

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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Greece and the Eurozone

Editorial

Game Theory suggests that the side with the most complete information of the intentions, weaknesses and stratagems of its opponent will probably win, all other things being equal. The Greek Finance Minister, Mr Varoufakis, is said to be an academic specialist in Game Theory. But all other things are not equal, for Greece holds the strongest cards in its hands, especially the weakness of the Euro as a currency zone without a government. It has proven adroit at exploiting its advantage.

Eurozone muddle

Eurozone officials have been trying meekly to push the boat out on “governance” building. In mid-February an “*Analytical Note on the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)*” by Commission President Juncker raised (again) the theoretical possibility of a “Eurozone Union” and even Parliament, stating that “strong common institutions” were needed instead of the current mere “common rules”. In the wake of the latest Greek crisis, ECB chief Draghi has said that the lack of convergence in the economies and institutions of the Eurozone was “*why, whenever there is a serious shock in any part of the euro area, questions about the sustainability of the union still arise.*”

Europe’s fiscal and monetary rules have repeatedly been broken, said Draghi, straining “trust” among countries. There must be:

“deeper institutional integration, with more shared sovereignty and strengthened accountability ... We need to move from a system of rules and guidelines for national economic policy making to a system of further sovereignty sharing within common institutions ... My conclusion is that there must be a quantum leap in institutional convergence.” (*EurActiv*, 17.03.15)

We have heard all of this before, notably when Merkel and Sarkozy took the historic leap of introducing the Fiscal Compact in 2012 to the exclusion of Britain. But, apart from the basic, essential structures of a banking union and an insurance fund against future bank and sovereign failures through a type of debt mutualisation, little has been heard of that initiative since.

The Eurogroup is petrified by outside events, such as the prospect of a British EU exit, and immobilized by the role of non-Euro states (such as Sweden) and anti-Euro states (such as Britain) in co-determining both monetary union (an EU process) and developments in the Euro currency (through the EU Council of Finance Ministers).

On the other hand, on the issue immediately at hand, Eurozone leaders have repeatedly stressed that Greece cannot be forced or allowed to drop out of the Euro, the red line position of Merkel since her statement to that effect in 2012 (see ‘Grexit Grumblings’, *SPIEGEL International*, 5th January). But the lack of progress towards “common institutions” means that a policy of muddling through will be how it will “solve” the Greek problem.

The Greeks have been very lucky!

Trojan Horse?

That Greece can ride casually through the chaos that is Eurozone policy and come up trumps is hardly a surprise. As if to emphasise their measure of the game, following the Syriza victory it was not to Berlin or Paris that the new leaders of Greece travelled to begin diplomacy on its debt crisis, but to the capitals of essentially hostile currencies, London and Washington, where they were hailed as celebrity heroes (echoes of “*plucky little Greece*”).

Greece has embellished its demands on the Eurozone with a variety of outlandish and interesting provocations. These include threats (by the Greek Justice Minister) that Middle Eastern refugees and Islamic State militants could “flood” Europe from Greece should the Eurozone not concede its demands. The Syriza party press has continued to publish cartoons of German politicians in Nazi uniforms while the Greek government has re-floated reparations demands for Second World War German crimes. Tugging the anti-fascist heartstrings of the western Left rarely fails, and this case has been no different.

Wolfgang Schäuble likened the collective effect on the Eurozone of acceding to early Greek demands as a “Trojan Horse” within the currency. But the leaders of the Eurozone’s strongest states, Merkel and Hollande – with Dijsselbloem and Juncker in tow – moved to talks directly with the Greeks on a solution ahead of a decision by the Eurozone Ministers (much to the latter’s annoyance) so as to ensure an “agreement” based on “mutual trust”, giving Greece more “flexibility” in meeting reform commitments than many of the EZ leaders would be inclined to accept. The notion of the Germans as the austerity “hard-liners” is very far from the mark. Germany wants any agreement that provides time, doesn’t undermine the Syriza government and, above all, keeps the country in the Euro. EU Commission President Juncker went one step farther, announcing the availability of €2.15 billion of “*unused EU development funds ... to support efforts to create growth and social cohesion in Greece, targeting especially youth unemployment*” (RTE News, 20th March).

The roll-over of the Eurozone leaders to accommodate Greece seems total, as it should be. All types of rules are being abandoned. According to Bloomberg, the ECB “*rejected a proposal by its new supervisory arm – the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) – to stop Greek banks from increasing their holdings of short-term government debt, amid concern that such a decision would endanger political negotiations.*” The SSM, apparently, had sought to prevent Greek banks agreeing to government requests to buy unlimited government bonds. The ECB intervened to make sure it could, despite EZ rules limiting such intervention (Bloomberg, 19th March).

No wonder the Athens stock market is reported by *The Irish Times* to have “*rebounded*” the following day!

The problem of the Greek State

“Austerity” can mean many things. In Britain it is portrayed by the current Tory regime as a virtuous road to the Small State and Big Society while in Ireland it has been more a necessary pragmatic adjustment to underpin economic recovery without dismantling social provision. In Greece, until the arrival of Syriza, it involved wild and unmeasured cutting of health, welfare and public salaries while avoiding tackling deeper structural deformations.

On 20 February the new Greek government presented the Eurogroup with the “List” of actions it proposed to implement in exchange for continued financing of its liquidity gap under a new name. Its partners, including even the *Bundestag*, eventually declared themselves satisfied with the “List”, although it contained no figures at all for its various commitments on revenue raising. The Eurozone has shown it is prepared to go along with the Greek Game and promise special treatment (invalid status) for Greece in return for a credible show of implementing at least some “reforms”.

Greece’s real problem is the absence of a credible state, not “austerity”. Its “List” of non-costed commitments includes not just an effort to collect taxes, but the establishment of a credible tax collection system in the first place, including computerizing it (!). Since the start of these negotiations, Greek citizens have increasingly simply refused to pay taxes at all, with revenue returns plummeting by close to €1bn, and twice that amount in deposits being withdrawn from bank accounts, disappearing who knows where. The Eurozone has nevertheless found a formula for allowing it to “help” Greece and ensure it remains in the Eurozone, once it can be seen to be making some kind of effort.

Syriza was elected in January 2015 not only on the promise of a tough negotiating stance with Brussels/Frankfurt but also of taking on bastions of privilege, evasion and waste at home (Varoufakis himself once commented that building a stretch of motorway in Greece costs three times what it would

in Germany). Greece’s Eurozone leaders have been prepared to suspend disbelief and accept that Syriza’s election rhetoric amounts to a declaration of intent to put in place some form of functioning state.

But Syriza also promised it would reverse pension cuts. These “cuts” included the abolition of the option for public servants to retire on full pension at 50 years of age. Public sector unions - a key element in the Syriza coalition - will not take kindly to any reneging on this election promise. The new Government has already reversed the abolition by the previous government of the ineffectual “internal review” process for dealing with tax collectors suspected of collusion with tax evasion. This had been replaced with an independent inspection system, but Syriza reversed this in delivering on a commitment to the tax officials’ union.

The tax collection challenge is not one solely of targeting wealthy “Oligarchs” – mostly magnates in the banking and shipping world - but also mass tax evasion by the self employed, small businesses, the professions and the commercial middle class in general. The limited tax take from the Oligarchs goes back to tax reliefs on ship building introduced in the 1950s to stimulate a rebuilding of the Greek merchant fleet destroyed in WW2. But it can be assumed that many of those who voted for Syriza will also not take kindly to a system of actual revenue collection.

The minimum wage issue (Syriza has announced its restoration to about €7.50) is a bit baffling. This rate was high by European standards (€100 higher per month than Spain) and a multiple of that provided in several poorer Eurozone states (such as Estonia). But what exactly does a minimum wage mean in an economy where over 30% of GDP is generated in the “black economy”? Judging by media reports the Eurogroup seems prepared to go along with a fiction in this area too.

Much has also been made in the media of a “humanitarian” crisis in Greece, allegedly the result of Troika imposed cut-backs, but this too seems largely of Greece’s own making, not least the extraordinary cuts made to hospital services. Unemployment payments are provided for one year after which claimants get nothing at all, and are thrown back on family resources or whatever they might source in the country’s extensive informal economy. That has long been the Greek system for which the “Troika” bears no responsibility whatever. The Troika never opposed the Irish insistence on maintaining existing welfare and social protection provision throughout its “programme” and was supportive of the revival of centralised bargaining in Ireland in 2013.

As Merkel made clear in the “negotiations” with Greece, it is entirely up to Greece how its deficit targets are met, and they should design their own reforms as Ireland had done (*Irish Times*, 21 March).

The most important constraint on the Syriza government is the Greek people itself. Popular opinion seems to have taken to the proposition of a comprehensive building of a functional Greek state. A recent opinion poll in Greece showed the real “hard left”, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), and the “extreme right” Golden Dawn, both of which favour a Grexit, having declined to just 4.5% and 6% respectively. On the other hand 47.5% support the Government. Most importantly, support for Greece staying in the Euro has grown consistently,

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and now stands at 84% and, while people wanted a tough stand in negotiations with Brussels, 80% were “*optimistic that there will be a solution that would satisfy both sides*” (<http://greece.greekreporter.com>, 21.03.2015). That there is a “Russian option” for Greece, as touted by some commentators, is a mirage, or at best a piece of British left wishful thinking (e.g. Helena Smith in *The Guardian*, 17 March).

Irish position

In a commentary in the *Irish Independent* (24.02.2015), John Bruton, the quixotic ex-Taoiseach who denounces the founding act of State in 1916 that made it possible for him to be Taoiseach in the first place, provided a good measure of the Irish establishment’s views of the situation (emphasis added):

“ ... When Greece got a bailout from other governments and the IMF, the ultimate beneficiaries included banks, not only in Europe but also elsewhere. These banks had been lending to the Greek government, long after they should have stopped doing so, and have forced Greece to confront reality. *They assumed that because Greece was in the euro then someone somewhere would ensure they were repaid* ... The origins of the Greek problem are very deep and long-standing. The Greeks had been consuming more than they were producing, retiring on pensions earlier than is normal and running an educational system that had few links with the real economy. All these gaps were bridged by borrowing money from foolish investors who averted their eyes from the profound underlying problems of the Greek economy.”

But the other side of the Irish establishment position – as set out elsewhere by Bruton and others, and echoed in *Irish Times* editorials – is that the supreme interest of the Irish state is to maintain Britain in the EU, indeed be a “bridge” between the two. This has led it to support British “reforms” designed to prevent Eurozone integration. Ministers have declared that their tactful silence on the Scottish referendum will not be repeated in a Brexit one. There is also a distinct lack of enthusiasm for deepening the political or monetary integration of the Eurozone (as in the Government’s hostility to the proposed EU common corporate tax calculation base and common Financial Transaction Taxes). This alleged Irish “strategic interest” was spelt out with brutal honesty in a new book published by the IIEA and blessed by the Irish Times Trust (see article by IIEA Director General and Irish Times Trust chairman, Tom Arnold, *The Irish Times*, 21 March).

The effect of the Irish Government position is thus to reinforce the weakness and incoherence of the Eurozone. The Fine Gael reflex that fundamental Irish interests require special allowances to be made for Britain in Europe is profoundly mistaken. Ireland’s long-term interest is in deeper integration and coherence of the Eurozone and not the rejection by the Irish Times Trust of Draghi’s proposed “*quantum leap in institutional convergence*”.

Greek endgame

The *Financial Times*, reflecting the interests of the City of London, also has the measure of Eurozone weakness. On the morning of Greece’s showdown in Brussels, FT columnist Wolfgang Münchau strongly urged Greece to “*hold firm against the Eurozone’s failed policies*” and to play hardball with the

Eurogroup (FT, 15.02.2015). For a moment even John Bruton (as Chair of IFSC Ireland) seemed wise to this line:

“[S]ome banks saved [by the last Greek bailout] from their errors were indeed German. But many ... were British and American, and the British and American taxpayers have avoided a proportionate exposure to the costs ... The eurozone is bearing the main burden, *while the others offer free advice.*” (*Irish Independent*, 24.02, emphasis added).

The Eurozone, for all its weakness, may be outgunned by Greece in the Game. It is right of course to muddle through to save Greece. But the Eurozone failure to substantiate the Fiscal Compact to a system of coherent integrated governance has opened the gates to many Trojan Horses.

On the other hand, Greece’s failure to gain a single ally among the Eurozone governments will ultimately trim its sails and enable a dignified compromise as the “*loss of Greece*” is not a price Europe is prepared to pay. As the obvious and inevitable compromise to enable this emerged in late March, Syriza’s star status with Eurosceptic critics of the Euro began to fade rapidly. FT commentator Wolfgang Münchau, writing in his weekly column in *Spiegel* (16.03.2015), called for the flamboyant Varoufakis to be replaced with a more humble negotiator and the usually strutting Eurosceptic ‘Open Europe’ was nearly apoplectic at the emerging compromise agreement (‘Greece capitulates’, 20.02.15).

Whether Syriza has the substance to create a meaningful state in Greece remains to be seen. But the incoherence of the Eurogroup means there will be more expensive crises like Greece before it moves to deeper integration. □

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Fascism, Greece, Metaxas and Churchill

By Brendan Clifford

For 55 years after the end of the 2nd World War, and as a direct result of its unprincipled character, the world was divided into two socio-economic systems that were essentially incompatible with each other. The nature of the conflict between them was such that each was committed by its basic assumptions about itself to envisage the only solution of their conflict as lying in the extinction of the other. Moscow might present a foreign policy of peaceful co-existence of the two systems, while Washington might declare a policy of “*containing*” the Moscow system rather than assaulting it with its superior force, but all concerned knew that the slogans only signified a kind of marking time, and that in the long run neither system could share the world with the other.

A Washington politician, Wendell Willkie, published in 1943 a book that was famous in its time. It declared that there was One World.

The political impulse which ethnically cleansed half a Continent by means of popular genocide, and preserved itself as a Continental Superstate by means of a Civil War in which a million people died, knew from the early 19th century that it was destined to dominate the Earth. Having made the American Continent its island base by means of the Monroe Doctrine (which asserted its right to determine the course of development in Latin America), it made itself a Sea Power in the Pacific, forced Japan to come out of its long, peaceful hibernation, and set about filching China from the European Imperialists who had conquered it.

It was diverted from its westward expansion—that would have brought it to Europe by the back door—by the Great War that Britain launched a hundred years ago. It sold war goods to both sides, but only one side could bring them home. Britain drove the German Navy from the High Seas in August 1914, thereby monopolising the American trade.

Germany, though cut off from the international supplies of food and raw materials on which it was thought to depend, and from international finance, devised a War Economy with new methods of finance and with war materials produced from unpromising materials by means of new techniques. It held out against Britain, France, Russia through 1914, 1915 and 1916 with a punishing resistance that exhausted Britain’s self-sufficiency in munitions. So Britain began importing munitions from the USA—on such a scale that it soon exhausted its ability to pay. So it bought on credit. When Germany still held out, and even seemed to grow stronger, Washington had to face the prospect of having to write off the enormous body of credit it had extended to Britain.

Another consideration discussed by American political writers from the start of the War was that a clear winner between England and Germany at the end of a hard-fought war would be very much against the American interest. The winner would be the equal of the United States as a World Power, and if it was Germany it would be unlikely to tolerate the Monroe Doctrine.

The USA therefore declared war on Germany and ensured its defeat. But it declined to take responsibility for victory, allowing Britain to be the apparent victor. But Britain had disabled itself in the course of the War and was in many ways a dependency of the US at the end of it.

There was a widespread opinion amongst people who comment authoritatively on these things that the next major war would be between Britain and the USA. Trotsky was not alone in predicting it as a virtual certainty. And, if Britain was to have the kind of future that its war propaganda required it to have, it should at least have held to its refusal to adopt a “*freedom of the seas*” policy, and have been willing to uphold its Naval dominance of the world in a Naval race with the USA.

The only rational object of the British Empire in making War on Germany and Turkey in 1914 was to increase its territory and enhance and consolidate its position as the major World Power.

Germany after unification had followed the British example of capitalist expansion in the world economy. By 1900 British observers recorded that Germany had ceased to be self-sufficient in food and raw materials and had become dependent on overseas trade. In that regard it had become, like Britain in the development following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1848, dependent on imports. That dependency was cited as the reason why the Royal Navy should dominate the seas of the world. If it did not do so, the people of Britain would starve.

Around the time that British observers noted that Germany had become dependent on imports, the German Government began to build a Navy to protect its international trade, as Britain had done. A retired military man, General Bernhardt, wrote a book with the title *World Power Or Downfall*. In the British 1914 propaganda this was resented as meaning Conquest Of The World Or Downfall. Its meaning was that Germany must make itself capable of defending militarily the economic position it had achieved in the world. But that was something that Britain would not live with. If Germany acquired the military means of protecting its foreign trade, as Britain had done, that would mean that British absolute dominance would be at an end.

The logic of this British position was that Britain should be acknowledged to be master of the world, both in fact and as of right; and that any other Power, with extensive international trade, which was not content for that trade to depend on the grace of the Royal Navy, was a warmonger, wantonly disturbing the peace and order of the world.

What was at issue between England and Germany in the Great War of 1914-19 was not the socio-economic system: both were capitalist. Neither was it Imperialism: both were Imperialist, England being much more so than Germany. Nor was it the political system: both were democracies.

The British propaganda in 1914 declared that Germany was Imperialist and Autocratic, while it was something else, and that those differences were at the heart of the conflict. British public opinion, saturated with a singularly English kind of moralising, could uphold the greatest Empire the world had ever seen, and yet denounce Germany for being Imperialist. As to Autocracy: there is no agreement on what democracy, as a set of institutions, is. The German Government was arranged slightly differently from the British and that was made the basis for describing Germany as an Autocracy—as being ruled

by a single person, a despot. In Germany the Kaiser was an actual part of his own Government, while in Britain the Prime Minister not only acted in the name of the Crown but had the powers of the Crown transferred to him: he was "*the Crown in Parliament*". Both might declare war without seeking the authority of Parliament. But neither could actually wage war without the active support of Parliament. The British Parliament had been deceived by the Prime Minister since 1908 about the secret agreements and arrangements being made with France for war with Germany and, when this was revealed to it in early August 1914, Parliament took the revelation in good part, effectively concluding that it had been deceived for its own good. No such deception was practiced on the *Reichstag*—if only because the Kaiser had not prepared diplomatically for war at all, and had allowed Germany to be encircled.

After war had broken out between Russia and France on the one side and Germany and Austria on the other, Britain declared war on Germany and quickly dispatched its prepared Expeditionary Force to its position in the line in France, and instantly cut off Germany from raw material and food imports. The British declaration of war greatly enhanced the preponderance of force that was already deployed against Germany. On August 5th it could be said that the War was over, bar the fighting.

But the fighting took over four years.

At various points it seemed that Germany would win in the fighting aspect of the War, and that the superiority of men and resources against it would not determine the outcome. But, whatever the condition of the fighting, Britain refused to give serious consideration to a negotiated settlement. It preferred to go down rather than acknowledge an equal. Germany was willing to negotiate. So Bernhardt's *World Power Or Downfall*, in the sense of *Conquest or Downfall*, was the British, not the German attitude.

The rational basis for this British attitude was that, after declaring the kind of war it declared, and after working up a moral frenzy in the populace in support of it, a negotiated settlement would be destructive of British morale internally and would be destructive of the financial position Britain had established for itself in the economic life of the world after two centuries of purposeful effort by the ruling class which had guided it.

A negotiated settlement would have signified that Britain had failed in its effort to prevent Germany from stabilizing the position it had established for itself in the world. It would have meant *de jure* acceptance that Germany had become its equal as a World Power. And that would probably have led to the collapse of sterling as a world currency and loss of all the gains that this brought to Britain. And, given that Germany had fought the War to a draw, despite being cut off from its raw material resources, and with its currency made valueless, a draw would have been a win for Germany.

It was reasonable, in terms of national interest, for Britain to reject all overtures for a negotiated settlement—only engaging in a superficial pretence of considering them in order to please the neutrals.

Refusal to negotiate cost a few million lives more, including a few hundred thousand British lives, but one does not become a great Empire by being squeamish about such things.

The United Kingdom, a state in which only a third of the adult population was represented in Parliament, declared that its war on Germany was in defence of democracy. It democratised itself, more or less, by the 1918 Reform Act.

Democratisation had been resisted for a couple of centuries as being incompatible with Parliamentary Government, but it was made necessary by the active participation of the general population in the conduct of the War, and particularly by Conscription of men into the Army and the entry of women into the industrial workforce in munitions factories and the active Suffragette support for the War.

So Britain's war propaganda for democracy was applied—at home at least—and the state was not broken apart. But the British State was the authoritative framework of life in Britain, its authority consolidated by two centuries of competent exercise of power. And it had an established system of party-politics to which the populace was accustomed, even though excluded from it, and into which the mass of new electors could be fed. And there was the important condition that democratisation of the Parliamentary franchise was not introduced in response to mass demonstrations demanding it, but was done almost without being noticed while the popular mind was fixed on the need to destroy the Hun.

(The 1918 Reform Act is scarcely remembered in popular history. Even though it enfranchised more people than all previous Reform Acts combined, it is not treated as a watershed, as the comparatively small reforms of 1832 and 1867 are.)

There was a smooth transition to democracy in Britain in 1918-19. The War Coalition of Unionists and Lloyd George Liberals contested the 1918 Election as an alliance and won by a landslide. The Unionist Party (a merger of Tories and Joseph Chamberlain's social-reform Liberals) was the dominant Party in the Coalition.

The Labour Party increased its representation and became the Official Opposition because of the collapse of the Asquith Liberals.

The democratically-based Coalition continued the policies of the pre-democratic Coalition in every respect. The probable difference made by democratisation is that this first democratic Government did not consolidate and enhance Britain's position in the world, following victory in this Great War, as pre-democratic Governments had done after previous Great Wars.

The most striking difference is that it did not make peace with the defeated enemy in terms advantageous to itself by negotiating with him, but punished him, humiliated him, deprived him of his colonies, cut away some of his home territory, and starved the general population by means of a food blockade for six months after the fighting ended, in order to compel the weak German Government set up in the chaos of defeat to sign an official admission of guilt on behalf of Germany for the fact that there had been a war.

The Peace Settlement was made by ultimatum dictated at the point of a gun with a starving populace in the background, while wholesale economic plunder was being carried on by the victors. And this was done by the first democratically elected British Parliament.

The realistic implication of these initial Peace measures was that Germany was to be disabled as a state. If Germany had been thoroughly disabled, that would have been in accordance with the propaganda explanation during the War of why the German state was evil and its destruction was a necessary precondition of lasting peace. The unified Germany of 1871 was said to have brought the good, or at least harmless, Germans of the South, under the influence of the bad Germans of the Prussian system of the North. The combination of Prussia with Bavaria and the Rhineland could not be tolerated after the War.

France agreed. The French grievance over the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, as a result of its war of aggression in 1870, was

an essential element in bringing about the alliance against Germany in 1914. France bore the main cost of the War. It got back Alsace and Lorraine in 1918, insisting that the region was French as of right and refusing to let the return depend on a referendum vote of the people. Then it wanted to push forward its frontier with Germany to the Rhine where it fell short of it, but Britain vetoed that policy at Versailles.

France then encouraged an anti-Prussia separatist tendency in the Rhineland, and also in Bavaria, which had been a separate kingdom until the French aggression against Prussia in 1870 led it to make common cause with Prussia.

The dismantling of the German state into its major components was a practicable policy in 1919, and was in accordance with the British war propaganda. But, as the moral frenzy which characterised the British conduct of the War cooled down, it became obvious that implementation of anti-German policy in line with the war propaganda would restore France to its status as the major European Power, which it had lost in 1870. And that realisation triggered the basic rule of British foreign policy towards Europe under Balance of Power strategy, that the strongest European Power was, by virtue of that fact, Britain's enemy.

Britain therefore took a stand in support of the territorial integrity of 21914 Germany, minus some marginal parings in the West and larger territory in the East to provide territory for a reconstituted Poland.

What the first democratic Government of Britain did, therefore, was humiliate Germany, plunder it, give it territorial grievances, but refuse to disable it so as to make it harmless.

It maintained it as a big territorial state at the centre of Europe, and within a few years helped it to strengthen itself by evading the military conditions imposed on it by the Versailles Treaty.

