

# 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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# Editorial

## Hiroshima

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The President—that is the President of the World—visited Hiroshima, where the modern world began on 6th August 1945. He said he did not go there to apologise. Why did he go?

To formalise the precedent set by the nuclear bombing to establish that the deliberate killing of civilians of an enemy country for a political purpose is a legitimate, and even a commendable military tactic? What other purpose could there have been for the visit, since the notion that it might have been a step towards an admission that the United States was a major war criminal was scotched in advance?

It was a diplomatic action which normalised nuclear bombing as a means of making war—perhaps with the proviso that the state against which it is used should not itself have the means for retaliation in kind.

The best wars are those which are conducted by use of overwhelming force against an enemy which is incapable of defending itself. Voltaire's satiric maxim—*This animal is dangerous: if attacked it defends itself*—has now come into its own as a moral truth. But the adjective needs to be changed in order to give perfect expression to the Puritan Christian morality of our era: *This enemy is evil because if we attack him he defends himself*.

The United States is the Puritan offspring of Anglo-Saxon Protestant England. In England itself Puritanism faltered. After Cromwell had dealt decisively with the Irish in an impeccably Reformed manner, he returned to England and did not quite know what to do next—apart from routing the Scots who wanted to make an accommodation with the Crown if it would sign the Covenant. He maintained a military/moral tyranny for seven years—which can only be described as a tyranny because it was purposeless. Then he died and was buried, and his makeshift State fell apart, and Monarchy returned, and dug him up and punished him, and restored some of the way of life he had destroyed.

But in the Colonies Puritanism continued. And in the course of time the Colonies became the United States. They retained the purposeful sense of certainty that Cromwell lost, and they continued his work of establishing the peace of God on earth by means of the extermination of the unworthy, or the enslavement of them in the service of the godly.

The system of slavery began to be questioned within the United States in the early 19th century, but the rightness of the genocide was never doubted.

A young Ulster Presbyterian who joined the United Irish conspiracy escaped the consequences of his actions by flight to the USA. In America he settled down quickly into the part of an upright and progressive citizen, and some years later he published a history of progress in the USA. In his view slavery was an obstacle to progress which needed to be overcome, and the genocide of the native population was something that needed to be completed. He recounts the progress of the genocide as he would the clearing of a jungle filled with dangerous animals.

David Bailie Warden was the perfect citizen of the United States, fitted for purposeful American citizenship by the idealism of Ulster Presbyterianism in the generation when it was at its most idealistic. (Some information will be found in

the editorial material included in the Athol Books reprint of *Bolg An Tsolair*, the Gaelic magazine of the United Irishmen.)

It was Jefferson, the democrat of early US history, who proclaimed sovereignty over the entire territory to the Pacific while great tracts of it were still populated by natives, and he warned that they would be exterminated if they resisted progress.

The slave system was established in the Colonies by England. The Libertarian ideologues of the 1688 Revolution were all involved in it. Where else would you put your money to have it make a good profit? The famous Protestant divine of the 17th century, Richard Baxter, revealed that commercial profit was a sign of virtue. And John Locke defended both slavery and the genocide on apparently secular grounds.

When the productive power of Manchester Capitalism came into its own in the 1830s, England abolished its industrial Slave Labour Camps on the Caribbean islands and began to harass the USA morally about Plantation slavery. Then US slavery was formally abolished as an incident in the Civil War fought on other grounds.

The purpose of the War was to establish the alliance of Colonial states, which had asserted their independence of England, as a Continental super-state. Union was established in absolute priority over the Federal principle. Southern slave states might have made peace with the Union by ending their secession but not by ending slavery. But the issue of slavery caught fire in Congress under the leadership of Thaddeus Stevens and when the South surrendered there was a strong movement to empower the emancipated slaves and punish the social stratum that had held them in slavery.

This was very much not in accordance with Lincoln's plans, but he got himself shot and Congress based itself on the libertarian rhetoric he had employed as a propaganda tactic.

The white populations where black power was being cultivated by Congress rebelled. The rebellion took the form of the secret vigilante organisation, the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK terror restored white supremacy and maintained it for a hundred years under a flimsy facade of equal rights.

Woodrow Wilson, who was a History Professor before being elected President, took the USA into the European War in 1917 and proclaimed all sorts of freedom as the American purpose in the War. At the end of the War he premiered, in the White House, a film celebrating the contribution of the Ku Klux Klan to United States freedom. This was D.W. Griffith's *The Birth Of A Nation*, one of the first great film classics. And Wilson, as a historian, supported the view that the KKK had saved the United States at a moment when excessive enthusiasm of the Abolitionist element in the Civil War threatened to undermine the Union, after the Confederacy was defeated, by the establishment of black States in place of the Confederacy.

