papers of Ollenhauer (formerly SPD Secretary in Germany, now based in London) and Heine (SPD Secretary in London) in the SPD Archive are conspicuously devoid of correspondence relating to it. Although with the declassification of OSS records from the 1970s knowledge of this relationship began to emerge, as late as 1990 Fritz Heine, the SoPaDe secretary in wartime London, still vociferously denied it to the present writer, claiming that the relationship with Allied intelligence agencies went no further than assisting with identifying potential democrats among German prisoners of war.<sup>54</sup> But among the papers of Hans Gottfurcht in the German Trade Union Archive is a notebook providing details of the meetings and arrangements come to with OSS, and further material is present in the records of the ISK.<sup>55</sup>

Gottfurcht, leader of the German trade union group in London, supplied the OSS Labor Desk – headed first by Arthur Goldberg and then George Pratt – with copious material on the internal debates in the *Union of German Socialist Organisations*, which the latter followed assiduously. Pratt – who through OSS could organise postal communications with the US – also put Gottfurcht in contact with Toni Sender, a woman former trade-union-sponsored SPD Reichstag deputy, who had associations with the ISK; she was now working for the Office of Strategic Services in Washington as director of “European Labour Research”. This OSS office – a forerunner of the AFL “Free Trade Union Committee” – had the task of analysing “the general situation in the Nazi occupied countries and especially all problems connected with the labour cause”. Toni Sender sought from Gottfurcht “confidential information” on the personnel of the German socialist emigration in Britain

and lists of reliable trade union contacts within Germany who might be activated at the end of the war.<sup>56</sup>

At the start of December 1942, Heine, the SoPaDe secretary, arranged a meeting for Ollenhauer with Goldberg and Pratt to discuss a SoPaDe role in OSS plans. OSS support would not come cheap. Pratt wanted the SoPaDe to supply detailed information on “German workers’ attitudes” to the post-war role of Germany and to American foreign policy aims. He wanted hard information and not “reports on general attitudes” and also sought information on wages, working conditions and, notably, the locations of specific industries and factories in Germany. Pratt offered in return to restore SoPaDe and *Landesgruppe* (trade union) “contact with their people in neutral countries” (meaning Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey and South America). Ollenhauer, who was given a three-day week job working in “research” for the OSS, reached a formal agreement with Pratt to this effect on December 10.<sup>57</sup>

The arrangements reached with the OSS laid the basis for the London based German socialists to pursue an alternative strategy for post-war influence; previously it had sought, through British Labour, an alliance with European socialist parties, an avenue which, as was seen, the Labour Party had closed to the SoPaDe. It was just as the new arrangement with the OSS was being finalised that Ollenhauer delivered his extraordinary speech to the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* on December 6, essentially abandoning key SoPaDe positions and throwing in the lot of the exile SPD circle with the ISK and the Office of Strategic Services. A leading ISK trade unionist who heard the speech described it as representing “astonishingly far-reaching concessions to Bill’s [Willi Eichler’s] proposals”.<sup>58</sup>

### 3.7 The anti-Communist purpose of the ISK-OSS alliance

The OSS-*Union* alliance developed tentatively at first but gained momentum from May 1943 when both were gripped by panic at events in the East. That month the Soviet leadership dissolved the Comintern, advising European communist parties to participate in broad national liberation movements in their countries. In July, following the spectacular defeat of the German armoured offensive at Kursk – in which its entire Eastern Front armoured strategic reserve was dissipated – the “National Committee for a Free Germany” was created, composed of German political exiles in the USSR with a backup anti-fascist movement involving thousands of German prisoners of war, including top generals from von Paulus’s defeated Stalingrad army. “Free Germany” soon won considerable prestige and credibility among German exile populations and political refugees not caught up in the intrigues of the narrower leadership circles. In Britain, and despite the obvious dominant role of the German Communist Party (KPD) in the National Committee for a Free Germany, it attracted a large following among émigrés, including social democrats, and was soon the single largest organisation of German political refugees in Britain, estimated at over 400 members.<sup>59</sup>

For both the OSS and the SoPaDe, policy for the post-war period had suddenly been reduced to one issue: preventing a communist “take-over” of Germany through what they saw as a spurious Soviet-steered “united front”. The OSS began frantically to query the leaders of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* on their position on “international connections”, “the future of German-Russo relations”, whether in their view the *Fight for Freedom Group* of former socialist politicians – which advocated a punitive peace – was acting “under British or Russian pressure”, the SoPaDe’s position on “socialist unity” (with the KPD) and whether it trusted the “London *Neubeginnen* crowd”.<sup>60</sup> Among the *Union* organisations the ISK moved swiftly, launching a vigorous offensive opposing cooperation with “Free Germany”. In a “Declaration on Foreign Policy



Questions” it even publicly described the dissolution of the Comintern as a ruse, stating that Moscow control of communist parties had “simply shifted to direct dependence on the Russian government”. KPD strategy had just become “more cynical” and “suspect” than ever.<sup>61</sup>

Heine, the SoPaDe secretary in London, wrote to the ISK leader, Eichler, that the situation in Europe had been changed dramatically by the emergence of this “new communism”:

“Throughout Europe we will almost certainly be confronted [at the end of the war] by strong pro-state ‘communist’ parties. Through astute political manoeuvring and a highly refined political organisation and propaganda, they will seek to exploit the patriotism of the masses. I can’t see any socialist party at the moment with the ability (let alone the will) to compete with this in any area.”

The “*central problem*”, he continued, was confronting this threat and “*finding a strategy to turn the situation to our advantage*”. Socialist circles were “*generally incapable*” of imagining the scenario that would now unfold. It was vital to “immediately start planning an alternative international socialist strategy” to counter it.<sup>62</sup>

This issue henceforth became and remained the central focus of the political concerns of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations*.

The confrontation with the KPD in Britain was played out within the formally “non-party political” German trade union group, *Landesgruppe deutscher Gewerkschafter*. Over 200 KPD members joined the *Landesgruppe* in 1943, seeking representation on its executive and other decision making bodies. Werner Hansen, the foremost ISK man in the *Landesgruppe* leadership, noted bitterly that “*debate to clarify policy had largely ceased*” and negotiations on a programme for post-war Germany had become hopelessly deadlocked.<sup>63</sup> Eichler convinced Gottfurcht, the TU leader in London, to prevent any move to align the *Landesgruppe* with the “Free Germany” movement and mobilised joint SoPaDe-ISK activities in the *Landesgruppe* to ensure this. The non-communist leaders of the *Landesgruppe* reacted with alarm when the TUC declared in favour of a reconstruction of international trade unionism through a British-Soviet alliance, with post-war Germany serving as a common resource in the economic reconstruction of Europe. The *Landesgruppe* leaders, like the American Federation of Labor (AFL), made no attempt to engage with the plans for a world trade union body, the WFTU, and aligned themselves instead with the ISK proposals - reflecting AFL-International Federation of Transport Workers (IFT) policy - for politically “neutral” (i.e. non-party political), “*free trade unions*” in Europe. Eichler and Ollenhauer organised this campaign and the *Landesgruppe* only finally adopted an agreed programme in 1945 (largely in line with the ISK proposals) when the KPD members abstained, to avoid continued confrontation. Immediately following the German surrender, the ISK/SoPaDe element successfully brought about the dissolution of the *Landesgruppe*.<sup>64</sup> (To be continued)

(Endnotes)

51 Quote in Alfons Söllner (ed.), *Zur Archäologie der Demokratie in Deutschland*, Frankfurt a.M., 1982, p. 25; See also Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace. The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State*, 1980, p. 216 f.

52 The collaboration between the OSS and the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) of the State Department, where many exile German intellectuals worked on post-war planning for an occupied Germany, is documented in Söllner (ed.), *Zur Archäologie*, pp. 24 ff. and 157 ff. On the structures of the OSS and the Labor Desk, see also Ulrich Borsdorf and Lutz Niethammer, *Zwischen Befreiung und Besatzung, Analysen*

*des US-Geheimdienstes über Positionen und Strukturen deutscher Politik 1945*, 1976, pp. 10 ff. For AFL policy towards Germany, Fichter, *Bersatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften*, 1982, pp. 48 ff. and 59 ff. On the role of the ITF as a network of contacts for transmitting US policy on post-war German trade unionism, ‘Memorandum of a Conversation’ [Wiesner, Auerbach and Jahn], 15.3.1945, in IfZ OMGUS Mp.Div., 17/257 – 2/7. Wiesner was a US trade union officer with the US „Political Affairs Division“ (POLAD) while Auerbach and Jahn were German IFT officials who were also prominent in the *Landesgruppe deutscher Gewerkschafter*, and close to the ISK. In general also Carew, *Labour and the Marshall Plan*, 1987, pp. 70 ff.

53 On ISK-ITF connections in this period, Werner Link, *ISK*, p. 312 f. Anthony Glees (*Exile Politics*, p. 135) notes Heine’s appointment to SOE on this date. On Gottfurcht’s meeting with the Labor Desk officials, see *Gottfurcht Notebook*, referenced in footnote 55 below.

54 Interview, Bad Munstereifel, 03.09.1990. On OSS sources emerging in the 1970s and the establishment of the OSS connection see generally Borsdorf, Niethammer (eds), *Zwischen Befreiung und Besatzung*, pp. 10 ff.

55 This loose-leaf notebook titled “8444” in Gottfurcht’s papers (HBS NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 37), is hereafter referred to as the “*Gottfurcht Notebook*”. 8444 was the telephone number of the OSS Labor Desk in the US embassy in Mayfair. The ISK papers in AsD (Bestand IJB/ISK and papers of individual ISK members) were closed until the end of the 1980s.

56 Goldberg to Gottfurcht, 29.10.1942, Toni Sender (“Director, European Labour Research”) to Gottfurcht, 5.11.1942, and Gottfurcht to Sender, 21.11.1942, in HBS NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 37. Minutes of Ollenhauer’s meeting with Pratt, 10.11.1942, AsD Best.-SoPaDe-Emig., Mapped 79. On Sender, also *Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration*, p. 689. In exile Sender published a very moving memoir of her years as a social democrat activist in Germany, which ran into several editions - *Autobiography of a German rebel, with a preface by Herbert Morrison* (1939, 1942).

57 Pratt to Ollenhauer 5.12.1942, arranging a meeting at Heine’s suggestion, and minutes of Ollenhauer’s meeting with Pratt 10.12.1942 (untitled), both in AsD SoPaDe-Emig., Mapped 79. According to these minutes, Ollenhauer had had an initial meeting with Goldberg a few days previously. On Ollenhauer’s research position, at £5 per week, *Gottfurcht Notebook*, p. 3.

58 [Werner Hansen], (untitled), speech to MSI meeting, n.d. (early 1943), AsD NL Hansen, Ordner 6.

59 On the impact of “Free Germany”, see Glees, *Exile Politics*, pp. 187-226, Röder, *Exilgruppen*, pp. 193 ff. Also the memoir, Fred Uhlmann, *The Making of an Englishman*, 1961. For a communist account, *Exil in der Tschechoslowakei, in Grossbritannien, Skandinavien und Palästina*, Berlin/DDR, 1987, pp. 186-293.

60 Pratt to Gottfurcht 22.7.1943, HBS NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 37.

61 ‘Versammlung des ISK. Thema: Russland und die Komintern’, 20.1.1943, AsD NL Hansen, Ordner 5; Walter Dorn, ‘German Political Emigration’, p. 71; Willy Eichler, *Russland und die Komintern*, London, 1943.

62 Heine to Eichler 27.4.1944, in AsD Best. IJB/ISK, Box 42.

63 Hansen, untitled speech to MSI meeting, n.d. (1943); ‘Vierteljahresbericht des Londoner O[orts]V[erein] des ISK Februar-April 1944’, p. 4, in AsD Best. IJB/ISK, Box 52. The policy stalemates are reflected in the minutes of the *Landesgruppe* “working group” (“*Arbeitsausschuss*”) for 1943-45, of which a full set survive in the Gottfurcht papers (HBS NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 5). On the agreed programme finally adopted in 1945, with the KPD members abstaining, and the dissolution of the *Landesgruppe* immediately following the German surrender: ‘Vorschläge für eine Beratung im Arbeitsausschuss’, 14.5.45, AsD Best. IJB/ISK, Box 56. See also Röder, *Exilgruppen*, pp. 239 ff., 256 ff. and, on programmatic development, also Ulrich Borsdorf et al (eds.), *Grundlagen der Einheitsgewerkschaft* (1977), pp. 217 ff., 250 ff. (continued p. 12)

## Starving The Germans: The Evolution of Britain's Strategy of Economic Warfare During The First World War — The French Connection Part 8

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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.]

Franco-Spanish tensions in Morocco.

Under the terms of the secret 1904 Franco-Spanish Agreement the Spanish presence in Morocco was defined according to British military requirements. This meant that the coastal regions determined by Britain as constituting a particularly sensitive region for its security of Gibraltar, were to be administered by Spain as that country was deemed to be a second-rate naval power incapable of posing any meaningful threat to the British base. This provision was insisted upon by Britain in the October 1904 Franco-Spanish Agreement as a condition of the earlier April 1904 *Entente Cordiale* and confirmed in the Act of Algeciras of 1906 and the Mediterranean Agreements between France, Spain and Britain on 16 May 1907.

“But if the British felt that these accords met their principal strategic requirements in the area, those French officers and officials who were most closely connected with the pursuit of a forward policy in Morocco did not. Spain in their eyes was a nuisance, a jealous and junior partner whom geography and Great Britain had imposed upon them. They doubted her loyalty, and despaired over her involvement in costly conflicts with the tribesmen of The Riff. The Spaniards for their part suspected that the French were bent upon extending their dominion over the whole of Morocco, and that they would in time drain the convention of 1904 of all of its meaning.” (Hamilton, *The ‘Wild Talk’ of Joseph Caillaux: a sequel to the Agadir Crisis*, op. cit., p.205).

While not all French imperialists sought to redefine the 1904 Franco-Spanish Agreement, the more robust amongst them were never reconciled to the British stipulations regarding the Moroccan coast - at least never reconciled to it applying to France. They viewed it simply as a means by which Britain sought to keep Germany off the Moroccan coast and now with the 1911 Franco-German Treaty removing Germany from the Moroccan equation, these French imperialists could see no reason why the 1904 agreement with Spain could not be re-interpreted in French imperial interests. After all, Britain was her partner in the *Entente Cordiale* and no longer had to fear a German presence on the Moroccan coast. However, when it came to pressing her case with Britain this section of the French imperialists soon found that as far as Britain was concerned there were limits to the partnership.

The problem had begun earlier as a direct result of the French invasion of Morocco in May 1911 when Spain, always suspicious of French imperialist designs in Morocco, sought permission (which she was compelled to do under the terms of the 1904 Agreement) to be released from the stipulation which required her to seek French permission before embarking on any military mission in her zone. Jean Cruppi, the colonial

imperialist Foreign Minister in the Monis Government refused. Britain, fearing a degeneration in the relations between the two countries, urged Cruppi to take account of Spain's request but even this met with a rebuff. Further British pressure resulted in late May in Cruppi agreeing to tripartite talks on the issue between France, Spain and Britain but these talks were abandoned on 8 June after Spain, in the face of French intransigence, ordered her military forces to occupy Larache and El Kasr in Morocco. This unilateral action became the excuse for the French imperialists and colonialists to begin their attempts to remove those areas of Morocco from Spanish administration that she had been allocated under the 1904 Franco-Spanish Agreement.

But before this could blow up into a full-blown crisis the Monis government was replaced by that of Caillaux and his initial attention was taken up with the negotiations with Germany on the future of Morocco. In the meantime, a number of suggestions and proposals to deal with the Spanish problem were formulated by French elder statesmen, the Quai d'Orsay, and various politicians. These emerged because the continued Spanish influence in Morocco was being staunchly defended not only by Spain but by Britain and also because different sections of French politics had different ideas of what they wanted in terms of concessions from Spain. Then in October 1911 there emerged a proposal that appealed to the widest range of French opinion and it came from a veteran Spanish statesman, Segismundo Moret. The suggestion was that in return for ceding the majority of its Moroccan Zones to France, Spain should be granted a narrow strip of territory stretching from Tetuan to the Moulouya. Eugène Regnault, the French representative at Tangier, then proceeded to draft a new accord which incorporated terms similar to those suggested by Moret.

“This, the so-called ‘project Regnault’, would, if accepted, have left the Spaniards with little more than the hinterland of their *presidios* [the territory in Morocco that Spain possessed prior to the 1904 Agreement – ED], and would have allowed the French to control the strategically important triangle of territory extending from Larache and El Kasr to the east of Tangier. De Selves, although not at first averse to demanding substantial compensation from Spain, evidently had his doubts about the wisdom of the scheme. Nevertheless, it was readily embraced by Caillaux, and at his behest de Selves had Regnault deliver his project to Bertie [British ambassador to France – ED] on 19 October.

Caillaux thus gave his backing to a course which accorded with the prejudices of the same officials who had been working to obstruct his dealings with Berlin. Yet this was quite consistent with this desire to limit public criticism of his Moroccan policy. In order to mitigate the impact of the proposed German coupure [a means of opening or closing a wall – ED] upon France's position in central Africa the Quai d'Orsay had attempted in September to achieve a colonial bargain with Great Britain through which the French might acquire a slice of northern



Nigeria, and Caillaux had also tried with the aid of Fondère [a French banker and government 'fixer' – ED] to persuade the Belgians to lease to France a territorial corridor on the left bank of the Congo." (ibid., pp.208-209).

Caillaux had come to power in June 1911 on the basis of forming a government of national unity by which he sought to balance a number of issues. Firstly, to keep the French imperialists on side through the successful diplomatic completion of the colonialist agenda in Morocco, secondly, to do this by avoiding war through peaceful negotiations with Germany; thirdly, to keep the left happy through the introduction of significant reforms in social provision. Unfortunately, he had been handed a poisoned chalice by Monis and Cruppi's mishandling of the situation in terms of Morocco and was compelled to concede more than he hoped in order to assuage German demands. This left him open to accusations from the imperialists of selling out the country's African interests and of being party to an agreement which was a humiliation to French prestige. Unless he could find something else in the bag which would counter such criticism his goal of continuing with his government of national unity was lost. Thus his compliance with the imperialists' demand for a French takeover of existing areas of Spanish administration in Morocco. However, he knew that he would have to persuade the British if his goal was to be achieved but if he could get the Spanish to accept 'project Regnault', it could, on the one hand make it more difficult for the British to object, and on the other, it could be used as a means of neutralising the imperialist-led criticism of his Cameroon/Congo concession. However, Bertie, on receiving the Regnault proposals told him that

"he did not believe that Great Britain could concur in the substitution of France for Spain on the northwestern seaboard of Morocco.

Crewe found it impossible not to agree with this conclusion. The French proposals, he minuted, would 'falsify one of the most important features of the agreements of 1904'. And although Grey had so far shown very little sympathy towards Spanish complaints over recent French conduct, he informed Paul Cambon [French ambassador to Britain – ED] on 30 October that once France had settled with Germany, Great Britain would not accept or support any negotiations with Spain that were not based upon the 1904 accords. Great Britain, he observed, was a party to those arrangements and to treat them as if they did not exist would be to 'drag the Entente in the mud, and would have the most disastrous effect on public opinion here'. Asquith was equally firm. He told an emissary whom Caillaux had sent to England that Great Britain would not possibly support any 'hectoring or bullying attitude towards Spain', and Bertie, who had been on leave in London, was instructed to speak 'very strongly' to the French ministers on the subject. This he did when on 2 November he had an interview with de Selves. The new project, he explained, could hardly recommend itself to the foreign minister since it 'contained elements of danger to the foreign policy of France if the Entente was intended to continue its task of preserving peace whilst protecting the solid interests of France and England'. He therefore advised de Selves to return to the draft which he had proposed in August, and to seek compensation for France in Spain's southern zone." (ibid., pp.211-212).

Bertie's meeting with de Selves on 2 November 1911 was not quite as normal as indicated in the above quotation. The behaviour of de Selves, the French Foreign Minister, at this

meeting was bizarre to say the least. Once confronted with Bertie's account of Britain's opposition to the plan de Selves immediately caved in and agreed that it must be dropped. The convention in these situations is not for a Foreign Minister to formulate government policy in discussions with the ambassador of another country but to return to his Prime Minister to inform him of the sentiments which that ambassador is conveying and then it is up to the Prime Minister to decide what to do. But de Selves's behaviour was even more extreme. He informed Bertie that it was Regnault and Caillaux who were to blame for formulating such a plan and he complained bitterly about his treatment by Caillaux and the way the Prime Minister treated him through the use of unofficial agents. As de Selves was the Foreign Minister and close to the Quai d'Orsay group which had consciously obstructed Caillaux's communications with Berlin it is no wonder that the Prime Minister had to resort to subterfuge but for de Selves to reveal these things to the ambassador of another country verges on treason (it certainly would have been so treated under Section 2 of the British Official Secrets Act which came into law earlier that year in August 1911).

The fact that de Selves, in such circumstances, thought it proper to share such sensitive information with the British ambassador is telling. It appears that from this point, the point when it became obvious that the Regnault plan would not be tolerated by Britain, the Quai d'Orsay and the French imperialists decided to abandon Caillaux to his fate. The meeting with Bertie was in fact preparatory to the meeting between Bertie and Caillaux which took place the following day (3 November). It was at this meeting that Caillaux's fate was effectively sealed. He insisted that the terms of the Regnault plan should be accepted by Britain and that if Britain persisted in her opposition to French claims on Spanish territory "French public opinion would be greatly irritated and there would be a danger of France and England falling out". A further meeting on 4 November when both men were the guests of the President Armand Fallières at a shooting party at Rambouillet only served to widen the rift with Caillaux observing that "friendship with England would cost dear to France if her legitimate aspirations were to be opposed by England" and blamed Britain's military weakness for his inability to resist the extent of Germany's claims in compensation for the French invasion of Morocco.

"Had 200,000 British troops been available in support of France, he would, he claimed, have rejected Germany's demands. 'It was a question', he said, of whether France 'could not have come to more satisfactory terms with Germany without the entente on the Morocco and other questions'. If it had not been for her understanding with England, France, he reasoned, 'could long ago have come to terms with Germany'. . . . He [Bertie] told him that he thought the safety of France from attack had been due to Germany's fear of the British fleet, and that if there had been a war 150,000 troops might have been furnished by Great Britain. These Caillaux claimed would have been inadequate, and he dismissed Bertie's claim that the Royal Navy could have guarded the French coastline against attack with the assertion that mines and submarines would have sufficed to meet this threat." (ibid., p.214).