Franco/German enmity was an inevitable consequence of the terms imposed on Germany. In order to prevent the defeat of Germany, chiefly through French effort, from establishing France in a position of hegemony in Europe, Britain helped Germany to escape the conditions imposed on it by the Versailles Treaty, in the making of which Britain had played a major part. This help was given covertly in the 1920s, during the period of the Weimar democracy. It was given by open collaboration after the consolidation of the Nazi regime in 1934.

Other striking measures of Britain's first democratically-elected Government, which had long-term consequences, were the exclusion of representatives of the Irish national democracy from the Versailles Conference in 1919, and the terrorist war on the Irish democracy in 1919-21, the first years of the League of Nations; the incitement of Greece to engage in a war of conquest and annexation against Turkey in the Turkish heartland; and the administrative massacre of an Indian demonstration at Amritsar. These events showed that, for subjects of the British Empire, the establishment of the League of Nations changed nothing.

Winston Churchill said, a couple of decades later, something to the effect that Democracy is the worst system—except for all the others. He could have come no closer to saying what he thought of democracy without ending his political career.

In a functional democracy politicians can be nothing but democratic. It is not virtue that makes politicians in a democracy democratic: it is necessity. In a working democracy there is nothing to be but democratic.

What we call Democracy is, where it exists effectively, the most absolute form of government.

But there can be little doubt that Churchill thought the best form of government was late 19th century oligarchy, in which the ruling class that had made the state still held together as a coherent influence, but there was enough of an electorate to enable one to be a man of the people. The people were present in the political process in large numbers but they were still under influence. They were impressed by the Empire and were content to leave its conduct to the suave body of aristocrats and gentry who had made it. The game of Whigs and Tories could still be played between them with impunity. And Churchill himself had been both Whig and Tory.

The engagement of the populace in the conduct of the War, in a way that had never happened before, changed the medium in which politics was conducted.

Churchill, who had grown up within the ruling class, knew what should have been done in 1919, but had to resign himself to the fact that it had become impossible to do it.

The influence of the new democracy made it impossible to treat the defeated enemy as a warrior should treat his foe after a fight, because democracy was not chivalrous but moralistic. And the democracy must pursue Justice under circumstances under which the warrior saw that what it was doing was indulging a base instinct of revenge.

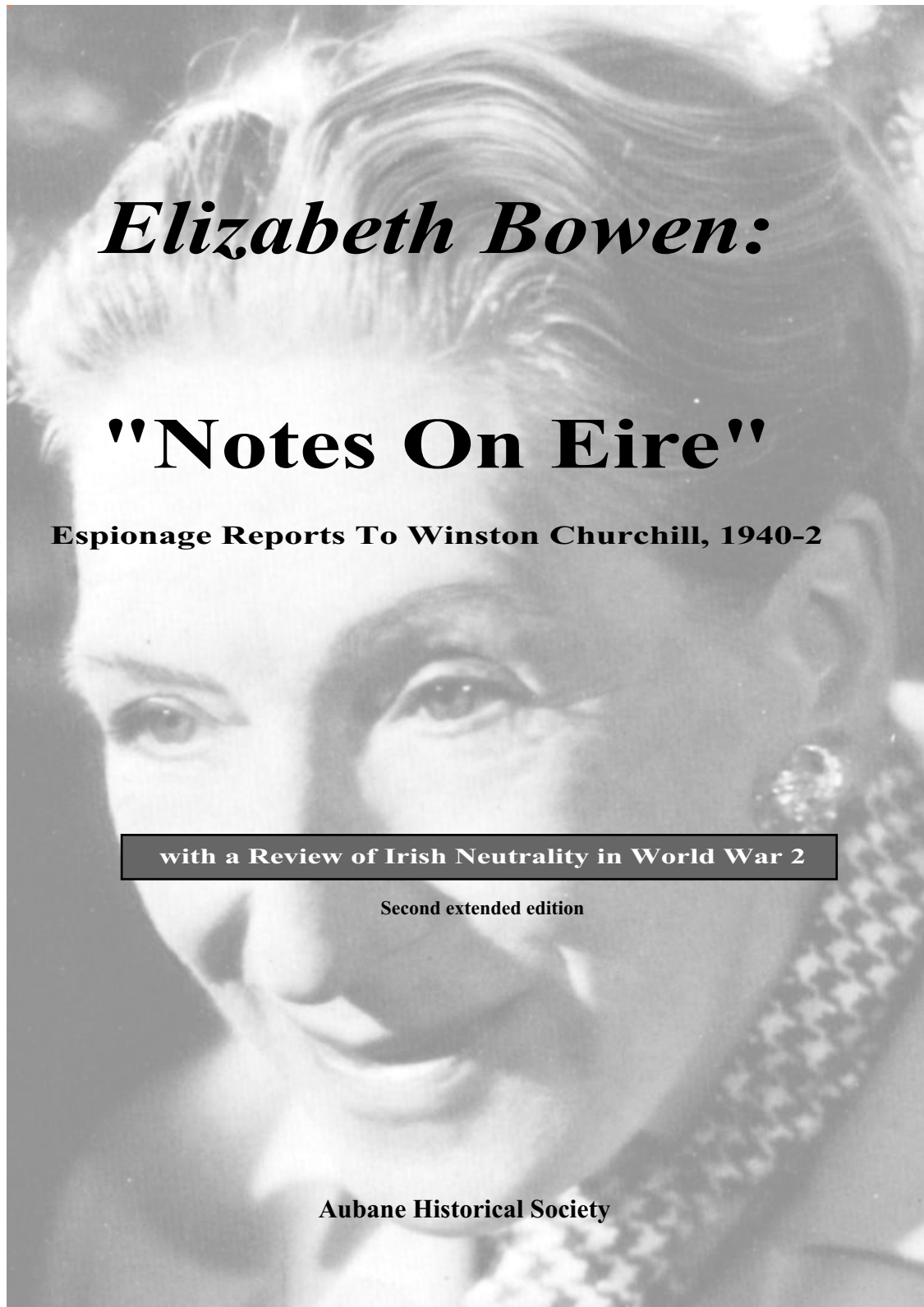
The democracy acted as if it believed implicitly in the one-dimensional world of the war propaganda. It had filled out an army of millions in order to crush the terrible Hun, who was the only obstacle to perpetual peace in the world. And when the Hun was brought down the mass army raised to defeat him was disbanded, leaving the expanded Empire without a regular means of government.

(Even though the War had been launched purely in support of Right in the world, with no thought of Imperial aggrandisement, Imperial aggrandisement resulted from it! The *Manchester Guardian*, which had opposed British entry into the European War right up to the moment when it was declared, then (knowing in its bones what it was all about, even though it retained a rigidly righteous posture) reflected that, even though Might is not Right, disinterested pursuit of Right sometimes brought material gain.)

The warrior wanted to strike up an immediate alliance with defeated Germany against Bolshevik Russia. This would have undone much of the damage to European civilisation that had been done by the War. But the democracy wouldn't stand for such a cynical violation of the beautiful ideal in whose name all the destruction of the War was undertaken, and so there was a destructive Peace, and out of this destructive Peace Fascism emerged to save the essentials of European capitalist civilisation. And Churchill became a Fascist; his homage to Mussolini was reported in the *Times* on January 21st 1927. That report is in the introductory material to the publication of Elizabeth Bowen's secret reports to Churchill during World War Two, *Notes on Eire*, by the Aubane Historical Society.

So what is Fascism? And is there such a thing as "true Fascism"?

The wing of Sinn Fein that signed the pseudo-Treaty with Britain in December 1921 established a Provisional Government of Southern Ireland in January 1922, constructed an Army that was armed by Britain during the following six months, made war on British orders on the Army that had fought Britain to the negotiating table, destroyed the Republican Government mandated by free election in 1918, 1920 and 1921, and went



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with a Review of Irish Neutrality in World War 2

Second extended edition

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Editors: Brendan Clifford and Jack Lane

into the Empire with head held high under the name of Cumann na nGaedheal—that Party merged with a remnant of John Redmond's Home Rule Party in 1933, became Fine Gael and said it was Fascist.

It organised a mass movement with a distinctive shirt, which was blue. It adopted the Mussolini salute, had a Youth League and a Cavalry of plough horses—like Cromwell. It said that Parliament, with its divisive structure of party conflict, tended to undermine national harmony and should be replaced with a representative assembly of vocational groups in society. And in 1936 it developed a mass movement, the Irish Christian Front, in support of its demand that the Government should recognise General Franco's rebellion against the elected Government of the Spanish Republic as the legitimate Government in accordance with the standards of European civilisation.

Most of the really respectable members of Southern Irish society, and virtually all of its academic intelligentsia, were members of Fascist Fine Gael, or voted for it.

The reason why the Treaty Party, the pro-British Party, became Fascist was that the Anti-Treaty Party, with survivors of the Anti-Treaty IRA at its core, which had been beaten down in the 'Civil War' of 1922-23, had formed itself into a "*slightly constitutional party*" (Fianna Fail) in 1926 and had won the 1932 Election and consolidated its victory with another Election in 1933. Fianna Fail immediately set about repealing the elements of the Treaty which had been ostensible cause of the 'Civil War'.

Fianna Fail in 1932 might be described as the slightly constitutional wing of the IRA. (If the Treaty was the essential Constitution, it could not be described as Constitutional, since it declared that it would break the Treaty by unilateral action—and proceeded to do so.)

The IRA also existed as a distinct organisation, supportive of Fianna Fail on the Treaty issue and informally linked with it. The Treatyite Government had in its last period in Office, 1927-32, tried to crush the IRA (and erode Fianna Fail incidentally) by draconian Law and Order legislation and action. It failed, leaving the IRA hardened by the experience. And, following the ideas of Liam Mellows—who had been taken from jail by the Government and shot out of hand to encourage the others, on 8th December 1922—it had developed a socialist outlook.

When the Treaty Party lost the 1932 Election, it vacated its offices and let Fianna Fail occupy them. This action has been cited as proof of the profoundly Constitutionalist outlook of the Treatyites. But, when Fianna Fail won an even clearer victory the following year, the Treatyites went extra-Parliamentary, and anti-Parliamentary, and organised a paramilitary movement against the Government.

The reason given for going Fascist was that the IRA had become a Communist movement, that Fianna Fail was dependent on it, and that at a certain moment the Fianna Fail leader, De Valera, would be discarded by the IRA and Ireland would become Communist. And Fascism was the counter to Communism.

Looking at the 1932 situation, with an appropriate scepticism about the profound Parliamentarism of the Party which became Anti-Parliamentary so soon after, what one sees is not a strong Party conceding state power on principle, but a Party whose constitutional strength had seeped away and which had alienated much of its critical support by its rigid adherence to the Treaty, which hardly anybody had liked for its own sake in the first instance.

The 'Civil War' of 1922-3 was in substance a British proxy war against the IRA, launched by Michael Collins under

British ultimatum to avert a direct British resumption of power. If Cumann na nGaedheal had refused to relinquish Office in 1932 (to a Party which it had declared to be a catspaw of the Communist IRA), it would have found itself engaged in a real Civil War, with an IRA which it had failed to crush by draconian use of State power, and with little prospect of actual support from a demoralised Imperial Power, whose capacity for purposeful action had been undermined by Turkish defiance of another Treaty.

In 1921-22 Treatyism had the purpose of warding off a threatened Imperial reconquest by submitting to British demands. The initial Treatyites were almost all Republicans doing Britain's bidding for the moment, in order to be able to defy Britain later. That was the attitude which enabled Collins to get some IRA support. But that attitude did not survive the 'Civil War'. The fatal mistake of Cumann na nGaedheal was that it began to present the Treaty as a good arrangement freely agreed, without intimidation, and used its provisions to exclude Republicans from the Free State Dail instead of trying to lure them into it by Treaty amendment.

The post-1932 understanding of the Treatyites was tainted by the propaganda of its inflexible Law & Order Treatyism of 1927-32. They deceived themselves about the situation, and re-organised themselves to deal with a situation that did not exist. The main thing in Irish society was still the property-owning democracy of the countryside, established by William O'Brien's long agitation, and his collaboration with the Unionist government in 1903—a democracy of small landowners who worked their own land and, while engaging in market activity as a matter of course, were reluctant to treat their farms as commodities.

Rural property was remarkably stable. There was little perceptible growth in the size of farms—a fact which displeased hardline IRA man Sean Moylan, who was quite English in many of his attitudes, when he was Minister for Agriculture.

The small property owners, organised in the Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association, who discussed political affairs at daily meetings at the Creamery, backed Fianna Fail through its economic war with Britain over the Treaty in the 1930s, and through the wartime neutrality—and Fascism evaporated.

When Fine Gael returned to Office in the 1948 Coalition, it abolished the last remnant of the Treaty, the residual formal connection with the Empire and Commonwealth, and the Fascist episode was discreetly forgotten.

But, as Irish life became more academic, and the academic intelligentsia remained Fine Gaelish, there was some embarrassment when the skeleton in the cupboard was stumbled on. Some explanation was called for.

Professor Garvin of UCD—the Fine Gael University, with close relations with Cambridge—explained that Fine Gael had not been really Fascist at all, while the IRA had been close to it. This was one of those Irish Paradoxes, arising from inadequate conceptions, by which awkward appearances are conjured away: Fine Gael, which said it was Fascist and acquired all the appropriate accoutrements, was the democratic party. (1922: *The Birth of Irish Democracy*, p.22)

This nonsense is made necessary by the inability of academic Ireland, tutored by Cambridge, to bear the burden of actual Irish history, and a consequent inability to see the history of either Britain or Europe from the viewpoint of Ireland.

Now it might be said that Ireland is an inconsequential society, unfit to bear the burden of its own history, and that it would be presumptuous of its academics to try to think their

own thoughts instead of re-cycling ideas that are imported so cheap that it might be considered dumping. The academics certainly seem to have been educated to a submissive attitude. But my only education consists of having lived in Slieve Luacra into my twenties, and that attitude was not prevalent there then.

No doubt there are societies that are unfit to bear their own history. Edmund Burke said there were, and he did not say such things lightly:

“The rules and definitions of prudence can rarely be exact: never universal. I do not deny that in small truckling states a timely compromise with power has often been the means, and the only means, of drawing out their puny existence” (*Letter I On A Regicide Peace*).

I have never thought of myself as being nationalist in outlook. I am, after all, the founder of the notorious “*two nations theory*” of the Northern conflict and I spent twenty years trying to get Northern Ireland into the democracy of the British state by which it is governed. But I was bred in a segment of nationalist Ireland which took itself to have substance. I took in the world from a Slieve Luacra vantage point, and I can’t remake myself and place myself at some other vantage point. I lived in Ireland during the World War in which the neutrality is said to have isolated it from the world and set it to navel-gazing.

The academics, who import their ideas from the historians located at a different vantage point, tell us that we called the World War The Emergency and were kept ignorant of it by censorship. I know that we called it the World War and that we were interested in it and were well-informed about it, and that because of our neutral stance towards it we saw it better than those who started it and were immersed in it—so I found when I went to London in the late 1950s. The War there was heavily overlaid by a cloud-cover of moralistic fables.

At a later period a new fable was introduced: that Britain fought the War to save the Jews. It was too patently untrue to pass muster in the fifties. Britain had an effective anti-Semitic culture then. It still has. But it is more discreetly and obliquely expressed now than it was then. And, anyway, if you had any capacity to think in terms of causative sequence in time, you saw that the extermination of the Jews was undertaken in the circumstances brought about by the War and that it was improbable that it would have even been attempted if British policy in 1934-38 had been to curb the Nazi regime, rather than encouraging it and facilitating its expansion.

The great British lie of the post-War era is that it “*appeased*” Hitler: it *collaborated* with him for five years before capriciously deciding to make war on him. “*Appeasement*” suggests a policy of being nice to a great bully in the hope of mollifying him. But the power of Nazi Germany was negligible in 1933. It only became considerable after Britain broke Czechoslovakia for it and made a gift of the Sudetenland to it.

Such things were obvious to us in isolated, inward-looking neutral Ireland. They are still not visible through the propaganda haze to English historians.

Churchill in 1920 described the position which the British Empire had achieved in the world:

“The British nation is now in the forefront of mankind. Never was its power so great, its name so honoured, its rivals so few. The fearful sacrifice of the war, the stupendous victory with which it closed, not only in the clash of arms but in the triumph of institutions and ideals, have opened up to us

several generations of august responsibility and splendid hope” (*Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 30 May 1920.)

Churchill was a regular contributor to the *Illustrated Sunday Herald*. Another contributor was Robert Blatchford, perhaps the most influential Socialist writer there has ever been in England.

But Britain failed to give substance to the formal position it had achieved in the world through the Great War. By the time Churchill came to publish the final volume of his War History, the victory had been frittered away and Europe was a shambles. It took only four years to fall apart:

“Certainly the story ended with 1922 in universal gloom. No peace had been made acceptable to Germany or giving security to France. Central and Southern Europe had broken into intensely nationalistic fragments sundered from each other by enmities and jealousies, by particularist tariffs and local arrangements. Russia was, as she still is, beyond the pale. The United States... dwelt in opulent, exacting and strongly armed seclusion beyond the ocean. Turkey, resuscitated in a new fierce form, ... reigns henceforth with untrammelled sway over such Christian and non-Muslim inhabitants as have not been destroyed or expelled. The League of Nations, not yet reinforced by Germany, under the derision of Soviet Russia, abandoned by her mighty trans-Atlantic parent, raised a frail and unsure bulwark against stormy seas and sullen clouds. The Parliaments erected so hopefully in the 19th century were already, over a large part of Europe, being demolished in the 20th. Democracy, for which the world was to be made safe by the greatest of struggles, incontinently lets slip or casts aside the instruments of freedom fashioned for its protection by rugged ancestors. England, bowed by debt and taxation, could only plod forward under her load. And new misfortunes approach. China dissolved into a sanguinary confusion. France sundered from England stood mobilised upon the threshold of the Ruhr...” (*The Aftermath*, 1929, p455).

1922 was the year when Sinn Fein was broken and the Treaty was imposed on Ireland. But victory in Ireland was quickly followed by disaster in Turkey. Churchill’s final chapter is called *Chanak*—a word that was later almost eliminated from British history. It was Chanak that set Britain on an era of destructive Imperial drift. It broke the War Cabinet and put the “*second eleven*” in to bat.

Things would have been even worse but for Mussolini, who invented Fascism and saved Europe from Bolshevism. Churchill went to Rome in 1927 to honour him. He said, if he was an Italian, he would be a Fascist, and, if Fascism had been needed in England, there is little doubt who its leader would have been.

Why Did Fascism Fail In England? That is the title of a recent book. The answer is simple: Because it wasn’t needed.

Fascism did not fail in Ireland because it was not properly presented. It was not improperly presented, because there is no such thing as true Fascism. Fascism is whatever does the job when the job is there to be done. And the job is to maintain authority in the nation state so that it can be a stable framework for the functioning of the market.

The way the Great War was fought and the way the Versailles peace was made dissolved much of European society into its elements—into classes or nationalities. Nation-states were

thrown together by Versailles without regard to their national viability. And the Bolshevik Revolution made dictatorship of the proletariat the ideal.

The proletariat is the great class of workers without property in the means of production. In private propertied market society it is necessarily exploited. It can only be freed from exploitation by being made into the utterly dominant social class, secured by a monopoly of political power, in an economic form which does not operate through the market, or in which the market is so extensively controlled that it has no life of its own.

In the secure bourgeois world of 1914 the politics of the dictatorship of the proletariat was nowhere a contender for political power. The collapse of the Russian Empire under the stress of war in 1917, the destruction of the Austrian and German Empires in 1918, and the proliferation by Versailles of nation-states with little or no prior national development, made it a contender from 1919 onwards.

Capitalism could not exist if workers refused to be exploited—to have the products which they make for wages taken by the employer, the owner of the means of production which enables them to be produced, as commodities, and sold on the market for a profit, which the employer keeps. Capitalism requires class collaboration. Why should the worker collaborate with the capitalist by working for him and letting him keep the products of the work?

In the ordinary way that question does not arise. Classes, as distinct social entities, do not come together and agree to collaborate, one to exploit and the other to be exploited. They come about through a process of differentiation within a society, a community, to which both belong.

But, in the destructive effects of the Great War, whose centenary we are now being required to celebrate, that social bond was snapped and, under Bolshevik influence, the working classes of European capitalism began to understand themselves in terms of Marx's economic analysis. (I read Marx while working as a general labourer in a Creamery in Slieve Luacra and came to understand myself in those terms. But my exploiter was a co-op of about 120 sociable and convivial owners of small property, and the cultural bond in Slieve Luacra was alive and well, and there was no mass proletariat nearby, so proletarian revolution wasn't on the cards. But multiply what I was in the mid-1950s by a good many millions, and place us in a disrupted framework of advanced capitalism, in a national culture eroded by the War, and a barren cultural stratification of the various classes, and you get some notion of post-1918 Europe.

If working class rule—something quite different from a Labour Party taking Office—was to be warded off, and capitalism (on which it was said that civilisation depended) was to be saved, then class collaboration had to be restored. And class collaboration, from the viewpoint of the dictatorship of the proletariat, was Fascism.

Proletarian power failed to dominate any situation outside Russia, but it remained strong enough in many situations to prevent the establishment of government on bourgeois assumptions—until Mussolini dominated the Italian situation with the Fascist movement and the economic scheme involving corporations or syndicates.

Mussolini was a very Left Socialist before the War. He became an irredentist nationalist when the Italian Government, supported by the Catholic Church and the Socialist Party, declared neutrality in the Great War. He was prominent in the anti-neutralist agitation of 1914-15, which was actively encouraged by Britain (including Home Rule Ireland).

Italy, though a winner in the War, was disrupted by the War, partly because Britain did not deliver on all its irredentist promises.

After the War, Mussolini consolidated the combination of irredentist nationalism and Socialism by which he had helped to get Italy into the War—and there was Fascism. The word comes from *fascies*, a bundle of twigs (*Ne neart ach chur le cheile!* No strength but by putting together.)

Churchill and Blatchford had mulled over the limits of Parliament to cope with the pressures that would possibly be exerted on it by democratisation, with a Labour Party taking the place of the Liberal Party. The Whigs and Tories, which had dominated politics for two centuries, were both ruling class parties. They had shown an ability to draw middle class, lower middle class and respectable working class elements into their nets as the Parliamentary franchise was enlarged by instalments after 1832. But the tripling of the electorate in 1918, combined with the break-up of the Liberal Party two years earlier, and the appearance of Labour as the Opposition—the alternative Government—threatened to bring class-based politics to the fore, at a moment when the Utopian illusion fed by the War propaganda collapsed and mass unemployment set in.

Churchill did not think that the Parliamentary system could cope with class-based party politics in a depression:

“Mr Balfour... has recently pointed out the dangers to a Parliamentary system of an alternation between a party based on a Capitalistic Monarchy and one aiming at a Socialist Republic... We must not allow this issue to fall unmitigated upon the Houses of Parliament. It must be fought in the first instance by argument, education and propaganda in every constituency, in every village, in every street in the country... Parliament must be shielded from the strain which, if brought suddenly to bear upon it, might rupture fatally its power to guide events...” (*Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 30.5.1920. He did not spell out what would be done in the second instance if what was done in the first instance was ineffective).

When the crisis came, in 1931, it was dealt with by the suspension of party politics, and the formation of a Labour/Tory/Liberal National Government, which lasted until 1945, under a Labour Prime Minister at first and then under a series of Tory Prime Ministers. This was class collaboration at the highest level, made possible largely by the continuing influence behind the scenes of the old ruling class.

Given that party politics had been taken to be central to Parliamentary government, this all-Party Government can be seen as retaining the inessentials of Parliamentary government while suspending the essentials. It did not have the accoutrements of Fascism in less experienced states. It warded off Fascism by performing what might be regarded as its essential function—maintaining the authority of the State when it was threatened by things flying apart.

There was in Britain at the time a declared Fascist movement, with its distinctive Shirt, which was Black. But a post-War Tory Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, who was cutting his political teeth at that time, said that, if formal Fascism had been found necessary, its uniform would not have been the Black Shirt but the Norfolk Jacket.

The displaced ruling class would have reasserted itself to take the situation in hand. And the obvious Leader was Churchill.

The 1930s is not a period on which British historians like to dwell with much political realism. It is a source of the British

mesmeric myths of the post-War era, and those myths bear little resemblance to the reality.