There was a strong revival of the Klan in the 1920s, helping society to simmer down after it was disturbed by engagement in European War, in breach of George Washington's advice. White America's sense of well-being was being restored. The blacks were put in their place again and the Genocide had been

completed—the commander of the American Army in France in 1918, General Pershing, had taken part in its final battle at Wounded Knee as a junior officer. And the long celebration of the Genocide in innumerable Hollywood Westerns began.

The “*Manifest Destiny*” of the United States, as proclaimed by John L. O’Sullivan in the mid-19th century, was realised. The United State had its western border in the Pacific, having brushed aside Spanish California and Anglicised it and made it the heart of American world culture.

Conor Cruise O’Brien’s hagiographer, Akenson, in the enthusiasm of his support of O’Brien’s Northern Ireland policy of putting down the nationalist community, pointed out that nationalist Ireland was an active element in Imperialist culture. He highlighted the part it played in the opening up of the West. It took part in killing off the Indians and seizing their lands. And it was true. Irish anti-Imperialism was not a biological racial attribute that determined the behaviour of the Irish when they migrated. It was an attribute of their political nationality. In their American migration they became respectable white racists—though some of them did become disreputable “*white niggers*”. It was only in their ground, in pursuit of their nationalist purposes, that they were something else. In migration they became British white racists, particularly in the United States and Australia.

At home they remained “*niggers*” in the British view until very late in the day. As recently as 1969 Major McDowell, the effective owner of the British newspaper in Ireland, the *Irish Times*, in communication with the British Ambassador, complained that his Editor had become a bit of a “*white nigger*”—meaning that he had become too sympathetic to the Irish majority (see John Martin’s *The Irish Times, Past & Present*).

The Irish were Britain’s “*niggers*” at home. They became “*niggers*” only because they had resisted pressure to play the part of the Red Indians, which would have been best. The London Times, in the aftermath of the “*providential*” Famine/Holocaust (in which the British State played the part of Providence), looked forward to the time when a Celt would be as rare in Ireland as a Red Indian in Manhattan.

Genocide was the preferred option from the time of the maniacal Elizabethan poet and politician, Edmund Spenser, down to the late 19th century, but the State, somehow, never found the space to apply itself single-mindedly to the task.

Through British negligence and the tenacity of the pre-British culture of the Irish, genocide was not realised and, the Irish survived and progressed—on the American model—from the status of Red Indians to that of “*white niggers*”.

The black slaves were a privileged section of the non-white population of the United States. They were commodities as slaves, and were valuable to their owners. After they ceased to be commodities, they became a workforce without rights, kept in subordination by the informal rule of lynch law, and were still valuable. They then set about realising the substance of what was implied by Emancipation, and achieved it after four generations. It took the Irish roughly the same length of time. (The starting dates are 1801—abolition of the Ascendancy Parliament in Dublin and 1829 (Catholic Emancipation) for the Irish and 1864-5 for the US blacks—the emergency Emancipation and the surrender of the Confederacy. One cannot be so precise about the date of achievement in either case, but in Ireland it was not later than the final British withdrawal in 1938, and in American not later than the appointment of a black National Security Adviser.

Of course the objects were different in kind. The Irish wanted to remove themselves and their country from the British state and Empire, while the emancipated slaves wanted integration into the political life of the state that had enslaved them. Once the KKK had warded off the possibility of black States being established on the ground of the defeated Confederacy—a thing which Lincoln had not seen as acceptable, and which the Yankee Unionism on the whole would not have stood for—the concession of the substance of citizen rights to blacks would have been consolidating of the Union State, while the Irish national demand would have upset the British state and Empire.

In the 1920s the Genocide of all the peoples who had flourished between the Atlantic and the Pacific was a well-accomplished physical fact and its moral contribution to the cause of Progress was not questioned. The Civil War hero, General Sheridan, when applying his talents to the task of Genocide when freedom was established by the defeat of the Confederacy, said *the only good Indian was a dead Indian*. It was a self-evident truth.

In recent years the Supreme Court, in connection with the resistance with which American globalist military activity has been met, and the attempt by elements of the resistance to appeal to US law, has said that the American Constitution is not a *suicide pact*. The rights which it confers on individuals are understood to be subject to the safety of the state. And, if that is the case with regard to foreigners who would like to use the Constitution against itself, it must be infinitely more the case with regard to the Genocidal origins of the state.

Those Genocidal origins have been celebrated in a thousand Hollywood movies. Those movies had the purpose of generating profound moral feeling in support of the Genocide, while at the same time disabling the intellect with relation to it and preventing it from being seen as anything even remotely resembling Genocide, even in a later time when the accusation of Genocide had become a legitimate reason for destroying other states.