In Britain Caillaux's position (although he was forced to deny this in a subsequent meeting with Bertie) seemed to be one in which he was prepared, under the right circumstances, to contemplate a situation in which the *Entente* 'would no longer play any part' (Crowe). But of course the British Foreign Office could always depend upon their friends in the 'bureaux'

of the Quai d'Orsay and elsewhere to encourage dissent from Caillaux's position:

'The foreign office was, however, aware that Caillaux's colleagues might not be prepared to support him in seeking to revise the Franco-Spanish convention. Fallières [the French President - ED], whom de Selves had briefed on British objections to this course, had told Bertie he thought any discussions with Spain should be based on the 1904 accords, and he had promised to use his influence with the cabinet. Moreover, as Delcassé was one of the authors of the entente, and the minister of marine in Caillaux's government, Crowe evidently felt he would be sympathetic to British wishes, and suggested that Bertie contact him. But Bertie's inclination seems to have been to leave to de Selves and Fallières the task of persuading Caillaux to drop the 'project Renault'. Bertie was confident that if Caillaux were denied British assistance at Madrid, he would 'reconsider his position' . . ." (ibid., p.215).

But despite his supposed inclination towards a 'hands-off' approach Bertie did not just "leave [it] to de Selves and Fallières" to persuade Caillaux to drop the 'project Renault'. He took steps to 'encourage dissent'. Caillaux, as the target of such dissent, was quick to identify its source. On 18 November 1911, during the interval of a performance at the Paris opera in honour of the King of Serbia, Caillaux openly accused Bertie of interference in French politics behind his back and in the presence of other diplomats referred to the ambassador as 'l'homme terrible' and went on to accuse him of waging a campaign against him. Although Bertie denied the accusation it was a very diplomatic denial. On his own admission (and in apparent contradiction of his disavowal) Bertie did, between 4 and 18 November, have meetings with several leading and influential French politicians:

"These included four former foreign ministers, Cruppi, Delcassé, Stéphane Pichon, and Alexandre Ribot; a prominent conservative member of the foreign affairs commission of the chamber, Denys Cochin; and one of the chief spokesmen of the parti colonial, Eugène Etienne." (ibid., p.216).

Bertie, in very diplomatic fashion, denied that these meetings constituted a campaign against Caillaux by insisting that in each case he had allowed the politicians to seek him out and did not seek them out for the meeting and in any case he had only replied to questions and did not volunteer an opinion in advance of such questions! The timing of Bertie's non-existent campaign (from 4 to 18 November) was no accident. The

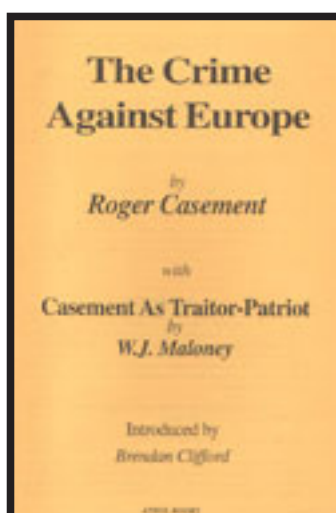
Franco-German Agreement was signed on 4 November 1911 and represented the closing of the international crisis caused by the French colonialist-inspired invasion of Morocco seven months earlier. However, despite some initial euphoria at war being averted, the absence of any compensating achievement in terms of Spanish Morocco for the loss of French territory in the Cameroon/Congo was laid bare as a wound to French prestige and was thus exploited by Caillaux's enemies. In the midst of Bertie's campaign, on 8 November, *Le Matin* published the terms of the 1904 Franco-Spanish Agreement and the French public learned for the first time that France was to be debarred from the Mediterranean coastline of Morocco. The result was an upsurge in public indignation and the leak appears to have been a broadside by the Caillaux camp to muster such indignation behind his drive to confront the British in his attempts to wrest Spanish territory in Morocco. His British-briefed opponents then responded in a way not anticipated by Caillaux:

"His opponents likewise seized upon reports of what he had said to Bertie, and of his alleged threats to foment a revolution in Spain (he had threatened to encourage unrest in Spain as a way of diminishing that country's ability to withstand France's takeover of Spanish territory in Morocco), as evidence of his desire to effect a radical change in France's foreign relations. Already denounced for having conspired with the Germans, Caillaux now stood accused of being prepared to forfeit France's entente with England." (ibid., p.217)

Thus, by the time of the signing of the Franco-German Agreement on Morocco, despite dissipating an international crisis not of his making, Caillaux was left stranded because of the joint efforts of the British government and the French anti-German imperialists - the very people who had been responsible for causing the crisis in the first place. Although the French Chamber of Deputies sanctioned the agreement with Germany Caillaux's hold on power was significantly weakened. By early December he had recognised the reality of his position and abandoned his support for a French takeover of Spanish territories in Morocco. But this did not help as the subsequent debate in the senate showed that opposition to him had extended into nationalists and moderate republican circles. All that was left was the *coup de grâce* delivered by his treacherous Foreign Minister de Selves who, during the Senate examination of the Franco-German Agreement, pointedly revealed that Caillaux had used unofficial lines of communication to negotiate with Germany and thus expanded the examination into areas that could not but damage him in the eyes of the more moderate political elements in the Senate. □

(Continued from p. 9)

64 Report on the WFTU debate to a meeting of ISK trade unionists, 'Bericht über Gewerkschaftskonferenz im M[itglieder] V[ersammlung], 30.-31. Juni 1944', 9.9.1944, in AsD NL Hansen, Ordner 6. *Landesgruppe* leaders associated with the ISK believed its most effective strategy against Communist influence was to base its position on Eisenhower's directive of March 1944 on the "freedom of economic organisations". See memo by 'Trade Union Centre for German Workers in Great Britain', 'Re: IFTU Project for the Reconstruction of the International Trade Union Movement', n.d. (early 1944), in AsD Best. IJB/ISK, Box 54; also 'The OSS and the Labour Movement - How European Trade Unionists Operated behind German Lines', *The New Leader*, 31.8.1946.



The Crime Against Europe, by Roger Casement, with an introduction by Brendan Clifford

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# Separating Fact From Fiction: Merkel, Solzhenitsyn, Khrushchev and Putin on Crimea.

By Manus O’Riordan

Perhaps I was too kind to Angela Merkel in the March issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs* as she offered what I considered sound advice to Kiev on the concerns of Russian speakers in Eastern Ukraine. In my recoil from Ireland’s own Pat Cox stirring the pot to boiling point for the subsequent Kiev coup, and then calling for NATO observers to be dispatched to the borders of Crimea, was I far too willing to clutch at any straw that might act as a force for peace? True, Merkel’s original point was one which she went on to reiterate on her visit to Kiev this August 23. But the German Chancellor is also a leader who has continuously kept the pot boiling in demanding a reversal of the reunification of Crimea with Russia, which she persists in denouncing as an “annexation”. The Crimean peninsula has over time been mooted as the appropriate homeland for a variety of nationalities, but Merkel’s endorsement of a whimsical totalitarian “Ukrainian” impulse on the part of that Soviet dictator of the proletariat, Nikita Khrushchev, is the most farcical. As the Ukrainian crisis intensified last March 6, CNN interviewers put the same question to both Merkel and Ireland’s own gift of our native daughter to global “humanitarian” warfare, the US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power. How come they both now opposed Crimea’s right of self-determination to secede from Ukraine and reunite with Russia, while previously both had loudly championed Kosovo’s unconstitutional secession from Serbia, in direct contravention of a UN Security Council resolution on that country’s territorial integrity? Both Power and Merkel answered as if with one voice. Merkel’s own peculiar brand of sophistry maintained that one key difference was that the Crimean crisis had arisen out of the blue, while Kosovo had been brewing for a long time.

Now, if any European region had been brewing for centuries, it was Crimea. As the “Ballad of Patrick Sheehan” by the Fenian Charles Kickham described the Irish cannon fodder for Britain’s Crimean War against Russia: “I awoke before Sevastopol and not in Aherlow”. Under the heading of “We already paid the ultimate price in Crimea – we must not do so again”, the *Irish Examiner* columnist Victoria White wrote last February 27:

“We have been here before. Crimea, today described as the ‘flashpoint’ of the Ukraine crisis, was a ‘flashpoint’ in the 19th century that claimed 800,000 lives. When I say ‘we’ I mean we, the Irish. 30,000 Irish men lost their lives in the Crimean War (1853-1856) between Britain and Russia. A victory banquet was held in Dublin in 1856 for 5,000 guests. When I set out to research the Crimean War ... I read an absolutely amazing statistic: in the parishes of Whitegate, Aghada and Farsid, Co Cork, one-third of the male population died in the Crimean War. We have largely forgotten those men and the war in which they died... We should not forget. The ‘flashpoints’ created by imperial ambitions which erupted so spectacularly during the First World War have not gone away. The beautiful, temperate Crimean peninsula, whose coastline has been compared to that of Amalfi, is still strategic territory, giving Russia access to the Black Sea. This is the only way Russia can gain access to Europe by sea, excluding the Baltic, which can easily be blocked by northern powers... We can’t understand today’s crisis in Crimea without understanding her past, which is why we’ve got to teach history and we’ve got to learn it. Crimea

is a holy land for Russians... When the Ottoman Empire lost Crimea to Russia in 1783 it was their first loss of territory to a Christian power... Catherine the Great made every effort to get Muslim Tatars to leave Crimea, whether by punitive taxation, land seizures, forced labour or physical intimidation. By 1800, a third of the Crimean Tatar population had left for the Ottoman Empire, over 100,000 people. They were replaced by Russians and other Eastern Christian settlers, some of them refugees from the Ottoman Empire. This started a trend... It suited France to build her influence by attempting to form a pan-Catholic front against Orthodox Russia. Britain leapt in with France to defend Turkey to safeguard her interests in the region. The British public became terrified by the ‘menace’ posed by the fastest growing empire on earth, imagining a Russian takeover of central Asia and even India. So there you had it: a pretext for war. The pretext is still there. The mid-1800s is not as long ago as we’d like to believe it is. Stalin, whose vision for Russian power was not dissimilar from that of the tsars, expelled the Crimean Tatars. After the Soviet collapse, as many as 300,000 returned. When you place Crimea in her historic context, it is not at all surprising that she is loyal to Russia and Russia is loyal to her; nor is it surprising that your average Tatar wants the hell out of Mother Russia. And it’s not surprising that Ukrainian nationalists look to Europe. Nor is it surprising that Russia resents that... It is wholly understandable that autonomous Crimea should want to stay with Russia, not with Ukraine, even if Ukraine looks to Europe... The simplistic idea that Europe is good and Russia is bad is no basis for progress or peace. As the Crimea crisis deepens, we must remember that we have been here before. Four world powers with imperial ambitions — France, Britain, Russia and Turkey — believed God was on their side and their side only, For which blind folly a third of the men in Whitegate, Aghada and Farsid paid the ultimate price.”

And yet Merkel keeps insisting that Russia must yield up Crimea to Kiev. As the *EUObserver* reported: “German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 13 March told the Bundestag it is ‘shameful’ to compare the independence of Kosovo with the referendum for independence in Crimea and called on Russia to stop its actions in Ukraine or face economic sanctions. ‘In Kosovo we had years in which the international community had no power to intervene while Slobodan Milosevic carried out his ethnic cleansing. NATO then decided to act alone because Russia continuously blocked any UN mandate on Serbia. That situation is in no way similar to what is happening today in Ukraine’, she said. ‘In my opinion it is shameful to compare Crimea to Kosovo. And even if there had been other breaches of international law – Kosovo not being one of them – Russia’s actions in Ukraine are still a breach of international law’, she added. Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this month justified a decision to send troops to Crimea by comparing it to the international intervention in Kosovo in the late 1990s. He said he wanted to protect ethnic Russians, who make up the majority of the population on the Crimean peninsula.... Merkel noted that the independence referendum called by Crimean authorities, and advanced from 25 May to 16 March, is in violation of Ukraine’s constitution because it was not approved at national level... The sanctions move is unpopular

in Germany. A recent poll showed only 24 percent in favour of economic sanctions while 69 percent believe it would not help solve the Crimea crisis.”

*Radio Free Europe* reported on a meeting Merkel held with Ukrainian Prime Minister Yatsenyuk in Berlin on 28 May: “German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the lessons of two world wars have led her to take a firm stance against Russia’s annexation of Ukraine’s territory of Crimea. At a May 28 opening of an exhibition on World War One, Merkel said Russia’s annexation of Crimea was unacceptable, as it upset Europe’s postwar order.” And, under the heading of “Merkel reaffirms Crimea must be Ukrainian”, *Kyiv Post* could report with glee Merkel’s remarks at her press conference in the Ukrainian capital this 23 August: “President Poroshenko thanked Merkel, who visited Kyiv for the first time since 2008, ahead of the country’s August 24 Independence Day, and the important meeting of Ukraine’s president with Russian leader Vladimir Putin on August 26 in Minsk.... Merkel at the same time stressed Ukraine has to secure rights of Russian-speaking residents, who have to ‘feel belonging to Ukraine’. Their needs would be protected after efficient decentralization, Merkel added. She, however, did not support federalization of Ukraine, the idea promoted by Russia and supported by German vice-chancellor (and Social Democratic Party leader) Sigmar Gabriel, according to an interview to *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper. ‘In Ukraine decentralization is the same which Germany understands as federalization’, she said. **Merkel also reaffirmed that Crimea belongs to Ukraine, despite Herr Gabriel’s remarks that Ukraine has to forget about the Russian-occupied peninsula.** (My emphasis – MO’R). ‘It (annexation) was in violation to territorial integrity of Europe and if we recognize this principle than this may happen all over Europe... So it’s important to recognize the territorial integrity (of the borders established) after the Second World War’, she said.”

But, unlike Germany’s then Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who took the lead in egging on Croatia to secede from Yugoslavia (which, theoretically, it may have had a heavily qualified constitutional right to do so, but requiring the simultaneous agreement of Croatia’s own Serb minority), and which thus propelled the region into mutual ethnic slaughter, or the endorsement by Merkel herself of the NATO blitzkrieg bombing of Serbia to enforce Kosovo’s secession (for which there was no constitutional provision), Russia has done absolutely nothing to alter what Merkel purports to uphold as “the territorial integrity of the borders established after the Second World War”. For those borders included Crimea as an integral region of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the primary component of the USSR. This is not to deny that in defending the Soviet Union’s territorial integrity against the invasion by Hitler’s Nazi Germany, whole peoples, whether guilty or innocent, were made pay for the sins of those among them who had collaborated with the Nazis. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the most searing Russian critic of the whole course of Soviet history from Lenin to Stalin, as well as beyond both of them to Khrushchev, addressed as follows the fate of the Crimean Tatars in *The Gulag Archipelago*:

“When people today decry *the abuses of the cult*, they keep getting hung up on those years which are stuck in our throats, ’37 and ’38. (Note: All italics in these quotes are Solzhenitsyn’s own, with *the cult* referring to Khrushchev’s 1956 denunciation of the Stalin ‘personality cult’ and the consignment to the Gulag of much of the Communist Party elite in the party purges of 1937-38, the only issues that subsequently seemed to begin

troubling the ‘consciences’ of the Khrushchevite Communist Parties of the West, as they continued to hail Khrushchev himself in his far more significant 1956 role as the butcher of Budapest. The British & Irish Communist Organisation stood alone in recognising the significance of Solzhenitsyn’s critique, and the Soviet regime’s incapacity to cope with it, as a harbinger of its own eventual self-liquidation – MO’R). And memory begins to make it seem as though arrests were never made *before* or *after*, but only in those two years.... But just say ‘Nineteen thirty-seven’ to a Crimean Tatar, a Kalmyk, a Chechen, and he’ll shrug his shoulders... Within the over-all wave of those from formerly (Nazi German) occupied areas, there followed, one after another, the quick and compact waves of the nationalities which had transgressed: In 1943, the Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars; In 1944, the Crimean Tatars. They would not have been pushed out into eternal exile so energetically and swiftly had it not been that regular army units and military trucks were assigned to help the *Organs*. The military units gallantly surrounded the settlements, and, within twenty-four hours, with the speed of a parachute attack, those who had nested there for centuries past found themselves removed to railway stations, loaded by the trainload, and rushed off to Siberia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and the Russian North. Within one day their land and their property had been turned over to their ‘heirs’. What had happened to the (USSR’s ethnic) Germans at the beginning of the war now happened to these nationalities: they were exiled solely on the basis of *blood*. There was no filling out of questionnaires; Party members, Heroes of Labour, and heroes of the still-unfinished war were all sent along with the rest... But anti-Soviet formations made up of Soviet citizens were organized from the very start of the war. The first to support the Germans were the Lithuanians. In the one year we had been there we had aroused their deep, angry hostility! And then the SS-Galicia Division was created from Ukrainian volunteers. And Estonian units afterwards. In the fall of 1941, guard companies appeared in Byelorussia. And a Tatar battalion in Crimea. We ourselves had sown the seed of all this! Take, for example, our stupid twenty-year policy of closing and destroying the Moslem mosques in Crimea. And compare that with the farsighted conqueror Catherine the Great, who contributed state funds for building and expanding the Crimean mosques. And the Hitlerites, when they arrived, were smart enough to present themselves as their defenders... We soon discovered that there really were Russians fighting against us and that they fought harder than any SS men.” (Vol 1, 1974, pp 24-25, 84 and 253-4).

“Even to *Him* (Solzhenitsyn’s italics for his *bête noire*, Stalin – MO’R), of course, the answer did not become clear quite so suddenly. He once even committed himself to the incautious view that ‘there never has been and never can be an instance of anyone in the USSR becoming an object of persecution because of his national origin’. In the twenties all those minority languages were encouraged; it was endlessly dinned into Crimea that it was Tatar, Tatar, and nothing but Tatar; it even had the Arabic alphabet, and all the signs were in Tatar. Then it turned out that this was ... all a mistake... The business of banishment was immeasurably improved and speeded up when they drove the first *special settlers* into exile... Then the Great Father gave orders that this word be applied to banished nations... From the air or from high up in the mountains it was probably a magnificent sight. The whole Crimean peninsula (newly liberated in April 1944) echoed with the hum of engines and hundreds of motorized columns crawled snakelike, on and on along roads straight and crooked... The motorized columns took the Tatars to the stations, and there they went on waiting in their trains for days on end, wailing, and singing mournful



songs of farewell. (In the 1860s the landowners and the administration of Tavrida Province petitioned the government to expel all the Crimean Tatars to Turkey. Alexander II refused. In 1943 the Gauleiter of Crimea made the same request. Hitler refused.) ... All that the exiles have left behind them – their houses, wide open and still warm, their belongings lying in disorder, the home put together and improved by ten or even twenty generations – passed without differentiation to the agents of the punitive organs, then some of it to the state, some to neighbours belonging to more fortunate nations... One final thing made the principle of uniformity absolute, raised it to the height of perfection – the secret decree did not spare even members of the Communist Party in the ranks of these worthless nations. No need then to check Party cards – another relief. Besides, the Communists could be made to work twice as hard as the rest in their new place of exile, and everybody would be satisfied... The reader has seen throughout this book that from the very beginning of the Stalin age there have been no *politicals* in our country. The millions driven past while you watched, all those millions were merely common *criminals*. Besides, merry, mouthy Nikita Sergeyeovich (Khrushchev) took so many bows from so many platforms. *Politicals?* Not a one! We just don't have them!.. Not that we altogether believed it – but for practical purposes we accepted that there were no longer any politicals in jail. Well, yes, even today (1968) ... the curse has not been lifted from the Crimean Tatars – but very soon, no doubt. (Crimean Tatars were not, in fact, permitted to return to their native land until the mid-1980s – MO'R)... And Nikita was there, glued to his platform... 'Now everyone in our country can breathe freely ... with no need to worry about the present or the future.' March 8, 1963." (Vol 3, 1978 edition, pp 385-6, 389-90 and 506).

And how had “merry, mouthy” Nikita Sergeyeovich addressed such issues in his historic 1956 denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union? Khrushchev indicted Stalin for the collective punishment of whole nationalities, as follows:

“The main roles and the main credit for the victorious ending of the war belong to our Communist Party, to the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and to the tens of millions of Soviet people uplifted by the Party. (*Thunderous and prolonged applause in the hall.*)

Comrades, let us reach for some other facts. The Soviet Union justly is considered a model multinational state because we have assured in practice the equality and friendship of all of the peoples living in our great Fatherland. All the more monstrous are those acts whose initiator was Stalin and which were rude violations of the basic Leninist principles behind our Soviet state's nationalities policies. We refer to the mass deportations of entire nations from their places of origin, together with all Communists and Komsomols without any exception. This deportation was not dictated by any military considerations. Thus, at the end of 1943, when there already had been a permanent change of fortune at the front in favor of the Soviet Union, a decision concerning the deportation of all the Karachai from the lands on which they lived was taken and executed. In the same period, at the end of December, 1943, the same lot befell the Kalmyks of the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic. In March, 1944, all the Chechens and Ingushi were deported and the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic was liquidated. In April, 1944, all Balkars were deported from the territory of the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Republic to faraway places and their Republic itself was renamed the Autonomous Kabardian Republic. Ukrainians avoided meeting this fate only because there were too many of them and there

was no place to which to deport them. Otherwise, Stalin would have deported them also. (*Laughter and animation in the hall.*) No Marxist-Leninist, no man of common sense can grasp how it is possible to make whole nations responsible for inimical activity, including women, children, old people, Communists and Komsomols, to use mass repression against them, and to expose them to misery and suffering for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons.”

And? Yes, well, and? Khrushchev did not utter a single word about the Crimean Tatars, of whose total exile he fully approved. And his playing to the Ukrainian gallery was on a par with his recent “gifting” of Crimea to Ukrainian administration. Solzhenitsyn had made no mention of Ukrainians in connection with Crimea, precisely because that was one “national question” devoid of any significance. There was only one other “national question” of relevance to the Crimean stage, although Solzhenitsyn seemed to be writing of it with his tongue at least partly in his cheek, as that Russian Holy Man intoned: “Exiles of the twenties recall that the only live and militant party at the time was the Zionist Socialist Party with its vigorous youth organization, Hashomer, and its legal ‘Hehalutz’ organization, which existed to establish Jewish agrarian communes in Crimea. In 1926 the whole Central Committee was jailed, and in 1927 indomitably cheerful boys and girls of fifteen, sixteen, and under were taken from Crimea and exiled. They were sent to Turtkul and other strict places. This really was a party – close-knit, determined, sure that its cause was just. Their aim, however, was not one which all could share, but private and particular: to live as a nation, in a Palestine of their own. The Communist Party, which had voluntarily disowned its fatherland, could not tolerate narrow nationalism in others... Admittedly a national home in Crimea was not the Zionist dream in its purest form, and perhaps it was Stalin's joke to invite this Mediterranean people to adopt Birobidian, on the edge of the taiga (on the Siberian border with China – MO'R), as their second Palestine.” (Vol 3, pp 345-6).