An Oxford historian, John Charmley, published a biography of Churchill about twenty years ago in which he showed that Churchill's campaign against "*appeasement*" had nothing to do with Germany in the first instance, and still less with Fascism. What he condemned was a minor concession to Indian sentiment in 1935. And he hinted that Churchill was the British Fascist leader in waiting. The *Times* gave publicity to the book, but those who decide these things obviously concluded that the time was not yet right for realistic historical treatment of the 1930s.

David Irving has shown that, having gone to Rome to praise Mussolini in 1927, Churchill was in Munich in the early 1930s, angling for a meeting with Hitler. And Churchill did not conceal his admiration of Hitler. He wrote somewhere that, if Britain had lost the War and been reduced to the condition of Germany, he hoped somebody like Hitler would have arisen to restore it.

When Hitler had restored German power (with British help), it became Britain's enemy in Churchill's eyes, in accordance with the Balance of Power principle of British foreign policy, because it was powerful, not because it was Fascist.

There has in recent years been a spate of academic publications about the regime of General Metaxas in Greece (1936-40), discussing whether it was truly Fascist, or merely "*parafascist*". Unfortunately they do not deal in any detail with the two episodes of British policy towards Greece which had disastrous consequences for Greece. Metaxas was involved in both. In 1914-15 he was Chief of Staff and supported the neutrality policy of the King. In 1940 he was Dictator and asserted his own neutrality policy towards Germany, even though he was at war with Italy—which makes no sense in terms of ideological British war history, the ideology of the "*Anti-Fascist War*", which assumes that there was a kind of International Brotherhood of Fascism.

In 1914 Britain offered Greece a piece of Turkey, if it joined in the War on Turkey. King Constantine, supported by Metaxas as Army Chief of Staff, refused the offer. He was therefore denounced as an agent of the Kaiser by the British propaganda, some of it published in Greek newspapers controlled by Britain. Then, in January 1915, Britain went into conspiracy with the Greek Prime Minister, Venizelos, to bring Greece into the War on an irredentist programme against Turkey, either by exerting irresistible pressure on the King, or by overthrowing him.

The King refused the British offer of a piece of Turkey, because both the territory and the population of the Greek state had been doubled in the Balkan Wars of 1913-14 and a period of consolidation was considered advisable. This consideration was enhanced by the fact that Britain would not, or could not, guarantee a sufficient military commitment in the region to make the gamble worth the risk.

But Britain, planning the Gallipoli adventure, and needing to reinforce Serbia from the sea, decided that it had to have the use of Greece "*at any cost*".

The Greek state established in the early 19th century—the first Greek state there had ever been—was almost obliged to be irredentist. Before the wars of 1912-13, only about a third of the Greeks in the general region were within the Greek state. The conquests of 1913 brought a majority of Greeks within the state, but there were still many Greek colonies dispersed around the Black Sea and in Asia Minor, as sailors in ports and merchants and bankers in cities.

Against the King's policy of conservative consolidation of the existing state, Venizelos conceived the project of a Greek Empire, going beyond mere irredentism (the "*Megali Idea*"), and Britain backed that project.

In recent decades the Irish Establishment, for the purpose of disparaging Republicanism, has taken to using the word "*irredentist*" as a term of condemnation, something self-evidently wrong. It is doubtful whether the term can be used meaningfully to describe the ambition of a section of a nation lying outside the national state, and being systematically misgoverned in it, to join the nation state—as is the case with Nationalists in the Six County region of the UK.

But then the Irish Establishment decided to celebrate the centenary of Britain's War of 1914-19, while not saying a word about the irredentism that fuelled that War in France, Italy, and Greece—not to mention the Serbian irredentism that provided the detonator in July 1914. (The "*irredenta*" is the "*unredeemed*" part of the nation—the part lying outside the nation-state.)

Venizelos, inspired by his "*Megali Idea*" of a Greek Empire, availed of the opportunity of World War to realise it. His collaboration with Britain against the King led to his dismissal in 1916. He then went to Macedonia and set up a rival Government, which joined the *Entente*. Britain and France then put the Greek Government in Athens under blockade, and in 1917 they landed an army on its territory and compelled the King to abdicate, and exiled Metaxas. Venizelos returned to Athens to be the ruler of the whole of Greece. Turkey—known as "*the sick man of Europe*" for a generation—was defeated, after four years of hard fighting, by Britain and France. Greece appeared amongst the Victor States at Versailles. The treason of Venizelos was justified by the only morality that applies to these things in the post-Reformationist world. And Venizelist Greece was on the way to becoming the major regional Power in that part of the world, as part of the new League of Nations order of the world—or the new Great Power order of the world—whichever should prevail.

Turkey was destroyed. Constantinople had been offered to the Tsar, but the Tsar had failed and so it was under caretaker occupation. And Venizelist Greece became the power that would force on Turkey the Treaty of Sèvres by which it was to be destroyed. Venizelos sent in his Army and the British Prime Minister hailed the triumph in a Statement to Parliament.

Lloyd George:

"Mustapha [Ataturk] was supposed to be marching with great force to drive the Allies out of Asia Minor, and even Constantinople was supposed to be in peril. I never took that view myself. At that time we had a consultation with M. Venizelos, the distinguished leader of the Greek people... He had considerable forces still under arms, and we were told that they were not very much use. The Turk, on the other hand, was said to be a very formidable person, especially when led by Mustapha Kemal. After going into the matter very closely, the British Government came to the conclusion that the best thing to do would be to use the force at the disposal of the Greek Government for the purpose of clearing up the situation...

"Mr Venizelos, I will not say guaranteed, but expressed the opinion that he would be able to clear up the whole of the neighbourhood between Smyrna and the Dardanelles in course of fifteen days. His forces were put into action and his plan was carried out. The Greek troops... fought with great dash and bravery... Not only did they clear up that situation in fifteen days, but they did so in ten days. The Turkish forces

were repeatedly defeated and order was restored. They are now undertaking similar operations in Thrace...

"What is the position in the Near East? Whether we like it or not, or whether Europe likes it or not, it has got to be realised. You have some of the most important countries of the world which have been under Turkish domination, something that is called the Turkish Empire... There are certainly no more important countries for Britain from the strategic point of view... Unfortunately they have been in the hands of an empire which, put at its highest, was thoroughly incompetent, administratively and militarily incompetent. In fact, the Turk has been living on capital which he acquired by a long record of violent ferocity... The Balkan Wars demonstrated that he was no longer the same formidable person. His armies melted before the Bulgarians, before Serbia, and before Greece that had been his vassal. That has altered the situation. The great powers had kept him together not because of any particular confidence they had in him, but because they were afraid of what might happen if he disappeared. There was no one to take his place. He exercised some crude and occasionally barbarous authority, but it was authority of a sort. They feared that the country might be put into the hands of a great military empire which would use it to the detriment of the interests of their rivals or that it might fall into anarchy and confusion. Therefore the great Powers had for generations agreed to keep this empire together, corrupt and incompetent as it was, and to preserve its nominal authority. The late War has completely put an end to that state of things. Turkey is broken beyond repair, and... we have no reason to regret it. She broke every promise ever made, she sold every friend including Great Britain. We stood by her through good and evil report. British treasure, British brains and British blood have been expended on preserving her integrity and her power, and at the most critical hour in our history she sold us to our most dangerous and bitter enemy.

"Therefore we could not trust her again. She might sell us again, even though she had signed a bond. Turkey is no more... We have to find a substitute..."

"At one time the Bulgarians promised that they might be relied upon to assist Europe in the development of those countries. Unfortunately, after the last War we can no longer trust Bulgaria. Bulgaria owes a good deal to Britain. Without the force of Russia, Bulgaria would never have been emancipated, and yet the moment when Russia was falling to pieces, because there was no means of getting at her through the Black Sea, was the moment chosen by Bulgaria to assist her most dangerous foes, and she bolted and barred the doors against us. Bulgaria certainly cannot be trusted. The Greeks, on the other hand, have shown strength, capacity, restraint and statesmanship throughout the War... They have a great past, and they have the Greek gift, even to the present day, of throwing up great leaders, for Mr Venizelos is a successor of great leaders, he is not merely a phenomenon. The Allies therefore, without hesitation, utilised the forces at the disposal of the Greek Government for the purpose of assisting them to restore order in that part of the world, and to enforce the Treaty. I think the experiment has been a success. It has been a gratifying success, a promising success" (*Hansard*, 21 July 1920, cols 477-480).

Venizelos was cock-of-the-walk in 1920. He had justified his treason by succeeding in it. He had regarded the Greek state as a work in progress, and had added to it. He had restored Greek authority in Asia with the blessing of the League and the Great Powers. He proclaimed a Greece of two Continents and five Seas. It straddled Europe and Asia and had ports on the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmora, the Aegean, the Ionian Sea and the Mediterranean.

Two biographies of him were published in London in 1920. One of them, by S.B. Chester, explained that the split occasioned by the overthrow of the King had now been healed: "*Venizelos makes one nation out of Venizelists and Royalists*".

The other, by H. Gibbons, explained that Britain and France had managed the *coup* that brought him to power in Athens so that it took the form of the overthrow of the King by foreign Powers, too strong to be resisted, rather than by Treason:

"In June France and Great Britain decided to invoke their obligations as 'protecting Powers', who had promised to guarantee a constitutional form of government for Greece at the time the Kingdom was created [over 80 years earlier] to demand the abdication of King Constantine" (p299).

"Venizelos was not consulted in regard to the abdication of Constantine. The move was made wholly upon the responsibility of the British and French Governments" (p301).

However, the Imperialists knew that—

"Venizelos believed this step was the only possible means of saving Greece from civil war of a nature that might jeopardise the hopes of an Allied offensive from Salonika... The forced abdication was the lesser of two evils. Venizelos could not enter into any agreement before hand with Jonnart [the French Commissioner who was handling the matter]. This would have involved him in difficulties with an important element in Greece that sympathised with him and at the same time was loath to accept the necessity of the armed intervention of the Entente Powers. It would have been dangerous for Venizelos to lay himself open to the accusation of being returned to power by Allied bayonets. Many Venizelists resented the blockade. The Greeks are a proud people. Belief in the wisdom of the policy of Venizelos did not destroy their fanatical devotion to their sovereign and their memory of his leadership in the wars against Turkey and Bulgaria" (p302, the pre-War war against Turkey, that is).

But, of course, Venizelos had already committed treason before that. When he failed to persuade the King to join the Entente and make war on Turkey, he had gone and set up his own Government in Macedonia collaborating with the Entente while it blockaded the legitimate Government. And it was because the Entente "*could not leave Venizelos independently in an anomalous position at Salonika*" that it invaded the mainland and overthrew the Athens Government.

Chester explains:

"The war waged against the Central Powers by the Venizelist Government of Salonika was now waged by the Venizelist Government of Greece... Greece began to be restored to unity... The blockade had been raised a few days after the departure of ex-King Constantine. More Greek vessels were returned to Venizelos by the Powers" (*Life Of Venizelos* p305. Greek ships that put into Entente ports had been seized).

So Venizelos had accomplished his *coup* astutely, with the help of the Allies who had gone to war to avenge the violation of Belgian neutrality but felt that the rape of Greece was a virtuous and honourable act, as well as a useful one. A new King was installed in Greece.

The Irish Home Rule Party, which was recruiting energetically for the British Army because Germany had violated Belgian neutrality, did not notice this breach of Greek neutrality, which

was much more extensive than the German breach in Belgium as it involved a *coup d'état*. But the Christian Brothers, who have been travestied in recent Irish history, noticed it. They had fully supported Redmond's war policy on the Belgian issue, but then they wondered why Belgian neutrality was sacred and Greek not:

"Salonika is still the war's centre of gravity. The city has come but recently under the power of Greece, while Greece herself owes her national existence mainly to the powers now intruding on her territory. After the battle of Novorino Russia, France and England forced the Sultan to withdraw his troops and constituted themselves guarantors of Greece's independence..."

"In spite of the suspicions of a prejudiced and hostile Press there is no reason, so far to doubt his [Constantine's] intentions. But Greece may not be able to maintain neutrality in her dangerous situation. Her Spartan history is passed for ever, and Byron felt that his invocation was in vain:

Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of your Spartan dead..."

(*Our Boys*, January 1916.)

"Germany's 'scrap-of-paper' treaty has also been an ill example to her enemies. The manifesto of the King of Greece is an extraordinary pronouncement. He says: 'I have tried to get a fair hearing in the French and British Press. I am compelled to appeal to America for the fair hearing denied me by the Allies. Allied troops have occupied Salonika, Castellorizo, Corfu, Mitylene, Lemnos and Imbros, without as much as 'by your leave'. It is absurd for Britain and France to talk of the violation of Belgium'..." (March 1916).

"Poor Greece is a war text of intimidation and weakness and a new commentary on the 'scrap of paper' integrity of small nations... Twenty-seven Franco-British warships have entered Piraeus, five miles from Athens, and seized three German vessels" (November 1916).

"Disarmament is demanded of Greece, which Greece refuses. The ships are taken over. International law is annulled. Ambassadors from Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey are compelled to leave Athens. A Franco-British detachment audaciously marched into the capital. Byron's statue was significantly blindfolded by the citizens. The desecration was hardly atoned by the blood of a hundred of the invaders while the ships in the Piraeus shelled the flanks of the Acropolis..."

"The unpardonable crimes of Belgium and Lusitania are still unatoned. On the other side there is Greece. Right always becomes might in the end..." (January 1917).

"The Greeks, in tears, have followed Constantine into the sea on his expulsion from his Kingdom. Venizelos sways over his desecrated and disgraced country by the armies and fleets of England and France" (August 1917).

"There are no such things as 'little nations', according to the English Prime Minister. All nationalities are equal. It is a pity that this is such a recent discovery. Some of the quondam little nations are great troubles at present. Belgium and Greece are violated by invading armies 'for military reasons'..." (October 1917).

(*Our Boys* was the monthly magazine of the Christian Brothers. The 1914-18 war articles were collected and published by Athol Books as *The Christian Brothers' History Of The Great War*, a large pamphlet which is still available.)

The occupation of Turkish Smyrna, where there was a substantial Greek population, became the base for an invasion

of Anatolia to wipe out the stubborn Kemalist resistance and enforce the Treaty of Sèvres on the Turks. Venizelos set his Army on the march towards Ankara. It found it an easy march to begin with.

Then the Venizelist King died from the bite of a pet monkey. Venizelos returned to Athens, a conquering hero. He called an election. He not only lost the election, but lost his seat. Churchill later commented: "*It is perhaps no exaggeration to remark that a quarter of a million persons died of this monkey's bite*" (*The Aftermath*, 1929, p386).

The Aftermath is an additional volume of Churchill's account of the Great War, describing some of the consequences. It is by far the most interesting, and that is probably why it is many decades since it was seen in the bookshops. Here is its account of the consequences of the fatal monkey bite on the Venizelist King:

"The Greek Constitution did not specifically prescribe that a General Election should follow on a demise of the Crown; but the question of a successor was embarrassing. Venizelos seems to have toyed with the idea of crowning the infant son of Mlle Manos [a commoner whom the King had married in 1919], with the consequential prolonged regency. It was however eventually decided to offer the throne to Prince Paul of Greece. Paul was living in Switzerland under the roof of his exiled father [i.e. King Constantine], and no doubt was inspired to reply that he could only accept after the Greek people had at an election definitely decided both against his father and his elder brother, Prince George. This forced a General Election.

"Venizelos in no way shirked the issue. Buoyed by the evidence of his popularity and by the conviction that he deserved well of the Greek people, he was willing that the issue should be put crudely to the electorate: Were they for the restoration of Constantine or not?... It might well have seemed that there could not be much doubt about the public choice upon the issue of 'Constantine *versus* Venizelos' at a moment when the former was stultified and the latter vindicated by world events. But the imperious Cretan did not make sufficient allowances for the strain to which his small country had been put; for the resentments which the Allied Blockade to make Greece enter the war had deeply implanted; for the many discontents which arise under prolonged war conditions; for the oppressive conduct of many of his agents; for the complete absorption of his political opponents in party politics and for their intense desire for office and revenge... But the election results... were a staggering surprise for all..."

"I happened to be with Mr Lloyd George in the Cabinet Room at the time the telegram announcing the result of the Greek election... arrived. He was very much shocked, and still more puzzled. But with his natural buoyancy... he contented himself with remarking, with a grin, 'Now I am the only one left'..." (p386-7).

Lloyd George was a petty bourgeois upstart who had risen from Welsh Nonconformist origins to be the ruler of Britain and the Empire, and power had gone to his head. He did not have in his make-up the ruling class ballast which had stabilised the mentality of all previous Prime Ministers. They had all been bred, in the company of a thousand others, to be the rulers. Even when one of them reached the top, he was still surrounded by his equals. Lloyd George was only an ambitious talent. When he made his way to the top in the desperate circumstance of the greatest war ever fought, he was alone. Power went to his head. He began to imagine that the world had no objective realities in it around which he must tack. It was a fluid substance waiting

The Christian Brothers' History Of The Great War

first published in monthly instalments in 1914-18

edited by *Brendan Clifford*

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to be given shape by his extraordinary will. This attitude was evident in his conduct of Irish policy after he lost the Election in Ireland.

The year after he lost the Greek Election—given the crucial part he played in the making of Venizelos, that election should be treated as a British event—he had to acknowledge a degree of objective reality in Ireland by negotiating a Truce with the IRA, though he recovered some ground by establishing mastery over Michael Collins. He never recovered from the repudiation of his agent by the Greek democracy. And it was through what the Turks did to the Greek invasion, which he authorised, that he fell in October 1922.

Churchill implies that the catastrophe which overtook the Greek Army as it marched to Ankara resulted from the electoral defeat of Venizelos, but that seems improbable. The King continued the war. Defeat did not come through military demoralisation caused by the loss of Venizelos. The advance towards Ankara continued. When it was stopped the Army held together for many months, in difficult circumstances, confronting the Turks.

Of course when Kemal had assembled adequate force and launched an effective offensive the Greek retreat soon turned into rout. And then the ethnic cleansing, which the Greeks had begun to apply in Smyrna and elsewhere, was put into reverse, and the Greek presence in Asia Minor which had been undisturbed during the centuries of Ottoman rule, was brought to an end.

When the Turkish advance reached the sea the British were there to meet it. The French by this time had made peace with the Turks. Lloyd George appealed to the Empire to rally to the assistance of the Greeks, but the Empire turned a deaf ear to the call. And the British democracy itself only wanted to wash its hands of the failed Greek conquest which it had instigated. So the Royal Navy sailed away from Chanak. And Lloyd George's Coalition fell on xxx 1922.

British democracy betrayed the Greeks—there's no two ways about that. What is pleaded in justification is that the Greek democracy betrayed the trust that Britain had placed in it:

"Greece, though only a small state beset with difficulties and foes, indulged in the dangerous luxury of a dual nature. There was the pro-Ally Greece of Venizelos and the pro-German Greece of Constantine. All the loyalties of the Allies began and ended with the Greece of Venizelos. All their resentments centred upon the Greece of Constantine. The ex-King was a bugbear second only to the Kaiser himself in the eyes of the British and French peoples, and he ranked in Allied estimation with the so-called 'Foxy' Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Here was a potentate who, as we saw it, against the wishes and interests of his people, had for personal and family reasons thrown his country, or tried to throw it, on the enemy side, which had also turned out to be the losing side. It would be absurd to ask the British or French democracy to make sacrifices or efforts for a people whose real spirit was shown by their choice of such a man... For the sake of Venizelos much had to be endured, but for Constantine less than nothing" (*The Aftermath*, p387-8).

Is it necessary to say that the only reason Constantine is accused of trying to take Greece into the war on the German side was that he tried to prevent it from going to war against Turkey on the strength of British promises?

Although Constantine was recalled to the throne by a large majority, Venizelos kept his party in being and there was deadlock between it and the Royalists throughout the twenties and thirties until 1936, when General Metaxas, with the

support of the King, set up a dictatorship and began to establish an effective state structure supported by fascist policies—authoritative policies with a socialist dimension.

Greek party politics had somehow never been formed with relation to the conduct of the Government of a State. They seemed to be more an expression of sentiment or personal belief unconnected with the practicalities of Government. The recall of Constantine at the start of a war launched by Venizelos with British support was an extreme expression of this.

The reason for this unpolitical mentality seems to derive from the existence of the Greeks, for centuries before the formation of the state, as free, prosperous communities dotted around the Turkish and Russian Empires. They were loosely governed by the Empires but left to look after themselves in ways that would be incompatible with the ideological and organisational regimentation required by a nation-state. Ottoman tolerance did not prepare them for the governing of themselves as a nation-state

Metaxas engaged for a few years in State-building of a kind that was called Fascist. In 1940, after Britain and France had declared war on Germany in 1939 and lost it in France in May-June 1940, Mussolini invaded Greece. Italy, like Greece, had been brought into the Great War by British promises that its irredentist ambitions would be fulfilled. But Britain could not deliver on all its promises in 1919, largely because it had made contradictory promises. Italy felt that it had been swindled and when Britain collapsed in 1940 it set about getting what it had entered the Great War for. Part of what it wanted lay in Greece. It made a demand to which Metaxas replied with a famous "No!" So Mussolini invaded, and was met by an effective Greek defence conducted by Metaxas.

Britain, having lost its war in France, and refusing to negotiate a settlement, was looking to spread the War by means of the Navy, with pin-pricks here and there. It pressed military assistance on Metaxas, which was refused.

The British purpose—Churchill's purpose, which is the same thing—was not to help the Greeks with their war with the Italians, in which they were doing rather well, but to make the Italian/Greek War part of its War on Germany. Metaxas did not want his war merged into Britain's War. But he died in January 1941 and his successor submitted to British pressure to accept British troops. This of course made it Germany's war.

Churchill, very much against military advice, diverted resources from North Africa (relieving pressure on the Italians) to Greece. A short while later Churchill had a second Dunkirk, barely extricating his Army from Greece but leaving its equipment behind.

The Communist movement, which had not been in contention for power before the War, became the main force of the Resistance to the German occupation, and by the end of the war it was poised for Government. But Britain decided that it was the collaborators with the Nazi occupation who should govern. So the collaborators were installed in Office by Britain and backed in a long Civil War against the Resistance. And, after the Civil War, there was a McCarthyite reign of terror to purge the society of all remnants of the infection contracted through having resisted Nazism during the German Occupation brought about by capricious British policy.

If Greece does not have a functional State today, it is because Britain wrecked the three possible developments which would have built such a State: during the Great War, the Second World War and at the end of that War. □

Starving The Germans: The Evolution of Britain's Strategy of Economic Warfare During The First World War — The French Connection Part 10

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. We have reached the year 1912 when the Caillaux government, which had negotiated an agreement with Germany regarding Morocco, had fallen.]

The demise of the Caillaux Ministry was greeted with relief by the British Government but the replacement administration, under Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré, remained an unknown quantity with regards to its attitude towards Spanish Morocco. Poincaré formed a new Ministry on 21 January 1912 and, although his was a distinctly conservative administration in which he retained Delcassé as his Minister of Marine, he allocated himself the role of Foreign Minister. In doing this he caused some anxiety for the British Government and their anxiety was not helped by the fact that in the previous November Caillaux had named Poincaré as one of the politicians who had attached real importance to the removal of Spain from the Larache and El Kasr parts of Morocco.

However, Poincaré did not make Caillaux's mistake of challenging Britain's strategic interests in Morocco and reassured Britain that he had no intention of damaging "*any well founded Spanish susceptibilities*". He also accepted the principle of international control over Tangier. But of course since the Franco-German Agreement on Morocco the dynamics of the situation had changed. With Germany no longer acting as a brake on French ambitions in Morocco, the attention of the French imperialists remained directed at the unfinished business of Spanish territory in that country. This time however, it was not Germany standing in the way of French imperial ambitions but Britain, and the *Quai d'Orsay* began to behave accordingly. Britain began to fear the treatment that Germany had previously experienced. Already, prior to the fall of Caillaux, the British Ambassador to France, Bertie, had caught the mood of the French when he:

"warned Grey on 5 January that a new foreign minister might not be so pliable as Selves, and that other ministers might wish to show that they were more careful of France's interests." (Hamilton, op. cit., p.221).