In the 1920s the Indians were gone and the Blacks were quiescent and the profound racial righteousness of the Colonial

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United States was eloquently asserted in a number of high-quality mainstream publications, pre-eminent among which were books by Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard.

The message was that Protestant British Colonialism was progressive because it was racially hygienic. The colony preserved its civilised English heritage by simply taking for itself the vast spaces which it conquered, and excluding from the possibility of life the peoples who inhabited those spaces when the colonists arrived.

One of the spectacular events of the post-Civil War colonisation of the region over which Union sovereignty had been asserted was the Oklahoma Land Race. There was free land in Oklahoma territory. It was there for the taking by any white person who could get to it and stake a claim on a piece of it. The Government, in the spirit of fairness and equality, set a date on which it could be claimed, and organised a race into the Territory by claimants who were gathered at a starting bloc on the verge of the territory and set free into it by a shot from a starting pistol.

How did the land of the Territory come to be free? Why ask embarrassing questions? Only Edna Ferber had the poor taste to hint at the reason in her Oklahoma novel.

The rightness—the effectiveness—of the English mode of colonisation by Genocide was proved by comparison with the other mode of colonisation implemented in the other half of the Continent—the Spanish colonisation that was conducted about the same time on Roman Catholic assumptions about the human race.

Latin America was a political mess and an economic mess because it was a racial mess resulting from Roman Catholic dogmatism and superstition. The place was full of half-breeds.

The English Reformation was the act of a State that was in the process of detaching itself from the European cultural world. It made up a new religion to political order and its affairs of state were conducted by aristocrats and gentry—including Bishops—who, through being involved in making up a new religion and conducting it as an instrument of State policy, were not subject to the logical dynamics of their invented religion. They were *de facto* but not *de jure* skeptics with regard to it. (This is what Conor Cruise O'Brien called the English Enlightenment—a skeptical aristocracy using a Biblicalist religion as an instrument of statecraft.)

But the logical dynamic of Biblicalism caught fire in the social orders below the gentry, and these were the colonisers of North America. Through their unrestrained Biblicalist enthusiasm they came into conflict on some points with the enforcers of the State religion, though basically in agreement with it on matters relating to Rome. Many of them availed of the opportunity to become completely free of political constraint by going to America, and filling the empty spaces which they helped to empty. They emigrated for conscience sake, and their new consciences told them that they were a people chosen by Providence to do its work in this world. With *Deuteronomy* and *Joshua* behind them they could have no problem with Genocide—or with black slavery when that came along. (And a reason it came along was that the free peoples of America refused to be made into subjugated labourers for the colony.)

The ruling class played with Enlightenment while enforcing a State religion and deploring the French enthusiasm for broadcasting Enlightenment for everybody. They maintained amongst themselves the publicly muted Enlightenment so much admired by O'Brien. And they set to with a will to crush the French Revolution. But somehow that Revolution altered things in Britain, even while Britain was crushing it and public Enlightenment took off in Britain. Paine's *Age Of*

*Reason* was prosecuted by a distinguished gentleman who a few years earlier had thought it safe to defend *The Rights Of Man* (Thomas Erskine), but after France was defeated in 1815 the middle class began to challenge the aristocratic monopoly of political power, got themselves enfranchised in 1832, and through their involvement in operating the political system subverted their religious beliefs.

But the growth of popular Enlightenment made no difference to racism as it was no more than a secularisation of Biblical anti-Romanism.

Racism was in any case part of the Enlightenment. One might describe English Biblical racism as a kind of superstition, but the rise of an empirical mentality did not dispel it. The racism continued but its ground became 'scientific'.

'Scientific' racism began within the Enlightenment, and it flourished in scientific circles.

The substantive equality of all varieties of humans was a Roman Catholic dogma. Catholicism as a force in the world was established by the Emperor Constantine in the Empire created by Augustus. It was launched as a religion for the world. Rome was the world, and it consisted of all sorts and conditions of men, and not an Anglo-Saxon among them!

Protestantism began as a fanatical religious secession from the urbane Roman world. It asserted itself within provincial horizons which separated themselves from the horizon of the world. Each little bit knew little more than itself. It had saved itself from the multifarious mass of sinfulness of the Roman world and therefore tended to be exclusivist in its view of things.

Each secession was a kind of fundamental nationalism. Each was a chosen people. And between the various chosen peoples there was no unity. In a very little time the English and the Dutch were at war.

In the American colonisation, however, they seemed to forget their European differences in the Protestant drive for cleansing the Continent of human dross and peopling it with themselves.

Eventually they conquered California and only the vast Pacific Ocean lay before them. What were they to do with themselves then?

That was in the 1850s—at a time when Alexander Herzen was surveying the world and wondering about its possibilities.