In 1971, the year that Khrushchev died, his ‘secret’ memoirs were published in the West. While loud in his condemnation of some, but only some, of Stalin's executions, his views on the strategic significance of Crimea, and of the approach to be adopted in respect of both Tatar and Jewish nationalist ambitions in respect of that territory, did not differ one *iota* from those of Stalin. Khrushchev recalled: “During the retreat of the Hitlerite armies from the Soviet Union our troops engaged and destroyed the Germans near Kishinev (in Moldova – MO'R), then pursued the enemy across the border into Rumania. At the beginning of the war, Hitler had promised (the Rumanian fascist dictator) Antonescu the annexation of Crimea in exchange for Rumania's participation in the war against the Soviet Union. Hitler was no miser when it came to making promises.” (*Khrushchev Remembers*, Vol 2, p 227).

But Khrushchev was himself no miser in making Crimean promises, although to Ukrainians rather than Jews. He also purported to recall: “At the end of the war, after our defeat of the Germans, I recall an organization had been formed called the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee of the Sovinformbureau (Soviet Bureau of Information). It was set up gathering positive materials about our country, about the activities of our Soviet Army against the common enemy, Hitlerite Germany, and for the distribution of these materials to the Western press, principally in America where there is a large, influential circle of Jews. The committee was composed of Jews who occupied high positions in the Soviet Union and was headed by Lozovsky, a member of the Central Committee and former chairman of

Profintern (the Trade Union International). Another member was Mikhoels, the most prominent actor of the Yiddish theatre. Yet another was (Soviet Foreign Minister) Molotov's wife, Comrade Zhemchuzhina. I think this organization was first created at the suggestion of Molotov, although it may have been Stalin's own idea... Once the Ukraine had been liberated, a paper was drafted by members of the Lozovsky committee. It was addressed to Stalin and contained a proposal that Crimea be made a Jewish Soviet Republic within the Soviet Union after the deportation from Crimea of the Crimean Tatars. Stalin saw behind this proposal the hand of American Zionists operating through the Sovinformbureau. The committee members, he declared, were agents of American Zionism. They were trying to set up a Jewish state in Crimea in order to wrest Crimea away from the Soviet Union and to establish an outpost of American imperialism on our shores which would be a direct threat to the security of the Soviet Union. Stalin let his imagination run wild in this direction... The investigation of the group took a long time, but in the end almost all of them came to a tragic end. Lozovsky was shot... A question of substance: was it necessary to create a Jewish Union or autonomous Republic within the Russian Federation or within the Ukraine? I don't think it was. A Jewish autonomous Region (Birobidzhan in Siberia) had already been created which still nominally exists, so it was hardly necessary to set up one in Crimea. But this question was never discussed in substance. We had been conditioned to accept Stalin's reasoning, and we gave in to his absolute authority. He contended that if a Jewish Republic were created in the Crimea, then Zionism, which is rampant in America, would gain a foothold in our country. That was all there was to it." (Vol 1, pp 279-281).

So, two decades later, Khrushchev shed crocodile tears for Lozovsky, and yet it is clear that as far as Crimea was concerned, he and Stalin were agreed on certain essentials, the exile of the Tatar population and total opposition to any idea of its transformation into a Jewish autonomous Republic. In the April and May 2011 issues of *Irish Political Review* I wrote a two part series on the 1952 Soviet trial and execution of Solomon Lozovsky, accompanied in the April issue by "The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee – Some Context", an *IPR* editorial critique of what I had written, all available on [www.atholbooks.org](http://www.atholbooks.org) as free downloads. In my view, the proud Jewish Stalinist Lozovsky, who had been severely tortured prior to the trial, was innocent of charges of Zionism, as he defiantly insisted on proclaiming in court. He had, however, been framed by the testimony of the Soviet Yiddish poet Itzik Fefer, who had not been subjected to even the mildest of torture in any way whatsoever, and whom Lozovsky accused of operating according to a very definite Zionist agenda in his latest role as felon setter:

Lozovsky:

"I plead guilty to nothing... I haven't read Yiddish in sixty years. Can I really bear responsibility for the fact that a newspaper that came out under the direct control of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee printed nationalistic articles? I am stating here nothing that was written in *Eynikayt* (the Yiddish-language newspaper of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee – MO'R) had anything to do with me directly or indirectly. When I was told that they needed a Yiddish writer, I would help them, and that was it... I cannot say who was involved in drafting the letter about Crimea. I know that three people came to see me about it: Mikhoels, Epshteyn, and Fefer. I told them at the time that this matter looked very difficult to me from the practical standpoint because Jews were all urbanites, and Crimea had to be settled in two to three years, which could mean transferring entire collective farms there. It would take fifty to sixty years

to settle Jews in Crimea, which would not do the Soviet Union any good. But because I had no objection in principle to settling Jews in Crimea or elsewhere, I looked at their draft, and all I said was, 'Why do you write about the sufferings of the Jews? That's well known. Why are you padding the letter? Cut the poetry and leave in your arguments about resettlement.' On the whole, I had my doubts how this would be carried out in a practical sense... When I read the third volume of Fefer's 'collected works' (Itzik Fefer's 'accusations' against his co-defendants – MO'R) I understood what it was all about. Fefer's testimony touches on about a hundred people unknown to me and whom he keeps on slandering, but he says not a word about himself... What is the political significance of all this? I will be completely candid. There is a very carefully thought-out criminal intention here to draw as many people as possible into the ranks of the accused and then go out with a bang, to draw in as many people as possible, so that it leaks out abroad through the Israeli Embassy or Mission... I declare that Fefer is doing all of this in order to launch a campaign abroad against the Soviet government through the agency of Israeli Missions vis-à-vis the closure of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and *Eynikayt*. That is the political meaning of all this."

Slav and Jew, Stalinist and Zionist, were all agreed on the expulsion of the Crimean Tatars. The then-Stalinist Khrushchev wanted the ethnically-cleansed areas of the peninsula further re-populated by Slav settlers, both Russian and Ukrainian, the Zionist Fefer wanted it re-populated by Jewish settlers, while the Jewish Stalinist Lozovsky remained quite indifferent, but highly sceptical of the Jewish proposal. In 2011 the US academic Grover Furr published a book with the lengthy title of *Khrushchev lied: the evidence that every 'revelation' of Stalin's (and Beria's) 'crimes' in Nikita Khrushchev's infamous 'secret speech' to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is provably false*. Furr, Professor of English at Montclair State University in New Jersey, systematically examined every one of the 61 allegations made against Stalin in Khrushchev's 1956 speech and checked them against primary sources from the former Soviet Union's archives. But he also went one step further. Even though Khrushchev had levelled no charges against Stalin regarding the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, since he fully agreed with Stalin on this particular measure, Furr decided to address it since others had denounced it as a Stalin crime, and he proceeded to link it to the deportation of those other nationalities whose deportation Khrushchev had denounced. Khrushchev claimed of the wartime deportations of Chechens and Ingush, "this deportation action was not dictated by any military considerations" and that there were only "hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons". Furr commented, "The military necessity for the deportations was to secure the Red Army's rear. In each of the cases of the deported nationalities, very large parts of the population were either actively or passively aiding the Germans in rebelling against the Soviet government, and constituted a serious danger to Soviet forces." Furr observed, "In 1939 there were 218,000 Crimean Tatars. That should mean about 22,000 men of military age – about 10% of the population. In 1941, according to contemporary Soviet figures, 20,000 Crimean Tatar soldiers deserted the Red Army. By 1944 20,000 Crimean Tatar soldiers had joined the Nazi forces and were fighting against the Red Army." And, "In 1943 there were about 450,000 Chechens and Ingush in the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (CHASSR). This should have meant about 40,000-50,000 men of age for military service. In 1942, at the height of the Nazis' military successes, 14,576 men were called to military service, of whom 13,560, or 93%, deserted and either



hid or joined rebel or bandit groups in the mountains. There was massive collaboration with German forces on the part of the Chechen and Ingush population.”

Even if one has reservations about some of Furr’s statistical deductions, there were other statistical, demographic realities which rendered Crimea no longer suitable for reverting to Tatar rule or, still less, to be reborn as a Jewish Republic. During Tsarist rule the Crimea had been comprehensively Russified. Following the Crimean War of 1853-56 against the combined invading forces of Britain, France and Turkey, there was another Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, in the wake of which 200,000 – out of a total Crimean Tatar population of 300,000 – emigrated to the Ottoman Empire. During the Soviet era the Crimean Tatar population increased to 240,000, but this never exceeded 20 percent of the then pre-War population of the Crimea. Hitler, of course, promised them power beyond their numbers. According to Yitzhak Arad, “In January 1942 a company of Tatar volunteers was established in Simferopol under the command of Einsatzgruppe II. This company participated in anti-Jewish manhunts and murder actions in the rural regions.” (Yitzhak Arad, 2009, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, University of Nebraska Press, p 211). As already recorded, the Crimean Tatar population was deported *en masse* by the Red Army in 1944. Following their permitted return from the mid-1980s, Tatars now constitute about 12 percent of Crimea’s current population.

And what of Jews in Crimea? Despite best efforts, they never reached a critical demographic mass. As Solzhenitsyn related, even explicitly Zionist Hebrew-speaking *kibbutzim* had been permitted until the crackdown of 1926-27. But he omitted to refer to the fact that there nonetheless remained a continuous growth in the Jewish population due to the encouragement and formation of Communist Yiddish-speaking *kolkhozes* or collective farms. According to the 1897 Tsarist census, there were 28,700 Jews living in Crimea, or 5.1 percent of the population. Under Soviet rule their numbers came to 39,900 (6.1 percent) in 1926. In the 1930s the Soviet state allocated 342,000 hectares of Crimean land for Jewish settlement, to which also returned some communities of disillusioned Zionists from Palestine, but less than half of the allocated hectares were taken up. By 1938 the Jewish population of Crimea had risen to a peak of 60,000, of whom 20,000 lived on collective farms around the self-governing Jewish districts of Freidorf and Larindorf. Thousands fled for their lives to other parts of the USSR ahead of the Nazi invaders in June 1941. But others could not. According to a provisional Nazi report from the beginning of 1942, as many as 20,149 Jews from western Crimea alone had already been “liquidated”. On April 16, 1942 Crimea was officially declared *Judenrein*. Under Soviet rule the Jewish population of Crimea came back up from zero to 26,400 in 1959, or just 2.2 percent of the population. Following the break-up of the USSR, Ukrainian rule and emigration to Israel and the West, Crimea’s Jewish population has fallen back to 15,000, and was overwhelmingly supportive of reunification with Russia.

With the defeat of Nazi Germany, Crimea once again reverted to the USSR as an integral territory of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. How on earth, then, did Ukraine ever enter the picture? Khrushchev whinged about having been conditioned to give in to Stalin’s reasoning and his absolute authority. But this was how Khrushchev himself insisted his own subordinates should knuckle under him. Under the heading of “USSR’s Nikita Khrushchev gave Russia’s

Crimea away to Ukraine in only 15 minutes”, *Pravda* revealed this past February 19:

“The Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union passed the decree to hand over the Crimean region from the structure of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian SSR within the Soviet Union. Then-Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, virtually gave Crimea away to Ukraine. The delivery of the region from the Russian SSR to the Ukrainian SSR was just a formality during the years of the ‘indestructible’ Soviet Union. Ukraine received such a gift on the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its unification with Russia. It could never occur to anyone back in those days that the USSR would collapse, and that Ukraine would no longer be a part of it. Historians have a very simple explanation for Nikita Khrushchev’s generosity. He came to power after the death of Joseph Stalin, unmasked his cult and condemned repressions. However, Khrushchev was involved in a number of repression-related affairs before. He was conducting a struggle against ‘people’s enemies’ when he served as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party from 1938 to 1947... Khrushchev informed his comrades of the decision to deliver Crimea to Ukraine incidentally, on the way to lunch. ‘Yes, comrades, there is an opinion to deliver Crimea to Ukraine’, he said casually. No one dared to express any protests, because a word from the first face of the Communist Party was law. The agenda of the session of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which took place January 25, 1954, contained a question about the delivery of the Crimean region to the structure of the Ukrainian SSR. The discussion of the question took only 15 minutes. The participants at the meeting approved the decree, and the region was given away to Ukraine for free. Not a single protest was made; no one had any doubts about the decision. No one wondered how the population of Crimea would treat the decision (where there were more than three Russians for every Ukrainian). It turned out that such important issues as the territorial movement of regions could be solved without any difficulties at all. The question should have been submitted to the open discussion of the Supreme Council of the Russian SSR. Moreover, a referendum should have been conducted to find out the opinion of the residents of the two republics. Nothing of that happened. The Presidium of the Supreme Council gathered for a session on February 19, 1954 - only 13 of 27 members were present. There was no quorum, but the decision was adopted unanimously. The Supreme Council of Russia ruled in 1992 that the Crimean region had been delivered to Ukraine illegitimately. Now the region is called the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.”

On April 18 last *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* reported on how some of those who had maintained their silence in the face of Khrushchev’s bombast had nonetheless considered it a lunatic measure: “Immediately after he came to power as general secretary in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev, who had for many years been in charge of the Communist Party of Ukraine, decided to make the symbolic gesture to ensure he enjoyed strong support among the influential Ukrainian establishment. He did it in his typical arbitrary and headstrong manner, coming up with a proposal – at an agriculture sector gathering in the Kremlin – to hand Crimea to Ukraine as a gift. Dmitry Shepilov, a future Soviet foreign minister who was at that meeting, later wrote: ‘Khrushchev wanted to present Ukraine with a gift on a golden dish, so that the whole republic knew how generous he was and how he cared about Ukraine’s prosperity.’ ‘The Ukrainians will, of course, be delighted if we give Crimea to them. I think we shall be able to agree it with the Russian Federation, too. It’s

*just that we have to be smart about how we do it all'*, Khrushchev said, according to Mr Shepilov. Mr Shepilov's predecessor as Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, who was also at the meeting, said: *'This proposal is, of course, wrong. But it looks like we shall have to adopt it'.*"

In an April 4 interview, however, the dictator's son had tried to put a more favourable gloss on his father's actions:

"Sergei Khrushchev, the son of the Soviet leader who gave Crimea to Ukraine, says that his father never intended to separate Crimea from Russia and Russia will never give it back. When Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev transferred Crimea to Ukrainian control in 1954, it was simply for logistical and symbolic reasons, according to his son. Now, he swears, Russia will never give it back. Sergei Khrushchev has been living in the United States since emigrating from the Soviet Union in 1991 and is a naturalized American citizen... Khrushchev spoke to *The Daily Beast* ahead of a speech at Bryant University in Rhode Island... Back in 1954, when Nikita Khrushchev transferred Crimea to Ukrainian administration, the main reason was that construction of two major canals between Ukraine and Crimea was underway. Khrushchev wanted to streamline the process by placing both sides of the project under one administration, according to Sergei. The 300 year anniversary of the treaty that joined Ukraine to Russia was a happy coincidence, Sergei said. *'My father was the leader of the Soviet Union. Russia and Ukraine were two union republics, equal inside the Soviet Union'*, he added. *'For my father there was no difference because it was all inside one state.'* Khrushchev blames the decision to let Crimea go on Boris Yeltsin, who he said was distracted with his own ambitions and in 1991 told Ukrainian leaders they could have Crimea. *'I think my father would have been very unhappy with what Yeltsin decided to do'*, Khrushchev said. It's impossible to say how Nikita Khrushchev would have handed the current crisis in Ukraine because he never would have been able to imagine that the Soviet Union would be disbanded and disappear from the map, Sergei said... Ukraine historically had no identity and was simply an amalgamation of farmers who lived on the Russian periphery and applied to join Russia in the mid-17th Century, and even then it was only Eastern Ukraine, said Khrushchev. Western Ukraine joined them in 1945, but there are still essentially two countries there living together, he said."

But the only coherent analysis of the Crimean crisis had come in the March 18 Kremlin speech of Russia's President Vladimir Putin to Russian State Duma representatives and civil society representatives, which received minimal coverage in the West:

"Dear friends, we have gathered here today in connection with an issue that is of vital, historic significance to all of us. A referendum was held in Crimea on March 16 in full compliance with democratic procedures and international norms. More than 82 percent of the electorate took part in the vote. Over 96 percent of them spoke out in favour of reuniting with Russia. These numbers speak for themselves. To understand the reason behind such a choice it is enough to know the history of Crimea and what Russia and Crimea have always meant for each other. Everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptised. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought

Crimea into the Russian empire are also in Crimea. This is also Sevastopol – a legendary city with an outstanding history, a fortress that serves as the birthplace of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Kurgan and Sapun Ridge. Each one of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolising Russian military glory and outstanding valour. Crimea is a unique blend of different peoples' cultures and traditions. This makes it similar to Russia as a whole, where not a single ethnic group has been lost over the centuries. Russians and Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and people of other ethnic groups have lived side by side in Crimea, retaining their own identity, traditions, languages and faith. Incidentally, the total population of the Crimean Peninsula today is 2.2 million people, of whom almost 1.5 million are Russians, 350,000 are Ukrainians who predominantly consider Russian their native language, and about 290,000-300,000 are Crimean Tatars, who, as the referendum has shown, also lean towards Russia. True, there was a time when Crimean Tatars were treated unfairly, just as a number of other peoples in the USSR. There is only one thing I can say here: millions of people of various ethnicities suffered during those repressions, and primarily Russians. Crimean Tatars returned to their homeland. I believe we should make all the necessary political and legislative decisions to finalise the rehabilitation of Crimean Tatars, restore them in their rights and clear their good name. We have great respect for people of all the ethnic groups living in Crimea. This is their common home, their motherland, and it would be right – I know the local population supports this – for Crimea to have three equal national languages: Russian, Ukrainian and Tatar."

"Colleagues, In people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia. This firm conviction is based on truth and justice and was passed from generation to generation, over time, under any circumstances, despite all the dramatic changes our country went through during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the revolution, the Bolsheviks, for a number of reasons – may God judge them – added large sections of the historical South of Russia to the Republic of Ukraine. This was done with no consideration for the ethnic make-up of the population, and today these areas form the southeast of Ukraine. Then, in 1954, a decision was made to transfer the Crimean Region to Ukraine, along with Sevastopol, despite the fact that it was a federal city. This was the personal initiative of the Communist Party head Nikita Khrushchev. What stood behind this decision of his – a desire to win the support of the Ukrainian political establishment or to atone for the mass repressions of the 1930s in Ukraine – is for historians to figure out. What matters now is that this decision was made in clear violation of the constitutional norms that were in place even then. The decision was made behind the scenes. Naturally, in a totalitarian state nobody bothered to ask the citizens of Crimea and Sevastopol. They were faced with the fact. People, of course, wondered why all of a sudden Crimea became part of Ukraine. But on the whole – and we must state this clearly, we all know it – this decision was treated as a formality of sorts because the territory was transferred within the boundaries of a single state. Back then, it was impossible to imagine that Ukraine and Russia may split up and become two separate states. However, this has happened. Unfortunately, what seemed impossible became a reality. The USSR fell apart. Things developed so swiftly that few people realised how truly dramatic those events and their consequences would be. Many people both in Russia and in Ukraine, as well as in other republics hoped that the Commonwealth of Independent States that was created at the time would become the new common form of statehood. They were told that there would be a single currency, a single economic space, joint armed



forces; however, all this remained empty promises, while the big country was gone. It was only when Crimea ended up as part of a different country that Russia realised that it was not simply robbed, it was plundered. At the same time, we have to admit that by launching the sovereignty parade Russia itself aided in the collapse of the Soviet Union. And as this collapse was legalised, everyone forgot about Crimea and Sevastopol – the main base of the Black Sea Fleet. Millions of people went to bed in one country and awoke in different ones, overnight becoming ethnic minorities in former Union republics, while the Russian nation became one of the biggest, if not the biggest ethnic group in the world to be divided by borders. Now, many years later, I heard residents of Crimea say that back in 1991 they were handed over like a sack of potatoes. This is hard to disagree with. And what about the Russian state? What about Russia? It humbly accepted the situation. This country was going through such hard times then that realistically it was incapable of protecting its interests. However, the people could not reconcile themselves to this outrageous historical injustice. All these years, citizens and many public figures came back to this issue, saying that Crimea is historically Russian land and Sevastopol is a Russian city. Yes, we all knew this in our hearts and minds, but we had to proceed from the existing reality and build our good-neighbourly relations with independent Ukraine on a new basis. Meanwhile, our relations with Ukraine, with the fraternal Ukrainian people have always been and will remain of foremost importance for us. (*Applause*) Today we can speak about it openly, and I would like to share with you some details of the negotiations that took place in the early 2000s. The then President of Ukraine Mr Kuchma asked me to expedite the process of delimiting the Russian-Ukrainian border. At that time, the process was practically at a standstill. Russia seemed to have recognised Crimea as part of Ukraine, but there were no negotiations on delimiting the borders. Despite the complexity of the situation, I immediately issued instructions to Russian government agencies to speed up their work to document the borders, so that everyone had a clear understanding that by agreeing to delimit the border we admitted de facto and de jure that Crimea was Ukrainian territory, thereby closing the issue. We accommodated Ukraine not only regarding Crimea, but also on such a complicated matter as the maritime boundary in the Sea of Azov... What we proceeded from back then was that good relations with Ukraine matter most for us and they should not fall hostage to deadlock territorial disputes. However, we expected Ukraine to remain our good neighbour, we hoped that Russian citizens and Russian speakers in Ukraine, especially its southeast and Crimea, would live in a friendly, democratic and civilised state that would protect their rights in line with the norms of international law. However, this is not how the situation developed. Time and time again attempts were made to deprive Russians of their historical memory, even of their language and to subject them to forced assimilation. Moreover, Russians, just as other citizens of Ukraine are suffering from the constant political and state crisis that has been rocking the country for over 20 years.”