In reserving the position of Foreign Minister for himself Poincaré sought to nullify the destructive impact of the *Quai d'Orsay*. He believed that in the past the maverick behaviour of that office had been facilitated by either a Prime Minister not interested in foreign affairs or by the appointment of someone to the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs who had an agenda different from that of the Prime Minister. Poincaré came to power on a wave of disapproval of both the practice of secret negotiations and the restrictions imposed on France by Britain in Morocco and he exploited this in an attempt to frustrate the continuing ability of the *Quai* to push its more extreme anti-Spanish agenda. This is not to say that he himself had abandoned all claims to Spanish territories in Morocco -

his willingness to back new proposals which continued to create conflict between France and Spain and between France and Britain patently showed this not to have been the case. A temporary resolution to the problem came in November 1912 in the form of a settlement which excluded Spain from a large tract of territory to the south of the Riff but retaining the essential elements protecting Britain's strategic interests on the coasts. Tangier however continued to be a bone of contention. This remained the situation when Britain declared war in 1914 and an understanding between France and Britain on the question of international control over Tangier was not reached until December 1923.

Continued pursuit of Franco-German rapprochement.

Poincaré's attempt to frustrate the *Quai d'Orsay*'s pursuit of its more extreme anti-Spanish agenda at a time when imperialist ambitions in Morocco were no longer being frustrated by Germany but by Britain's support for the Spanish presence also impacted on the wider issue of Franco-German relations. Jules Cambon, the French ambassador to Germany and a strong advocate of Franco-German rapprochement, did not see the fall of Caillaux as necessarily a setback to the pursuit of that policy. The removal of Germany as an obstacle in Morocco and Poincaré's assumption of the Foreign Ministry was seen as an opportunity for French interests to move forward along lines more in harmony than in hostility to Germany. These sentiments were also shared by the German Government:

"Initially Jules Cambon was delighted with the new leader of the *Quai d'Orsay*. Weak foreign ministers had allowed the '*bureaux*' to impose their will to the detriment of Cambon's diplomacy. Now it seemed that Poincaré would be able to keep them in check. Furthermore, as the Kaiser and the German chancellor had together explained to the French naval attaché just before Agadir, a man of authority was needed at the helm in France to assume responsibility for a policy of *détente* with Germany. Only a month after Poincaré had been in power the Germans began overtures on *détente*. The chancellor attempted to dismiss the Agadir incident as an aberration of the secretary of state, Kiderlen Waechter, who he claimed had been squeezed out of power. Soon afterwards the Kaiser invited himself to dinner at the French embassy in Berlin. Cambon's policy of *détente* gathered momentum." (Keiger, op. cit., p.647)

What Jules Cambon and Germany failed to appreciate however, was that Poincaré's policy of imposing restraint on the *Quai d'Orsay* was never directed at its anti-German bias but was designed to limit the extent to which the differences between France and Britain over Spanish Morocco could threaten the *Entente* - something which he was determined to preserve. His restraint of the *Quai* was purely directed at that body's over-zealous pursuit of its Moroccan agenda. In undertaking this struggle with the *Quai* Poincaré required allies and the most obvious one was the camp associated with the policy of closer relations with Germany and towards that end he allowed Jules Cambon to continue his efforts in that direction.

In the meantime, oblivious of the real agenda, Cambon got on with his efforts.

On 23 March 1912 he wrote a letter to Poincaré informing him that a former agent of the German Foreign Ministry, Charles René - a person known to be in favour of Franco-German rapprochement - had made contact with the French embassy in Berlin with a proposal. René claimed that Bunau Varilla, the director of the influential newspaper *Le Matin*, was prepared to put his newspaper at the disposal of the cause of Franco-German rapprochement if the problem of Alsace-Lorraine was settled on terms favourable to France. René had told him that a complete restoration of the 'lost provinces' to France was impossible but that another solution involving almost total autonomy could be explored. Bunau Varilla had offered to arrange a meeting between René and Poincaré and Briand. In the meantime, the German under-secretary of state at the Foreign Ministry had been informed and let it be understood that Germany was open to concessions regarding the autonomy of Alsace-Lorraine.

"Cambon's immediate reaction was one of reserve, for these proposals went further than anything he had envisaged. He needed instructions from Paris before taking any action. Thus on 27 March, after a second overture had been made to his embassy, he ordered all conversations with René to be stopped. On that last visit René had confirmed that Germany would be willing to make considerable concessions in Alsace-Lorraine but that conversations could only continue "*si le gouvernement de la République les envisage d'un oeil favorable*" [if they have the approval of the Republic's government]. The limit between unofficial and official conversations had been reached.

Cambon's interest in this overture was demonstrated by his immediate invitation to the German chancellor to dine at the embassy. As he had suspected, Bethmann-Hollweg [the German Chancellor since 1909 much of whose foreign policy was designed to maintain good relations with Britain - ED] expressed a desire to see an '*apaisement entre nos deux pays*' [an easing of tensions between our two countries]. But Poincaré wanted the René-Varilla conversations terminated immediately, seeing the whole affair nothing less than a trap in which the German government

'semble poursuivre avec une obstination inlassable un rapprochement que seule une séparation complète du passé rendrait possible. À écouter des propositions comme celles de M. Charles René, nous nous brouillerions avec l'Angleterre et avec la Russie, nous perdrons tout le bénéfice de la politique que la France suit depuis de longues années, nous n'obtiendrions pour l'Alsace que des satisfactions illusoires et nous nous retrouverions le lendemain isolés, diminués et désqualifiés.'

[seems to be intent on a rapprochement which is in fact impossible unless we forget the past altogether. If we were to listen to proposals such as those of M. Charles René, we would fall out with England and with Russia, and we would lose all the benefits of the policy France has been pursuing for many years. As regards Alsace, we would be agreeing to a compensation that is of no real substance; in the end we would find ourselves isolated and diminished, our influence a thing of the past.]

He had from the outset preached the maintenance and separation of the two alliance systems which made negotiations

for such an agreement with Germany strictly out of the question. Cambon, on the other hand, believed that a European conflict could only be averted if Franco-German relations were on a better footing." (Keiger, op. cit., pp.648-649).

With Poincaré obviously intent on blocking any movement towards a closer agreement with Germany Cambon retreated into an exploration of areas where recognition of joint interests might prove fruitful. But he consistently came up against Poincaré's reluctance for France to be drawn into anything that might endanger the *Entente*. After his initial rebuff by Poincaré, Cambon even tried to convince the political director of the Quai d'Orsay, Maurice Paléologue, of the common interests between France and Germany. In May 1912 he wrote to him explaining that Germany's desire for economic agreements with rival powers offered France the opportunity to expand her colonial empire if she only had the will to take advantage by building closer relations between the two countries. Cambon waited for a positive response but from the Quai there was none. Instead Paléologue embarked on a campaign of opposition.

Undaunted, Cambon continued in his attempts to revitalise the cause of Franco-German co-operation. On the outbreak of the Italo-Turk War in September 1912 Cambon pointed to the possibilities of a break-up of the Ottoman Empire and that as the powers with the largest interests in the region, France and Germany, should make preparations in the event of the destruction of that empire and come to an understanding on how to protect their mutual interests against the inevitable demands from Russia and Britain in the event of Turkey's downfall. But to each proposal Poincaré appeared to set his face claiming variously that such proposals were either devices by Germany to weaken France's relationship with Britain or were designed to play a similar role in undermining France's relationship with Russia.

"Cambon lost his patience. In a desperate attempt to force Poincaré's hand he informed a journalist from *Le Temps* that the French government was making his task impossible by refusing outright all German proposals. The journalists informed the Quai d'Orsay. Poincaré was furious and seriously rebuked his ambassador, who, nevertheless, remained unrepentant." (Keiger, op. cit., p.651).

The Ambassadorial conference to settle the Balkan conflict was opened in London in December 1912 and it brought about a change in Poincaré's attitude. The danger of the growth of disaffection within the Ottoman Empire concentrated Poincaré's mind. Such growing disaffection could lead to an intervention of the great powers with a consequent internationalisation of the Ottoman Middle East and a dilution of French influence in Syria and the Lebanon. In response to this possibility Poincaré embarked on a policy which gradually drew him closer to the ideas of Jules Cambon and to Germany.

Poincaré ceased to be Prime Minister in January 1913 on being elected President of France, whose duties he took up in February 1913. In the meantime, as President elect, he asked Aristide Briand to form a Government which took the reins on 21 January 1913. Before being invited to form the Government by Poincaré both men had extensive meetings to discuss what was required and there is little doubt that the Cabinet formed under Briand very much reflected Poincaré's preferences. Poincaré

more than any other French president for a generation sought to use the office of President as an instrument of everyday power in French politics through his daily involvement in the area of foreign affairs. Briand's Cabinet included Eugène Etienne as Minister of War and Charles Jonnart as Minister of Foreign Affairs (both strong advocates of French colonial power in north Africa with Jonnart having been Governor of Algeria) in an obvious gesture of determination to follow Poincaré's assertive stand with regards French colonial policy (Briand had also asked Delcassé to continue as Minister of Marine but he had refused). However, although Jonnart held the title of Foreign Minister his role was effectively usurped by Poincaré's determination to continue to direct foreign affairs. His insistence on controlling the Quai d'Orsay was brought home to the Foreign Ministry through Poincaré's daily visits to the Quai - something that became a feature of his presidency at least up to the First World War. The reason for this hands-on approach by Poincaré was the need to balance the assertiveness of the colonial imperialist position without unleashing the anti-German elements that was an inevitable part of the make up of certain sections. In the aftermath of the weakening of the Ottoman Empire resulting from the two Balkan wars Poincaré viewed French interests in Syria as requiring closer relations with Germany as Britain had previously shown in its attitude towards French ambitions in Morocco that the *Entente* always would come second to its pursuit of its own imperial interests and, as far as Poincaré was concerned, Syria was now in Britain's sights.

"Despite the guarantees France had squeezed from Britain in December 1912, during the first half of 1913 the Quai d'Orsay continued to receive reports of growing anglophile sentiments in the area. The virtual certainty of a renewal of hostilities in the Balkans, due to Turkish intransigence over the ceding of Adrianople to the Balkan allies, threatened once more France's Syrian interests. France could expect no support from Britain or Italy, who hoped to gain from her losses, nor Russia, who rejoiced at any weakening of the Ottoman empire if it increased the prospect of her achieving the age-old goal of controlling the Straits. Thus German interests increasingly appeared to square with France's. Was it not therefore common sense to seek German good-will as support for French interests in the event of a partition of the Turkish empire?" (Keiger, op. cit., p.653).

The outbreak of the Second Balkan War in February 1913 resulted in a further weakening of the Ottoman Empire and had the effect of increasing French anxiety which was not helped by the display of inter-Power rivalry at the resultant ambassadorial conference in London. The Briand Ministry fell on 18 March 1913 after losing a vote on electoral reform. His Ministry was replaced by that of Louis Barthou on 21 March. Again, this reflected the changing balance that Poincaré demanded of the Cabinet with Etienne continuing as Minister of War but this time with Stéphen Pichon, a man not averse to getting up close and personal with Germany, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs once again:

"Jules Cambon was delighted with Pichon's appointment, recalling the free hand he had been given between 1907 and 1910 to bring about détente with Germany. Furthermore, following his new appointment Pichon had written to him explaining that '*toute son attitude sera une attitude de détente*' [his whole attitude would be one of détente] with Germany. But Cambon feared that an overzealous attitude towards Berlin might turn the '*bureaux*' against him even more. Already Pichon's zeal in wishing to negotiate with Germany had been discovered

by the Quai who had intercepted a German communication in which the German ambassador in Paris had used the word '*rapprochement*' - causing uproar in the '*bureaux*'. Did Cambon fear that these intercepted telegrams could produce a scandal similar to that of the Caillaux secret negotiations during the Agadir crisis? He was sufficiently worried to write a letter to Pichon congratulating him on the courteous settlement of a diplomatic incident with Germany, in which a German zeppelin had accidentally landed on French soil, while warning that '*Les personnes qui parlent de rapprochement font naître des réactions pénibles et quelques fois dangereuses*' ['those who speak of rapprochement cause others to react in a pained and possibly dangerous manner' -ED]. The best policy, he explained, was to find '*un milieu entre les empressements déplacés et les rodomontades blessantes*' ['a middle ground between excessive zeal and hurtful bombast' - ED]. Something of which he was certain was that the inspiration for Pichon's policy came from Poincaré: '*Pichon a lâché Clemenceau et est devenu tout à fait poincariste*' ['Pichon has dropped Clemenceau and become wholly poincarist' - ED]. (Keiger, op. cit., p.653).

However, whatever the belief of Cambon (and it seems that by this stage the penny was beginning to drop that Germany was being used to gain leverage in pursuit of French colonial interests rather than there being any genuine intentions to develop a rapprochement), Poincaré knew exactly the limits to which he was prepared to go in terms of cultivating Germany and that fell far short of any rapprochement.

The First Balkan War had officially ended with the Treaty of London signed on 30 May 1913 and Cambon saw the coincidence of interests between France and Germany with regards to Turkey as an excuse for pushing for an agreement between the two countries on the future of Turkey in the Middle East.

"This involved adopting a conciliatory attitude towards her over the Baghdad railway. It also made it necessary for France not to bully Turkey in negotiations to obtain railway concessions in exchange for loans. Intimidation would only annoy Germany, Turkey's protector, and lead her to refuse her blessing for the French sphere of influence in Syria . . . But outbursts from the '*bureaux*' and the actions of germanophobe French officials abroad continued to threaten détente." (Keiger, op. cit., p.654).

Developments however, had to wait until the ending of the Second Balkan War in November 1913. Poincaré continued to believe that the peace signed at Bucharest was merely a respite for the Ottoman empire and with increasing British-French colonial rivalry in the Syrian/Lebanon area he embarked on a more conciliatory policy towards Germany on the issue of the Baghdad railway. On 15 November 1913 serious negotiations with Berlin began. These negotiations withstood the furore amplified by the '*bureaux*' surrounding the claimed insult of Alsatian recruits and the French flag by a young German officer (the incident became known as the Saverne incident). Then the negotiations were further tested by Russia's objections to the appointment by Turkey of the German general, Liman von Sanders, to the post of instructor for its army and commander of a division in Constantinople. Russia lodged a strong protest and called on France to show solidarity with her ally by supporting the call for his removal. This stand on the part of Russia was believed by Cambon to be a ruse concealing Russia's resentment

of France's negotiations with Germany on the Baghdad railway project - something that she felt threatened her Caucasian border. Poincaré only provided token support for Russia's stand by temporarily withdrawing from the negotiations, only to restart them again in January 1914 after a cosmetic rearrangement of Liman von Sanders' official position *vis à vis* the Turkish army. However, in the meantime the Barthou ministry fell on 2 December 1913 and with it went Stéphen Pichon. Poincaré chose as Barthou's successor, Gaston Doumergue, a Radical of the centre with a special interest in the expansion of French secular education particularly as a means of extending French influence in the Middle East. Doumergue assumed the role of Foreign Minister as well as that of Prime Minister and it quickly became obvious that he had his own ideas of what kind of foreign policy he favoured. During the Sanders affair he had adopted a strongly pro-Russian line which risked undermining the Franco-German negotiations until Poincaré's intervention. Despite this however, it was obvious that the new Government was more in sympathy with the '*bureaux*' than the preceding ministries and that Poincaré's ability to control the Quai had distinctly weakened. Negotiations with Germany restarted after 15 January 1914 and less than a week later, Poincaré accepted an invitation to dine at the German embassy in Paris - something that had not been done by any French president since 1871. The significance of this gesture was not lost on either the Germans, who had been suspicious of Poincaré's changed pro-German attitude, or on the Quai, who thereafter determined to increase efforts to sabotage the moves towards a harmonisation of relations between the two countries. The negotiations came to fruition on 15 February 1914 with France agreeing to finance the Baghdad railway. This then opened the way for the conclusion, on 9 April 1914, of negotiations with Turkey (which had been taking place in tandem with the German negotiations and was reliant on a successful conclusion to those negotiations) involving the French loan to Turkey.

In the meantime, the '*bureaux*' and the Germanophobes had been busy and the agreement was met with a mixed reception in France. Cambon, although happy with the outcome of the negotiations, was despondent about the future. If such an agreement, which forestalled a war with Germany, could be met with such a determined opposition from the Germanophobe elements in France, it was difficult to see how war could be postponed indefinitely. He observed:

"Since the Dreyfus Affair, we have in France a militarist and nationalist party which will not brook a rapprochement with Germany at any price, and which excites the aggressive tones of a great number of newspapers. The government will have to take them into account, and also the party they represent, should another incident break out between the two nations. The majority of Germans and Frenchmen want to live in peace, they cannot be denied. But a powerful minority in both countries dreams only battles, conquests, or revenge. That is the danger beside which we must live as if next to a powder-barrel which the slightest imprudence might blow up." [cited in translation in E.Weber, *The Nationalist Revival in France 1905-1914*, California 1959, p.159. Cambon's analysis is corroborated by Becker, 1914, pp. 27, 38, 42, 51-52 - quoted in Keiger, op. cit., p.657).

But of course this was exactly the element which Britain was reliant upon to sustain its plan for France in its war on Germany. The anti-German majority in the French army was in direct line of descent to those same elements in the French army who, combined with the anti-German nationalists and imperialists,

continued to frustrate any move away from belligerency and towards an accommodation with Germany. During the several incidents in which the ambitions of this sector of French society led them to encroach militarily in Morocco, as in 1905, in 1907 in Casablanca, and in 1911, Britain provided them with unstinted and uncritical support, despite the fact that such behaviour, in the last two instances was in direct breach of the Act of Algeciras, of which Britain herself was a protective signatory. If, at any stage, Britain had opposed such actions, it would have bolstered the pacific elements in French society with a corresponding loss of morale for the belligerent elements. But such a thing was never likely to happen because the pacific elements inevitably expressed themselves in terms not conducive to Britain's war plans and so they were effectively abandoned. In those circumstances where the greatest power on the planet makes its will so obviously known and known by such means, it is inevitable that those elements which sought an accommodation with Germany would continue to be out-flanked by those who took significant confidence from the support offered by that power. The support offered to the anti-German war party by Britain was not just a moral support but could also be measured in terms of a military commitment and a military commitment which Britain was prepared to alter in a way which gave credence to the war party in France. It was the eventual realisation of this that proved sufficient to bring to its fold those like Clemenceau, Pichon and Poincaré, who in different circumstances would, in all likelihood, have continued to work for a closer relationship with Germany. Because of this, it would not be an exaggeration to say that, despite a general awareness that France's best interests were in closer harmonisation with Germany, she was 'bounced' into a war with Germany by a combination of British interference and the anti-German war party in French politics. □

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Social Democracy and the Shaping of Germany, 1945-49 *Part 6: The ISK Group and the Office of Strategic Services.*

By Philip O'Connor

The race against the German Communists to secure influence in post-war Germany.

[*Instalment 6 of extracts from a thesis written at TCD in the early 1990s.*]

3.9 ISK-SoPaDe influence on Western policy for occupied Germany: compromises and limits

The relative impotence of exiled mainstream German socialist politicians in the US contrasted with the significant patronage afforded the Hagen Group of ISK, elements from Neubeginnen and former SAP (Socialist Workers Party) members. Another significant development in the US was the integration in the Allied intelligence system of a group of German “neo-Marxist” though non-party affiliated academics from Horkheimer’s “*Institute for Social Research*”, notably Franz Neumann, and including well known theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and others. Working in the Research and Analysis (R&A) Branch of the OSS, they provided historical analyses of Germany and German fascism, which they explained as a continuum of German structural dysfunction, democratic failure, and a world power ambition based in “Prussian” militarism and German monopoly capital. It was a system which could only be dismantled by military defeat and a “reconstruction” of society under the supervision of the democratic powers. Any future German state could only be a loosely federal structure. This theoretical construct represented the adoption by German intellectuals of a “structuralist” version of the WWI era British propaganda portrayal of German “Prussianism” – what would become known as the German *Sonderweg*. The Neumann circle also provided the OSS with analyses of political intelligence, and produced background papers which informed much of future American occupation policy being prepared at the time by the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) of the War Department, established in March 1943. These academics, famous as founders of the Frankfurt School of neo-Marxist “critical theory”, were, like the German socialists working with the AFL and OSS Labor Desk, linked with the *Neubeginnen* circle headed by Paul Hagen which formed the nucleus of the *Union*-type alliance established in the US and dedicated to a post-war German reconstruction under a US hegemony. Initial Allied distrust of Hagen had been finally dispelled by Brandt’s assurances to the US embassy in Stockholm.⁷³ From late 1943, the US Political Affairs Division and the OSS Labor Desk undertook discussions with the leaders of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* in London on policy in a defeated Germany. The SoPaDe-ISK drew on all of their resources to supply comprehensive and politically realistic suggestions. These included guidelines for the “denazification” of the German economy and public administration, proposals for a federal state structure and even behavioural guidelines for Allied occupation officers. From 1944 this work was coordinated directly under Eisenhower’s “Supreme Headquarters” (SHAEP). The *Union* leaders mobilised all their trusted contacts. Economists, including Walter Fliess who had been a member of ISK, and E.F. Schumacher, an SPD member and trade union economist who would become famous in the 1960s for his book, *Small is Beautiful*, worked with a group of Oxford economists on Allied economic policy

for an occupied Germany. An ISK-directed organisation, “*German Educational Re-Construction*”, was established with British support to select and train “politically reliable people” to run courses in “democracy” for German PoWs. It also drafted ideas for the “political re-education of the German people” and worked closely with British educational planning staffs producing British policy in this area, particularly in the reconstruction of the German media. A further channel linked the ISK to important circles in the British Foreign Office. Fritz Eberhard (under the pseudonym “Helmut von Rauschenplat”) was a key contact in this. Indeed it was through this channel that British occupation planners first learned in September 1944 that a group of former social democrats in Berlin was planning to establish a “central body as a potential provisional leadership” of a revived SPD following a military defeat.⁷⁴

Trade unionists like the former ISK organiser Fritz Eberhard, now employed with the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), and Gerhard Kreyssig, a contact of Ollenhauer’s who worked in the London WFTU secretariat, contributed both to *Union of Socialists* and *Landesgruppe* (trade union) planning groups while also assisting British intelligence and planning bodies. Ludwig Rosenberg, a trade union official and Hans Gottfurcht’s policy advisor, was appointed German labour advisor to the US delegation in the “European Advisory Committee” (EAC) at SHAEP. These men later played leading roles in the trade union movement in Germany. The *Union* even published drafts for a currency reform which anticipated the developments of the late 1940s and reflected the extent to which at least the trade union wing of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* had adopted the main tenets of US demand-led economic management theory.⁷⁵

At the end of 1944 ISK plans for German trade union reconstruction were finalised. The shape of the movement was to be determined by shop floor relations re-constituted along the lines of the 1920 Works Council Law (*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz*), but excluding higher levels of what later was to become “co-determination”. Unions were to emerge with local Allied assistance from this basis, led by surviving local pre-1933 officials, “gradually from small beginnings (from ‘below’)”. Given the planned fixing of wage rates by the Allied military government and the prohibition on collective bargaining, the authority of works councils was to be enhanced during the “transitional period” by functions in areas such as “local administration, food supplies and the removal of crisis conditions in the social and economic sphere”. These movements would then be allowed “gradually to develop” into “co-ordinating committees at the district and central co-ordinating level” for which “suitable elements will be found available” and finally into “centrally controlled unions” along industrial sector lines federated in a loose supervisory central body. The local “suitable” figures to lead these developments formed the “White Lists” prepared for use by Allied occupation officers.⁷⁶

These proposals were incorporated almost in their entirety into the OSS handbook written by Franz Neumann and adopted on 22 July 1944 as *Labor Relations and Military Government: Civil Affairs Guide*, and into SHAEP’s *Military Government Germany: Technical Manual for Labor Officers of*

December 1944 which had been drafted by Rosenberg. Policy work in many other areas produced by the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* in cooperation with the political officers of SHAEF formed the basis of much of the comprehensive *Civil Affairs Handbooks* produced by the Civil Affairs Division ("G-5") of SHAEF.⁷⁷

The input of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* and its circles to Allied occupation policy was thus very considerable. The wartime policy cooperation also led to many German socialists contributing especially to British domestic policy developments. E.F. Schumacher, for instance, assisted in drafting the Beveridge Plan for the welfare state, Eberhard and Kreyssig contributed to TUC policy and *Union*-linked intellectuals such as Löwenthal, Schiff and Anderson became respected commentators in the labour press and with liberal journals such as *The Observer* and *The Economist*. These intellectuals had also worked to varying degrees for the intelligence and irregular warfare institutions of the Allies, and in this way helped form the formidable post-war US-European anti-Soviet foreign policy elite. Later they played a dominant role in Cold War politics. Many were associated with the *Socialist Clarity* group in the Labour Party, which included figures like Richard Crossman and Austin Albu, and which campaigned against the influence on British policy of the Vansittartist *Fight for Freedom* tendency that supported a Western-Soviet alliance. *Socialist Clarity* favoured a "democratic socialist" rebuilding of Germany under strictly Western Allied supervision.

The impressive organisational connections and intellectual prestige of Eichler's small but dedicated group led to a virtual ISK hegemony over German exile socialist policy by the end of the war. Its well-informed magazine, *Europe Speaks*, became the leading political journal of the German exiles in Britain (and one of the few permitted). By mid-1944 an internal ISK report boasted proudly how "*our programme is now substantially that of the Union*".⁷⁸ The group understood the difficulties traditional SPD members would have in breaking with their "*old slogan of nationalise the whole lot*" as evidenced in the *Guidelines on Economic Policy* adopted by the *Union* at SoPaDe insistence in 1944. ISK theory rejected traditional concepts of nationalisation as "*totalitarian bureaucraticism*". But influential trade unionists, notably Eberhard and Rosenberg, adopted the ISK position and gradually changed *Union* thinking: the nationalisation demand disappeared in the 1945 version of the *Guidelines on Economic Policy* in favour of a vaguer programme of "*economic decentralisation*" and "*democratic control*". Even this was regarded in ISK circles as something of a compromise with traditional SPD ideas on "*socialisation*". Nationalisation was simply out of the question given Allied policy against German centralised state institutions. In developing these positions, the ISK trade unionists worked closely particularly with Austin Albu and Alan Flanders, two men linked to the former British wing of the ISK, known as *Socialist Vanguard*. Enjoying Bevin's confidence, they worked on trade union policy for occupied Germany where they were both later to serve as leading British political officers.⁷⁹

This trimming of German socialist economic policy to Western Allied requirements, despite the official policy of creating a joint four-power 'Control Commission' governing the affairs of the defeated country, opposed the emergence of a centralised German state that might serve as a vehicle for Soviet influence in western areas. A SoPaDe proposal of March 1944 seeking the application of the self-determination principles of the Atlantic Charter to Germany fell on deaf ears and was quietly dropped. In line with their strategic concept, the western powers therefore opposed nationalisation proposals and supported a locally and regionally based trade union movement rather than national structures. At a meeting in early 1945 with

Louis Wiesner, the chief US Labor Officer at the Allied Control Council, Gottfurcht and Hans Vogel the elderly titular head of the SoPaDe, warned that the expectations of socialists inside Germany would be that "*we press for immediate and radical socialization of large-scale enterprises as soon as Hitler falls*". Wiesner replied that such decisions would have to await the outcome of democratic elections. As these were a matter for the distant future, German socialists knew their only option in the medium term would be to build on the local co-determination (*Mitbestimmung*) structures that might be permitted. Gottfurcht therefore impressed on Wiesner the importance of forming strong works councils as quickly as possible through a re-institution of the 1920 law.⁸⁰

The "Big Three" Alliance was basically an alliance of convenience to defeat Germany, with this overall unity of purpose covering many areas of competing interests and political rivalry, not least contradictory intentions for post-war Europe. Unity was maintained through the insistence on an "unconditional" German surrender. At the end of 1944 the Western Allied armies had reached the western German borders while the Red Army had occupied East Prussia, encircled Budapest and were advancing on the Oder and Vienna. The public profile of Western Allied policy towards Germany prominently stressed the united demand for an "unconditional surrender" and gave much coverage at this time to the views of Lord Vansittart and the *Fight for Freedom* group which demanded a punitive, draconian peace. In September 1944 Churchill and Roosevelt, meeting in Quebec, agreed a joint memorandum based on the "Morgenthau Plan". This proposed the "industrial disarmament" of Germany, a massive reduction in German economic output and living standards, and "converting Germany into a country primarily agricultural and pastoral in its character." Following the Quebec summit, the SHAEF *Handbook for Military Government in Germany* of August 1944 - to which the exile German socialists had contributed so much - was withdrawn and replaced by Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive JCS 1067, *Handbook for Military Government in Germany Prior to Defeat or Surrender*. While outlining the need to provide for basic subsistence and the resumption of local administration and services, the directive prohibited any steps towards "the economic rehabilitation of Germany" or "designed to maintain or strengthen the German economy", and, while maintaining much of the detail of the earlier *Handbook*, was now restricted to the pre-surrender period, with events after that to be determined by Big Three agreement. The flux of Allied policy and the punitive tendency of the new directives dispirited the exile German socialists and impressed on them the limits of their influence, regardless of their (covert) alliance with key elements of the future political occupation authorities.⁸¹

But one thing was clear to the exile leaders - their plans would relate only to the Western occupied "Zones". In private, Hansen of the ISK described the Soviet advance in January 1945 as "really terrifying". "What will happen in the Soviet Zone", Ollenhauer wrote, "no-one knows, but we social democrats will certainly have no possibility for any political activity there."⁸²

3.10 Organising the return of the ISK

From late 1943, as western Allied plans for an invasion of France took shape, the ISK began secret negotiations with both the OSS and the British SOE for the organised return of their activists with the Allied armies as they entered Germany. There were attempts to organise the dropping of ISK agents by parachute behind German lines in the framework of OSS/SOE sabotage and espionage operations, also intended to start the process of organising personnel for the occupation period. In

the event, apart from some sabotage operations not involving ISK personnel, only one of these ISK-OSS “insertions” was successful. This was the parachuting of Jupp Kappius into the Ruhr in September 1944. Finding his movements restricted, he based himself in Bochum and tentatively sought out ISK contacts in surrounding towns of the Ruhr. He also undertook some espionage activities, including locating and reporting the sites of continued industrial production. His wife too, Anne Kappius, was smuggled into Nazi Germany from Switzerland by OSS Swiss station chief, Allan Dulles. Indeed from 1944 regular courier runs into Germany organised by the ISK with OSS support from Switzerland had enabled much information to be gathered of use to both organisations, including news on plans by underground SPD circles in Berlin and elsewhere. Anna Kappius managed to travel extensively, making contacts with surviving ISK people in several key west German cities, informing them of the *Union* programme and the plans for political and trade union activity on the arrival of the Allied armies, and returning with reports for the OSS and ISK on local political conditions.⁸³

It should be noted that the Soviet Union was not completely in the dark about the activities of the SoPaDe-ISK leadership in London. Besides having its own sources within MI5, the political perspectives of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations* on post-war Germany were well known to it. The *Union* was quite candid in setting out its views in its monthly publication *Sozialistische Mitteilungen*. In addition, the conflicts in the trade union *Landesgruppe* in London over post-war trade union policy had been fraught and bitter. The effective SoPaDe leader in London was Erich Ollenhauer but calls by the titular SoPaDe chairman, Hans Vogel, on the Allies not to apply their demand for an “unconditional surrender” to the German people, but only the state, and to apply the “Atlantic Charter” in dealing with a defeated Germany attracted the ire of the Soviet media, which warned of the “Dangerous London Socialists”.⁸⁴ As will be seen in a future chapter, the Soviets themselves were to adopt an approach in securing local political control in Eastern Germany which was a mirror image of that being planned by the London German socialists.

In late 1944 the London *Union*-OSS alliance was extended to the selection of personnel to act as “Guides” with the advancing British and American armies to assist in the capture of German cities, the isolation and removal of Nazi officials and the appointment of “suitable people” to assume roles in the local administration and economy. After being vetted jointly by the ISK-SoPaDe group and OSS/SOE for suitability and political reliability, the “Guides” were trained in a programme overseen by Eichler, Ollenhauer and Rosenberg. Approximately twenty were finally selected, and trained to implement the missions of both OSS/SOE and the *Union* in the significant urban centres of the future British and US Zones. These were to be supplemented by the contacts re-activated and prepared for the post-war position by Anna Kappius and other couriers in a further range of cities. The “Guides” and re-activated contacts within Germany included Paul Bondy (Munich), Alfred Kiss (Cologne), Paul Walter (Frankfurt), Robert Neumann (Cologne), Kurt Scheer (Frankfurt), Willi Heidorn (“Werner Hansen”, Cologne), Helmut von Rauschenplat (“Fritz Eberhard”, Stuttgart), Alfred Dannenberg (Hannover), Otto Bennemann (Brunswick), Richard Broh (Nuremberg), Helmut Kalbitzer (Hamburg) and others. Following the establishment of local Allied control, the “Guides”, according to the signed memo outlining the matters agreed with OSS, would assist with the removal of Nazis from positions in the local administration and economy and then “exchange uniform [sic.] for civilian clothes ... mix with the civilian population” and begin the identification

of “reliable people” and groups to take on these functions and “act as nuclei of new groupings or even organisations”.⁸⁵

At a time when the great majority of exiles were to be prevented from returning to Germany until 1947 and – especially in the case of communists – often until as late as 1949, this represented a major political advantage for the London *Union* leadership. But even before this stage was reached, as early as December 1944 the ISK leader Willi Eichler was brought to France and Switzerland by OSS to engage directly with German socialists who had survived there and were regrouping.

In a report for his British and OSS contacts, Eichler first raised his concerns at the “one-sided propaganda” being carried out among German PoWs in France “by German communists ... on behalf of the so-called ‘Free Germany Committee’ ... which only serves communist aims”. He also explained the increasingly critical attitudes among French socialists towards Britain and America as at least “partly ... the result of the activities of the Free Germany Committee.” He enclosed a report made by “one of my friends” on the recent conference of the French Socialist Party (SFIO). In Switzerland he met with “Mr D-” (i.e. Dulles) with whom he discussed the plans for activating ISK “anti-fascist” circles in German towns as they were captured and described the success with which the *Union* programme was being greeted in underground circles in Germany. He provided a detailed assessment of the leading German political exiles in Switzerland regarding their suitability for a speedy return to roles in occupied Germany and hoped “to have achieved a number of things in the course of this journey that will prove useful for the aims of the United Nations, and especially the United States of America.”⁸⁶

One of these “useful things” was undoubtedly his success in organising a grouping of former SPD members in Paris who had survived the occupation to oppose the dominant tendency to form joint groups with communists and support the ‘Free German Committee’. Within a week of Eichler’s arrival, a German socialist with the OSS, Max Lippmann, was able to report to Ollenhauer that this anti-Free Germany grouping had “already set up something similar to the ‘Union’...”⁸⁷ While most of the two hundred or so former German socialists in France ultimately signed the declaration of the Free Germany Committee – known in France as CALPO (Comité Allemagne Libre Pour l’Ouest) – it was the small *Union* group – called the *Group of German Socialists in France* – opposing the Committee and supported by the London socialists and the OSS that was recognised as the official “SPD” representation and was to form the functional route for those wishing to return to Germany. Virtually the entire energies of the *Union* linked socialists were consumed with trying to disrupt the general tendency of social democrats to participate with communists in joint initiatives and even to favour the abandoning of the “old party” and the building of a new “united socialist party” combining former socialists and communists instead.⁸⁸ This fight overshadowed all other issues for the *Union* and dominated the politics of these revived SPD circles. An identical process of disrupting “united front” activities and establishing a *Group of German Socialists* linked to the London *Union* followed in Brussels, after contacts with surviving German socialists in Belgium were re-established through Eichler and the OSS in December 1944.⁸⁹

By the end of 1944 it was clear to Eichler that experimenting with attempts to form a “united party” of former social democrats and other non-communist left groupings based on ISK ideas would only further confuse a situation where the major issue that had emerged was the need to prevent German socialists forming joint initiatives with the communists. A “united party”, he told his ISK colleagues in London, “is today only imaginable in the form of the old social democracy.”⁹⁰

Early reports reaching Eichler from the OSS “Guides” working with the Allied armies in Germany indicated that despite the carnage and destruction of the war, activist left wing circles were re-emerging throughout the country and taking a decidedly alarming form.⁹¹ Locating and shaping a potential leadership within Germany and not solely creating and influencing local groupings now became the priority for Eichler and the leaders of the *Union of German Socialist Organisations in Great Britain*. The next chapter will reveal how this was successfully achieved.

(Endnotes)

73. On the R&A section and its work, see Söllner, *Zur Archäologie der Deomratie in Deutschland*, pp. 24-40, 153-6; Söllner, ‘Ein (un) deutsches Juristenleben — Franz Neumann zum 80. Geburtstag’, *Kritisches Justiz*, 13 (1980), pp. 427-37. See also biographies of Neumann, Marcuse, Hagen and Horkheimer in *Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration*, Vol. II. On Brandt’s testimony in favour of for Hagen, Müssener, *Exil in Schweden*, and Kock, *Willy Brandt*. Note added 2014: There has been much new writing on the theory of the “German *Sonderweg*” since this thesis was written. For the current state of play, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonderweg> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_Kershaw. Frankfurt School academics such as Marcuse had begun to develop this approach in the late Weimar era, publishing their views, amongst other places, in *Die Gesellschaft*, the SPD theoretical journal edited by Rudolf Hilferding, a prominent Marxist theoretician and politician. Hilferding’s work, *Das Finanzkapital* (*Finance Capital*), Vienna, 1910, was one of the most influential works of 20th century Marxist theory, anticipating the later writings on this issue by Luxemburg, Lenin and others on this issue.

74. ‘Suggestions for a Programm of Immediate Action in the Transitional Period’, 18.9.1944, in HBS NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 37; ‘Entwurf einer föderalistischen Erklärung’, Januar 1944, in AsD Best. IJB/ISK Box 51; ‘Research’ themes in Gottfurcht Notebook, p. 2 January 1944; on economic policy discussions, ‘Vierteljahresbericht des Londoner OV des ISK, Februar-April 1944’, p. 6, in AsD Best. IJB/ISK Box 52; on Fliess and Schumacher, *Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration*, pp. 181, 675; ‘Draft: Development and Destruction of Trade Unionism in Germany’, 4.11.1943 by ‘HaGo’ [= Hans Gottfurcht], in HBS NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 37. On SHAEF policy planning in general, Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 1961, pp. 17 ff. On ISK re-education proposals and programmes: ‘Scheme 101 – PoWs’ in Gottfurcht Notebook; ‘Vierteljahresbericht des Londoner OV des ISK, Nov. 1943 - Januar 1944’, p. 6, in AsD Best. IJB/ISK Box 51; MA Nr. 3 Mai 1944 p. 8 in *ibid.*, Box 52; materials ascribed to Helmut von Rauschebplatt [aka Fritz Eberhard] in AsD NL Eberhard Mappe 69a; Mehringer, *Waldemar von Knoeringen*, pp. 245-60 and *Biographisches Handbuch* p. 374. On British re-education policy see also Welsh, ‘Priming the Pump of German Democracy’, in Turner (ed.), *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany*, 1989, pp. 215-38. On von Rauschenplat (i.e. Eberhard), see his correspondence with Brailsford (whom he informed of the Berlin SPD circle), D. Warrimer and Duncan Wilson of the German Section, F.O. Political Intelligence Department, as well as with Alan Flanders and John Price, Bevin’s appointee at the ILO. AsD NL Eberhard, Mappe 69a.

75. On the policy work of trade unionists named, see *Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration*, pp. 143 and 397 and Röder, *Exilgruppen*, pp. 221 ff. On currency reform, E.F. Schumacher and Walter Fliess, *Betrachtungen zur deutschen Finanzreform*, London 1945, and “London Representation of the SPD” [‘London-Vertretung der SPD’], *Zehn Vorschläge zur deutschen Währungsreform*, 1945.

76. On development of ISK trade union policy: Hansen, ‘Parteien und Gewerkschaften’ 24.4.1943, in AsD NL Hansen Ordner 6; Gottfurcht to Hans Jahn (ITF), 27.7.1944, in HBS NL Gottfurcht Kasten 37; ‘Bericht ueber Gewerkschaftskonferenz im MV Sch ... 30-31. Juni’, 09.01.1944, in AsD NL Hansen Ordner 6. On the evolution of Allied

trade union policy for Germany, Fichter, *Besatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften*, pp. 59 ff. For London German input see the following materials in HBS NL Gottfurcht Kasten 37: joint proposal “for P.” [i.e. Pratt, OSS] from Gottfurcht [*Landesgruppe*], Eichler (ISK), Kramer [i.e. Jahn, ITF] and Ollenhauer [SoPaDe], ‘Some Comments on the Reconstruction of the German Trade Union Movement’, 21.7.1944, and Gottfurcht to Pratt [OSS], ‘Some Suggestions by German Trade Unionists’, 5.8.1944, with copies to ‘FK’ [= Jahn of ITF], WE [= Eichler of ISK], and EO [= Ollenhauer of SoPaDe], and the notes on various meetings of this circle and with Pratt in thrashing out the joint policy in entries in the *Gottfurcht Notebook* for April-July 1944.

77. The official title of the *Civil Affairs Guide* drafted by Neumann was OSS R&A Document 1655.28. See the extensive discussion of these documents in Fichter, *Besatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften*, pp. 62-75 and Söllner, *Zur Archäologie der Demokratie in Deutschland*, pp. 157 ff., 168 ff., 207 ff. and 225 f. For the provisions of the directives themselves, Hammond, ‘Directives for the Occupation of Germany’, in Stein (ed.), *American Civil-Military Decisions*, 1963, pp. 311 ff.

78. MA Nr. 3, May 1944, p. 8, AsD Best. IJB/ISK Box 52; ‘Diskussionsrede während ISK Konf. 1942’, AsD NL Hansen Ordner 6.

79. ‘Bericht gegeben im gemeinsamen M[embers] M[eeeting] mit engl. Genossen am 5.XII.1943’ in AsD NL Hansen Ordner 6; Union deutscher sozialistischer Organisationen in Grossbritannien, ‘Richtlinien auf dem Gebiet der Wirtschaftspolitik’, 1944, AsD SoPaDe Emig., Mappe 84; On these policy developments also Röder, *Exilgruppen*, pp. 221 f.; ‘Richtlinien der Union ... für die Wirtschaftspolitik’, London, Nov. 1945, ‘Was kann Sozialismus heute ökonomisch bedeuten?’ MS by ‘Eberhard Kreis’ (Eberhard Circle) and Eberhard’s 1944 correspondence with Alan Flanders on nationalisation – AsD NL Eberhard. The 1945 programme of the *Landesgruppe* on trade union reconstruction, which was adopted against the abstention of the KPD votes, *Die neue deutsche Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, had been substantially drafted by Rosenberg, Schoettle and Eichler, and included a statement on economic policy almost identical to that in the revised 1945 version of the *Union* economic guidelines. On these debates see also Ott, *Die Wirtschaftskonzeption der SPD nach 1945*, 1978 pp. 78 ff. In June 1945, Ollenhauer informed the economist F.K. Wiest “that we [i.e. the *Union*] now share the perspective of the *Landesgruppe* of German trade unionists which Gottfurcht outlined to you” (16.6.1945, AsD SoPaDe Emig., Mappe 184).

80. On the ‘Atlantic Charter’ proposal, Gottfurcht, Vogel, Schiff, ‘Proposal’, 25.3.1944, in HBS, NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 37. On the works council discussion, ‘Memo of a Conversation. Louis A. Wiesner with Hans Vogel, Erich Ollenhauer and Hans Gottfurcht’, January 25, 1945, in IfZ OMGUS Mp. Div. 17/257-2/7, p. 3 f. Gottfurcht’s note on the same meeting confirms the issues discussed, including “reconstitution of Betriebsraete-gesetz in whole or partly, everywhere or only where desired”: ‘W-r – US Group CC./St.(?) Dep. 25.2.1945 – Socv. Pol., Ec. Pol., Educ., TUs.’, HBS NL Gottfurcht, Kasten 37. (“W-r” of course is Louis Wiesner).

81. Quebec memorandum in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1944*, pp. 466–67. *Directive to Commander-in-Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany; April 1945* (JCS 1067) in Borsdorf and Niethammer (eds.), *Zwischen Befreiung und Besatzung*. On the influence of the Morgenthau Plan and the background to JCS 1067, Pietsch, *Militärregierung, Bürokratie und Sozialisierung*, 1978, pp. 19 ff. The re-drafted SHAEF manual was issued as *Handbook for Military Government in Germany Prior to Defeat or Surrender*. IfZ OMGUS-CAD 3/416-3.

82. ‘Erich to Willi’ [= “E.K. Innis”, i.e. Hansen, to Eichler], AsD NL Hansen Ordner 6. Ollenhauer to Richard Hansen, New York, 20.02.1945, AsD SoPaDe Emig., Mappe 84.

83. The Jupp Kappius story is widely covered in the literature (e.g. Link, *Geschichte des Internationalen Jugendbundes*), though without revealing the nature of the wider mission of which it was part. On OSS sabotage and espionage programme inside Germany of which the ISK programme formed part, see Anthony Cave

Brown, *The Secret War Report of the OSS*, New York, 1976. On the ISK courier and information system operating from Switzerland into Germany with OSS support – “very efficient people” – see von Rausechenplat [Eberhard] letter to [?], 20.09.1944, AsD NL Eberhard Mappe 69a.

84. Transcript: ‘Soviet Home Service, *Pravda*, 16.7.1944: “Dangerous London Socialists”, in AsD Bestand IJB/ISK Box 51, reproduced by SoPaDe in *Sozialistische Mitteilungen*, 03.09.1944. Also, the response by SoPaDe to Soviet accusations, ‘Gegen verleumderische Angriffe’, *Sozialistische Mitteilungen*, no. 69, Dec. 1944.

85. *Memorandum. Secret! London, 23rd February 1945*, 3 pp., signed by Eichler, Gottfurcht and Ollenhauer. In *Gottfurcht Notebook*. A copy is also in Eichler’s papers – AsD Bestand IJB/ISK Box 55. Ollenhauer’s copy of this English-language memorandum and other papers relating to the relationship with the OSS appear to have been systematically removed from the records of the exile SoPaDe, otherwise meticulously maintained by Heine (AsD Bestand SoPaDe-Emigration, AsD Bestand Ollenhauer and AsD Bestand Heine). The plans for this organized transfer to German of SoPaDe-ISK agents with the western Allied armies go back to earlier 1944. See an early draft “W.E.” [= Willi Eichler],

‘Plan fuer die Einsetzung von politischen und gewerkschaftlichen Hilfskraeften’, London, 1.5.1944, in AsD Bestand IJB/ISK Box 51.

86. Willi Eichler, ‘Experiences of my journey to the Continent from Nov. 4th till Dec. 8th 1944’, 1st January 1945. AsD Bestand IJB/ISK, Box 55.

87. Max Lippmann, OSS Det. APO 887, to Ollenhauer, 12.11.1944, AsD Bestand SoPaDe-Emigration, Mappe 72. Lippmann established the *Union* group with the assistance of Ernst Hirschberg, who had worked in the Paris SoPaDe office in 1940.

88. Lippmann to Ollenhauer 29.11.44, in *ibid.* On the struggle against Free Germany and the construction of the *Union* aligned centre, see also Ernst Hirschberg’s report to Ollenhauer, 29.11.1944, *ibid.* Mappe 84, and Ollenhauer’s correspondence with various socialists in France between November 1944 and February 1945, in *ibid.*, Mappe 72 and 84.

89. See Ollenhauer’s correspondence with various German socialists in Belgium in *ibid.*, Mappe 84.

90. ‘Bericht ueber die Arbeit des Landes OV des ISK, Mai-Dez. 1944’, AsD Bestand IJB/ISK, Box 55.

91. Reports from the *Union*-OSS “Guides” with the British and American armies in Germany in early 1945 are available in AsD Bestand IJB/ISK, Box 55. □

JFK Assassination

By John Martin

A bizarre article by T. Ryle Dwyer on the 1964 Warren Commission investigation of the JFK assassination appeared in the *Irish Examiner* (29/9/14). The kindest thing to be said about it is that it owes more to internet gossip than to the research of a serious historian.

In the course of the article he discusses the famous Zapruder film of the assassination and then says:

“There has never been any official explanation of what happened to the simultaneous film taken from the other side of the road by Beverly Oliver. This would have had the grassy knoll in the background. The film was seized by the FBI, and has never been seen publicly.”