“I understand why Ukrainian people wanted change. They have had enough of the authorities in power during the years of Ukraine’s independence. Presidents, prime ministers and parliamentarians changed, but their attitude to the country and its people remained the same. They milked the country, fought among themselves for power, assets and cash flows and did not care much about the ordinary people. They did not wonder why it was that millions of Ukrainian citizens saw no prospects at home and went to other countries to work as day labourers. I would like to stress this: it was not some Silicon Valley they fled to, but to become day labourers. Last year alone almost 3 million people found such jobs in Russia. According to

some sources, in 2013 their earnings in Russia totalled over \$20 billion, which is about 12% of Ukraine’s GDP. I would like to reiterate that I understand those who came out on Maidan with peaceful slogans against corruption, inefficient state management and poverty. The right to peaceful protest, democratic procedures and elections exist for the sole purpose of replacing the authorities that do not satisfy the people. However, those who stood behind the latest events in Ukraine had a different agenda: they were preparing yet another government takeover; they wanted to seize power and would stop short of nothing. They resorted to terror, murder and riots. Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites executed this coup. They continue to set the tone in Ukraine to this day. The new so-called authorities began by introducing a draft law to revise the language policy, which was a direct infringement on the rights of ethnic minorities. However, they were immediately ‘disciplined’ by the foreign sponsors of these so-called politicians. One has to admit that the mentors of these current authorities are smart and know well what such attempts to build a purely Ukrainian state may lead to. The draft law was set aside, but clearly reserved for the future. Hardly any mention is made of this attempt now, probably on the presumption that people have a short memory. Nevertheless, we can all clearly see the intentions of these ideological heirs of Bandera, Hitler’s accomplice during World War II... Those who opposed the coup were immediately threatened with repression. Naturally, the first in line here was Crimea, the Russian-speaking Crimea. In view of this, the residents of Crimea and Sevastopol turned to Russia for help in defending their rights and lives, in preventing the events that were unfolding and are still underway in Kiev, Donetsk, Kharkov and other Ukrainian cities... As it declared independence and decided to hold a referendum, the Supreme Council of Crimea referred to the United Nations Charter, which speaks of the right of nations to self-determination. Incidentally, I would like to remind you that when Ukraine seceded from the USSR it did exactly the same thing, almost word for word. Ukraine used this right, yet the residents of Crimea are denied it. Why is that? Moreover, the Crimean authorities referred to the well-known Kosovo precedent – a precedent our western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation, when they agreed that the unilateral separation of Kosovo from Serbia, exactly what Crimea is doing now, was legitimate and did not require any permission from the country’s central authorities. Pursuant to Article 2, Chapter 1 of the United Nations Charter, the UN International Court agreed with this approach and made the following comment in its ruling of July 22, 2010, and I quote: ‘No general prohibition may be inferred from the practice of the Security Council with regard to declarations of independence’ and ‘General international law contains no prohibition on declarations of independence.’ Crystal clear, as they say... This happened in Yugoslavia; we remember 1999 very well. It was hard to believe, even seeing it with my own eyes, that at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one of Europe’s capitals, Belgrade, was under missile attack for several weeks, and then came the real intervention. Was there a UN Security Council resolution on this matter, allowing for these actions? Nothing of the sort. And then, they hit Afghanistan, Iraq, and frankly violated the UN Security Council resolution on Libya, when instead of imposing the so-called no-fly zone over it they started bombing it too. There was a whole series of controlled ‘colour’ revolutions. Clearly, the people in those nations, where these events took place, were sick of tyranny and poverty, of their lack of prospects; but these feelings were taken advantage of cynically. Standards were imposed on these nations that did not in any way correspond to their way of life, traditions, or these peoples’ cultures. As a result, instead of democracy and freedom, there was chaos, outbreaks in violence and a series

of upheavals. The Arab Spring turned into the Arab Winter... Members of the Federation Council, deputies of the State Duma, citizens of Russia, residents of Crimea and Sevastopol, today, in accordance with the people's will, I submit to the Federal Assembly a request to consider a Constitutional Law on the creation of two new constituent entities within the Russian Federation: the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and to ratify the treaty on admitting to the Russian Federation Crimea and Sevastopol, which is already ready for signing. I stand assured of your support."

And there is apparently a "European" consensus, ranging from strutting EU peacocks, headed by the Supreme P Cox himself, to the "conciliatory" German Chancellor Merkel, that Kiev's "rule of law" must be re-imposed on such a Crimea. □

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### **Letter from Eamon Dyas, 14 August 2014, in response to Geoffrey Alderman.**

"In my view, Palestinians who support Hamas - an unashamedly antisemitic entity - are at best seriously misguided and at worst palpably evil." - Geoffrey Alderman in the Jewish Chronicle, 8 August 2014.

This comment, though not the worst in terms of its attitude towards the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, betrays an ignorance of two essential truths. Firstly, Hamas is not anti-semitic. It is anti-Zionist and anti-Israel - not the same thing as anti-semitic. Secondly, it shows a complete failure to comprehend why the Palestinians support Hamas and dismisses such support as either misguided or evil. There is a gratuitous refusal to seek any logical explanation as to why the Palestinians support Hamas. It is as if the Palestinians existed in some sort of physical and economic vacuum where the overwhelming influence and control of their lives by Israel is of no account and where the manner in which that control is exercised by Israel does not compel Palestinians to support the most uncompromising body that defends them.

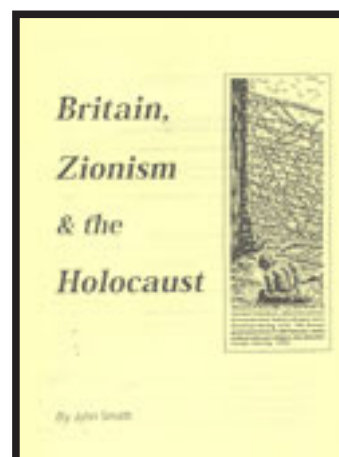
The context of Alderman's comment was the resignation from the Board of Deputies of British Jewry of Antony Cohen, the deputy of the Leeds Jewish Representative Council. It appears that at the plenary session of the Board of Deputies on July 20 last there was, what Alderman describes as "a passionate discussion of the war in Gaza". During that discussion Antony Cohen declared "I don't care about any Palestinians, I only care about the Jewish people in this country and in Israel. We are facing a tremendous danger." This resulted in ten other deputies objecting to his use of language in this way who took the view that it amounted to "racism" and "discrimination". Given the fact that the Board of Deputies of British Jewry consists of 265 Deputies representing 138 synagogues and 34 communal organisations it is rather depressing that only 10 objected to Antony Cohen's remarks. However, it seems that his remarks were referred to the Board's constitutional committee but before it could rule Cohen resigned. Geoffrey Alderman's comment was part of a column entitled "So Sue Me, Mister President" in which he defended Antony Cohen's remarks as not being racist and used the following argument:

"To begin with, we need to confront the absurdity of the argument that Cohen's remarks amounted to 'racism.' In a war people are entitled to take sides. During the Falklands War, a great many people in this country said - in public - that they did not care about the Argentinians. And some people - prominent in public life - actually supported the Argentinian position.

Cohen's remarks were in no sense racist. He did not offer any opinion as to the relative biological or ethnographic merits of the Palestinian and Jewish 'races,' but merely announced that he did not 'care' about Palestinians."

So Mr. Alderman believes that there is some equation between the Falklands War and the bombing of Gaza - a war in which two states fought each other over a disputed island and which was fought remotely by the armies of the two states in the South Atlantic Ocean. This was, to all intents and purpose, a symmetric war fought at some distance from the citizens of both states. How is Gaza similar? In the case of Gaza the war was brought to them by air, sea and land by an infinitely superior military force in the very centre of the area where the Palestinian citizens of Gaza lived. They were defenceless aside from a body of people who had no air force, no navy and no army at their disposal. This was an asymmetric war fought in the population areas of the citizens of one of the states. What was involved was a people against a sophisticated modern military machine. In those circumstances only one people was in danger despite Mr. Cohen's belief. It was not the Jewish people who were in danger during this war. And it was not the Jewish people who were suffering and in need of their fellow human's "care". When people said during the Falklands war that they did not care for Argentinians they were referring to those actually doing the warring - i.e. the Argentinian soldiers. They were not referring to the plight of the Argentinian people, who were not suffering as a result of that war. In the case of Gaza it was the Palestinian people who did the suffering and it was the State of the Jewish people which inflicted that suffering on the Palestinian people. There is no equation of suffering here. No symmetry that permits a balance of concern. When someone in that context says that they do not care for the Palestinians but only care for the Jewish people they are targeting the victims for no other reason than that they are different. It is a judgment not warranted by the relative suffering of both peoples but purely on the basis of a belief that somehow those actually suffering deserve it and because they deserve it the normal human caring response is invalid. There is more to racism Mr. Alderman than overt references to biological or ethnographical differences. □

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Britain, Zionism and the Holocaust  
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## RTE Goes Redmondite

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By Dave Alvey

A heavily advertised RTE TV panel discussion on the Great War hosted by John Bowman (5 August 2014), 'The Forgotten War? Ireland and World War 1', provided clear evidence, if evidence is needed at this stage, that Ireland's public service broadcasting organisation has sold its soul to British war culture in marking the centenary of the outbreak of war in 1914. In advance of the programme an openly Redmondite article by Bowman was published in the Irish Times headed, 'Time for Ireland to remember those who lost their lives in First World War' (Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2014). Bowman seems so caught up in tearing up Irish nationalism by the roots that he, in common with the entire corporate entity that is RTE, has abandoned any pretence of impartiality on what is, despite an apparent consensus in the media, a matter of public controversy.

The choice of panel speakers on the programme and their backgrounds was revealing: **Paul Bew**, professor of Irish politics at Queen's University Belfast, advisor to David Trimble when he led the Official Unionist Party and prime mover behind the now discredited Boston College project to record oral testimonies of the Northern troubles; **Catriona Pennell**, senior lecturer in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century British and Irish history at Exeter University with a research interest in Irish involvement in the Great War, and *protégée* of Professor David Fitzpatrick (a leading figure in anti nationalist historiography at Trinity College Dublin); **Edward Madigan** lecturer in Public History and First World War Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London and a leading member of the Centre for War Studies at Trinity College Dublin; and **Robert Ballagh** President of the Ireland Institute for Historical and Cultural Studies and coordinator of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1916 Rising in 1975. The balance of the programme was three speakers with academic knowledge of the subject plus the anchor on the Redmondite side against a token dissenter, Robert Ballagh.

For this reviewer the programme was a stitch up on at least three counts: the line-up of speakers was biased; in advance of the broadcast John Bowman had set the tone for the programme in a rather heavy promotional trailer emphasizing how the 1914-18 war had been 'forgotten' in Ireland with suitably solemn mood music; and at an intellectual level, Bowman's article in the Irish Times was overtly Redmondite as the following excerpt shows:

Cunningham was not alone among Irish nationalists to discover he had not returned to "a land fit for heroes". Many had gone to the war confident Ireland was among the small nations for whose freedom they were fighting. They now found it was Pearse's Ireland, not Redmond's, that they were expected to espouse as the "historically correct" aspiration for Irish nationalists.

There was little room for compromise. As WB Yeats put it: "who can talk of give and take . . . while those dead men are loitering there." Historian Nicholas Mansergh echoed Yeats's point. After the Rising, the minds of the living were overshadowed by the "rigid, inflexible doctrines of the 'martyred' dead". (<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/time-for-ireland-to-remember-those-who-lost-their-lives-in-first-world-war-1.1885196?page=1>)

### Dissident views against Redmondism in letters page

Strangely enough John Bowman's efforts to use his position in the media, presumably with the backing of RTE, to win

public support for a Redmondite take on the Great War met resistance. On the morning the programme was to be broadcast a raft of letters against Bowman's article was published in the Irish Times. The letters summarise the anti-Redmondite position quite well and can be found at:

<http://www.irishtimes.com/debate/letters/commemorating-the-dead-of-the-first-world-war-1.1887184>

We reproduce just one.

Sir, – Regarding the hoopla currently under way concerning our participation in the Great War some thoughts come to mind. Interestingly, this conflagration was not started by Germany, not looked for, not provoked. Neither was there any reality to the manias of the time about "poor little Belgium" or Germany's wish to "conquer the world". Both were mythical. Another curiosity was that the largest, most powerful, most feared army in the world at the time was not that of Germany but of France.

The fact is that during the countdown to August 1914 the "warmongering" Kaiser was frantically casting about among Europe's chancelleries for any expedient that might head off the catastrophe he, more than anyone, could see looming ahead. In the Wilhelmine era, Germany had risen immensely in the world, artistically, scientifically, industrially, so much so that as early as 1906 there existed high up in His Majesty's Government a group determined to have Britain declare war on Germany for the express purpose of crushing it the moment a suitable *casus belli* presented itself.

Poor deluded Redmond, crooning about the promised paltry bauble of "home rule", can hardly be blamed here. It was of their own volition that large numbers of Irishmen flooded into Britain's armies to further a cause as unworthy as any in history, i.e. to annihilate the finest, most active, creative and honourable people the world has seen since the fall of Rome, a people with whom we had never had any quarrel. Mark the event by all means, but, recalling Kipling's words "should any ask you why we died tell them – because our fathers lied". Mark it for the tragedy it was. Yours, etc,

JOHN CULLY, Co Dublin

This correspondence is so unusual I have summarized the main points below:

It is not true that nationalist Ireland discarded all memory of the war and not true that most Irish war veterans stood by their decision to join the British army. (Dr Brian Hanley)

The war was not started by Germany, on the contrary, a leading group within the British Government wanted to destroy Germany and worked hard at devising a cause of war. Supporting Britain in the war meant supporting an unworthy cause. (John Cully)

On the day of the post war victory parade in Dublin, a parade celebrating a war that Irish nationalists had joined to advance Irish self government, four Irish parliamentarians were arrested by the British authorities for participating in the democratically elected parliamentary assembly, Dail Eireann. (Donal Kennedy)

There is nothing to celebrate about the war. Many Irish participants joined up because of grinding poverty. Others were forced to enlist by their employers. In human terms it was a dire failure for all sides. (Marin de Burca)

We are now going overboard in commemorating the war. By all means hold commemoration events, but so many? (A Jones)

The percentage figures for participation in the British armed forces during the war were: 26% of Scottish men, 24% of Welsh men and 10% of Irish men including Ulster. Perhaps the war was not as popular here as some current studies would have us believe. (John Hanamy)

The persistent efforts to confer a new respectability on the British army under the guise of honouring the Irish war dead are not acceptable. We must eventually make a decision. Will we continue along the path of nation-building or do we see ourselves as part of the Anglosphere? (Tom Cooper)

A veritable deluge of Commemorations of the First World War is upon us ...to mark the beginning of that most horrendous sacrifice of innocent youth that goes by the name of the Great War. Wars to make the world safe for democracy were wrong whether in 1914, 1916, 1939 or two thousand years ago. (Michael Anderson)

Usually the editor of the Irish Times letters page tries to achieve a semblance of balance between pro and anti statements on any given topic; the publication of eight anti-Redmondite letters was therefore something unusual, an expression of a shift in public opinion perhaps. Needless to say this airing of dissident opinions had no effect on how the panel discussion was managed.

### **The panel discussion**

During the broadcast discussion the argument did not go completely to plan. Robert Ballagh was able to land some solid punches. But the stitch up was no less a stitch up for that. The following is not a complete verbatim transcript of the programme. It does however capture the gist of what was said during the discussion.

The programme commenced with an introduction from John Bowman given outside Dublin Castle in which he repeated points he had made in the programme advert: more Irish people fought in and more died in the Great War than in any other war, yet this war was somehow lost from national memory; the war changed the course of Irish history, so why was it ignored? The discussion was divided into four segments: the military and political context; the growth of public awareness of the horrors of the war; the connection between the Rising and the war; and commemoration of the war in Ireland. Each segment was prefaced by a short report from reporter Evelyn O'Rourke illustrated by photographs of the events and footage of the artillery bombardments and the like.

### **Section 1 the political and military context**

In recounting the political and military context of the war Evelyn O'Rourke recounted the chain of events that followed the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo. The only important event listed in the chain is Germany's decision to invade Belgium and Northern France. The story then moves to Ireland where she describes how the country was divided between pro and anti Home Rule movements, how, following Britain's declaration of war on Germany and its allies, Redmond encourages nationalists to join the British army because the Home Rule Bill has been placed on the Statute Book and how over 200,000 Irish males eventually enlist voluntarily. She finishes by asking were they merely cannon fodder.

John Bowman to Robert Ballagh: Why did the Irish join the British army in such numbers?

Robert Ballagh: There is no simple answer. Ulster volunteers signed up to stop Home Rule and their counterparts in the South may have joined for the opposite reason. Economic reasons

were very important. 1914 followed 1913 when workers suffered during the protracted lock out. There was no welfare in those days.

Catriona Perry: There were as many reasons for enlisting, as there were volunteers. Some enlisted because of the German invasion of Belgium which resonated with people in Ireland. Some joined for adventure, others because they were drunk, others because of unhappy marriages.

Paul Bew: Even if there was no Great War a compromise would have been agreed to avert civil war in Ireland. In the days following the Buckingham Palace talks of July 24 1914 the Redmondites agreed that no time limit would be applied to the exclusion of Ulster from control by a Dublin parliament, the details of how many counties would be negotiated later. The Germans thought that the British were so preoccupied with the Irish crisis that they would keep out of the war but this was wrong. The Redmondite position was that Irish nationalism had always maintained that they could be trusted to be England's friend in a time of crisis and so they could be trusted to have Home Rule; Parnell had said it and Redmond now said it. Redmond saw it as a matter of honour to support Britain in the war and above all else he was a man of honour.

Edward Madigan: The situation in Dublin was extremely tense. Following the Howth gun running episode the Kings Own Scottish Borderers opened fire on a crowd in Bachelors Walk killing three and injuring sixty. 200,000 people attended the funerals of the dead. Violence was in the air. Before war was declared there were already 30,000 Irish in the British army, some as reservists. The new recruits who joined after August 1914 did not see action until late 1915.

Robert Ballagh: It is a normal element of colonialism that a certain section of the population gets involved in the imperial adventure. In Ireland there was a tradition of some families having a connection with the Empire. This is a global phenomenon. My own family was part of that caste if I can call them that.

Edward Madigan: Ireland was very militarized before the war between the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Volunteers in the South. It was understandable that some of these would take the opportunity of becoming a real soldier rather than playing at it.

### **Section 2 Public opinion becomes aware of the horror of war**

This section mainly contained testimonies from veterans about their experiences in the trenches. There have been so many programmes about the war on RTE that these veterans, all of whom are now dead, are becoming household names. A clip from the Late Late Show was shown during the time when Gay Byrne was the compère. This was a much used interview with Jack Campbell who described the rats and the lice and the terror he felt when going over the trench. Campbell was a member of a Scottish regiment and was a member of the professional army well before August 1914. Another veteran, Terrence Poulter was deeply critical of military commanders who showed scant regard for the lives of their men. Sam Hutchinson spoke emotionally of the experience of seeing recruits he had enlisted with being killed and replaced by others who were also killed.

Edward Madigan: There is a revisionist view that the horror of war was exaggerated, that much of it was boredom and discomfort. But Lord Moran has described fear as a permanent settler in the midst of the soldiers. The horror remained even when the men were not at the front.

John Bowman: Why was there no anti-war movement?

Robert Ballagh: People thought it would all be over by Christmas. No one quite knew that the killing would be on such an industrial scale. There was a successful anti-conscription



campaign in Ireland later in the war. James Connolly saw the war as an imperialist conflict and opposed it from the start.

Catriona Pennell: I disagree with the idea that people believed that the troops would be 'Home by Christmas'. In my research I have found that the phrase is a post-war myth that probably originates in the American civil war. There was an aspiration to have a short war but people like Kitchener expected from early on that the war would last about three years. Diaries from the time show that many people considered that the outbreak of war was a great historical moment.

### Section 3 the 1916 Rising

A frequently shown clip of Emmet Dalton (Dalton became famous for being one of the officers with Collins at Beal na Blath who subsequently accompanied the transport of Collins's remains back to Dublin by sea) being asked by Cathal O Shannon about his reaction when he heard that an insurrection was taking place in Dublin was shown. Dalton said he felt annoyed and confused. The rebels were a tiny minority. Terrence Poulter said that the leaders deserved to be executed as they had been engaged in treason.

John Bowman asked Paul Bew were the Irish in the British army caught on the wrong side of history.

Paul Bew: Yes. Redmondism was representative of nationalist opinion as was shown by the many elections before 1914. But following the executions there was a shift in public opinion. Yet there is a more complex reality. Irish nationalists in the British army may have joined up for Ireland but also for liberty. There was a widespread perception that the Germans posed a threat to the Catholic faith. The British no longer posed such a threat.

Robert Ballagh: There is a difference between fighting in the British army for diverse motives and fighting in the Rising for Irish freedom. The first group were fighting on the side of imperialism; the second were fighting against imperialism.

Edward Madigan: I would have to take issue with this point. The 1916 proclamation is a moving document but it contains one 'off' note. That is the reference to 'our gallant allies'. The rebels were engaging with one of the imperial powers through their connection with Germany.

Robert Ballagh: We have the habit of viewing these issues in an entirely Anglo-centric fashion. Ireland has relationships with other countries apart from Britain.

John Bowman: For every one 1916 rebel wearing the green jersey there were sixteen in the trenches wearing the green jersey.

Robert Ballagh: Connolly characterized the war as imperialist. It was very different to be fighting against imperialism in Dublin and fighting on the front for the cause of Empire. There has been too much made of poor little Belgium. Belgium was a leading imperial power at this time and was engaged in brutal exploitation on a large scale in Africa. Roger Casement had the task of exposing it. It's nonsense to be talking of poor little Belgium.

Catriona Pennell: It's not nonsense. German atrocities did take place in Belgium. I have done research that shows that Irish recruitment into the British army increased after 1916. In statistical analysis of recruitment figures, when you remove recruitment for industrial occupations, Irish recruitment is higher than other parts of the United Kingdom. Concepts like liberty, honour and defence were part of the motivation behind Irish participation in the war.

Robert Ballagh: German participants in the German army were just as innocent as participants in the British army. They were cannon fodder no matter what nation they came from. Talk of honour and patriotism and the like is claptrap.

Edward Madigan: The Irish in the war were not cannon fodder. They understood the world they were living in. 6,000 Belgian civilians were killed by the Germans in the opening months of the war. Just because Belgium was exploiting African slave labour does not mean that German atrocities in Belgium were justified. It was a war against tyranny.

Robert Ballagh: It was good idea for Irish nationalists to see English difficulty as an Irish opportunity.

Edward Madigan: the issues are infinitely more complex than that.

### Stage 4 Commemoration

Evelyn O'Rourke reported on how the war has been commemorated in the South. The photograph of the peace day parade in 1919 in which tens of thousands of de-mobbed Irish soldiers marched was shown. The clip in which Sam Hutchinson describes how difficult it was to have a Belfast accent, a Protestant sounding name and to have been an ex-serviceman is shown. Looking sad he states it was hard times indeed. O'Rourke describes Queen Elizabeth's visit to Ireland in 2011 and the footage of her attendance at the Islandbridge memorial park is shown. Photographs are then shown of Islandbridge in the early 1980s when the place was in a state of neglect. Ironically the photographs are credited to Robert Ballagh. O'Rourke's voice over refers to Ireland coming to terms with its legacy.