Where to start! Firstly, the uncorroborated source for this piece of nonsense is Beverly Oliver herself. Oliver is one of the numerous hoaxers and attention seekers who have plagued investigations of the JFK assassination. She first made her claims about filming the assassination in 1970. However, over the years there have been numerous contradictions in her story. Her initial claim was that the camera she used was a Yashica Super 8, which it turned out did not exist in November 1963. She also claimed that she saw Lee Harvey Oswald in Jack Ruby’s club and the latter introduced him as Lee Harvey Oswald from the CIA! A so-called undercover CIA agent being introduced as being from the CIA!

I know of no serious researcher on the JFK assassination who finds Oliver to be a credible witness. Even a Warren Commission sceptic such as Anthony Summers does not even mention her in his substantial books on the subject.

Later Ryle Dwyer outdoes himself and most conspiracy theorists when he says:

“Why did the Warren Commission ignore the party at the Dallas home of oil magnate Clint Murcheson on the eve of the assassination? The attendance there included Lyndon Johnson, J Edgar Hoover, Richard Nixon, Jack Ruby and Carlos Marcello. Surely questions should have been asked about why all were there?”

The reason why the Warren Commission ignored this is because it never happened. This party is a figment of the imagination of another hoaxer called Madeleine Brown. The story has been long debunked and is not believed by even the most gullible of conspiracy theorists.

Ryle Dwyer’s bizarre article makes one wonder about the quality of his more well known work. □



The Riddle of the Sands

Heligoland: The Gibraltar of the North

By Pat Muldowney

The Good Friday Agreement is sometimes sneeringly described as Sunningdale for slow learners. If there are parallels between the lives of Robert Erskine Childers and Roger Casement, the former could be described as a slower-learning version of the latter. Like Casement, Childers served the British Empire, became disenchanted with it, and joined the Irish independence movement.

Both were executed. It is not hard to imagine that a bitter and vengeful Churchill played a personal part in bringing about both executions.

Childers is remembered for his execution, and for being the ancestor of a number of Childers political figures. Many people will know of his 1903 book *"The Riddle of the Sands"*, of which a film was made in 1979. This book warned of a German plot to invade and conquer Britain via the Frisian islands off Germany's north west coast, where it faces the south east coast of Britain about three hundred miles away.

The book signaled a revolution in British foreign policy in which its traditional ally Germany became the target for attack and conquest, with devastating consequences for the twentieth century world.

More than that, Childers' book set in train changes in British naval policy preparing the way for the 1914-18 blockade or siege which brought Germany to cease-fire and whose continuation into 1919 was a major factor for renewal of war in 1939.

In the twenty-first century most of the surface of the earth is criss-crossed by roads and railways. There are airways connecting almost every country to almost every other country. But the goods trade of the world is still mostly by sea.

At the turn of the nineteenth century air travel was still in the future, and control of seaways was the predominant factor in world power. Casement's book *"The Crime Against Europe"* made the case that human civilisation required that Britain's stranglehold on the seaways be broken. Especially the seaways of northwest Europe, across which Ireland occupied a strategic position.

Where did this leave encircled and besieged Germany? Germany shares a Baltic coastline with the Nordic countries, with only a narrow natural outlet to the North Sea via the coastlines of Denmark and Sweden/Norway. This outlet could be easily closed. So Bismarck opened a shipping canal (the Kiel Canal) across German territory from the Baltic Sea into the German Bight area of the North Sea near Hamburg and the mouth of the Elbe.

But this was not enough. It would be next to impossible for German ships to force the English Channel, past Portsmouth and the Royal Navy. This left the coastal Bight area of Hamburg, Cuxhaven and Bremen with a sea route to the outside world via

the North Sea, around Scotland and Ireland. The key to naval control of this area is the Frisian Islands, and in particular the fortifiable island of Heligoland, about thirty miles from the German coast, and three hundred miles from Norfolk.

This is where Erskine Childers sounded the alarm in 1903, ensuring that the Royal Navy had a North Sea strategy, and perhaps setting in train the course of events which has shaped the world.

In the course of the first decade of the twentieth century Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II made a determined but unsuccessful attempt to remedy Germany's naval vulnerability. And when war started, the British preparations, prompted in part by Childers, ensured a naval stalemate in the North Sea - in the battles of Heligoland, Dogger and Jutland. A naval stalemate was essentially a victory for the British blockade, ultimately ensuring German defeat in the war.

In July 1914 Childers helped to land arms in Howth for the Irish Volunteers, his call-up telegram being sent to Volunteer HQ in Dublin.

At the outbreak of war in August, at Churchill's request, Childers provided him with a detailed plan for invasion of Germany via Heligoland - the Riddle of the Sands in reverse. The attack which took place on 28 August 1914 - the first naval battle of the war - did not succeed in capturing Heligoland, but reduced the German surface navy to a defensive role from which it never really emerged.

On 25 December 1914 Childers participated in an attack on Heligoland and Cuxhaven mounted by an air arm of the Royal Navy, in what must be the first air raid in history. He served in Gallipoli, and in 1918 was transferred to the newly created RAF, where he was involved in preparations to attack Berlin. He performed important work in the Irish War of Independence, including editorship of the *Irish Bulletin*, the journal of the independence movement and of Dáil Éireann.

That's Childers. What about his subject - Heligoland?

Gibraltar was captured from Spain by Britain in 1704 during a war against France. A century later, in another war with France, the island of Heligoland, about half the size of Gibraltar, was captured from Denmark by Britain in 1807 following the naval bombardment of Copenhagen in a surprise on a neutral. The island was constitutionally linked to Schleswig-Holstein which at that time was part of Denmark, but which joined Prussia in 1864.

In reality, Heligoland had the particularist features seen in hundreds of regions, towns and petty kingdoms prior to 19th century German unification. The one square mile island was inhabited by a couple of thousand people who lived off fishing. They spoke a dialect of their own and, in effect, ruled themselves. They suffered economic hardship because of Napoleon's "continental system" which barred continental trade with Britain.

From 1807 to 1890 Heligoland had the status of a British colony, under a series of mostly benevolent resident Governors. The two thousand islanders carried on with their fishing, and were content as a British colony for eighty years. British influence was limited to the Governor and his family, and a small naval presence.

In 1890 Britain swapped the one square mile North Sea island for extensive German colonies in East Africa. Britain's aim was to fill in the gaps in its territorial control of east Africa, from the Suez Canal to Cape Horn. Germany's aim was to complete the unification of its national territories.

Freelance German colonialist Karl Peters was disgusted with the loss of his life's work, and declared that the African kingdoms of Witu and Uganda, and the headwaters of the Nile, had been exchanged "for a bath-tub in the North Sea". Kaiser Wilhelm II announced that he had *"reincorporated this island with the German Fatherland without war and without bloodshed, as the last piece of German earth"*, declaring bombastically that *"The island is chosen as a bulwark in the sea, a protection to German fisheries, a central point for my ships of war, a place and harbour of safety in the German Ocean against all enemies who may dare to show themselves upon it."*

Bismarck, now out of office, and even though he had worked carefully for such a development when he was Chancellor, sourly denounced the swap as trading "a whole suit of clothes for a trouser button".

Did Britain surrender a vital North Sea asset? Did Germany acquire its own Gibraltar? On 21 September 1917 the *Times* newspaper published a German claim that "the German submarine war would be almost an impossibility if Germany did not hold Heligoland", and three days later it published a despatch quoting the Kaiser: *"Today this trouser button holds our whole suit together"*.

In World War 2 Heligoland performed an equally important function, and also provided early warning of the routes and direction of Allied bombing missions against Germany. Numerous attempts were made to destroy the island, its fortifications and military resources. JFK's older brother Joseph Kennedy was killed in 1944 during one of these missions.

In World War 1, the civilian population was evacuated to mainland Germany from August 1914 to December 1918. In contrast, there was no evacuation during World War W2. The island then consisted of a mile-wide rock bounded by cliffs rising to a great height above the ocean, with a kind of shelf attached at sea-level, where the islanders lived with their boats and fishing gear. A network of shelters had been excavated into the rock where the population were safe during the frequent and fierce bombing raids.

Safe, that is, until twelve days before Hitler's suicide. On 18-19 April 1945, a thousand bombers, accompanied by squads of fighter planes, turned the island into a moonscape on which no living thing could exist. The intention was that the island would cease to exist as a physical entity on the surface of the earth. A portion of the great rock collapsed into the sea, changing the shape of the island forever. A film clip of this collapse was used in *"The Guns of Navarone"*. It was the second last outing of the Dambuster bombers, the final one being a useless and pointless raid on Hitler's mountain hideout at Berchtesgaden.

A hundred or so soldiers manning anti-aircraft guns were killed during the April raid, but amazingly there were only three civilian casualties. The islanders were evacuated by ship to Germany on 21 April 1945, and though the island was returned

to Germany on 2 March 1952, the devastation was such that even in 1958 most of them were still living on the mainland.

From 1945 to 1952 the island was used as a bomber training and testing site. The scale on which this was done is practically unimaginable. It brings to mind a NATO threat to Serbia, spoken by a German official in the 1990's: "Ve vill bomb you to rubble, and then ve vill bomb ze rubble." The Cold War arms race brought such destruction to many places, especially remote, uninhabited islands - even if, sometimes, the islands had to be rendered uninhabited before they were rendered uninhabitable.

Except that Heligoland was not remote. And, as far as the Heligolanders were concerned, it was not to be considered uninhabited. The islanders treasured their home, their language, their fishing, and their way of life, and sought to preserve these even in their involuntary periods of exile.

They had few allies or supporters in Britain, the occupying power. One was the Ulster Unionist Westminster M.P Sir Douglas Savory, who did as much as he could to confront Parliament with the Heligolanders' case. Savory was a former Queen's University European language expert whose initial interest in the islanders was their unique language.

The British wild-life lobby was probably more influential - it could bring some control and restraint on the bombing, not for the sake of the islanders' ancient homeland, but to save the migrating and nesting birds.

The tide began to turn in the islanders' favour when, at Christmas 1950, two left-wing Heidelberg students managed to get onto the island where they raised a Peace Flag in protest.

Ultimately, in the circumstances of Cold War, German opinion prevailed. Despite its insignificant size and population, the island mattered to Germans, perhaps in the way the Irish have a sentimental attachment to the Aran Islands - or the Blaskets, or Tory Island with its traditions and its "King". Perhaps Heligoland's towering storm-lashed cliffs rising out of precarious and treacherous seas conveyed romantic ideas of Nordic gods and their ancient epics to people who lived in more mundane and domesticated surroundings.

The German national anthem was composed there in 1841 by August Heinrich Hoffman who had been driven out of conservative Prussia for his National-Liberal views. In 1925 the theoretical physicist Werner Heisenberg invented quantum mechanics while resting for his health in the island's pollen-free atmosphere.

Curiously, this theme resurfaced in the 1940's, when Britain wanted to add atom bomb tests to its Heligoland bombing repertoire. Chancellor Adenauer caustically suggested that they use the Shetland Islands instead. In the end, American suspicion may have been the decisive factor in stopping atom bombing of Heligoland. There were security concerns arising from the case of Klaus Fuchs, a German theoretical physics refugee who had worked on the Manhattan atom bomb project in the USA, and then in Britain's Harwell facility where he passed information to the Soviet Union. After nine years imprisonment Fuchs became a prominent scientist in East Germany.

Parts of the popular television series *"Das Boot"* were filmed in the remnants of the U-boat facilities in Heligoland.

The restoration of the island took many years, but by 1961 a tourist office was established and it again became a popular holiday resort for Germans. □

Disputing Some Skeffington Depictions of War and Peace

By Manus O’Riordan

“The Small Nations” was the title of the paper by Michael B. Yeats, Auditor of Trinity College Dublin’s College Historical Society, read at the Society’s inaugural meeting on November 1, 1944. The vote of thanks to the Auditor was proposed by the Taoiseach, Éamon de Valera, and seconded by the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk. In its issue of November 2, 1944, the *Irish Times* had reported on this meeting, and its account of the contributions of both Dev and Masaryk was reproduced in full in the September 2013 issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, preceded by a background article from myself in the June 2013 issue, entitled “‘Emergency Czechmate’ or Wartime Dialogue? – Dev, the ‘Irish Institute’ and the Masaryk Affair”. The student auditor Michael Yeats was the son of the poet W. B. Yeats, but there was yet another son of a famous father who participated in that debate, Owen Sheehy Skeffington, permanent senior lecturer in Trinity College’s French Department. Owen was the son of the feminist and pacifist socialist Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, who had been murdered on the Wednesday of Easter Week 1916 by the Anglo-Irish British Army officer Captain J. Bowen-Colthurst, a cousin of writer Elizabeth Bowen. The same issue of the *Irish Times* further reported on the Skeffington and Yeats contributions to that 1944 debate:

“Dr. O. L. Sheehy-Skeffington ... said there were powerful people who put money and profit before the welfare of their own people and country, and as long as they remained in power similar conditions would obtain, and there would, perhaps, be another war. Thanking Mr. de Valera for his attendance, Dr. Sheehy-Skeffington said there were circles which regarded Trinity College as a sort of Leper Colony.

‘They believe if you enter the front gate’, he said, ‘you are in some way contaminated. I know this college has an immense contribution to make to this country, a contribution it has made steadily in the past, and I believe Mr. de Valera himself recognises this. I am glad that he is not afraid to enter Trinity College.’ Dealing with home policy, he said that our educational system was an abomination. Compulsory Irish was less objectionable than teaching through the medium of Irish.”

“In his paper entitled ‘The Small Nations’, the Auditor (Mr. M. B. Yeats) said that the smaller States could not admit that the influence possessed by any nation should be dependent solely upon the strength of its armed forces and the magnitude of its resources. That was the law of the jungle. The maintenance of good order and the respect for law were necessary to world peace, and to the protection of all nations, both great and small. But it was by the fate of the small nations that one might best judge the strength possessed by moral force in the conscience of nations. If the fundamental equality of all nations was not placed at the very foundations of international law, the whole of that law was bound to crumble. There could not be one law for the strong and another for the weak.”

“Mr. Yeats said that the small nations had always been in the forefront of the advance towards improved social legislation. Their claim to a considerable voice in post-war international affairs depended upon more than the mere utterance of a moral right. Their claim rested upon the practical evidences of that quite remarkable contribution which the small nations had

already made towards the advancement of the human race. By playing an active and honest part in international affairs, and by sending delegates to international conferences who would favour genuine policies of co-operation and progress, small nations could help to bring about an end to power politics. It was essential that small nations should be able to exercise the greatest possible influence, both material and moral, on the post-war world. There should be, as a primary objective of the small states, the development, between each other, of closer political, economic and cultural relations.”

Both of Owen Sheehy Skeffington’s parents were militant feminists, and when his father, Francis Skeffington, married his mother, Hanna Sheehy, they had joined and hyphenated their surnames. Owen himself, however, would later drop the hyphen. The 1944 Dev-Masaryk debate was dealt with by both Michael B. Yeats (1921-2007), in his 1998 memoirs, *Cast a Cold Eye – Memories of a Poet’s Son and Politician*, and Andrée Sheehy Skeffington (1910-1998), in her 1991 biography of her husband, *Skeff – A Life of Owen Sheehy Skeffington 1909-1970*. She related:

“For Owen the highlight of the year came in November, at the opening meeting of TCD Historical Society. There was an impressive list of speakers. The auditor, whose paper was on ‘The Small Nations’, was Michael Yeats, son of W. B., and the speakers were Eamon de Valera, then Taoiseach; Jan Masaryk, son of Thomas Masaryk, founder and first President of the Czechoslovak Republic and himself Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Provisional Government in exile; Senator James Douglas; and Owen. **It was quite an occasion and Owen rose to it, with a brilliant challenging speech. He denied that the Wilsonian ideal of self-determination had widely applied in 1918, quoting in particular the Irish election result of that year: a virtual plebiscite in favour of self-determination, the response to which had been ‘a regime of military repression and coercion unparalleled in history’.** Then praising Czechoslovakia’s efforts to better all her people between 1918 and Munich in 1938, he quoted de Valera’s promising 1932 speech at the League of Nations, and wished we now had ‘such a man at the head of our Government’. Finally, turning to de Valera, he thanked him for his attendance, a public recognition of the contribution Trinity had to make to country. Years later, Michael Yeats still remembered this speech: ‘Until he spoke it had been an essentially ‘establishment’ evening... He in turn delighted and infuriated every section of the audience’... **During Owen’s speech the British High Commissioner, sitting on the platform, half rose to his feet, as if to go in protest, but sat down again.** At the society’s dinner afterwards, Masaryk said to Owen: ‘I couldn’t speak my mind tonight, but invite me back after the war.’ Jan Masaryk never returned to Ireland. After the war, his country fell under Soviet domination and in 1948 came the news of his death, reported as suicide.” (pp 122-3; my emphases – MO’R).

Andrée Sheehy Skeffington sometimes used the shorthand of OSS, FSS and HSS when referring to her husband and parents-in-law. Her biography of OSS is rather bewildering in many respects, in that at times she appeared to be attributing some

of her own 1991 views to the husband who had passed away a generation previously in 1970, without any evidence that he would have agreed with those later views of hers. A native of the French city of Amiens and a graduate of Paris's Sorbonne University, her 1935 marriage to OSS had introduced Andrée to the complexity of Irish society and politics, and there is nothing to suggest that they had any significant disagreements on such matters during his lifetime. But in 1991 she appeared to be taking her cue on certain matters of War and Peace in Ireland from her husband's first cousin, Conor Cruise O'Brien (1917-2008) – the son of Hanna's sister Kathleen Sheehy – whom she invited to write the foreword to her biography. As O'Brien movingly related, Skeffington had always been more like an older brother to him – and at times even a father figure – being particularly supportive when O'Brien was under sustained attack from Belgian, French and British imperialism for his 1961 United Nations actions in attempting to end the French and Belgian-sponsored (and French and Belgian militarily-aided) secession of Katanga from the Congo. By the time of OSS's death in 1970, "the Cruiser" was still a Nationalist, and very far from the UK Unionist Party stalwart he would later become, and it would not be until becoming a Government Minister that CCO'B would push through the draconian anti-free speech measures of his 1975 Broadcasting Act. Michael B. Yeats's memoirs recall the joy that greeted O'Brien's defeat in the 1977 General Election: "He had antagonised nearly everybody by his increasingly anti-national views, and his almost fascist endeavours to control what was said or done on Irish Radio and Television." (p 105). "Free speech" was OSS's life-long credo, and it is well nigh impossible to imagine that the deepest of political breeches would not have opened up between the cousins had OSS survived to 1975, particularly given the vehemence of his Senate speech in opposition to the 1959 Broadcasting Authority Bill.

Andrée Sheehy Skeffington's biography fairly presented OSS's view of de Valera's policy of Irish neutrality during the Second World War exactly as he himself had written and spoken of it:

"Éamon de Valera had announced that the Twenty-Six Counties would remain neutral in the European conflict. Owen fully supported this position. His horror of Nazism had not abated, nor his love of France... (But) allowing Britain to use Irish ports would have been repugnant... Owen was among those (opposing any British port-use), not only out of antagonism to British imperialism, but also out of a desire to contain the war. He sympathised to a certain extent with the few friends who joined up with the Allies for the defence of democracy, but could not help drawing a parallel with those patriotic Irishmen who had taken a similar step twenty-five years before for 'the defence of small nations' and had either died without hope, like his Uncle Tom Kettle (married to Hanna's sister Mary Sheehy – MO'R), or come back disillusioned and with a horror of war... Owen had been impressed in May 1945 with de Valera's dignified answer to Churchill, who had made a smug and flippant reference to the British government's 'restraint and poise' in leaving the Irish government 'to frolic with the German and Japanese representatives'. An example of Mr de Valera at his best', Owen remarked." (pp 94 and 128).

It is precisely such an OSS perspective on that War that makes inexplicable Andrée Sheehy Skeffington's follow-on paragraph on the Dev-Masaryk debate:

"Masaryk had been invited to speak, a few days later, to the Institute of International Affairs. But at the last minute his lecture was banned by the government. De Valera, questioned

in parliament, replied that permission for the lecture had not been sought, and said that the Institute 'had become the focus of propaganda devoted entirely to encouraging a particular point of view in relation to the present'. This was immediately denied by the Institute's President, Donal O'Sullivan. Masaryk's remark to Owen – 'I couldn't speak my mind' – was well illustrated." (pp 122-3).

As was made clear in my June 2013 article, that so-called "Irish" Institute was a lobby group **against** Irish wartime neutrality, and I find it impossible to believe that OSS would not have actually applauded Dev's thwarting of its efforts to exploit the Masaryk visit. But Andrée Sheehy Skeffington also seemed to get it wrong regarding OSS's father, FSS, and the First World War:

"In the autumn of 1915 ... Frank went on a lecture tour to the USA. In *Silent Years*, J. F. Byrne, a college friend of FSS, settled in the USA, wrote that there was another purpose behind the trip, that of contacting the German government. Owen **apparently** heard of this revelation in November 1953 through Richard Ellmann, **whose letter he kept but did not mention, as far as I know, to anyone. He must have been** both incredulous and stunned. He had had no communication from J. F. Byrne, and **to my knowledge** had none subsequently. I am convinced he had never heard of this from his mother or anyone else. This piece of information **does not seem** to have ever been confirmed by members of the Neutrality League or anyone else on this side of the Atlantic. (Emphases all mine – MO'R). Byrne's and Devoy's interpretation that FSS acted for patriotic motives seems insufficient. Owen would not have put much trust in Devoy's testimony. Primarily, FSS wanted the end of the war, and his efforts had been and would be directed towards preventing Ireland helping it in any way. Hanna met Byrne in the USA in 1922-3 and there were disagreements (not explicitly revealed) between them." (pp 244-5).

This last sentence does not fit the facts. Byrne had explicitly revealed those disagreements in the same *Silent Years* (1953), and this was repeated by Leah Levenson and Jerry H. Natterstad in their 1986 biography of HSS. The explicit disagreement arose from Byrne being pro-Treaty, while HSS was anti-Treaty. (*Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Irish Feminist*, pp 142-3). Andrée Sheehy Skeffington could not face up to the fact that her own husband had quite deliberately kept her in the dark about the whole German affair. Far more credible was Leah Levenson's evaluation of the issue in her earlier, 1983, biography of FSS himself:

"Skeffington's ostensible reason for going to the States at that time (the autumn of 1915) was to raise money for the *Irish Citizen* (the suffragist paper he edited)... But his good friend, J. F. Byrne, whose New York home was to be his headquarters during his stay, says that '*these reasons were subordinate to a purpose which he did not express.*' This was to carry out an underground assignment for the Irish Neutrality League (of which James Connolly was President – MO'R) – namely, contact with Germany. Byrne wrote ... that Skeffington '*acting according to his lights as a patriotic Irishman, had been engaged, as far back as August 1914, in activities for which he, as a British Subject, could have been tried for his life.*' He added that what he said was not based on '*hearsay or assumption*', but on '*on a knowledge I possessed from the time of the beginning by Skeffington of the activities to which I refer.*' Further, he was '*acting only in accordance with Sheehy-Skeffington's expressed wish to me that some day I would give,*

or bequeath, testimony to this effect'. John Devoy went even beyond this in *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, published in 1929. His truthfulness was **sometimes** open to question as **Byrne's was not** (my emphases – MO'R), but, according to him, he had seen a letter written by Skeffington asking the Germans for assistance; he had not seen it, however, until after the request had been denied. '*It was written in a small town in Belgium and handed to the German commander with a request that it be forwarded to the proper authority*', Devoy wrote. '*It was referred by the German foreign office to von Berstorff (Germany's ambassador to the USA), and shown to me by von Skal.*' The letter was in English and was 'very clear and precise'. In it Skeffington said, according to Devoy, that he did not belong to the '*Irish Revolutionary Organisation*' but that its leaders trusted him. He mentioned the effective work that the anti-recruiting movement was carrying out, as well as the importance of that work to the Germans. In addition, he estimated the cost of continuing this work. '*I don't remember the amount he named, but it was very modest*', Devoy commented, and continued to give his own assessment of Skeffington's actions: '*Although violently opposed to all war, Skeffington evidently wanted England beaten in that particular war and was willing to make a pacifist's contribution towards bringing about that result... Had the English Government the smallest scrap of evidence that Skeffington had written that letter or held any sort of communication with the Germans in Belgium, he would doubtless have been executed long before Easter Week.*'" (*With Wooden Sword – A Portrait of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, Militant Pacifist*, (pp 182-3).