Edward Madigan: In 1919 90,000 Irish soldiers were de-mobbed. It was not the case that they were snubbed. In the 20s and 30s people with IRA backgrounds were held in higher esteem than ex-servicemen but Irish vets were better treated than their British counterparts in matters of employment, support and housing. After the Second World War and especially after 1966 a simplistic line was drawn between fighting for the national cause which was positively perceived and fighting in the British army which was not. Islandbridge had fallen into disrepair and this reflected the amnesia that has set in about the 1914 war.

John Bowman: (to Robert Ballagh) You took the photo. What is your view of the neglect?

Robert Ballagh: I kind of liked the gothic atmosphere of the place. In my mind it was fitting that a monument to militarism should have been allowed to decay like that.

John Bowman: As an artist do you not appreciate the Lutyens design?

Robert Ballagh: Yes, I still like to walk there.

Catriona Pennell: World War One was very present in British education when I was growing up. As a student on David Fitzpatrick's course at Trinity College I find the subject of the Irish attitude to the war very interesting.

Edward Madigan: It is a war myth that veterans never spoke of their time in the trenches. My father was a barman in Rathmines and he told me that the old veterans talked about nothing else but the war, but only among themselves.

Catriona Pennell: Women undoubtedly experienced traumas of separation during the war

Paul Bew: Following atrocities like the bombing of the Eniskillen memorial there has been efforts to forge reconciliation between unionist and nationalist. But as long ago as the 1960s Lemass made it clear publicly that nationalists who fought in the British army in the 1914-18 war should be recognised as patriotic. Since the 1990s there has been increasing momentum in the search for themes of reconciliation. A story like when members of the Ulster division risked their lives to stretcher John Redmond's brother, Willie, to safety although he died of his injuries is worth remembering. The two sides fought together in the trenches and that counts for something. There

is a feeling that if, and it's a big if, Irish unification were ever to become a real possibility a unity agenda could not possibly be driven by republicans. The First World War shows the real connection between Ireland and Britain.

Edward Madigan: That is a most interesting point. Republicans should not be hostile to celebrations of the First World War.

John Bowman: What about the poppy?

Edward Madigan: While I have no disagreement with people who wear the poppy I would not endorse the practice since it celebrates the dead in all Britain's wars.

Robert Ballagh: I agree that the poppy is not an appropriate symbol. I would suggest the forget-me-not as a symbol of remembrance. Poppy wearing has become a more intense preoccupation in recent years in UK culture, despite notable exceptions of some broadcasters.

Edward Madigan: It is welcome that we are becoming more comfortable with complexity and I like the idea of the forget-me-not. It should be remembered that at least 120 ex-servicemen including Emmet Dalton subsequently became involved in the War of Independence.

Catriona Pennell: On Paul's point about the example of unionist and nationalist coming together in the trenches we should avoid being too simplistic. Both sides knew there might come a time when they would not be on the same side; they continued to be suspicious of each other. We can't sugar coat the realities

John Bowman: Things can become too choreographed?

Catriona Pennell: Yes. There remains the potential for fratricidal conflict.

Robert Ballagh: For me the important point is that we should refrain from glorifying violence. I would argue that after the achievement of independence came the counter revolution and we are still finding out about the dark side of that conservatism like the mother and baby homes.

John Bowman: On that final note we will finish. I would like to end by quoting lines from a poem by Tom Kettle. This is from a poem, 'To My Daughter Betty, a Gift from God' on why he had abandoned her to serve in the army.

Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,  
Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor,  
But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed,  
And for the secret Scripture of the poor.

## Analysis

The programme lacked objectivity and impartiality from start to finish. The most serious lapse was in the section purporting to provide a political and military context for the war. The argument that developed during the discussion hinged on this question of context by which is meant the causes of the war. In the report for Section One Germany's invasion of Belgium and its terror campaign against Belgian civilians is presented as the major cause of Britain's participation in the war, a line of thought that is followed up and developed in the discussion. This is a gross over simplification and distortion of the historical record. An established Irish view of Britain's decision to join the war is contained in the letter from John Cully reproduced above in which he refers to a group within the British Government active from 1906 onwards determined to engineer a war that would destroy Germany. Roger Casement identified this secretive cabal which was headed by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, in his pre-war pamphlet, 'The Crime Against Europe'.

Paul Bew's assertion that 'Home Rule was on the Statute Book' was not challenged. At the same time as the 'Government of Ireland Bill' (Home Rule) was voted, another Bill was passed

which said that "no steps shall be taken to put [the Government of Ireland Act] into operation", this postponement being for an indefinite period. Home Rule therefore had not become law.

In the advance publicity and introductions for the programme John Bowman set a distinctly Redmondite tone. Evelyn O'Rourke continued that theme by emphasizing the invasion of Belgium, the main focus of Redmondite war propaganda during the recruiting campaign, and, excepting Robert Ballagh, the panel speakers each endorsed the point that German aggression against Catholic Belgium provided a moral justification for Irish participation in the war. It was Redmondism all the way.

In such a wide ranging discussion it would be impossible for all the points to be scored by the favoured side no matter how diligently the production team made their preparations. Robert Ballagh came across as an able and steadfast defender of the Connollyite position on the war. His point about Belgian exploitation of slave labour in Africa was well made, but the context for German tactics in those early months of the war must surely be found in the extreme urgency of knocking out the Western front as quickly as possible if Germany was to have any chance of survival.

Edward Madigan also made a valid point when he argued that ex-servicemen were not snubbed when they returned home. The First World War was never forgotten. Irish Governments recognized and acceded to requests for Great War memorials. This dispels a myth that RTE have been cultivating assiduously in recent years but it merely makes Redmondism slightly more coherent by adding a small element of veracity to the case.

The point made by Paul Bew regarding reconciliation is worth noting. A number of the programmes making up RTE's season on the Great War, especially those broadcast by the History Show, receive funding from the 'Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Reconciliation Fund'. Clearly RTE's love affair with an anti nationalist (and pro-British) narrative of the Great War has the backing of the 'deep state' and no doubt, the Government. In my view this does not justify abandoning the concept of impartial broadcasting. A national community whose understanding of its own history is shaped by media manipulation will necessarily become quiescent, passive and culturally impoverished, if the project proves successful, that is.

Bew's notion that reconciliation, even to the point of national unification, can only be advanced if we all embrace the Redmondite creed and give up republicanism has no basis in reality. For a start Northern unionists will reject the idea of an all-Ireland state whatever its colour, unless it entails re-integration with the UK. Secondly it is untrue that nationalist culture will become more understanding of unionist imperatives as that culture collapses into passive acceptance of the British worldview. History shows that where the sense of nationality is strongest, tolerance is likely to be greatest. Intolerance will eventually emerge where cultural insecurity is allowed to get a foothold. Thus the Cork based All-for-Ireland League led by William O'Brien in the early years of the twentieth century mounted an explicit challenge against the Catholic intolerance of the Ancient Order of Hibernians within Redmond's Home Rule party, and did so successfully. That movement which later merged into Sinn Fein and ultimately Fianna Fail extended its influence into the strongholds of Irish democracy, Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Limerick, Waterford. (That is not to say that a strong sense of Irish nationality is confined to Munster but Munster is where the fountain springs are to be found.)

The only effective means of advancing reconciliation between nationalism and unionism is firstly to call a spade a spade when expressions of loyalist culture entail anti-Catholic triumphalism or plain racism. Changing unionist culture is outside the control of nationalist or republican politics. All that can be done is to remain disciplined in the face of provocation



and to make use of opportunities for building good will. That is pretty much what Sinn Fein has been doing. The other matter that needs attending to in pressing forward reconciliation is cultural development through the promotion of greater historical understanding. Needless to say the prospects for that are non-existent at present in mainstream society due to the ahistorical nature of current orthodoxies.

'The Forgotten War? Ireland and World War 1' was not without amusing moments. When Catriona Pennell cautioned Paul Bew against sugar coating the realities, Bowman sagely interjected the word 'over choreographed'. No better man to understand choreography in that context! Pennell herself showed the value of modern scholarship when informing us that through her research she had discovered that the phrase

'home before Christmas' was a post war myth. You definitely can learn something new every day! Another laugh was provided when Edward Madigan, a clearly self-confident and sophisticated purveyor of re-worked war propaganda, deigned to lecture Robert Ballagh about historical truth being 'infinitely more complex' when Ballagh described the 1916 rebels as having been right to take advantage of English difficulties. But the prize for the best laugh must surely be awarded to the impartial host himself. Having bravely tied his colours to the Redmondite mast in the Irish Times and skilfully set the tone and guided the discussion along the Redmondite way, how better to end than by uttering the lines of a Tom Kettle poem with just the right amount of suppressed emotion. If, after all that, the viewing public fails to convert to the new gospel according to John Redmond, it's not down to John Bowman! □

## Puritanism And The Theatre

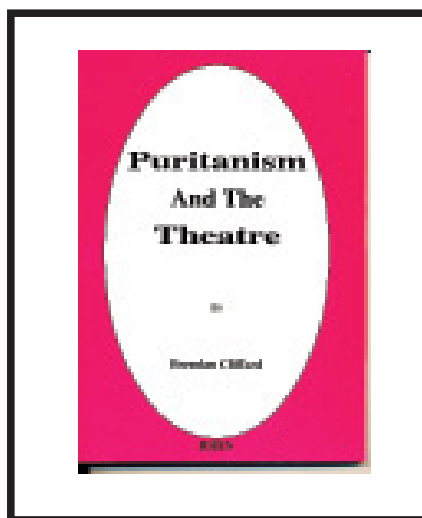
### By Brendan Clifford

Belfast Historical & Educational Society 2014

It is not well known that the English Reformation suppressed the theatre in England, not once but twice. First there was Henry VIII's suppression of the mediaeval theatre, because traditional culture was permeated by the old religion. Miracle plays and suchlike became a form of thought-crime. Henry's absolute State required a thorough re-moulding of the populace and that included theatrical life. Half a century later the State encouraged the development of a new development of theatre, to provide entertainment for Elizabeth and her courtiers. The Stuarts who followed her also promoted a new form of theatre which flourished, and which had a marked anti-Puritan bias. Stuart (or Jacobean) theatre was anathema to the new Puritan religious development. A *coup d'état* was brought about by Puritan forces in 1641. England became a rigorous Protestant theocracy and Oliver Cromwell abolished theatre for a second time. English social life came under the control of forces nowadays described as fanatical, radical or fundamentalist. Dating from this era, William Prynne's comprehensive Christian case against the theatre is described. After the Cromwellian governing arrangement ran into the ground, the Stuarts were brought back to power. With them came a new development of theatre after 1660, but only in a limited form under Government licence. In 1740 an attempt at political theatre was

nipped in the bud. This is discussed in connection with Charlotte Brooke, an early translator of Irish verse, whose father wrote the banned play *Gustavus Vasa*. These events were described in an entertaining manner in a series of articles for *The Heresiarch* (Editor, Joe Keenan) which are reproduced here.

Then there is a comment on Synge and Sean O'Casey, questioning a suggestion made on Radio Eireann that *The Playboy*



and *The Plough* were met with hostile demonstrations because their authors were Protestants. Around the theme of *Showgirls*, the depiction of sex in popular discourse is considered. The overall surprising conclusion is that Puritanism abolished, along with theatre, the traditional communal medium of social life, creating a vacuum which is filled in the Anglo-sphere by an upsurge of theatre. The population lives its community life through theatrical presentations on stage, screen and air-waves.

## A Right Wing Anarchist

### *Le Pen: une histoire française*, by Pierre Péan and Philippe Cohen

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by John Martin

This book, published by Robert Laffont, 2012, gives a fascinating insight into Jean Marie Le Pen, the French Right and France. It has been criticised for not portraying him as a monster, but in this reviewer's opinion that is part of its strength.

Le Pen was born in Brittany in 1928 to a petty bourgeois family. His father owned a trawler. Although Le Pen's childhood was austere, he was better off than many of his contemporaries in that time of rationing in the aftermath of the war.

He received a Jesuit education, but there is little evidence that his subsequent political development was influenced by his Catholic upbringing. In other countries the political right is associated with puritanism and strong religious convictions, but not so in France. As the subtitle of the book suggests Le Pen's journey is a very French story.

At university in Paris he studied law where he was involved in an organisation for law students and formed fruitful connections which he retained throughout his political life.

Contemporaries of his university days remember him as not having particularly strong political convictions. They were aware that he was located somewhere on the political right with vague sympathies for Marshall Pétain and the French Empire, which later became evident in his opposition to the decolonization of Algeria. It seems he made more of an impression as a *bon viveur* who enjoyed the company of women and achieved some success in that field.

The authors think a belief in individual freedom is an important element of Le Pen's character. Although he did not participate in the *événements* of 1968 they think he was sympathetic to the ideals of sexual freedom. His glamorous wife was a habitué of Parisian nightlife. After he divorced her Le Pen suggested that a wife should look after the family home. She had her revenge when she posed for Playboy suitably (undressed) as a maid.

During his years in the political wilderness he returned to university and chose as the subject for his thesis the anarchist movement. It seems he was fascinated by the individualism of the anarchists.

Le Pen was also partial to large American cars and a tendency to live beyond his means. But his financial worries were solved by an inheritance from an heir to a cement fortune, which enabled Le Pen to devote himself full time to politics long before his political breakthrough. This aspect of Le Pen's life is surrounded in intrigue. The will was contested by relations of the deceased. It seems that Le Pen's case was watertight, but there were aspects to the affair which Le Pen preferred not to have ventilated in a court of law. The gossip at the time was that the deceased heir had not been impervious to the charms of Le Pen's wife (the future Playboy model.) ... And so there was an out of court settlement. The authors estimate that in today's money the value of Le Pen's inheritance amounted to at least 8 million euro and possibly far more.

Another more substantial, but unconnected controversy, relates to an allegation by the *Liberation* newspaper that Le Pen participated in torture during his military service in Algeria. The authors make a convincing case for Le Pen's innocence in this matter. The accuser lacked credibility; Le Pen was not senior enough to be privy to such practices; and he was not in a division of the French Army that was involved.

The authors note that although he had connections with the illegal OAS terrorist group opposing Algerian independence he himself was never involved in illegal activities. Much to its embarrassment he never broke his links with the French establishment.

His other early political engagement was with the *Poujadists*, which was a movement of shopkeepers defending their interests against the large multiples.

But by the early 1970s his political career had largely been a failure. The fortunes of the extreme right were at a low ebb. After 1968 George Pompidou the leader of the Gaullist party was the dominant figure and Le Pen might have retired from political life.

In this period some elements of the extreme right attempted to plot a course leading to greater political power and influence. They were not interested in remaining on the fringe of the political spectrum. One of the most influential intellectuals on the right was Dominique Venner, who had spent some time in prison for his OAS activities. He was an admirer of Lenin and Gramsci and determined to write the right wing equivalent of Lenin's *What is to be done*. Gramsci's idea that a cultural revolution preceded political change was influential among right wing intellectuals. They saw their role as challenging and overturning the cultural hegemony of the left. Venner came to four important conclusions. Firstly, any reference to Hitler was futile. Secondly, the French empire was finished. There was no point in pretending otherwise. Thirdly, the people were alienated from the State in a system of soft totalitarianism. Fourthly, and most interestingly, the French right should learn from third world nationalists. If Algeria is for the Algerians, France should be for the French.

Another influence on the French extreme right was developments in Italy in the early seventies. At the time the Italian fascists had made an electoral breakthrough under the leadership of Giorgio Almirante. The French extreme right developed close relations with their Italian fascist counterparts. They came to the conclusion that they needed a strong leader, a French Almirante (they were fascists after all). It was decided that Jean Marie Le Pen had the necessary characteristics to fill that roll. He was the beneficiary of that decision even if he did not participate in it. Le Pen is no Lenin. He did not carve out his own destiny even if once he was chosen as a leader he was his own man.

By the late 1970s the *Front National* had made very little progress. Le Pen's programme had no appeal. His economic



policies were free market orientated and anti-communist. One of its policies was for France to rejoin NATO. However in the early 1980s the FN was about to make a breakthrough. Its success can be traced to a number of factors - internal and external - none of which had anything to do with Le Pen.

The FN changed its line, largely under the influence of Jean-Pierre Stirbois who developed a new line or "third way" between Liberalism and communism. While formerly the FN was hostile to communism it now was also opposed to capitalism. From being globalist in orientation it now became much more overtly nationalist.

It was able to tap into middle class fears of Mitterrand's socialist government as well as working class fears of immigration. From being a fringe party with about 2% of the vote it managed to garner almost 11% in the European elections of 1984. It had become a catch-all party. An exit poll of FN voters found that 27% had voted for Jacques Chirac in the 1981 presidential elections; 23% for Giscard d'Estaing; and most remarkably 24% for Mitterrand. The FN claimed that the right had abandoned the nation and the left had abandoned the people.

Stirbois, who was quite young (born 1945) also came from a wealthy family. He was able to finance a Le Pen radio station and a weekly bulletin. A colleague of Stirbois, Michel Collinot had an idea of a festival called BBR (Bleu, Blanc, Rouge the colours of the French flag). This was on a smaller scale than the Communist *Fete de l'Huma*, but turned out to be quite lucrative.

Le Pen also received help from an unlikely source. After his initial period of economic expansion the Mitterrand government of the 1980s was forced to introduce policies of austerity, which were extremely unpopular. Mitterrand's strategy for retaining the Presidency in 1988 was to split the Right by facilitating the rise of the FN. He did this by changing the electoral system to a proportional system for the legislative elections, which benefited the FN. He also sponsored the anti racist organisation SOS Racisme. The objective was to divert attention from economic issues to the issue of racism.

The authors give a very interesting account of Mitterrand's ambivalent relationship to the extreme right. In private he believed that Le Pen was part of the mainstream, but in public he preferred to demonise Le Pen rather than deal with his politics. The wily Mitterrand decided that the national flag along with the flag of the European Union would appear behind him at Presidential television broadcasts, which had not been the practice before.

The distinguished sociologist, Emmanuel Todd, remarked:

"In the current economic situation of openness to the world and Europe, along with ideological disintegration (Catholicism, communism, liberalism etc) the idea of the nation presents itself among ordinary people as the last protection. There is a strong need for the nation. As long as there are those within the RPR or the Socialists, who do not speak of it, there will be phenomena like the FN." (1995, *Liberation*).

By the late 1980s the FN was emerging from its extreme right wing ghetto. Its virulent anti communism became less important as the Soviet Union collapsed.

In 1990 Le Pen supported Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf war. Almost alone across the political spectrum he opposed

Mitterrand's policy. Admittedly, one of Mitterrand's cabinet minister's, Jean-Pierre Chevènement resigned in protest, but this was only at the outbreak of the war, long after Le Pen had been making the running on the issue.

Le Pen had placed himself in an extraordinary politician position. He had been a Marshall Pétain sympathizer; a supporter of the OAS against de Gaulle's policy of de-colonisation; pro NATO; a supporter of Zionism as a bulwark against communism in the Middle East; an opponent of immigration, which in France tended to be from Muslim countries. And yet in 1990 he took a pro Arab position, opposing American hegemony in the Middle East. He placed himself in the tradition of de Gaulle against almost the entire French political class.

For a brief period he appeared as an international statesman, successfully negotiating the release of French hostages from Iraq. Mitterrand managed to mitigate some of the political capital by ensuring that the release would be routed through Yasser Arafat who gave credit to the French President.

However no amount of skilful manoeuvring by Mitterrand could hide the fact that Le Pen represented something substantial in French society and furthermore what he represented was not being catered for by the mainstream political parties.

The authors have an interesting discussion of the response of the political mainstream to Le Pen. Some were prepared to engage. The former socialist prime minister Laurent Fabius commented that Le Pen's questions were good, but he couldn't agree with his solutions. However Fabius was an exception. Most of the mainstream politicians preferred to demonise and refused to engage with his politics.

By sticking their heads in the sand the French political class ceded a large section of the political field to the FN. And it was not just ground normally occupied by the political right, but a large area that was the preserve of the left. Whatever about in Ireland, immigration has been experienced as a problem for the French working class.

The authors note that the French employers' organisation is quite enthusiastic about immigration. On the other hand, the left is passive. It is a common view within the left that "we are all citizens of the world". Jean-Luc Mélançon is quoted as saying that immigration is not a problem in France. This coyness in respect of immigration is not in the tradition of the French left. The authors cite examples of the communist controlled CGT trade union opposing immigration in the 1930s on the grounds that it undermined French workers' rights.

## **Globalization.**

It seems to this reviewer that France is in a completely different position to Ireland with respect to globalisation. Our industrial policy has been orientated towards attracting multinationals to this country. Whereas France has been put in the defensive position of trying to keep her existing multinationals employing people in her own country.

Secondly the immigration we have experienced is skilled labour from Eastern Europe that had the effect of alleviating skills shortages. Whereas the impression that this reviewer has of France is that much of the immigration to France is from her colonies. The labour is unskilled and in many instances hostile to western values and France herself.

The FN is hardly left, but has substantial support among the working class and there is no doubt that it has begun to occupy left wing territory.

Nevertheless, it cannot hide its right wing origins. For example, it is a low tax party. The most common criticism of the FN is its racism. Its anti-immigration policies are symptomatic of at the very least its xenophobia rather than any concern for workers' rights. This thesis received a knock following the FN's opposition to both Gulf wars. If the "good" people cannot oppose imperialism in the Middle East what is the use of "anti racism".

A second criticism relates to Le Pen's view of the Second World War and in particular his attitude to the Jews. This crystallised in a 1998 TV interview Le Pen gave in which he described the use of gas chambers as a "detail of history", which gave the impression of an attempt to minimise the suffering of the Jews. The authors think this was a *faux pas*, which would have been quickly forgotten if Le Pen had apologised for any offence caused. But for whatever reason, he refused to do so.

The authors looked at speeches of Le Pen in the previous 40 years and couldn't find much evidence of anti-semitism. In the 1950s he made a savage attack on Pierre Mendès France, the then Prime Minister. He accused him of personifying cosmopolitanism, which was an element in the decline of France. Mendès France happened to be a Jew and therefore the speech could be interpreted as being anti Semitic. But interestingly it was not considered anti Semitic at the time.

Jewish acquaintances in his youth did not consider him anti Semitic. It seems that for most of his political career he attempted to cultivate the Jewish vote even to the extent of translating the FN manifesto into Hebrew. Since the collapse of communism he has moved away from his original Zionist position, but that is hardly evidence of anti-semitism.

Nevertheless, since 1998 his pronouncements on the subject of the Jews and the Second World War have escalated much to the chagrin of those elements within the FN who want the party to become more mainstream.

In particular he has questioned some cherished Gaullist myths re: the experience of French people under Pétain. On another occasion he has questioned the preponderance of Jews within the French media.