Levenson also quoted the following from a letter written by FSS, on 14 December 1914, to Charlotte Shaw, wife of the playwright GBS:

"You are, of course, quite right in saying that there is nothing 'pro-German' in the *Irish Citizen* – though the very fact that it advocates peace has been made the basis of such a charge! But as regards my personal attitude, outside of the Suffrage Movement, there is more excuse for the attachment of that rough and ready label. I want Peace, first of all, no matter who wins; I cannot conceive of any result more disastrous than the continuance of the present barbarism. If that cannot be achieved, then I want a drawn war, with no decisive victory on either side, and with German Militarism and English Navalism equally chastened. Because if Any Government can point to a decisive victory, the subjects of that Government will have a very bad time after the war; Imperialism will be rampant... An English victory ... would, I am certain, bring another period of repression to Ireland. Accordingly, the issue of the war which I should most dislike would be a decisive victory for England – and Russia. If France could win in the West, while Germany won in the East and also humbled English naval power, that would seem to me as satisfactory as any outcome of this carnage can possibly be. No doubt this is 'pro-Germanism' as the term is commonly used." (pp 170-1).

And what of the politics of HSS? In January 1918 Hanna declared her allegiance to Sinn Féin, rejoiced in its victory in the December 1918 General Election, congratulated the First Dáil on appointing Constance Markievicz as Minister for Labour, was elected a Sinn Féin Councillor on Dublin Corporation during the War of Independence, when that Party again swept the board in the May 1920 Local Elections, and went on to become Sinn Féin's Director of Organisation. Andrée Sheehy Skeffington wrote as follows of commemorations fifty years later, when OSS was a Senator representing Trinity College:

"In January 1969 came another historic ceremony: the jubilee of the meeting of the First Dáil. On 21 January 1919, after the British general election, the 37 Sinn Féin deputies who were not in jail met in Dublin's Mansion House, and pledged allegiance to the democratic programme of the Republic. Fifty years later the Dáil and Senate held a joint meeting in the Mansion House and commemorative speeches were made in Irish by the President, the Taoiseach and the party leaders. Firstly, by a 1916 veteran among the distinguished visitors, Joseph Clarke, who called the meeting a mockery and was ushered out before he could get much further. Secondly, by Owen who asked the Taoiseach whether he saw 'the likelihood of the democratic programme of the First Dáil being implemented in the foreseeable future' or whether 'it will continue to remain largely a dead letter'. The answer, in Irish, from the chairman was almost inaudible. Owen had often referred in sorrow, over the past thirty years, to the non-implementation of the 1919 Programme. But this solemn occasion was also for him a rededication on behalf of his mother, to his parents' republican ideals of socialist democracy." (pp 227-8).

What Andrée Sheehy Skeffington omitted to mention was that Sinn Féin Vice-President Joe Clarke's protest had been to demand the release of Irish Communist Organisation activist Dennis Dennehy, on hunger strike in Mountjoy Jail, imprisoned for his squatting activities on behalf of the Dublin Housing Action Committee. But, then, her anti-Communist rewriting of history was accompanied by even worse anti-Republican distortions, as when referring to OSS's fierce denunciation, in the 1944 Trinity debate, of British terror in Ireland, she claimed in a footnote:

"Ten or twelve years later Owen might not have painted this foreshortened picture of the savage Black and Tan repression as having been the immediate answer to the 1918 Sinn Féin victory at the polls. It omitted the resumption of war by IRA guerillas (sic) on 21 January 1919. The Black and Tans were first landed in March 1920." (p 253).

As recorded in the current March 2015 issue of *Irish Political Review*, at the January Galway University debate, Jack Lane disputed that the War of Independence had the origins charged by Andrée Sheehy Skeffington and others:

"Dan Breen could not have started a full-scale war and his actions were not supported by the Dáil, but the British persistence in suppressing the Dáil ensured that his type of action became necessary to achieve Independence."

On September 30, 2003, the *Irish Times* had carried a letter from Dr Risteard Mulcahy, son of the Fine Gael leader General Richard Mulcahy, who had been IRA Chief-of-Staff during the War of Independence, where the son pointed out:

"Dermot Meleady (September 24th) is correct when he acknowledges that the GHQ Staff was not responsible for the isolated events in 1919 nor did it approve of these events. It (the IRA) remained quiescent as a military force until the end of 1919 but was then obliged to take action because of the British campaign of intimidation and imprisonment of Sinn Féin speakers, the suppression of Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Volunteers in June 1919, and the suppression of the Dáil later in the autumn. Military action started in January, 1920, with the attacks on RIC barracks, carried out initially in association with the Cork Volunteers. There is no

reason to believe that GHQ would have commenced military action without the draconian attempts adopted by the RIC to suppress the activities of the representatives elected by the people. Dermot Meleady is not correct in implying that the War of Independence, extending from January 1920, to July 1921, was not based on democratic principles. The decision to commence hostilities was approved by Cathal Brugha, Minister for Defence in the first Dáil, and responsibility for the war was subsequently accepted by Dáil Éireann. One must agree with Mr Meleady that it was unfortunate that Home Rule was not established in 1914. It was equally unfortunate that the 1918 election did not evoke a conciliatory response from Lloyd George and his Cabinet."

But, in any case, Andrée Sheehy Skeffington did not herself believe in the First Dáil, and in a statement that would have had FSS, HSS and OSS all turning in their graves, she wrote: "In the British general election of November (sic) 1918 the limited franchise for those over thirty was granted to women (including Irish women) for the first time... Constance Markievicz was elected for South Dublin, becoming the first woman MP, but – regrettably, from a feminist point of view – as a republican she refused to take her seat." (pp 23-24). She, of course, had only refused to take her seat in the **British** House of Commons, opting instead to take her seat in that **Dáil Éireann** established by the democratic will of the Nation.

C. C. O'Brien's foreword had begun: "*Andrée's life of Owen is a work of love, and truth.*" Love, certainly; but truth? Andrée Sheehy Skeffington wrote of the final war of OSS's lifetime:

"Despite the revulsion felt by an increasing section of world opinion to the American bombing in Vietnam, that cruel war continued... Meanwhile, a group calling itself 'The Voice of Vietnam' (with Dan Breen and Peadar O'Donnell as chairmen of two committees) organised a march, at the end of October 1967, from Parnell Square, Dublin to the American Embassy in Ballsbridge. Owen believed it would be a non-violent protest and we both joined it. It included pacifists, left-wingers, trade unionists, students, and **a large contingent of Connolly Youths, who, once out of the city centre, surged forward, filling the street and blocking traffic.** The aim of the march had been to deliver a letter and make a speech at the door of the embassy. This plan was partly frustrated by **the violent demonstration of some youths who set fire to the American flag** and to placards with the effigy of President Johnson, chanting, 'Burn, Burn. American Embassy burn!' We had not come to endorse this kind of violence and left the demonstration in disgust. This protest demonstration had been used by people motivated by **hatred of American imperialism** rather than by a desire for peace." (pp 226-7; my emphases – MO'R).

In her denunciation of "hatred of American imperialism", Andrée Sheehy Skeffington's account was both inaccurate and tendentious. There was no organisation called the "Connolly Youths", but there was a Connolly Youth Movement (CYM), of which I was a member 1967-69, serving on its Executive 1968-69. There was only one "Irish Voice on Vietnam", with War of Independence veteran Dan Breen as a patron, Irish Communist veteran George Jeffares as its dynamic Secretary, War of Independence veteran Peadar O'Donnell as its active Chairman, and a broad-based Executive on which I myself represented the CYM 1968-69. Andrée Sheehy Skeffington used the word "youths" only twice in her diatribe, with the mendacious innuendo that it was the "Connolly Youths" who had set fire to the American flag. I know, for a fact, that yarn to be an outright lie, for I was on that demonstration. We in the CYM never burned an American flag. Its Young Communists had enough internationalist knowledge and consciousness to appreciate that US Communists claimed the Stars and Stripes as their own, refusing to tolerate that flag being monopolised by

US imperialism. This was also my own stated position at anti-war demonstrations in which I participated in the USA itself, as a member of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) 1969-70, throughout New England and at the quarter-of-a-million strong demonstration in Washington DC on 15 November 1969. At one demonstration in Boston in 1970, when I directly remonstrated with the flag burners, I was thanked by an anti-war US ex-serviceman, of an age to have experienced war himself in Korea, only for him to add: "I'm not an American; I'm a Native American Indian."

Andrée Sheehy Skeffington's primary objection was to the CYM "blocking traffic". We have only his widow's assertion that OSS's attitude to robust demonstration was as prissy as her own. If so, it would have been in sharp contrast to the robust approach towards anti-war demonstrations by both his parents. Moreover, FSS believed that John Redmond's commitment to the Imperialist War in 1914 should result in Redmond forfeiting any right to "free speech" in order to recruit. FSS not only believed in "blocking traffic". He also believed in seizing the very meeting place. Redmond and British Prime Minister Asquith did succeed in speaking at such a war recruitment meeting in Dublin's Mansion House on 25 September 1914, but only because it was strongly held by a British Military force, leading to the Irish Neutrality League having to call off the following plan, recalled in 1969 by the ITGWU veteran leader William O'Brien:

"It was decided that arrangements should be made to seize the Mansion House on the night before Asquith's meeting, and hold it by armed force for twenty-four hours to prevent the meeting being held. A joint force of members of the Irish Citizen Army and Irish Volunteers was to be organised for the purpose, and it is of interest that one of those who volunteered for this enterprise was Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, the well-known pacifist." (*Forth the Banners Go*, p 272).

If one is right in suspecting that Andrée Sheehy Skeffington's revisionism in respect of the Irish War of Independence was influenced by CCO'B, he cannot at all be held responsible for the contempt she displayed towards the movement against the Vietnam War. Quite the contrary. In his 1999 memoirs, Conor Cruise O'Brien recalled how he had functioned as an opponent of American imperialism while being a Professor of Humanities at New York University in the years 1965-69:

"Towards the end of my first year at NYU I was approached by a group of my students with a political proposition. These students were all Jewish... They knew that I had written and spoken against the war in Vietnam around the theme of 'Counter-Revolutionary Imperialism'. But now they wanted me to join with them in breaking the law... They did not propose any violent action, or any flamboyant gesture, such as the burning of the American flag, as practised at that time by the extreme left of the anti-war movement. What they did propose was a sit-in outside the Induction Center in Manhattan in order to obstruct the progress of recruitment for the war. We would no doubt be arrested and charged with a breach of the peace. We might even be jailed for a short time. Whatever happened would signal a stiffening of the resistance, by moderates, to the continuance of the Vietnam War. They said that they as American Jews, were influenced by the thought of the failure of most American Jews to protest effectively against the rise of Nazism, and in particular their failure to demand the admission of persecuted German – and later Austrian and Czech – Jews to the United States. They had in mind specifically the failure of most American Jews to protest against the position of the American government at the Evian Conference in 1938. At that conference, the Americans had agreed with the European governments not to relax immigration practices in such a

way as to admit any large numbers of European Jews to the countries represented at Evian. The Evian decision, in the year before the outbreak of war, sealed the fate of the Jews of Europe. Remembering that, the Jews who were talking to me were determined not to repeat what they saw as a great moral failure: now, failure to protest against what they all regarded as an unjust war.” (*Memoir: My Life and Times*, p 308).

“Quite a large number of us did turn up, did sit down, and blocked the entrance to the Induction Center... Then the police invited us to disperse, but we remained where we were. A number of patrolmen then moved in to haul us away. Some of us, including me, went limp. The patrolman who was in charge of me gave me a sharp and well-aimed kick on the upper hip-bone... The proceedings attracted considerable publicity at the time, of which we could not complain, since attracting attention was a large part of the exercise... I spent several hours in jail and was then brought to trial ... charged with a breach of the peace (but on this first offence, the case against him was dismissed - MO’R)... I half expected that my Jewish students would come to me with a proposal that we should renew our illegal protest. It would have been logical to do so. After all, the war against which we had protested was continuing and even expanding. I was resigned to renewed protest if the students demanded it. Resigned, but apprehensive: a second breach of the peace might well lead to a jail sentence and withdrawal of my green card. My students, however, did not call for a renewal of the protest. I think they, too, had got a fright and feared the consequences of a renewed protest. **I thought of Owen, who would have renewed the protest and gone on protesting, whatever the consequences. But by now I knew I was not Owen.** (My emphasis - MO’R). I kept on writing against the war and joining in lawful protests against it, but I never again broke the law in order to do so.” (pp 309-10).

I would like to think that CCO’B’s character assessment of OSS got it right, and that still less was Andrée Sheehy Skeffington herself Owen in that respect. But what of the account in Michael B. Yeats’s memoirs of the 1944 Dev-Masaryk debate? In the 1930s, while still only in his 20s, the agnostic pacifist Owen Sheehy Skeffington had been fortunate enough to receive a permanent, pensionable appointment as a senior lecturer in Trinity College Dublin’s French Department, which undoubtedly coloured his idealised presentation of Trinity’s “contribution” to Irish society, a perspective that was shared by his widow. The Protestant Republican Michael Butler Yeats held a rather different view of Trinity. He saw it as totally West British, from the moment of his entry in October 1939 to his eyewitness account of Trinity’s Loyalist provocation to Irish society with the flaunting of Britain’s Union Jack and the burning of Ireland’s Tricolour on VE Day in May 1945. All of the above has been detailed in my article in the current March 2015 issue of *Irish Political Review*, entitled “Casting Cold Yeatsian Eyes on Revisionism, Dev and ‘the Cruiser’”, and it will not be requoted here. Yeats regarded Trinity as being anything but the oasis of “free speech” portrayed by Skeffington: “Even after the European war was over, they refused to make the College Dining Hall available for a speech by Harold Laski, a perfectly harmless English Marxist intellectual of the day, who wrote of the violent overthrow of the capitalist State, but would have been horrified had it happened.” (p 42). So how, then, did the Dev-Masaryk debate materialise? Yeats related:

“When I first went to Trinity ... after a few months I decided I should take part in the debates of the College Historical Society... In due course I became Auditor of the Society, and this involved the holding, in November 1944, of an Opening Meeting to inaugurate the new session. At this meeting ... I

decided my subject would be ‘The Small Nations’. I chose as my two main speakers Éamon de Valera and Jan Masaryk, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Czechoslovak Government in exile in London ... the son of the great T. G. Masaryk, the founder of the State of Czechoslovakia after the First World War. In due course I turned up at Government Buildings, explained my business, and was brought in to see An Taoiseach. De Valera’s first question was, who else had I invited to speak? As soon as I mentioned Jan Masaryk, he said ‘Right, I will speak if he comes.’ So I was left in the position that I would have both of my main speakers, or neither of them... Even three weeks before the date of the meeting there was no reply from Masaryk. What I didn’t realise was that he was perfectly willing to accept my invitation and de Valera was most anxious that he should come, but that there were prolonged negotiations as to the terms on which he could be allowed to come, without endangering our neutrality. It was agreed in the end that he would not speak at any political event in Ireland other than the College Historical Society, and so finally to my great relief I was told that he was coming.” (p 43).

Yeats had already described how, in 1935, “at the age of 14, I had become a committed de Valera republican” (p 15), going on to write how “for Eamon de Valera, the safeguarding of Irish neutrality during the World War, ending with his brilliant reply to Churchill’s arrogant victory speech in which he attacked Irish neutrality, was the culmination of his long career” (p 64). And in November 1944 it had been a Society of Irish Churchillians that had sought to undermine that neutrality by drawing Masaryk into its game plan. As Yeats’s narrative of the Dev-Masaryk debate continued:

“In fact, even after all these negotiations there was still a diplomatic row over Jan Masaryk. A couple of days after my Opening Meeting he agreed to speak at a Society dealing with foreign affairs, thinking that it was a harmless non-political organisation. The Government, however, decided that this was a pressure group favouring Ireland’s entry into the War on the Allied side, and the meeting was banned, causing much excitement in the newspapers. Two years later, (actually, it was in March 1948 – MO’R), Masaryk was dead: after the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia, he fell to his death from a window in the Foreign Office in Prague. It has never been known for certain whether he was pushed or committed suicide in despair.”

“A few days before my Opening Meeting I was summoned to see the (Trinity) Provost, Dr Alton. He asked me to go to see de Valera, to invite him to come to Commons on the day of the meeting, to meet the Provost and the Fellows of the College. So off I went again to Government Buildings and was brought in to see de Valera. He asked me to apologise to the Provost. ‘You know,’ he said, ‘you may think it strange after all years I have been in public life, but I still like to have some time to myself before making a speech.’ However, he said, he would be happy to come to eat with the students after the meeting. We students, of course, were delighted with this, but it was only years later that, thinking back, I realised how peculiar this whole affair was. Nowadays, should the Provost of Trinity College wish to send such an invitation to An Taoiseach he would presumably use the telephone, or write a note, or he might ask his secretary to deal with the matter. He would certainly not send round a student of the College to speak on his behalf. Dr Alton (at least to us students) seemed a shallow, rather foolish man, and I can only conclude that his strange behaviour reflected the nervousness felt by the College authorities at that period in their dealings with the ‘new’ Ireland outside the College Walls.” (p 43-44).

Volume VII of *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, covering the years 1941-1945, was published in 2010. It contains a minute, dated 2 August 1944, to Joseph P. Walshe, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, from his Assistant Secretary, Frederick H. Boland, who reported:

“Dr Kostal, the Czech Consul, called on the 21st July and told me that Mr Jan Masaryk, Foreign Minister of the Czech Government in London, had been invited by Mr Yeats ... next November... Dr Kostal, before transmitting the invitation to Mr Masaryk, wished to know whether his coming to Dublin and speaking at the Meeting would be agreeable to the Irish Government. I told Dr Kostal that it would be better that Mr Masaryk should not come at all than that he should come feeling obliged to say things not consistent with this country’s neutrality. Public opinion in this country regarded speeches of that kind as embarrassing to our own Government and an abuse of our hospitality. It would be particularly embarrassing if any such speech were made at a Meeting at which members of the Government were present.”

“Dr Kostal said that he already knew perfectly well our attitude on this matter and that he could assure me most formally that if Mr Masaryk came, he would keep the discussion on a purely theoretical plane and would make no reference of a political character to the present world situation. I mentioned the matter to the Taoiseach on the 27th July... He had been thinking for some time of making a public statement defining our attitude on the question of the position of small States in any world organisation which might come out of the present war and that the Meeting in question might be as good an opportunity as any... As regards Mr Masaryk, he had no objection to his coming provided he was prepared to have due regard to our neutrality in what he said. The Taoiseach said I might tell Dr Kostal that he would be glad to have Mr Masaryk to lunch if he came.” (pp 444-5).

There was clearly an agreement for just one meeting only, with an agreed agenda. Yet, the German Minister to Ireland, Dr Edouard Hempel, protested even at that. But the Irish Government remained unapologetic. On 24 November 1944, Walshe penned a memorandum to de Valera, in which he reported:

“The German Minister came to see me today, and after some general talk, he referred to Dr Masaryk’s visit. He thought our attitude indicated a recognition of Dr Masaryk’s position as head of the Czech Government. The presence of the Taoiseach at the meeting in Trinity College and his amiable references to Dr Masaryk, as well as the general prominence given to him in the Press, were signs that we had changed our policy. He wondered why we had done so. He felt it his duty to put the question to us. We did not seem to realise that the whole form of Government had changed in Czechoslovakia a year before the war and that a new President had taken the place of Dr Benes. Germany had taken over the conduct of Czechoslovakia’s foreign affairs and the Irish Government had shown their acquiescence in that position by ceasing to list Dr Kostal as Czech Consul.”

“I told Dr Hempel that we ourselves had gone through the stage of being a suppressed nation and had experienced all the difficulties of obtaining recognition for our struggle for independence. As a small country we could not but support the cause of all small counties, no matter where they were situated.

We would be false to our principles if we did not do so. Dr Hempel, who seemed slightly worked up about the matter, said that we would understand that the position of Czechoslovakia vis-a-vis Germany offered no parallel for our position vis-a-vis Great Britain. Our boundaries were determined by the sea and the British had no excuse for any dispute with us on that score. But the Czechoslovaks were Slav – part of the great Slav invasion of newly 2,000 years ago – who penetrated into German territory, and their presence as an independent State constituted a highly dangerous problem for Germany. Since he kept on insisting until I felt I should be obliged to talk to him about Germany’s ill-treatment of practically all the small nations of Europe, I thought it better to suggest that he should have a talk with you some time soon on the whole matter. He gladly accepted the suggestion.” (483-4).

So much for Churchill’s charge of Dev “frolicking”! And the Michael Yeats account of the “Dev-Masaryk affair” has been found to be vindicated by the record. □

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New Mood at the EESC for a New EU Economic Direction

- A Report by Manus O’Riordan, Member for Ireland, Workers’ Group, European Economic & Social Committee, March 2015

My December 2014 report was entitled “*Changing the Guard at the European Commission*” and dealt with the replacement of Jose Barroso’s Presidency by that of Jean-Claude Juncker. Since then, of course, there has also been a changing of the guard in Greece, with the Syriza election victory, which has also served as a wake-up call for the European Union itself. I witnessed this myself on February 9 at a meeting of the EESC Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion, when a Finnish member of the Employers’ Group proposed holding an *ad hoc* debate on the current situation in the euro area in light of the latest developments in Greece. The Section President - a Dutch member of the Employers’ Group - agreed, indicating that, given the persisting difficulties of Greece in financing its public deficit and the clear stand of the new government against the Troika of international creditors, Europe would enter uncharted territory. The question would arise if it is sustainable to insist exclusively on rules being applied; in any case, well thought-out and cautious political reactions by all policy-makers were necessary. He then opened the debate.

There was general agreement amongst the participants that any overreactions must be avoided. Instead, careful consideration was necessary so that Europe could find its way through dialogue and consultation in order to reach a beneficial agreement for all sides. The ideas put on the table by the new Greek government should be listened to. It had to be acknowledged that after 5 years of Troika intervention, Greece still had a huge debt which was not repayable under normal circumstances. However, also in the creditor countries the situation was difficult in various aspects, and one should understand that public opinion was hesitant to write off debts. A solution could be found with the creditors, provided that the Greek people were given the means to repay their debt through more solidarity at European level, while the persisting problems with good governance in the country were addressed in a decisive way. Other structural problems would also need to be tackled by the new government in Athens: these related mainly to the banking and taxation systems, as well as to the discrepancy between a few very rich and many poor within an economy which was not free of corruption. From an overall European perspective, no progress could be made if the underlying political problems in EMU and the euro area were not addressed. Against this background, the President concluded the debate, agreeing that the issue of completing EMU would be put on the agenda of the Section again in the near future.

Given the neo-liberal agenda that had been pursued by outgoing Commission President Barroso, and having experienced and endured his performances at previous EESC Plenary Sessions, I experienced the appearance of Jean-Claude Juncker as Commission President before the EESC Plenary Session this February 18 like a breath of fresh air. George Dassis, the Greek trade unionist who is currently President of the EESC’s Workers’ Group but who will become President

of the EESC as a whole next October, addressed Juncker with the charge that EU austerity had impoverished millions. Moreover, under the Barroso Commission, the Troika had been encouraged to tear up collective bargaining agreements. Dassis recognised that, as well as proposing an Investment Plan for Europe, Juncker further believed in Social Partnership, which is why the Workers’ Group had supported his election as Commission President. He concluded by congratulating Juncker on the approach he was adopting towards arriving at an agreement with Greece.

In his reply, President Juncker maintained that fiscal consolidation was still necessary, as were structural reforms. But he went on to say that not everything hitherto labelled ‘structural reforms’ were in fact necessary. He believed that a Troika involvement had been necessary, but he himself had already criticised aspects of the Troika approach in his own election campaign. A more nuanced view was called for. Everything called austerity was not just austerity pure and simple. There had been excessive austerity in some Troika Programme countries, which needed to be reviewed. He himself was not going to speak about Greece at that Plenary Session, but he said that it should be noted that the previous (Barroso) Commission had never once discussed Greece, maintaining instead a blind faith in the Troika. Now the Commission meetings spent hours discussing Greece. He acknowledged that it was necessary to recognise that the dignity of people had been sinned against in both Greece and Portugal – and even in Ireland. As for questions put to him about taxation in the EU, neither was he going to go into any details at the Session. In any case, the media were discussing taxation day-in-and-day-out. But he confirmed his commitment to a common base for corporation tax. And as for the complaint made by the EESC Employers’ Group President, alleging that there was far too much regulation, Juncker replied that he too was against excessive regulation, but he believed that we were now at the stage where it was the deregulation that had become excessive.