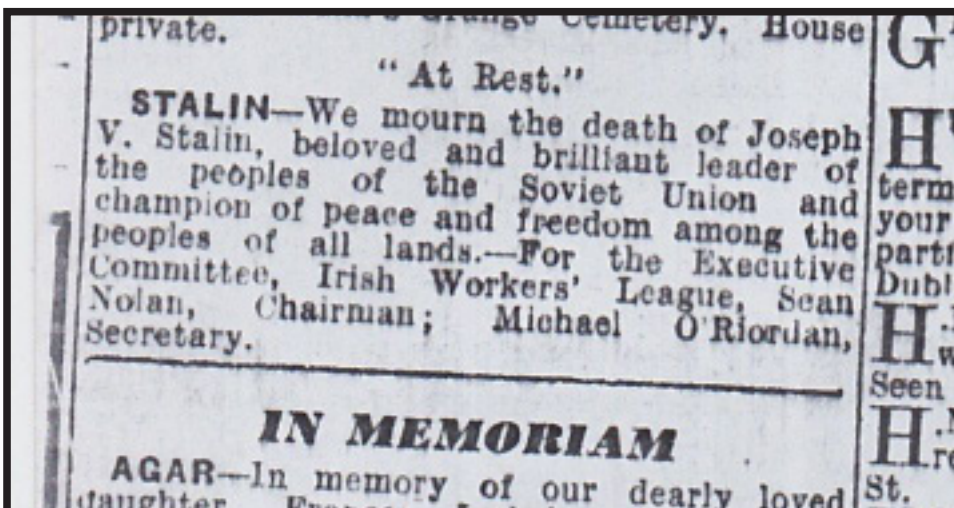
There is a widespread and respectable view that the French media has a globalist and "anti national" bias. De Gaulle thought *Le Monde* was anti national, while Mitterrand believed the editor of *Le Monde* was working for the Americans. However neither of those distinguished statesmen ever suggested a Jewish reason for the malaise.

Even if it is accepted that Le Pen is a racist it is difficult to understand why he has made so many recent controversial statements. One view is that in his old age he wishes to pander to his right wing audience. A second view is that it reflects his need to shock. Now that many of his policies such as immigration are no longer taboo the old right wing anarchist feels the need to breach new frontiers. A third, and more plausible view is that his controversial statements reflect a profound political disagreement with his daughter Marine Le Pen who has succeeded him as leader of the FN.

The father sees the FN as anti-establishment. Its purpose is to shock the political mainstream and ultimately force the main political parties to adopt some of its own programme. If it ceases to be radical and begins to resemble the other political parties it will die. If it ever obtains power (in a coalition) it will only disillusion its supporters because of the necessity to compromise in order to play the political game.

Marine has a different and more ambitious conception of the party. Unlike her father she believes she can be President of France. She may be delusional, but in the light of the recent European election results who would bet against her! She has much more aggressively looked for working class votes or the "forgotten". She claims that Globalisation and the Euro have undermined the standard of living of the working class and caused unemployment. Her plan is to transform the party structure from being a family enterprise and she hopes to increase its local government representation: something her father had no interest in doing. She has also distanced the party from her father's views on the Jews. She vigorously rejects Nigel Farage's view that her party is anti-Semitic.

The father accuses the daughter of the "feminine" characteristic of wanting to please. As the old right wing anarchist approaches the end of his life he ponders his legacy. Will his life's work be destroyed by his daughter? He fears that the FN will become just another party playing the democratic game, pandering to the people. It will either cease to be relevant and disappear or alternatively, it might prosper, but only on the terms of the political establishment. He can only see either failure or an ignoble success. □



Back in 1953, NO Irish newspaper, neither the "liberal" "Irish Times" nor the Dublin "Evening Mail", would publish a statement from the Irish Workers' League on the death of Stalin, but the "Evening Mail" was willing to accept payment for an IWL "family" death notice!  
6 March, 1953



**Given our colonial history, we have a duty to stand with the Palestinians**

Victoria White  
Thursday, July 24, 2014

MORE than 650 Palestinians and 31 Israelis have died, so far, as a result of 'Operation Protective Edge.' For two weeks, each day's news has brought fresh horrors: yesterday, 12-year-old Palestinian, Rabee Qasim, was killed by an Israeli shell as he led a donkey and cart through a Bedouin village.

We may wonder if TDs Clare Daly and Mick Wallace would have found incriminating evidence on a US military plane in Shannon, even if they'd been invited in and offered a seat. But because we're Irish, many of us agree with everything Wallace said about the US-backed Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip.

You can see our knee-jerk support for the Palestinians as a "dark seed in the Irish anti-colonial mindset", as Jason Walsh, of the Christian Science Monitor, said. I agree that a self-serving comparison, of Nationalists with Palestinians and Unionists with Israelis, is often made in the North.

But just because, for many of us, sympathy with the Palestinians is part of being Irish, that doesn't make it stupid. It's no more stupid that the pro-Israeli stance of people in Britain and the US who are bombarded by Israeli propaganda.

Israel exists because, between 1947 and 1948, Europeans drove 800,000 Palestinians off land that had been theirs for centuries. In 1967, Israel seized yet more land and the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are relics of this invasion.

The Palestinians, who were driven out of their homes, have no 'right to return', a point Dervla Murphy makes in her recent book on Gaza, *A Month By The Sea*. Jewish people, from anywhere in the world, have the right to 'return' to land in Israel that they never owned.

The state of Israel was established as the full horror of the attempted annihilation of Jewish people during World War II was emerging. No one is denying that horror. But many of us can't see what the hell the Palestinians have to do with it. Why should they pay the price? Europe made the horror of the Holocaust. Europe should have atoned.

But, of course, it suited the Western powers to kick the problem of destitute Jewry east. And while it's easy to understand how the idea of a 'homeland', far away from the European crime against them, appealed to horribly traumatised European Jews, the truth is that Israel is not their "homeland". Europe is.

The creation of the state of Israel was a result of the mania for ethnic cleansing that started in Russia [the Russian Empire? ed.] and involved a traumatic 'population exchange' between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s. The idea of the nation-state based on ethnicity was born.

It was important to spin the myth of a unified nation-state of the past. Thus, the reborn Greek monarchy threw a line back to Ancient Greece, the Irish were all descendants of Brian Boru, and Ataturk created a new Turkish language by 'cleansing' it of Persian and Arabic.

Many of us mourn the loss of the ethnically diverse Eastern Mediterranean, of which the huge riches of Jewish culture were an intrinsic part. While it is understandable, after what they went through, that the Jews would want a place where they

could be safe, it is a terrible shame that we created the nation-state, based on ethnicity, that is Israel.

It's a terrible shame, too, that Israel is a nation-state born of trauma. Dervla Murphy quotes Richard Falk, UN special rapporteur in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, who is himself a Jew: "Is it an irresponsible overstatement to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalised Nazi record of collective atrocity? I think not."

Israel has existed for nigh-on 70 years and few believe that Dervla Murphy's ethnically diverse 'Land of Canaan' will ever exist in Palestine. The two-state option seems the best thing that can come out of this mess. But it should be the Israel established in 1948, not the Israel created by force during the Six Day War of 1967, when they took the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. It is not hard to see the source of this expansionist mentality. The late deputy prime minister of Israel, Abba Eban, described the state that existed before the offensive as having "a memory of Auschwitz".

It is agreed by the International Court of Justice, the UN General Assembly, and the UN Security Council that Israel is illegally occupying the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and though Israel may no longer occupy the Gaza Strip its blockade makes the territory an open-air prison. This was made clear by the findings of the UN Human Rights Council. There is no argument here: Israel is an illegal, occupying force.

The reason Israel is permitted by the international community, notably the US and the EU, to carry on regardless, is because of the strength of the Jewish lobby in the US and the country's strategic importance. One estimate projects the US's allotted military spend for the region, from 2008 to 2019, at \$30bn, and Israel is the world's fourth biggest military power and has plenty of bucks to spend: our own exports to Israel total €250m.

This is why, as Irish people, we are torn between what most of us feel to be wrong and the promise of prosperity. We feel for the Palestinians, but the US is a hugely important trading partner.

Realpolitik consistently gets in the way of our attempted gestures: when local councils, including those in Cork and Dublin cities, called for an end to services contracts with the French multi-national, Veolia, (it runs the strategic Israeli train line into occupied East Jerusalem and also runs Dublin's Luas, deals with hazardous waste in Fermoy and provides drinking water to Limerick City) they were largely ignored.

It is time for the Government to get off the fence and stand with the embattled Palestinians. First, we need strong words from our new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Charles Flanagan; given that his father, Oliver J., used his maiden speech in the Dáil to call for the Jews to be chucked out of Ireland, this would allow Charles to make an absolute distinction between anti-Semitism and resistance to the state of Israel. We need the organised boycott of Israeli goods, called for by Palestinian civil society, until a two-state solution, guaranteeing Palestinians their rights, is agreed. Let the consequences be what they will.

I understand how angry this article may make some Israelis, who will rightly ask what business I have making these points. But the very fact that I understand how they may feel is a legacy of coming from a small, colonised country, along with my conviction that we must support the Palestinians.

If we will not stand with them, who will?

## **We are washing our hands of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.**

### **Victoria White**

My column last week, urging Ireland to stand with the Palestinians, drew such a huge and often angry response that I re-read my history.

The conviction only deepened that there has been a mass global refusal to admit that the Palestinians were expelled from their own land and that Benjamin Netanyahu's war will indeed be "protracted" and will threaten peace in our time until the wider world accepts the past. In Ilan Pappé's book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), for instance, I read about the campaign to ethnically cleanse the city of Haifa of Palestinians.

That campaign was called Operation Cleansing the Leaven. This refers to the Jewish religious practice of eliminating all traces of bread or flour from people's homes on the eve of the Passover, and, in Haifa in 1948, the Palestinians were the bread and flour. The British forces washed their hands of what happened, as Mordechai Maklef, of the proto-Israeli Carmeli Brigade, gave his orders: "Kill any Arab you encounter; torch all inflammable objects and force doors open with explosives." He later became Israeli chief of staff.

One million Palestinians were killed or displaced during the ethnic cleansing on which the Israeli state was founded. Israel is, writes Pappé, a European colonial outpost in the Arab world. It was founded by a Polish Jew, David Ben-Gurion, and is maintained by the Western powers for strategic reasons. Pappé is an Israeli Jew whose family fled Nazi Germany, and he served in the Israeli army in the Golan Heights in 1967. But he has refused, as a historian, to go along with the founding lies of his nation, though this has meant death threats and the loss of his university job in Israel. Pappé makes the point, over and over, that there is no hope for Palestine as long as the Nakba, or "the catastrophe", is denied; that without Palestinians having the "right to return", which they were given in UN resolution 194, there will never be peace. But the question of the refugees of 1948 was parked at Camp David and Oslo, and was not even mentioned in the peace initiatives of the Quartet.

How can this have happened? On guard against anti-semitism, the world is still not ready to see Jews as perpetrators of any wrong. But religion is irrelevant to the atrocity. True Judaism preaches humanity, as Christians can see clearly in the words of one Jew, Jesus Christ. Could it also be that we dehumanise the Nazis, and make the Jews the only possible victims, to distance ourselves from the fact that both perpetrators and victims were people, like us? The truth is that any group of people, including ourselves, could do the same, given the same set of circumstances. If there had been any justice, Ben-Gurion, the revered founder of modern Israel, should have stood trial for multiple war crimes.

He did not hide his plan to ethnically cleanse Palestine, writing to his son in 1937: "The Arabs will have to go, but one needs an opportune moment for making it happen, such as a war." The "opportune moment" was the end of the British Mandate in 1947. At that point, less than six per cent of the land was in Jewish hands and they constituted a third of the population. Ben-Gurion reckoned he needed at least an 80% Jewish majority to run a Jewish state, and so Plan Dalet, by which the land was to be rid of Palestinians, was adopted by the proto-Israelis in 1948. Villages were attacked around midnight, when people were asleep. The New York Times reported how in

the village of Sasa a large unit of proto-Israeli troops attached TNT to the houses.

The commander later recounted: "We ran into an Arab guard, who was so surprised he did not ask, 'Who is it?' but 'What is it?' One of our troops, who knew Arabic, responded humorously, 'This is fire', and shot a volley into him." Ben-Gurion had had the Palestinian villages systematically mapped, down to the last fertile tree, and found about 20 to 30 men in each village against whom some bogus charge could be laid — from having taken part in the rebellion against the British, in 1936, to having travelled to Lebanon. A hooded informer pointed out the men on the night and, typically, they were shot dead. In the village of Tantura, a mass grave was dug for 230 bodies after the rampage.

One informant saw the execution of seven males from his own family. He kept in touch with another survivor, who went insane after seeing his father shot dead. A few months later, the village of Deir Yassin was invaded by Israeli soldiers and the people were rounded up and murdered in cold blood. The informant was a boy of 12, who survived after having been lined up with the other children against a wall and sprayed with bullets. But he can't forget: "They called my brother, Muhammad, and shot him in front of us and, when my mother yelled, bending over him — carrying my little sister, Hudra, still in her hands, still breast-feeding her — they shot her too."

We have heard so many such descriptions of our potential for inhumanity, from the Armenian massacre to the Holocaust, right up to the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo and the Rwandan genocide, that I am nearly more shocked by descriptions of Israel, a country built on the ruins of the indigenous culture and which completely denies its origins. When Israelis wander through their endless national parks, they are told to notice the fruit and nut trees, but never that they were planted by the hands of dead villagers, in a dead village of which only rubble remains.

Palestine, minus the Gaza Strip and the West bank, is almost exactly the Israeli state that Ben-Gurion imagined, but it hinges on keeping Israel demographically Jewish.

In a recent poll, sixty-eight per cent of Israeli Jews expressed their wish to see Israeli Arabs "transferred", and racist laws were enacted in 2003 forbidding Palestinians from obtaining citizenship, or even temporary residency, when they marry Israeli citizens. Pappé argues convincingly that this situation can never be normalised; that the two-state solution, first proposed by Britain and which the West still puts on the table, can never work; and that Palestinians must be given the absolute right to return to land which is theirs. International pressure works in Israel, as it does everywhere. It was the reason that Jesus's birthplace, Nazareth, was not "cleansed" and remains as the only Arab city in Israel. The Nakba happened because we let it happen.

There must never be another Irish abstention on a crucial issue affecting the Palestinians, such as the craven and immoral abstention, last week, on the UN Human Rights Commission's proposal for an international enquiry into the situation in Gaza. We are a very small voice on the international stage, but we must use it to help bring the Palestinians home.

Some Zionist responses:

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/yourview/a-lesson-in-history-about-israel-277103.html>

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/yourview/israel-has-right-to-exist-and-to-live-in-self-determination-and-peace-277102.html>

## Cork Evening Echo — Exchange of Letters, Part 3

### 13 June 2014 – 11 August 2014

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[THE GREAT DEBATE ON WW1  
**This debate in the Cork Evening Echo** continues unabated. Like the War it deals with it seems that it will not be over by Xmas. And it should not be. As we are told so often there is a decade of centenaries to be commemorated and it may therefore go on for a decade!

One result of the debate was a public meeting in Cork on 8 August hosted by Labour Comment and chaired by Pat Maloney which launched “The Great Fraud of 1914-18” by Dr Pat Walsh.

The venue, a substantial room in Gresham Metropole Hotel, MacCurtain Street, was full, with attendance of about 50. The author Dr P Walsh gave a tour de force account of the origins of 1914-18 (1) Balkan War, (2) European War, and (3) World War, this concatenation of events being the prism through which the Great Fraud can be understood. By using slides to provide focus, Dr Walsh was able to provide an analytical framework for his account of the origins of these linked wars, all within the limitations of a 40 minute talk. It was quite an achievement to hold together a mixed audience, many of whom seemed relatively new to the subject. Many parts of the talk actually consisted of newly unearthed information. An important debate is emerging.

A lively audience discussion followed the presentation. Many contributed their family experiences of the Great War. Most expressed appreciation of the understanding of the Great War which they had gained from the talk. There is also a view that, in some way, the Great War experience is sacred, and somehow beyond analysis and understanding. This view was expressed by a member of the audience, presumably as a criticism or reproach, which was respectfully heard.]

#### EVENING ECHO, CORK—13th JUNE, 2014

##### Front lines

IN 1929, a novel arising from the Great War was published in Germany called *Im Westen nichts Neues*.

Its author, Erich Maria Remarque, had faced the French Army and the English translation of the work's title, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, signified the fact he had fought on Germany's Western Front, not on her Eastern Front facing the Russians.

French Forces facing the Germans were fighting on France's Eastern Front, as were their British allies.

It seems to me that Irishmen in Cork in The Western Front Association are very attached to their moral compasses but that their sense of direction is skewed by controllers in London.

Only a servile mindset could imagine that Germany's Western Front and Britain's Western Front were one and the same thing.

Robert Graves, who served with the British Army in France, was transferred to Limerick in March 1919 and due to be demobilised, but the War Office decided that, unlike France, Ireland was a Theatre of War and demobilisation should be halted. His memoir *Goodbye to All That* was published in 1929.

I would suggest that the Liffey, the Lee, the Shannon and the Boyne, the Foyle, the Bann and the Lagan were on Britain's Western Front, rather than the Marne, the Somme or the Rhine.

Donal Kennedy, Belmont Ave, Palmers Green, London

#### EVENING ECHO, CORK—16th JUNE, 2014

I HAVE been following the debate on the issue of Ireland's involvement in the Great War that has been appearing in the pages of the Evening Echo with immense interest.

I have found the contributions by what I will call the two 'main protagonists', namely Mr Gerry White of the Western Front Association and Mr Pat Maloney of Labour Comment to be particularly thought-provoking

They have posed a number of questions to each other and accused each other of refusing to answer same.

The question of whether Britain's (and Ireland's) participation in the war was just seems to be at the heart of the debate. I am fairly sure I know where Mr White stands on this issue but I can't say the same for Mr Maloney. In fact, I am sorry to say that I think many of his letters resemble nothing more than an Anglophobic rant. With this in mind I would like to address the following questions to him:

1. Does he think that Germany's declaration of war on France and Russia was justified?
2. Does he think that the atrocities committed by German soldiers on Belgian civilians were justified?
3. Does he think that Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare was justified?
4. Many Irishmen who fought in World War I with the British Army re-enlisted to fight in World War II. While I know his views on World War I, I would like to know if Mr Maloney considers Britain's war against Nazi Germany to be 'just'.

I'm sure readers of the Echo would be interested to read Mr Maloney's answers to these questions. And if he decides to reply, I would ask him not to be evasive but to answer the questions clearly.

I can also see that Mr Maloney puts a considerable effort into composing his letters. However, if he is using historical events to support his arguments, I would suggest that he gets his facts right.

In his letter dated May 22, he stated that the Battle of Fontenoy was fought to revenge the Battle of Culloden. I wish to point out to Mr Maloney (and to the readers!) that the Battle of Fontenoy was fought on May 11, 1745, and the Battle of Culloden took place on April 16, 1746 — almost a year later!

Richard Addington, address withheld on request

#### EVENING ECHO, CORK—17th JUNE, 2014

##### Our identity

PAT Murphy ('Debate exposes fragility of Irish identity,' June 4) is mistaken when he says Catholic Jacobite King James II wanted to persecute Protestants. Before he was overthrown by the 1688 Williamite coup, James, as the legitimate British sovereign, instituted freedom of religion for all Christian denominations, including Protestants who did not subscribe to the Established Church and who, along with Catholics, were subjected to Penal Laws by William III's successors.

Mr Murphy over-complicates the question of national identity. Sweden ruled Norway in the 19th century. These related and neighbouring peoples have much in common, including a Lutheran form of religion. But in 1905 Norway decided it did



not want to be ruled by Sweden, and voted for independence. Sweden sent in lawyers and constitutional experts to organise a clean break. Both are now UN members. One is in the EU, the other is not.

As far as I know, these adjoining nations are on friendly terms. But there is a well-founded distinction between them, and, whether we like it or not, there is no doubt or ambiguity about the difference.

Ireland was invaded and conquered militarily by Britain (or England) on a number of occasions in the course of the past millennium. Since the late 17th century, Ireland rebelled militarily on various occasions, refusing consent to British rule — except in the post-1910 period, when a promise of limited self-rule under British sovereignty was given by the British government. When this promise was broken Ireland voted for independence. But instead of lawyers and constitutional experts, Britain sent in the Black and Tans.

Mr Murphy says we should honour and commemorate the Inniskillings, a military unit with origins in Ireland which is, or used to be, part of the British army. According to their website, the Inniskillings were originally a militia formed to defend British colonial settlers against indigenous Irish who wanted to expel them from territory from which the Irish had been driven, with great slaughter, by Britain.

The advertisements by which British colonists were induced to settle on ethnically cleansed Irish lands sometimes boasted of the sport which could be had by hunting down wolves and wood-kerne. The latter were the remnants of the vanquished Irish who took refuge in mountains and other wilderness areas.

Nothing unusual about this, it is the way of the world, isn't it? But, unlike some other colonial territories, the indigenous wood-kerne survived; and after a number of centuries, were recognised as British citizens, even if second-rate ones. British rule in Ireland was such that, in disgust, some members of the settler population founded a movement for independence in which native and settler would be equal Irish citizens. Initially they did not get very far with that.

When, in 1912, the Irish asserted themselves as British citizens, the descendants of the Inniskillings rebelled against the British government, with the backing of the most influential sections of the army and society, and the British government did their bidding. After the defeat of the Home Rule movement the Irish voted for independence. The descendants of the Inniskillings, on the other hand, supported the Black and Tans, and held on to their power.

An accommodation or *modus vivendi* has been established between the descendants of the Inniskillings and the wood-kerne. But there is an historic and well-founded distinction between them which is fundamental to the identity and subjectivity of each. The Inniskillings have never been ambiguous or uncertain about their attitude to the Irish, and are deeply offended if they are mistaken for natives. Mr Murphy is perhaps disingenuous on this point. Similarly, there is nothing fragile or transient about Irish national identity.

Like Norway and Sweden, good neighbourly relations should be sought. But it is misconceived, counter-productive and fraught with danger to pressurise either identity on those with a different identity and allegiance, whether by bogus Remembrance propaganda or by any other sleight of hand.

Peadar Laffan, Ash Street, Youghal

#### **EVENING ECHO, CORK — WED. 18th JUNE, 2014**

##### **Tragic error**

YOUR correspondent Pat Murphy ('Debate exposes fragility of Irish identity', June 4) seems to have misunderstood the point made by other correspondents who asked why, if we are

expected to venerate the Great War Irish, we do not venerate the Wild Geese with equal pomp and ceremony; and why the Belgians do NOT venerate with official pomp and ceremony their Eastern Front Association which promotes Remembrance of Flemish volunteers in the Waffen SS.

Their point is that we should be very careful about indiscriminate veneration of warriors.

Mr Murphy says the Wild Geese should be honoured just like the Irish soldiers in the Great War, even though, he says, they fought for the absolutist French Bourbon monarchy.

What he seems to be saying is that we should honour Irish soldiers in any and every foreign army, regardless of the merits or justice of the cause they fought in.

If he is right about this, then surely the people of Belgium should venerate their citizens who fought valiantly in the Waffen SS?

This is patent nonsense, and I doubt if any Echo reader would agree with it.

Anyone who wants to hold up the Wild Geese as heroes has to make a case, not for their undoubted bravery, but for the justice of the cause they fought for.

Likewise, anyone who wants to hold up the Great War Irish as heroes first has to show that the British Army went to war for good and honourable reasons.

Actually, it is much easier to make the case for the Wild Geese.

As for Britain's Great War, it was strenuously opposed by the most insightful of our own leaders, James Connolly and Roger Casement.

But when Britain went ahead anyway and launched its attacks on Germany and Turkey, Connolly and Casement aligned themselves with Germany and our other "gallant allies in Europe" because these allies of Ireland had right and justice on their side.

In the course of the Echo letters debate, this point has been established beyond reasonable doubt, and no coherent counter-argument has been successfully made.

The Irish soldiers in Britain's army were suckered into a dishonourable and unjust cause by their political leaders. We should accord them pity and forgiveness for their tragic mistake.

Eamonn de Paor, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford

#### **EVENING ECHO — FRI. 26.6.2014**

##### **KILLING FIELD OF WWI ARE STILL RESONATING**

"MY first night in the trenches," said my Uncle Ned, an ex-Dublin Fusilier then in his sixties, "I'd peep over the parapet, duck, bless myself, then peep over again."

Yours truly, less couth, Christian and courageous than he, would have substituted another verb for "bless" if in a similar predicament.

Some years ago, I had a short tour of the killing fields of Flanders, where he served during World War I.

Many of the trenches and the shell holes still survived, and in places, such as Vimy Ridge, you could toss a cigarette butt across the opposing lines.

Cemeteries abound, big and small, where unidentified bodies lie in egalitarian portions of earth, separated only by the colours they served. Other human bones are gathered in ossuaries, one of which is said to contain the unidentifiable remains of 16,000 men.

In the British Cemetery at Cabaret Rouge, near Arras, the first stone, to the left of the gate covers J Connelly, a Private in the Lincolns, killed May 1917, and nearby another covers J Connolly, a Sergeant in the Munsters.

At the arrogant and ugly Triumphal Arch at Thiepval, dedicated in the 1920s by the genius of the Somme Offensive, Earl Haig, a register of 74,000 men whose bodies were never found contains three pages of Kennedys.

The Battle of the Somme began on July 1, 1916, and at the site of its beginning lie row upon row of Inniskillings and Royal Irish, mainly recruited from Carson's anti- Home Rule UVF, killed that same day, when the British forces sustained 64,000 casualties, 16,000 of them fatal.

With them lie Dublin Fusiliers of mainly Nationalist sympathies, killed the following November on the same spot, for, when the 'Brasshats' plan of a quick breakthrough failed, they persisted in their futile attacks until they had lost about a half a million men.

The Ulster Division has an imposing memorial, whilst the soldiers from Ireland's three other provinces, whose sons died as bravely and as needlessly, are commemorated by a modest Celtic Cross.

The scale of the slaughter there evident overwhelms feelings for any particular family, province or nation. The tragedy is universal.

Those who fell under the British flag have uniform headstones, embossed with regimental insignia. From a distance you cannot distinguish Christian, Jew, Hindu, Moslem or non-believer, though all are well represented.

But the graves of German and French soldiers, in their separate cemeteries, are mainly covered with crosses, liberally interspersed with tablets bearing the Star of David, in the case of the Germans, and the Islamic Crescent with the legend 'Mort pour La France' in the case of the French.

The subsequent records of Germany and France need no elaboration here. But it should not be forgotten that British Governments do not have immaculate records for their treatment of the 'lesser breeds' and those 'beyond the Pale'. Indeed, in many cases they have destroyed the records.

I started my tour at Arras, where, in 1640 a garrison of 1,500 men in the Spanish service, 400 of them Irish, and all under the command of Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill, held out for three months against a besieging French army, building up from 30,000 to 100,000 men. They only surrendered when orders came from the Spanish king.

The garrison was allowed retain its arms and its banners as it marched out, ending Spanish rule after a period of 150 years.

The French commander complimented Eoghan Ruadh (the future victor of Benburb) with the remark that O'Neill had beaten him in all but fortune.

I had meant to do research on that episode, but gave up, finding that today's Frenchmen are a peculiar lot, and not disposed to remember kindly, soldiers, however gallant, who occupied their territory for a foreign power.

Donal Kennedy, Belmont Ave, Palmers Green, London

## **EVENING ECHO—Thu. 26.6.2014 (?)**

### **OVER-SIMPLIFY OUR HERITAGE AT YOUR PERIL**

The temptation to view history from one perspective can be very powerful, especially if that perspective had been created to support an ideology.

Ideological movements will always present history in seductively simplistic and emotive terms. But history is not simplistic. It is a labyrinth of complexity.

If people could free themselves from their fear of this complex way of understanding the human condition and the challenges that it will pose to their deeply held prejudices, they would realise that it is this complexity that makes the subject infinitely fascinating.

If you study history from the perspective of a Nazi ideologue, then you could equate the appalling behaviour of the British army at Amritsar in 1919 or Irish paramilitary police in Coke [*sic*] Park in 1920 with the atrocities carried out by the SS between 1933 and 1945. You will dismiss the fact that the International Military Tribunal declared the SS a criminal organisation in 1946 as being victor's justice. When you are reminded that the German Government signed the Versailles Treaty in 1919 and that in Article 231 of that treaty Germany accepted sole responsibility for the war, you will retreat to the 'stab in the back' myth. You will be proud to remind your critics that your party stopped reparation payments to the allied nations in 1933, though you might cringe a little when you are reminded that post-war German governments made good your failure, paying the final payment in 2010.

In fairness to all the contributors to the ongoing debate in this paper, I'm sure none of them have Nazi sympathies. But the point is, if you view history from an ideological perspective you may be trapped into supporting a premise which seems bizarre and absurd to most people.

The contribution about the relationship of Norway and Sweden was a worthwhile one. Feudalism didn't take root in Sweden, this is an important factor in understanding the relationship between the Scandinavian countries. These countries do not base their identities on religion or feelings of mutual antipathy and have a healthy neighbourly relationship. In the 11th century, Britain was invaded and conquered by a warrior elite from their feudal base in Normandy. In the following century this French-speaking warrior caste invaded and conquered much of Ireland. As a result, a powerful ruling class imposed itself on the indigenous peoples of these islands. They introduced the feudal system which would bind these islands together for better or worse.

Over time, the Normans in Britain were anglicised and those in Ireland were gaelicised. As the cultures of these three Norman territories diverged, it would take centuries of conflict to break the feudal bonds that bound them together.

As some contributors seem to have misread my earlier contribution, I have to say I never recommended the veneration or even suggested the honouring of peoples of the past. All I ask is that we remember the people of the past and try, through study, to understand the world they inhabited.

I have no interest in the veneration of human beings. Not Scottish-born ex-British soldiers like James Connolly or recipients of the Queens South African war Medal for actions on behalf of the British Empire against the Boer Republics like Sir Roger Casement. I do not point out these forgotten aspects of these men's biographies to criticise them, but to illustrate the complexity of history.

In the simplistic history of reactionary nationalism, all men who served in the Inniskilling regiments through all the centuries were not natives. I wonder what would the descendants of Cork man Private Daniel Murphy, 7th Batt. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, killed in action on the western front in 1916, should call themselves?

Could those contributors who decide who is Irish and who is not, tell me what we should call Erskine Childers? Born in London to an English father and an Anglo-Irish mother, he joined the British army to fight the Boers in 1899. In 1903 he published a novel, *Riddle of the Sands*, which he claimed came out of "a patriot's natural sense of duty", to warn Britain of the growing threat Germany posed to the UK. In 1910 and 1911, motivated by his expectation of war with Germany, Childers wrote two books on cavalry tactics. In July 1914 he smuggled arms into Howth for the Irish Volunteers. In August he was commissioned in the intelligence arm of the Royal Navy. In 1916 he received the Distinguished Service Cross fighting the

Turks in Gallipoli. In 1921 he was part of the Irish delegation sent to London to negotiate the Anglo-Irish Treaty. He was shot by Pro-Treaty forces in 1922. And if those contributors decide he was Irish, do they recommend we forget his World War service?

**Pat Murphy, address withheld on request**

#### **EVENING ECHO—FRI. 30.6.2014**

I AM happy to stand corrected by Richard Addington regarding the timeline of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). The Irish victors at Fontenoy did not shout "Remember Culloden". But it is quite possible that they shouted "Remember Limerick".

Mr. Addington says on the one hand that he knows my views on World War I, and on the other hand that he does not know where I stand on the justice of Britain's (and Ireland's) involvement in it. Since, as he rightly says, this is the key question of this debate I find it very hard to believe that he has not yet divined my opinion.

Mr Addington asks whether I think Germany's war against Russia and France was justified, likewise its war in Belgium, and its submarine warfare. Also, Britain's involvement in World War II.

At the start of World War I, the Irish political leadership induced many thousands of their fellow-countrymen to join the British war against Germany, Turkey and other countries. If we now wish to publicly endorse this policy in the guise of remembrance, then the morality of Britain's declaration of war on these countries cannot be brushed under the carpet.

Suppose, instead of backing Britain, Redmond & Co had backed Germany, a relatively peaceful trading and manufacturing country which had been overrun and devastated numerous times by French, Russian, British, Swedish and other armies in the preceding centuries. If Redmond had done this in 1914, and if we now wished to celebrate the memory of thousands of Irish people who had fought and died for Germany in 1914-18, then we would now be obliged to account for the morality of Germany's war.

But Redmond did not back Germany, so Mr Addington's questions about World War I are irrelevant to the current debate about WW1 Remembrance of Ireland's Great War effort on Britain's behalf.

His question about World War II is likewise a red herring. Just like Culloden and Fontenoy, World War II came after World War I, not before. Similarly, Germany's mode of submarine warfare came after Britain's declaration of war, and not before. So it could not have been a *casus belli*, justifiable or otherwise. The Cork Chairman of the Western Front Association evaded the issue of justification of Britain's Great War by simply ignoring it. Mr Addington dodges the question by counterposing different questions which, as explained above, are actually irrelevant to the current remembrance debate.

The issue in this debate is the justice or otherwise of Britain's war, not Germany's. Even if Germany went to war for all the wrong reasons that does not mean Britain's war — a war of choice, remember — was justifiable.

A bunch of drunks fighting in the gutter outside a pub can ALL be thugs. Many people hold the view that ALL sides in the Great War, including Belgium, were criminal imperialist powers, and that Redmond persuaded Ireland, an innocent passer-by, to get down in the gutter to help out one particular thug. This is the same one who, at closing time every other night, beat us to a pulp and robbed us blind. This particular thug — the most notorious and feared of them all — could actually have walked past the brawl since nobody challenged or attacked him. But, seeing an opportunity for rich pickings,

he had largely instigated the wholesale mayhem that ensued, in which all parties lost all civilised restraint, and in the end caused the whole street to be burned out.

Ireland learned its lesson quickly. Within a couple of years the prime movers in Ireland's independence struggle regarded Germany as one of our "gallant allies". They said as much in their Proclamation.

In answer to Mr Addington, I hold the same view as the one expressed in the 1916 Proclamation.

Among other contributors, Peadar Laffan ('Britain was violent criminal of Great War', Apr 2) showed that Britain planned, in advance, an unprovoked war of extermination against Germany which was then, just like now, a comparatively peaceful economic power.

Mr Addington says he has followed the Echo debate with "immense interest". He has amply demonstrated his historical powers and expertise on the War of the Austrian Succession. Surely he can also demonstrate where, for instance, Mr Laffan has failed in establishing the justice of Germany's war and the injustice of Britain's?

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

#### **EVENING ECHO, Cork—Wednes. 2.7.2014**

IN the summer of 1958, I had a meal which gave me intense pleasure. It was not haute cuisine, nor can I remember the food. Its pleasure was all to do with location, location, location.

It was the Military Barracks in Cork, one of two named after one of my heroes, Michael Collins, and I was wearing the green uniform of Óglaigh na hÉireann's Second Line Reserve, the FCA.

I was 16 years old and on my way to a fortnight's training, with the Rockwell College unit, and comrades drawn from North Mon, Pres and Christians.

I relished the meal, for my father had also eaten there, for one night in May 1921, as a prisoner of the Barracks' previous holders, the British Army.

Six months previous to my father's short stay, soldiers had issued forth from the Barracks to dynamite the City Hall and the Carnegie Library, as witness to their feelings on democracy and learning.

But for a 16-year-old that was ancient history. Elvis Presley had just been called up by Uncle Sam and volunteering to serve Mother Ireland seemed quite trendy.

We were off to Spike Island and a fort named after a more famous prisoner than my father, John Mitchel.

We were in Fort Mitchel, when, one lunchtime, the radio reported on a border incident where a Volunteer Hand, of Saor Uladh, was shot dead by Crown Forces, and sympathy for the man was expressed by an FCA recruit. One member of our party would have none of it. He'd patrolled the border on both sides, wearing khaki and green in turns. Soldiering, for him, was all about money, and you served whoever hired you. A part-time recruit doesn't argue but I doubt I was the only one who felt a bit sick.

In Cobh at that time I once overheard a woman in a snug lamenting the withdrawal of the British Fleet and Coastal Gunners men 20 years previously. I had not read James Joyce at the time and his line about playing "catch-as-catch-can with a tight-breeched British artilleryman" but it occurred to me that, in her prime, she might well have entertained boarding-parties.

Certainly, in 1958, there were gombeen merchants, lobbying for an invitation to be sent to the British Fleet to revisit its old haunts.



In 1958, despite the heroism of other days, there were still fore-lock touching peasantry about. I'm afraid that in the 56 years since then, it has become an admired phenomenon.

The well-organised Irish branches of the London-centred 'Western Front Association' give the lie to a claim made by one of Ireland's greatest heroes: Michael Davitt claimed that the Land League had killed the Politics of Deference in Ireland.

Donal Kennedy, Belmont Ave, Palmers Green, London N13.

### **EVENING ECHO, Cork—FRIDAY, 4.7.2014**

THE long account by Brendan O'Shea and Gerry White of how the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo "triggered a devastating world war" (June 24) needlessly blamed all and sundry for the events of 1914-18 and left us none the wiser as to why this caused a Great War.

The account is complementary to the coverage of the centenary of the Great War in the British media, in which it seems there are only two accounts allowable with regard to the origin of the conflict — either to blame Germany solely or to cast the responsibility widely among the foreign powers. The truth of the matter, which is much closer to home, seems to be an inconvenient and unspeakable truth.

One fact suffices in understanding the truth: Great Britain made the Great War and without Britain there would have been no world war.

The mystification of the Great War's origins, to Britain's advantage, is achieved by a conflation of potential conflicts arising out of the killing of the heir to the Habsburg Empire. The provocative assassination of the Archduke made a Balkan war a probability between Austro-Hungary and Serbia. Russia's determination to back up Serbia, Germany's consequent need to protect Austro-Hungary in light of this, and France's alliance with Russia, made a European war a possibility. However, it was Britain's decision to intervene and participate in the conflict that actually made the Balkan and/or European war into a world war.

Britain was, of course, the only country that could afford to stay out of the developing conflict, being alone, an impregnable island surrounded by a mighty navy and not being bound by strict alliances, as were the other powers. But it chose to turn a potentially much shorter and less devastating European conflict into a much greater and catastrophic world conflict through its voluntary intervention. And it led Germany on, into Belgium, by not making its position clear to Berlin at the vital hour.

Britain's decision to participate in the European war gave it its global character. This was because it was only Britain which possessed the worldwide empire and global resources to make such a conflict possible. It alone had instituted a revolution in its foreign policy and a great innovation in its military arrangements in order to make contingencies for fighting a world war both on the European continent and further afield. It alone had the imperial ambitions in Africa and Asia and contingency plans prepared to bring them to fruition to make the war so geographically extensive. And it had the greatest military force in the world in the Royal Navy, globally deployed, to fight a war on a multitude of continents and seas.

It was Britain which also infused the world war with a catastrophic moral character that made it practically unstoppable, despite its quick stalemate and thereafter terrible attrition. By defining the conflict as 'a war for civilisation' and of 'good against evil' Britain made it impossible for the substantial Papal peace initiatives to succeed or for a functional peace settlement to be established, even after four years of devastation. When Britain could not win its war it widened it, through irredentist promises to others to participate, which were dishonoured

latterly. It forced countries such as Greece that had no wish to take part to do so by threatening them with its navy or violating their neutrality. When the war was over the chickens came home to roost, big time.

And that is the thing that made it one of "the most cataclysmic conflicts" which would "shape the world we live in today".

Mr O'Shea and Mr White unnecessarily muddy the waters in their lengthy examination of the origins of the conflict. When we talk of the Great War there should be no confusion about it. It was primarily Britain's Great War because Britain alone and indispensably put the 'Great' into that Great War. Fought across the world it was truly 'Made in Britain'.

Dr. Pat Walsh, Leyland Crescent, Co. Antrim

### **EVENING ECHO, Cork—SATURDAY, 5.7.2014**

Hoover distributed \$1.8m of food weekly.

We know the background to the First World War and its battles from the interesting letters of the past four months in the *Evening Echo*, but less of the hardships of civilians.

American Herbert Hoover was a businessman and a natural administrator. At the start of the war, he was based in London. He was asked to evacuate 12,000 American civilians from Europe, which he duly did.

He then led the Commission for Relief in Belgium to provide food and sustenance to the eight million people, who were in danger of dying from starvation.

They had been hit hard with factories closed, farms ruined and most of the food stores taken by the German army.

In response to this monumental challenge, Herbert Hoover distributed up [to] \$1.8 million dollars worth of food weekly for an amazing two-and-a-half years with the help of the New York office of the Commission. He helped to save millions of lives, but not without reported human flaws. He rarely visited a food station and there were allegations of profiteering. Whether true or not, he saved millions of people and helped them survive until the war was over and for this he was known as 'the Great Humanitarian'. It was the biggest relief effort the world had ever seen. He negotiated with the German authorities to allow the distribution of food in Belgium.

He was not the only one. There was Myron T. Herrick, an American ambassador to France during his first term to 1914 and during the war he helped the French people. He was awarded the French Legion of Honour and was the first American ambassador to have a Paris street named after him.

When the US entered the First World War in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson requested Hoover to head the US Food Administration to ready the country for war-time food production. Their slogan was 'Food will win the war'. At war's end, he headed the American Relief Administration, which saved millions of more lives in Europe, including the people of Germany who lost heavily in the war. They set up 35,000 food stations in Germany, which provided 300 million meals. He certainly was effective and he founded the Hoover War Collection library in 1919 on his immense aid effort in the First World War. This is now known as the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and it also has archives from the Second World War.

It should not surprise, he was elected 31st President of the United States in 1929. He came from a family of devout Quakers.

Name with editor

### **EVENING ECHO, Cork—SATURDAY, 5.7.2014**

Out of place.

Having read Donal Kennedy's letter re the "Killing Fields of WW1" (*Evening Echo*, June 27), I believe celebrations of the First World War to be completely out of place. All of the most advanced and progressive thinkers, from James Connolly to George Bernard Shaw to Rosa Luxembourg in Germany opposed the First World War bitterly, and saw it as an unnecessary imperialist adventure and a criminal waste of human life. For whose benefit was the First World War fought but the rich and powerful of Europe and it was more than a tragedy that so many Irishmen died serving the British Empire which had carried genocide during the famine and continued to evict and suppress the poor classes in Ireland.

Mark Duggan,  
Dublin.

#### **EVENING ECHO, Cork—TUES. 8.7.2014**

A just war.

AS I anticipated, in his letter of June 30, Pat Maloney, editor of Labour Comment, failed to answer the questions I asked about the justice of Germany's declaration of war on France and Russia, its actions against neutral Belgium, its unrestricted submarine warfare and the justice of Britain's war against Nazi Germany in 1939.

Mr Maloney described my question about Britain's war against Nazi Germany as a 'red herring' and said: "just like Culloden and Fontenoy, World War II came after World War I, not before". I would like to remind him that he was the one who introduced Culloden, Fontenoy and the Nazis to this debate! I consider his comment to be nothing more than a smoke-screen for his failure to provide an answer to my questions. For my part I do believe that Britain's war against Nazi Germany was just.

In a further attempt to mask his failure to answer my questions Mr Maloney described a hypothetical situation whereby John Redmond supported Germany in the war. For my part I prefer to deal with historical fact. He also stated that the issue of this debate is "the justice or otherwise of Britain's war, not Germany's" and accused me of dodging that 'question' by counterposing different questions. I would like to remind Mr Maloney that it was I who asked him the questions.

Mr Maloney stated that Peadar Laffan showed that Britain planned in advance "an unprovoked war of extermination against Germany which was then ... a comparatively peaceful country." They might consider Imperial Germany to be a comparatively peaceful country but there are countless others who would disagree!

Mr Maloney called Britain's war a "war of choice." It was indeed a war of choice, a choice motivated by its obligations to Belgium under the 1839 Treaty of London and what Britain considered to be a threat to its national interest. Mr Maloney may be willing to dismiss international treaty obligations but he should remember that such treaties are the foundation of international law and that governments are elected to act in their countries' national interest.

The origins of the First World War can be attributed to the imperialism, nationalism and militarism that swept Europe at that time.

But of all the warring nations, Germany must take the major share of the responsibility for starting the conflict. It gave Austria-Hungary a 'blank cheque' for its war against Serbia, it declared war on France and Belgium and violated international treaties by invading Belgium and Luxembourg.

In this regard it is my opinion, and the opinion of historians throughout the world, that Britain was justified in going to war against Germany. The atrocities the German armed forces committed in Belgium and the manner in which it fought the war ultimately proved that this was the correct course of action.

I believe I have addressed all the matters raised by Mr Maloney. I still await his answers to the questions I posed.

Richard Addington

Address withheld on request

#### **EVENING ECHO, Cork—Thursday, 10.7.2014**

THE impulse to ritualistically remember the dead is as old as the pyramids. Anthropologists and archaeologists show evidence that it is a universal trait.

From Newgrange to the Taj Mahal, the Terracotta Army to the Necropolis at the Kremlin wall, remembering the dead has played a vital role in the human story. When some people feel the need to ritualistically remember their ancestors who died in World War I, they are responding to an impulse as old as civilisation.