The new mood in the EESC, across all Groups, has been expressed in calls to go even further than the Juncker Investment Plan. This was made evident at the most recent meeting of the Economic and Monetary Union Section. A Draft Opinion on the European Fund for Strategic Investments stated in its summary and recommendations:

“The EESC welcomes the Investment Plan for Europe and appreciates the change of tone away from austerity and fiscal consolidation. The Commission now acknowledges that there is a lack of investment and of aggregate demand and that the financial sector is still not able to play a full role in boosting growth. The Investment Plan is a step in the right direction but it does face a number of serious questions about its size relative to Europe’s investment needs, about the high degree of leverage expected, about the potential flow of suitable investment projects and about the Plan’s timescale. There is uncertainty about whether a pipeline of projects can be developed that

offers returns that attract institutional investors. The EESC believes that, across many project classes, public investment gives better value for money for present and future taxpayers. There is concern, therefore, that in its desire to crowd in private investment the Plan may result in suboptimal outcomes.”

“The Plan proposes that contributions to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) from Member States will not be included in budget deficit calculations and this is to be welcomed. This does, however, beg the question as to why ongoing strategic public infrastructure expenditure expenditures are not treated in the same way. What is the difference between a favourable budgetary treatment of Member States’ contributions under EFSI and a full-blown Golden Rule?”

“The EESC believes that it is time to recognise that Europe needs a sustained public investment programme in order to regain growth, jobs and prosperity. Strategic public investment such as that envisaged in the Plan which underpins present and future economic development should be incentivised by a more benign fiscal framework. The EESC urges the Commission to work towards an agreed Golden Rule formulation for Europe.”

When it came to the Section vote, this Draft Opinion was adopted unanimously, with 73 votes for and only 5 votes against, with just 8 abstentions. At the same Section meeting there was even stronger support for a Draft Opinion on Economic Governance, produced by a Study Group of which I myself was a member. The *rapporteur* was David Croughan, Irish member of the Employers’ Group, and the *corapporteur* was Carmelo Cedrone, Italian member of the Workers’ Group. This Draft Opinion stated, in the course of its conclusions and recommendations:

“The European economic governance rules, conceived in crisis, played an important role in fiscal consolidation, economic policy co-ordination and, with the introduction of draft budgetary assessment, the furtherance of fiscal integration. However, the cost was high in terms of growth and employment, and the European Union has lagged behind the rest of the advanced economies in exiting the economic crisis largely due to the incomplete nature of economic governance. The measures put in place under the European Semester began the process of fiscal consolidation and rebuilding credibility, but the rules-based approach, while appropriate for normal times, is now part of the problem. Member States in difficulties need greater resources to exit the dead-end road of recession and guarantee growth and job creation and, through growth, sustainable fiscal consolidation...”

“In the Semester process, reductions in the government’s annual deficit are given far more weight as a remedy to the high debt/GDP ratio than more fruitful measures to increase GDP growth. The Commission should monitor not only the implementation of Country Specific Recommendations but also carry out an ex-post analysis of its recommendations in achieving an increase in output and growth of the Member State in question and in the creation of high-quality jobs. The Committee welcomes the emphasis placed on the use of flexibility within the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, whereby the Commission will take into account certain public investments when calculating the fiscal deficit, but considers it a limited and partial measure. A reasonable deviation from the 3% deficit parameter should be considered as a temporary exception for a given number of years and not be liable to sanctions.”

In its background review, the Draft Opinion observed that “in the short period of review, the Committee believes that the reformed EU fiscal Rules under the relevant regulations on fiscal surveillance have undoubtedly played a role in addressing fiscal consolidation as evidenced by the deficit of the EU-28 falling from 4.5% of GDP in 2011 to 3% in 2014.”

But it went on to point out:

“The cost, however, has been high for very limited success, pointing to EU policy failures in the contribution to economic growth and jobs. By contrast, in the same period the US deficit fell from 10.6% to 4.9%; US GDP growth **accelerated** from 1.6% to 2.4% (vs. EU **deceleration** from 1.7% to 1.3%); US unemployment **fell** from 8.9% to 6.2% (vs. EU **rise** from 9.6% to 10.2%) and importantly US employment **rose** by 6.3% while that of the EU **stagnated** at -0.1%.”

“The EESC is much less sanguine than the Commission that the structural deficit targets under the Excessive Deficit Procedure allow more precise and transparent policy advice. While the Committee accepts that this measure, stripped of the distortions of the economic cycle and one-off fiscal measures, offers the opportunity of a more transparent picture, it is nonetheless a non-observable variable based on theoretical and disputed calculations of potential output gaps, which is prone to substantial revisions, and likely in some instances to yield poor policy prescription.”

The original draft had also stated:

“The Committee accepts that the debt ratio is an important element of fiscal sustainability, but has some doubts about its increased profile in the annual Semester process, which is a tool as much aimed at prevention as correction. Annual fiscal balances by their nature are short-term and subject to short-term remedies, whereas the debt is a stock concept requiring long-term adjustment. The two do not sit that well together, particularly at this conjuncture of boosting growth through investment.”

At the Study Group meeting on February 5, I stated that this paragraph needed to be strengthened, and I proposed the following alternative wording:

“The debt/GDP ratio is an important element of fiscal sustainability. It has two components: the amount of debt and the size of GDP, neither of which can be pursued without regard to the impact on the other. An approach which concentrates on too speedy a reduction in the deficit with the objective of further reducing the debt level will, if it results in stifling or reducing GDP, have a counterproductive effect in terms of the objective of reducing the debt/GDP ratio itself.”

This wording was accepted by the *rapporteur* and by the Section, as indeed was the Draft Opinion as a whole, which was unanimously adopted, with not a single dissenting vote or abstention. □

Speech by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (Munich, 7 February 2015)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov addressed the 51st Munich Security Conference on 7 February 2015 [1]. Eight years earlier, on 10 February 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin, delivered a seminal speech from the same podium [2], the speech in which he asserted that the Cold War had never really ended, that the West had continued to exert pressure on Russia, incorporating the states of eastern Europe into NATO, having promised in 1990 not to move it one inch eastwards, and demanding that Russia's neighbours choose to be either with Russia or with the West (see *The Road to Ukraine* by Pat Walsh, Irish Foreign Affairs 7/4, December 2014).

Lavrov began by challenging the argument put forward by other speakers at the conference that in the last year or so "there was a sudden and rapid collapse of the world order that had existed for decades". On the contrary, he said that "the last year's developments confirmed the correctness of our warnings against profound, systemic problems in the organisation of European security and international relations in general" that President Putin had spoken about in 2007.

He continued:

"The structure of stability, based on the UN Charter and the Helsinki principles, has long been undermined by actions of the United States and its allies in Yugoslavia, which was bombed, as well as in Iraq and Libya, NATO's expansion to the east and the creation of new lines of separation. The project of building a 'common European home' failed because our western partners were guided by illusions and beliefs of winners in the Cold War rather than the interests of building an open security architecture with mutual respect of interests. The obligations, solemnly undertaken as part of the OSCE and the Russia-NATO Council, not to ensure one's own safety at the expense of others' remained on paper and were ignored in practice.

"The problem of missile defence is vivid evidence of the powerful destructive influence of unilateral steps in the development of military capabilities contrary to lawful interests of other states. Our proposals on joint operation in the anti-missile field were rejected. In exchange we were advised to join the creation of global US missile defence, strictly according to Washington's templates, which, as we underlined and explained based on facts a number of times, carries real risks for Russian nuclear deterrence forces.

"Any action undermining strategic stability will inevitably result in counter measures. Thus, long-term damage is inflicted upon the entire system of international treaties dealing with control over armaments, the feasibility of which directly depends on the missile defence factor.

"We do not even understand what the United States' obsession with creating a global missile defence system can be connected with. With aspirations to indisputable military supremacy? With faith in the possibility to resolve issues technologically, whereas these issues are in reality political?"

"There is a pinnacle in the course pursued by our western colleagues in the past quarter of a century on preserving their domination in world affairs by all possible means, on seizing the geopolitical space in Europe. They demanded of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries – our closest neighbours, connected with us by centuries economically, historically, culturally and even in terms of family ties – that they make a choice: 'either with the West, or against the West'. This is a zero-sum logic which, ostensibly, everyone wanted to leave in the past.

"The strategic partnership of Russia and the European Union failed the test of strength, as the EU chose a path of confrontation over the development of mutually beneficial interaction mechanisms. We cannot help remembering the missed opportunity to implement Chancellor Merkel's initiative put forward in June 2010 in Meseberg, to create an EU-Russia Committee on Security and Foreign Affairs at the level of foreign ministers. Russia backed that idea but the European Union rejected it. Meanwhile, this constant dialogue mechanism, if it were to be set up, would allow for solving problems faster and more effectively, and for resolving mutual concerns in a timely manner.

"As for Ukraine itself, unfortunately, at each stage of the crisis' development, our American colleagues, and under their influence, also the European Union, have been taking steps leading to escalation. This happened when the EU declined to involve Russia in the discussion of the consequences of implementing the economic block of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, which was followed by direct support of a coup d'état, and anti-government riots prior to that. This also happened when our western partners kept issuing indulgences to the Kiev authorities, who, rather than keeping their promise to launch nation-wide dialogue, began a large-scale military operation and labelled 'terrorists' all those citizens who defied the unconstitutional change of power and the rule of ultranationalists.

"It is very hard for us to explain why many of our colleagues fail to apply to Ukraine the universal principles of settling internal conflicts which presuppose, above all, an inclusive political dialogue between the protagonists. Why do our partners in the cases of Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Mali and South Sudan, for instance, urge the governments to talk with opposition, with rebels, in some cases even with extremists, whereas in the Ukrainian crisis, our partners act differently, in fact, encouraging Kiev's military operation, going so far as to justify or attempt to justify the use of cluster munitions.

"Regretfully, our western colleagues are apt to close their eyes to everything that is said and done by the Kiev authorities, including fanning xenophobic attitudes. Let me quote: 'Ukrainian social-nationalism regards the Ukrainian nation as a blood-race community.' Which is followed by: 'The issue of total Ukrainisation in the future social-nationalist state will be resolved within three to six months by a tough and balanced state policy.' The author of those words is Andrey Biletsky, the

“I would like to hope that today’s and tomorrow’s debates in Munich will bring us closer to understanding the level of efforts on searching for collective answers to threats which are

“It’s clear to me that you have a twisted view on things. You shouldn’t mix up apples and oranges. People keep saying now, ‘we are going to settle the Ukrainian crisis, and the whole system of security and stability will start working all by itself’. On the contrary. The crisis must be settled, it is a prime priority, but we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that all the agreements concluded after the end of the Cold War are not observed. We have no desire for revenge, especially at somebody else’s expense. We want to have normal relations with the US. It was not us who destroyed the established mechanisms created in recent years, which ensured daily contact and addressing each other’s concerns. It was not us who withdrew from the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] Treaty. It was not us who refused to ratify the adapted CFE [Conventional Forces in Europe] Treaty. Now we have to pick up the pieces and somehow negotiate a new security system on the basis of re-confirming the Helsinki principles, a system that would be comfortable for all including Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, all those before whom our US colleagues have placed the option of going West and cooperating less with Russia. This is a fact.

"I know that US Ambassadors across the world are receiving such instructions. I see here Alexander Vershbow [American Deputy Secretary-General of NATO] who in a recent interview called NATO the most peace-loving bloc in the world and a hope for European stability and security. But who bombed Yugoslavia and Libya in violation of UNSC resolutions? We can see now success stories through unilateral actions in the Middle East. We want NATO to be not the model organisation they are trying to present it to be, but a participant in an equal dialogue on ensuring stability. What's so bad about that? Everybody wants us to admit the subordinate role of everybody else regarding the US and NATO. I don't think it serves the interests of the world order and stability.

"As for the onset of the developments in Ukraine, US President Barack Obama recently said publicly that the US brokered the transition of power in Ukraine. It is modest wording, but we are perfectly aware of who was involved and how it was openly discussed over the phone which individuals should be in the new Ukrainian government, and many other things. We know what's going on now, who monitored the Maidan developments on a daily basis. There were no Russian military specialists and experts there.

"We really want the Ukrainian people to restore their unity but it should be done on the basis of real nationwide dialogue. As the central authorities make decisions to celebrate the birthdays of Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich, and the date of the 'Ukrainian Insurgent Army' formation as national holidays, the question arises, how those holidays could be celebrated in the east of Ukraine. They cannot be celebrated. Whereas in the west of the country they are reluctant to celebrate the 9th of May. To say nothing about the other specificities of Ukrainian society, this alone requires political agreements.

"People are probably shy to talk about it here, but currently mobilisation is underway in Ukraine, and is coming up against gravest problems. Members of the Hungarian and Romanian minorities feel a 'positive' discrimination since they are recruited in much greater proportions than ethnic Ukrainians. Why aren't we discussing that? Or the fact that not only Ukrainians and Russians live in Ukraine, that there are other ethnicities who by a twist of fate, found themselves in that country and want to live there. Why not ensure equal rights for them and take their interests into account? During the parliamentary election the Hungarian minority asked to 'carve up' the constituencies in such a way so that at least one ethnic Hungarian could be elected to the Verkhovna Rada. The constituencies were 'carved up' in such a way that no Hungarian went to parliament. All that proves that there are issues to discuss. There are real problems that prevent the Ukrainian state from coming out of that most difficult crisis, but the problems are being hushed up in the west. I talked to many, including those present here, when the lustration law was put into effect. In private, they said it was an awful law that should be urgently cancelled. I asked them why they did not speak publicly about it, only to hear in response that now there is the understanding that Ukrainian authorities should be supported and should not be criticised. Is there anything else to add to this?

[A 'lustration law' providing for the purging of, amongst others, officials who worked in the Yanukovich administration has been passed by the Verkhovna Rada and was signed into law by President Poroshenko on 9 October 2014. Prime Minister Yatsenyuk claimed that the law would apply to about

1 million officials, including anybody who held office during the "EuroMaidan revolution" from November 2013 to February 2014 and did not quit of their own accord [\[3\]](#).]

"I really hope that yesterday's efforts by the presidents of France and Russia and the German Chancellor will yield a result that will be supported by the parties to the conflict, and will allow for truly easing the situation by launching so badly needed nationwide dialogue on ways of solving all the problems: social, economic, and political."

The second Minsk Accords were agreed on 12 February 2015, a few days after Lavrov spoke. Asked about the Minsk process he said:

"As soon as the main participants of the Minsk process – the Ukrainian authorities and representatives of the proclaimed republics of the DPR and LPR, reach agreements on all the practical aspects of implementing each of the Minsk items, I am confident that Russia will be among those to ensure such guarantees, either in the OSCE, or in the UNSC. I am convinced that Germany, France and other countries will also be ready to offer such guarantees. But only what is done and achieved can be guaranteed. Agreements should be direct. We shouldn't pretend that those people will readily obey. They live on their land, and they are fighting for it. When it is said that they alone wouldn't have been able to ensure an advantage on the battlefield, I would respond that their cause is right, whereas Ukrainian soldiers do not understand what they are pushed to fight for. Let me reiterate, negotiations between the parties should be held directly.

"Once the US Administration was criticised for maintaining active contacts with the Taliban via Doha, Qatar. In response to the criticism, the Administration enquired why it is being criticised: Yes, they are enemies, but one does not have negotiations with friends. Negotiations are held with enemies. If Ukrainian authorities consider their citizens to be enemies, they will have to negotiate with them anyway. Our Ukrainian colleagues should not hope that all-out external support will solve all the problems. Such support, lacking any critical analysis, went to some people's heads. As much as it went to Mikhail Saakashvili's head back in 2008. Everybody knows what came of that."

To a question from German Christian Democrat MEP Elmar Brok, who accused Russia of violating the sovereignty of Ukraine, he responded:

"There are international rules which, indeed, are sometimes interpreted differently, with different actions receiving directly opposing interpretations. What took place in Crimea is stipulated in the UN Charter: self-determination. This document contains several principles, and a nation's right to self-determination is a key one. Read the Charter. Territorial integrity and self-determination must be respected. The UN General Assembly adopted a declaration that clarified the correlation of the basic principles of international law. It confirmed that territorial integrity and self-determination are inviolable, and countries claiming that their sovereignty must be respected have to respect the rights of ethnicities residing in this country and prevent violations of the right to self-determination through the use of sheer force.

“According to what you’ve said, the events in Kiev were simply the implementation of the agreement signed by president Yanukovich as elections were held there. First, the next day after signing the agreement, regardless of Yanukovich’s location (and he was in Ukraine), his residence, as well as the presidential administration and the government buildings, were attacked; not to mention buildings burnt and people killed on Maidan previously. The trampled down agreement, witnessed by foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland (by the way, present here is Radoslaw Sikorski, who can probably tell a story of his own), in its first article implied the creation of a government of national unity. These are key words. The aim of the national unity cannot depend on the fate of Viktor Yanukovich alone. So, if he fled, does this mean that power could be seized through an armed coup and that national unity could be disregarded? You wouldn’t agree with this, and you would be right, because it’s inadmissible. So, this all took place instead, establishing a government of national unity, which by September ought to have developed a new constitution to be used as the basis for the national election. This is how the events should have unfolded. But the starting point is national unity; this is what the Constitution should be based upon with consideration of all opinions across the country.

“Instead, when the agreement I mentioned was already buried, Arseny Yatsenyuk spoke at Maidan announcing the establishment of the ‘government of victors’. Then, force was used against the regions of Ukraine that staged protests and refused to accept the results of the coup. The leaders who spoke against the coup were arrested. Who attacked whom? Did Donetsk and Lugansk start the assault on Kiev? Not at all. Just the opposite, military units were sent to the southeast of Ukraine to take control of power by force.

“Crimean residents saw what was happening in Ukraine. At the very early stages of the crisis, the Right Sector made attempts to break through and seize administrative buildings, but they were stopped by voluntary people’s guards at the isthmus. Then, referendums on Crimea’s independence and then on incorporation into Russia were held. In Kosovo, no referendum was held, although US President Barack Obama recently claimed Kosovo as an exemplary case, as people voted in a referendum there. No referendums were held in Kosovo, nor were many other ‘referendums’. Germany’s reunification was conducted without any referendum, and we actively supported this.

“As you remember, after the end of WWII the USSR spoke against the division of Germany. Speaking of methods used instead of direct dialogue; unfortunately, the current President of Ukraine has lost the monopoly on the use of force. Private battalions have been created in Ukraine, and they are paid better than the regular army. People defect from the regular army to these battalions (including the Azov Battalion, which I have mentioned). Some of the commanders of these battalions are ultranationalists. Mr Brok, we have been working with each other for a long time. You even visited Moscow. So my response will be simple. It’s one thing if you want to deliver angry speeches to reinforce your positions in politics and the European Parliament, but if you want to maintain dialogue, let’s just sit down and reaffirm all the principles of the Helsinki Accords and see why and where you believe they were violated.

“By the way, the Nuremberg-based Ukrainian rating agency GfK Ukraine has recently conducted an opinion poll in Crimea.

The survey shows that over 90 percent of Crimean residents support the peninsula’s reunification with Russia. Only two percent said they were against it, and another three percent admitted they so far don’t have a clear idea of what is going on. These are statistics and people. A colleague has mentioned that the EU’s main principle is respect for self-determination. You spoke about countries, and in this particular case we are taking about people’s self-determination. And it took place based on centuries-long history. We can discuss all this if you indeed want to understand our position and our motives, and this has been repeatedly mentioned by President Putin. Or you can laugh at this, if you find it funny. They say that laughter prolongs one’s life.”

Questioned about Russian military aircraft flying in international airspace with its transponders turned off (allegedly), making collisions with civil aircraft more likely, he replied:

“We had an extensive network of bilateral mechanisms between Russia and NATO in the Russia-NATO Council, where the military had contacts with each other on a daily basis, with experts from the countries’ capitals holding special meetings and numerous joint projects to fight terrorism, as well as a project for the Stand-Off Detection of Explosives (STANDEX). Among others, there was also a project on training personnel for the Afghan security forces and providing them with helicopters, and the Common Airspace Initiative projects. Now they all have been suspended, although these mechanisms provided opportunities for agreeing on efforts to avoid dangerous military activities.

“As regards the air forces activities, we have corresponding statistics which show that NATO’s activity has increased immeasurably more than Russia’s. As far as I remember, this January, Permanent Representative of Russia to NATO Alexander Grushko discussed this with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and handed over the fact sheet containing the statistics we have been compiling. We are open to restoring the mechanisms of interaction, but as I said all those mechanisms have been frozen. There is only the council of permanent representatives, ambassadors, which holds sessions not very frequently. The rest has been scrapped.

“This has resulted in certain problems. Apparently, our NATO colleagues want to cut Russian diplomats’ physical presence in the Permanent Mission of Russia to NATO. Our access to the headquarters, where we have our premises, is being restricted. This will obviously lead to additional ‘dark spots’ in our relations and will not encourage clarification of each other’s intentions.”

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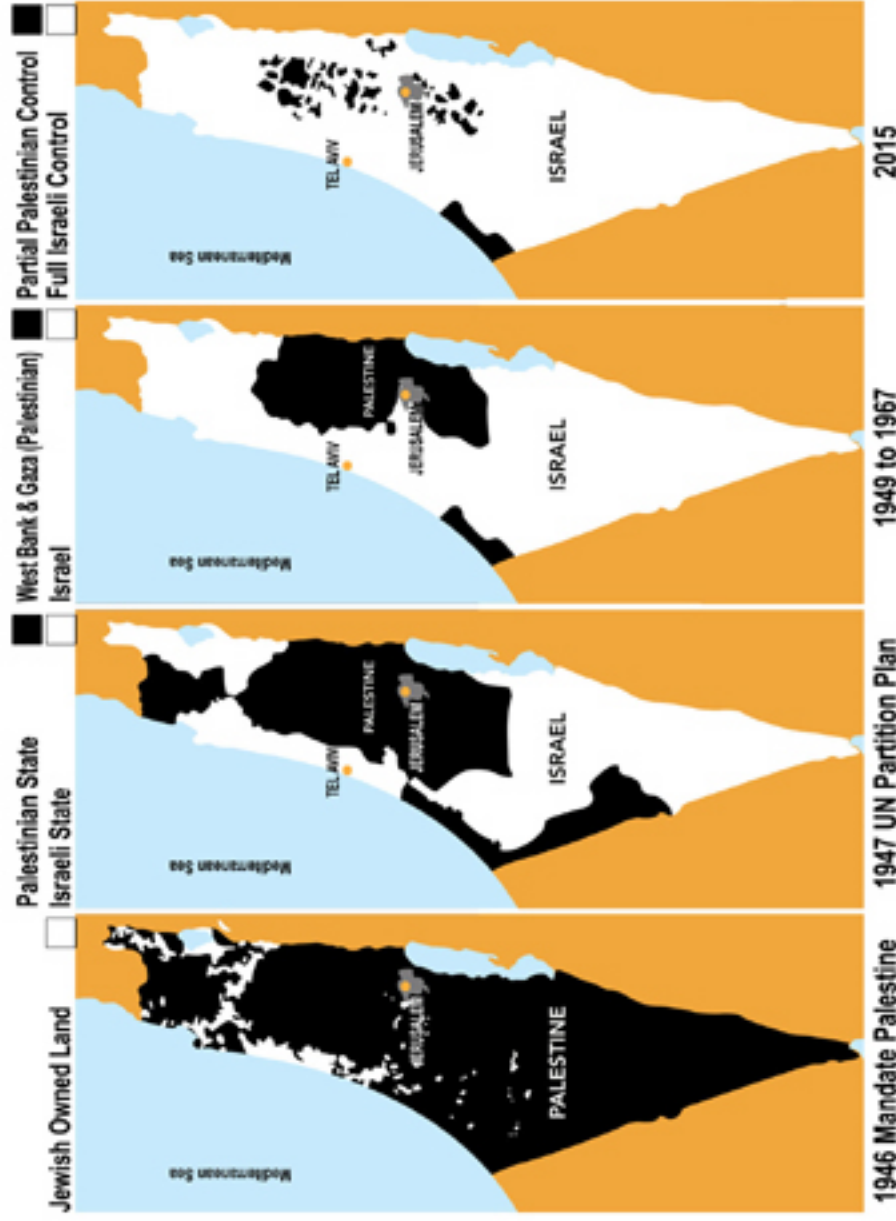
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