The people so deeply offended by this impulse that they feel the need to publicly denounce in the media those who engage in such rituals are, I find, a fascinating bunch. They champion the Kaiser's Germany, rehabilitate the SS, quote from the Proclamation and evoke the names of patriot dead in their desperate desire to ensure we shall NOT remember them.

Nostalgia can generate powerful emotions that can blind us to the realities of the past. I am sure these people would like to return to an Ireland of long ago, to an age of frugal self-sufficiency, when people lived in cosy homesteads and comely maidens danced at the crossroads. To an Ireland when a Catholic Nationalist hegemony held sway in the Southern State, when Nationalist political violence was romanticised and violation of Catholic sexual morality was criminalised. But such a world is dead and gone — with O'Leary in the grave.

These anti-remembrance people have made strange demands, for example asking that the justice of the allied cause in World War I has to be proven, for it to be acceptable for people to have the right to remember those who died in that conflict. But proven to whose satisfaction? It has already been proven to the satisfaction of millions of people who remember the fallen at monuments and memorials across the world.

In a tolerant society, people should be free to forget or remember whatever they want. If anti-remembrance people feel the SS are equally worthy of remembrance, maybe they should start publicly remembering them and in the reaction they get, they might understand what the rest of world thinks about the SS. Peering into the dimly-lit past, I am sure most people can recognise that the end of British Imperialism was a progressive step in European development and I see no harm if many Irish people take a little patriotic pride in the role that some Irish people played in that process.

By the same token, the demise of German Imperialism in both its second and third incarnations were positive steps in European development and I see no harm if some Irish people feel a little pride in the role their ancestors played in that.

But I think modern Irish people should feel secure enough to see that the legacy of British Imperialism poses no more threat to the world today than 'the glory that was Greece, And the grandeur that was Rome'.

Those who like to quote from the Proclamation should remember these words, "cherishing all the children of the nation equally". It does not say "cherishing all the children of the nation equally, except the children of those men who have fallen fighting against our gallant allies in Europe, who we insist must not remember their fathers".

And for those who like to evoke the patriot dead, I think it is worth reminding them that P.H Pearse was well aware of the need to ritualistically remember the dead when he said at the graveside of O'Donovan Rossa in 1915: "The fools, the fools! — they have left us our Fenian dead".

If the British could leave us with our Fenian dead, can we not leave our fellow Irish people with their non-Fenian dead?

Moreover, those who seem to think Protestants are not quite native really need to study their own nationalist mythology. It would be pointless asking these people to study history as it is obvious they think nationalist mythology is history.

However, the Declaration of Constitution of the United Irishmen 1797 declares "No reform is practicable, efficacious, or just, which shall not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion". The Proclamation of the Provisional Government 1803 states "We fight, that all of us may have our country, and that done, each of us shall have his religion."

The Fenian Proclamation 1867 says "We declare, also, in favour of absolute liberty of conscience, and complete separation of Church and State" and the 1916 Proclamation guarantees "religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all".

These documents express the true fundamentals of republicanism. Those reactionary nationalists who would deny Irish people the liberty to express solidarity with their own people who died in the war, not only expose their own sectarian bigotry but betray the principles they pretend to uphold.

Pat Murphy, address withheld on request

### **Cork Evening Echo letters column, 19/7/2014:**

#### **It Was Britain Who Wanted War In 1914**

Richard Addington (July 8 2014) denies that in 1914 Germany was historically the most peaceable of the large European states. He says the numbers of people who would disagree with this are "countless". In his 1952 book "A Study of War", American Professor Quincy Wright estimated the relative percentages of participation in wars by the principal European states. Top of the list was Britain, and at the bottom was Germany whose involvement in war was a mere fraction of Britain's. A cursory inspection of the history of 19th century warfare confirms this.

Mr Addington also claims that Germany was mainly to blame for starting the Great War. Historically Germany was generally the victim rather than the instigator of aggression. One power --- France --- invaded Germany at least thirty times since the middle ages. Mr Addington needs to do more than just make blanket statements for which he provides no evidence.

In fact his statements are contradicted by the evidence available. 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. The conversation between them gives the lie to Mr Addington's unsubstantiated claims:

*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.)

Britain did not declare war to defend Belgium, or for freedom of small nations, or for democracy. Britain freely chose to attack Germany, not to protect itself or any other country from aggression, but in order to physically destroy an economic competitor and to extend its Empire over vast new territories. It achieved both of these objectives.

Mr. Addington also mentions World War 2. Unlike 1914, in 1939 Germany was not a peaceful industrial country. After doing everything it could to prevent the democratic and unwarlike German Weimar state from consolidating itself, between 1933 and March 1939 Britain generously helped Hitler to acquire extensive territories and weapons of war. Just like the British Empire, Hitler's 1939 agenda was military domination, if not of the whole world, at least of a significant part of it. Hitler's Germany also resembled Britain in its colonisation and extermination policies. Here is how Hitler described his objectives and methods in *Mein Kampf*:

*"We will select the best settlement areas as land for German settlement ... We will deal with the population. ... We don't need to give ourselves any pangs of conscience about this ... After all we don't think of [Red] Indians when eating Canadian wheat. ... England ... was free to ... eat its frozen mutton [from Australia] without looking too closely into how they were produced. ... One task lies ahead: Teutonisation by bringing in Germans and regarding the original inhabitants as [Red] Indians. ... We will have to have a razzia [extermination war], square kilometre by square kilometre and constantly stringing people up. This is to be a real Indian War."*

Peadar Laffan Ash Street Youghal

### **EVENING ECHO, 24.7.2014.**

Let's have a public debate on Great War.

In 1914, a militaristic, genocidal power went to the assistance of another genocidal power. Except that, in accordance with a previously agreed plan for the criminal destruction of a relatively peaceful economic rival, Britain sent its army, not to Belgium, but to France.

Apart from these points, Richard Addington agrees with me that in 1914 Britain went to war as a matter of choice rather than necessity. Unlike most of the other powers involved nobody mobilised their armies against Britain, which was in no danger of attack by Germany, Turkey, Austria-Hungary, or Bulgaria.

After the Spanish Armada, it is hard to think of any British war that was not a war of choice, right down to its invasion of Iraq in 2003. As to Britain's exterminations of conquered peoples in the course of its drive for world domination, these were also optional.

Mr. Addington says that Britain's 1914 attack on Germany was retrospectively justified by Germany's conduct in the Great War, in particular by its treatment of civilians and shipping.

But punishment is usually administered for crimes already committed, not for future or potential crimes. How would you like it if you were fined today for not paying your TV licence in 2015? Perhaps, in 2015, you would refuse to buy your licence as the fine was already paid.

In 1914 Britain had been a hardened criminal for several centuries while Germany was a relative novice. If future crime



was justification for war then in 1914 Germany could have declared war on Britain for its future shelling of Dublin and slaughter of civilians in 1916, when it achieved a higher daily rate of civilian killing than that of Germany in Belgium.

Britain went on to murder the leadership of Ireland's Volunteer Army whose warfare was meticulously conducted and who could easily have escaped and gone into hiding, but who surrendered formally in order to deprive Britain of any excuse for further civilian murders.

In fact, in advance of the war, killing civilians by starvation naval blockade was Britain's primary war-winning strategy against Germany. A million or so German civilians were murdered by this method, several hundred thousand of them AFTER the military ceasefire. In the course of the Germany used submarines to try to counter this.

This letters debate is about the merits or otherwise of official Irish Remembrance of the Irish soldiers who died for Britain in the Great War. Mr. Addington has opened up a number of additional topics.

Here is a proposal to him. At 8 p.m. on August 8 in the Gresham Metropole Hotel, MacCurtain Street, *Labour Comment* is holding a public meeting to launch Dr. Pat Walsh's book "*The Great War: The Great Fraud, 1914 - 1918*".

I invite Mr. Addington to attend and debate the views he has expressed in the *Evening Echo*. A special invitation is also extended to the twentieth century war experts in UCC.

Pat Maloney Labour Comment  
Roman Street Cork

## **EVENING ECHO, CORK—SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2014**

Germany peaceful in 1914? What nonsense.

IN his letter of July 19, Peadar Laffan once again presents a distorted and Anglophobic view of history. He also raised a number of issues about my last letter that I wish to address.

Quoting Professor Quincy Wright's work, *A Study of War*, he states that Germany's involvement in war was a mere fraction of Britain's. He then goes on to state that France invade Germany at least 30 times since the middle ages.

Unfortunately, I have to remind Mr Laff an that, in his haste to absolve Germany of any wrongdoing in 1914, that the 'Germany' he describes had only been in existence since 1871 and not since the middle ages as he implied.

Mr Laffan accused me of making 'blanket statements' for which I 'provide no evidence'. The only thing I have to say in response to this is that history provides all the evidence I need.

In relation to the 'peaceable' Germany of 1914 the historical facts are as follows: GERMANY declared war on France and Russia; GERMANY invaded France, GERMANY invaded neutral Belgium and committed atrocities against the civilian population of that country; GERMANY introduced the policy of unrestricted submarine warfare and the aerial bombardment of cities; GERMANY was the first warring country to use poison gas on the Western Front. It must also be remembered that GERMANY admitted responsibility for starting the war in the Treaty of Versailles and all German governments (except Hitler's) honoured its commitment to pay war reparations.

For some reason, Mr Laffan has chosen not to acknowledge or address these historical facts.

Again, in his effort to prove that Germany was the most peaceable of European states in 1914, Mr Laffan conveniently neglected to mention its genocide of the Herero and Nama people of German South-West Africa between 1904 and 1907.

Germany's war aims can also be seen in the 'September Programme'. This was a document presented to the German government on September 9 by Chancellor Theobald von Bethman-Hollweg that provided an insight into the thinking of Germany's leaders at that time. Among other things it called for the annexation of Belgium and Luxembourg, the occupation of a strip of coastline in northern France and the imposition of war reparations on that country, the creation of an economic association in Europe that would be dominated by Germany and the expansion of the German Empire in Africa.

All of this proves conclusively that, whatever it was, the Germany of 1914 was definitely NOT the 'most peaceable of European states' that Mr Laffan believes it was.

In an effort to support his contention that Britain conspired to wage a war against 'peaceable' Germany in 1914, Mr Laffan quoted a conversation that occurred in 1910 between former British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour and Henry White, the U.S Ambassador to Britain, that was mentioned in White's memoir published in 1930 – twenty years after it took place.

Mr Laffan should know that government policy is not formed in private conversations but at the cabinet table, and in 1914 Arthur Balfour was NOT in office.

As for Mr Laffan quoting Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to support his arguments, to be honest, I find it disturbing that anyone would feel the need to use that rubbish to make a point!

Whether Mr Laffan chooses to believe it or not, the historical facts are that the British government DID call for an international conference to prevent a European war breaking out. Britain was the LAST major European power to go to war in August 1914 and Germany's violation of international law with its invasion of neutral Belgium WAS a factor that led Britain to go to war.

This is the historical evidence that I use to support what Mr Laffan calls my 'blanket statements' and these are the historical FACTS that he and other contributors who blame Britain for starting the world war can NOT simply ignore or wish away.

I am not blind to Britain's colonial past or indeed to the atrocities inflicted by the forces of the Crown on the people of Ireland during the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21.

This debate, however, is about Ireland's participation in World War I and the issue of remembrance. In the context of the time, I believe that the United Kingdom was justified in going to war.

I also believe that the Irishmen who fought in the war believed that they were fighting for a just cause and in that context they deserve to be remembered.

Richard Addington, address withheld on request

## **Echo Letters 7 Aug 2014:**

Richard Addington (July 26) is adamant that in 1914 Germany was NOT the most peaceable of the large European states. It is a great pity that Cork's history academics, including our eminent and distinguished history retirees, will not intervene openly and honestly in this debate in order to clarify this issue with real information rather than with the propaganda of the victors.

The British military and naval historian Captain Russell Grenfell made a statistical analysis of the numerical involvement in wars by the major European powers in the century between Waterloo and the Great War. He credited Britain with involvement in ten major wars, Russia in seven, France in five, Austria in three, and Prussia/Germany in three. In the absence of local academic input, every other serious study that I know of confirms this pattern.

Mr. Addington says that Germany started World War 1, that Britain's war-making was right and just, and that the Irish

who fought for Britain against Germany should be officially honoured for doing the right thing. But the vast majority of Irish withdrew their support for Britain's struggle. Eventually they went into wholesale revolt against Britain's effort to conscript the necessary human resources for its just and moral war against Germany. Should they be condemned for shirking their moral duty and for thereby giving aid and comfort to a force for evil in the world?

And what about our military connection to our "gallant allies in Europe"? Should we repudiate and condemn our Citizen and Volunteer Armies for allying themselves with the wrong side? If not, why not? Surely it is morally repugnant to take an ambiguous and shifty stance on a great international evil which caused so much terrible harm and suffering? Mr. Addington should tell us where he stands on this.

My claim, on the other hand, is that Britain caused a World War in 1914 in order to crush a relatively peaceful economic rival and to extend its vast empire, and that those Irish politicians who led us into Britain's criminal war should now be held to historical account on moral grounds.

Britain's responsibility for this great crime is confirmed by Arthur Balfour who was Prime Minister when the British war conspiracy was hatched. Mr. Addington pours scorn on Balfour's testimony, on the grounds that "government policy is not formed in private conversations but at the cabinet table." But the great complaint of the Liberal backbenchers in 1914 was that government policy had been formed without reference to cabinet or parliament.

Balfour was part of the secretive Committee of Imperial Defence which initiated and managed the political, diplomatic and military arrangements for war on Germany, and which included key members of the elite of both political parties and the armed forces, and which was not subject to parliamentary oversight and control. He was better informed about what was going on than the vast majority of the government party or even the cabinet. Balfour knew more than the Liberal Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman, for instance.

Mr. Addington mentions the British government's attempts to avert war in July 1914. This was pure hypocrisy intended to cover its true intentions. Here is what George Bernard Shaw wrote about it at the time: **"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 [Foreign Secretary] Sir Edward Grey."**

Mr. Addington has raised many serious and troubling issues. I note that he has been invited to debate these matters in person at a public meeting in the Gresham Metropole Hotel at 8 p.m. on Thursday August 8. Hopefully he will take up this opportunity.

Peadar Laffan Youghal

### **Echo Letters 8 Aug 2014:**

Richard Addington's letter of July 26 ('Germany peaceful in 1914? What nonsense') is so full of fallacies, anachronisms and non-sequiturs that he would surely get a big fat "Fail" if he presented them in a student history assignment. I will try to deal with a few of them in the limited space available.

He says "Germany" did not exist before 1871, so it could not have suffered the innumerable devastating invasions by neighbouring states that are the stuff of European history. This is like saying that Ireland did not endure the Great Famine, since "Ireland" only came into being with the 1916 Proclamation, or perhaps the 1919 Declaration of Independence.

He justifies Britain's unprovoked engagement in the war by various atrocities which happened AFTER its declaration of war. It declared war on countries which did NOT perpetrate the atrocities he lists.

The USA's Great War was, on the face of it, even more highly "moral" than Britain's. So if Turkey shared the war guilt with its ally Germany, why did the USA never declare war on it? Could it be that, after grabbing Egypt and half of Persia in advance of the war, Britain simply wanted to join up its Middle East Empire into a continuous landmass by grabbing Mesopotamia which had hitherto been content enough as an Ottoman component? Britain was successful then --- and just look at the condition of Mesopotamia now!

Mr. Addington talks of the German invasion of neutral Belgium, the author of the Congo genocide, which supposedly brought about Britain's declaration of war. Never mind that for centuries Britain had grown fat on invading, conquering and plundering far-flung lands.

A few years prior to the Great War Britain invaded neutral Persia, leading to an appalling famine. A few weeks after declaring war on Germany, supposedly because of Belgian neutrality, Britain invaded neutral China. A couple of years later, after imposing a brutal starvation naval blockade on Greek civilians, babies, women, the sick, the elderly, Britain invaded neutral Greece.

He talks about German use of poison gas. Here is what the pre-eminent British war leader Sir Winston Churchill said about this subject: "I do not understand this squeamishness about the use of gas. We have definitely adopted the position at the Peace Conference of arguing in favour of the retention of gas as a permanent method of warfare. ... I am strongly in favour of using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes."

Mr. Addington cites the Herero massacre in Germany's Namibian colony as demonstrating the colossal evil inherent in the German regime. Unlike the other European big powers, predominantly Britain, Germany eschewed colonialism until very late in the day.

The Anglophile German Carl Peters, while living in England, observed the huge advantages to be had by plundering defenceless, undeveloped, foreign countries, and he became the leading propagandist for establishing German colonies.

European colonialism was and is a cruel and abhorrent phenomenon. Carl Peters became an object of contempt in Germany where he was known as Hangman Peters. But it can be argued that, on the whole, the relatively marginal German colonialism was the least worst of the lot.

In Namibian South West Africa, a military governor replaced the German civil power during a revolt by the indigenous people in 1904, and he initiated a programme of extermination. The German Chancellor von Bulow advised the Kaiser to countermand this savage policy on grounds of simple humanity, which he duly did. But the damage had been done.

How does this compare with centuries-long British colonial policy? Leading British Liberal Sir Charles Dilke, who was expected to become Prime Minister before he got involved in a messy divorce, described British colonialism as follows in his best-selling book *Greater Britain*, where he stated frankly and proudly that the Anglo-Saxon race was the most effective genocidal force in world history: *"A gradual extinction of the inferior races is not only a law of nature, but a blessing to mankind..... The Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race on earth. Up to the commencement of the now inevitable destruction of the Red Indians of Central North America, of the Maoris, and of the Australians by the English Colonists, no numerous race had ever been blotted out by an invader."*

Eamonn de Paor Dunmore East Co. Waterford

### **Echo 11 August 2014**

IN his letter of July 24 ('Let's have a public debate on Great War'), Mr Pat Maloney, editor of Labour Comment, stated that

Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare in World War I was used to counter Britain's naval blockade of

Germany. May I remind Mr Maloney that the strategy of naval blockade was employed by countries long before World War I — one example being the Federal blockade of the Confederate coast during the American Civil War.

Under the 'Prize Rules' that existed when the war broke out in 1914, a submarine captain was not permitted to sink or render incapable of navigation a merchant vessel without having first placed its passengers and crew in a place of safety. Germany could have conducted its submarine campaign against Britain under these rules. Initially it did so, but it ultimately chose to violate the rules of war when it introduced its campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1915. During this campaign, German submarine captains torpedoed merchant vessels WITHOUT warning.

This is what happened when the Lusitania was sunk off the coast of Cork with the loss of 1,198 lives and when countless other Irish merchant vessels were sunk in similar circumstances. While he did address the matter of Germany's submarine campaign, Mr Maloney once again FAILED to provide answers to the other questions I asked him about the justice of 'peaceful' Germany's declaration of war on France and Russia, its invasion of neutral Belgium, the atrocities it committed against that country's civilian population, and the justice of Britain's war against Nazi Germany

in 1939.

Mr Maloney's failure to address these matters comes as no surprise. Prior to writing this, I reviewed most of the correspondence that has appeared in the Echo on the matter of Ireland and World War I. In doing so I noticed that in his letters Mr Maloney has DENIGRATED the memory of the Irishmen who fought in World War I by describing them as 'psychopaths', 'mercenaries' and 'gullible'; he compared these men to NAZIS; he INSULTED those Irish people who attend remembrance ceremonies, calling them 'deluded' and 'hypocrites'; he got historical facts WRONG in relation to the battles of Fontenoy and Culloden, and he IGNORED historical facts relating to what he called the 'peaceful' Germany of 1914.

In his letter, Mr Maloney also accused me of 'opening a number of additional topics'. I believe any 'topic' I may have 'opened' such as the Nazis and the 'justice' of Britain's entry into the war had already been introduced by him during the course of this debate.

I must say, I also find his use of inflammatory language to be interesting. He says that the German civilians who died as a result of the British naval blockade were 'murdered'. If this is the case, would he also agree that the innocent Belgian civilians who were killed by 'peaceable' German soldiers, the innocent civilians who died during 'peaceable' Germany's aerial bombardment of London and its shelling of British coastal towns and the innocent civilians who perished on the high sea when 'peaceable' German submarine captains sunk their passenger ships without warning, were also murdered?

Unfortunately, I suspect this is yet ANOTHER question he will decline to answer in case it places his 'peaceable' Germany in a bad light. I am quite sure that readers who have been following this debate would be interested in Pat Maloney's answers to the questions I've asked him. I certainly would!

However, rather than answer them, Mr Maloney invited me to attend a forthcoming book launch where he said I would have the opportunity to 'debate' the issues that have been raised in these pages. I don't live in Cork, but if did I wouldn't attend as I doubt very much if there would be an opportunity to have a

balanced and objective debate at this event. I am not sure how many people attended the event mentioned by Mr Maloney or indeed if the 'debate' he mentioned even took place.

There is, however, a debate on the war that has reached hundreds, if not thousands of people. That debate has been conducted in the pages of this paper.

Unfortunately, during its course, attempts have been made to portray the Irishmen who fought in World War I as traitors and war criminals. These men were anything but. They deserve better than to be vilified. In this, the centenary of the war, we should remember them.

Richard Addington, address withheld on request

## Echo Editorial 11 August 2014

### Heroes of our history deserve lasting respect

AN EXCELLENT BBC television programme, Who Do You Think You Are? last week followed the actress Julie Walters as she traced her ancestors in Co. Mayo. It turned out two of her great-grandfathers were Land League campaigners and one of them was evicted with his family. One of her great-grandmothers was an active agitator for the Ladies Land League, membership of which was condemned by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

The programme graphically illustrated the suffering and abuse Irish smallholders had to endure at the hands of rack-renting landlords, and their enormous struggle to get out from under that yoke. Land League protests were widespread throughout the country and meetings were attended by thousands.

All of this took place in the 1880s. It may be noted that these events happened less than 40 years before 1916. Those who seek to discredit the Easter Rising may wish to reflect on this context. We are increasingly being told that Irish independence was inevitable and that the lives lost in fighting for it were wasted. Such revisionism is as invalid as retrospective questioning of the motives of John Redmond and the Irishmen who followed his urging that they should go to fight for small nations in the First World War.

The brave young men who fought and died in both struggles did so out of the highest of motives and are entitled our respect.

Politicians and commentators now trying to shoehorn history to fit their modern views and prejudices, risk distorting it and depriving them of the honour and appreciation they deserve.

ISK /Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund /  
International Socialist Struggle League.

ISK members had to be non-smokers, teetotal,  
vegetarian and non-religious. Being late to  
meetings or untidy led to exclusion.

Unsurprisingly, it never had more than 300  
members.

Nevertheless, its leaders dominated the German  
Socialist exile groupings in London and were used  
as 'guides' to Allied armies at the end of the war to  
prevent communist influence in Germany. Philip  
O'Connor explains how it happened, p. 6.