Herzen was one of the reformist Russian intellectuals who did not accept Marx's determinist scheme of world history, and who have undergone a revival in Russia since 1990. He saw the course of history as being shaped in different ways in different places by different causes, giving rise to a wide variety of states and cultures which co-existed, with peoples being content with their very different ways of life. And:

“The Chinese and Japanese are without doubt two peoples who have found the most suitable social form for their way of living. That is why they remain unalterably the same...” (*Memoirs*).

The Chinese had been living peacefully on their large land mass for centuries, as the Japanese had been on their islands, but they were put under an irresistible moral pressure by the British and the Americans to mend their ways. The moral pressure in those instances, as in most other instances, was a feeling of helplessness generated by the brute physical force used against



them by guns and warships against which they had no defences. They had neglected the art of regimented killing by gunfire.

The occasion of the British war on China was the refusal of the Chinese Government to allow British merchants in India to export opium to China.

Britain needed Chinese porcelain, but China needed none of the crude commodities produced by British capitalism. Trade with China was therefore one-sided, causing a steady drain of the British stock of money. (Money in those days was gold and silver, which had a real value of their own based on their cost of production, and financial problems could not be dealt with by printing paper, or adding a string of zeros in books of account.)

The Royal Navy mounted a Millennial Exhibition at Greenwich in 2000 about the contribution it had made to the development of Britain. It explained that British prosperity in the 18th century and the early 19th depended on the monopoly of the Slave Trade which it gained at the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) in reward for having got the better of France in the War of the Spanish Succession, and on the industrially-productive Slave Labour Plantations in the Caribbean. The immense wealth that flowed into England from these enterprises led in the course of a couple of generations to the growth of a social stratum with fine feelings and refined tastes. The fruits of slavery made England civilised, and the newly civilised gentry just had to have Chinese porcelain.

(That informative Exhibition was condemned in Parliament for failing to explain that Britain's relationship with the Slave Trade was that it abolished it in the 19th century.)

Anyhow Britain was losing its money to China because of the one-sided trade, so it made war on it in 1839 and compelled the Chinese Government not only to allow British merchants to sell opium into China, but to conduct the trade within China. The Secretary for War was the great advocate of Liberalism, Lord Macaulay, author of the classic history of 1688 and all that.

The punitive Treaty imposed on China at the end of that Opium War was only the first of a series of Unequal Treaties designed to break the Chinese State.

The USA came to disagree with British Imperial handling of China. Its China policy was *Open Door*—China should be open to everybody as an unprotected market.

The name of the Chinese state was the Empire of China—as the German Empire was the name of the German state—it did not signify what "*the British Empire*" signified—a State with foreign possessions around the world and a will to world dominance.

The Chinese Empire was formally abolished in 1910 and was replaced by a superficial pretence of democracy in a territory that remained under foreign occupation. The USA cultivated this make-believe democracy with a view to making it a client state. In 1947 Chiang Kai-Shek, the American client ruler of the pretend state, was routed by a Communist Revolution. He retreated with his army to the offshore island of Formosa, which is now called Taiwan, and claimed that his Government in Taiwan remained the legitimate Government of China, with the Permanent Seat on the UN Security Council. The USA supported him in this stance, with the result that the actual Chinese state was excluded from UN membership for many years.

When Washington came out of denial about the reality of China, it changed its view of the status of Taiwan. While it maintained that the Government that controlled Taiwan was the legitimate Government of the whole of China, it naturally held

that Taiwan was an integral part of China, but when it recognised the actual Government in Peking as the Government of China, it declared that Taiwan was not part of China itself but was a separate state which should be admitted to UN membership.

The British Imperial engagement with China ended with the Viceroyalty of Chris Patten—who was also Viceroy of Northern Ireland for a while.

The Peking Government abided by the terms of the Unequal Treaty under which Britain held Hong Kong. When the time allocated by the Treaty ran out, Britain did not dare extend it by the means by which it had gained it. It vacated Hong Kong, but in vacating it, it changed it into a little Western-style democracy. Up until that moment it had governed Hong Kong as a Crown Colony.

The restoration of the Chinese state as a fully sovereign state was the major world event of the second half of the 20th century.

It was a world event because China had to convince the world that was threatening it—"*the West*"—that it would itself probably be destroyed if it tried to intervene again.

A capacity for "*mutually assured destruction*" is the actual condition of independent statehood in the world system produced by Britain's utterly irresponsible 2nd World War—the world onto which the beautiful United Nations design was varnished.

Events took a different course with Japan. When the American warship arrived in the 1850s and demanded that peaceful Japanese self-sufficiency should end, the first Opium War against China had already happened, demonstrating the brute military capacity of "*the West*", the ruthlessness with which it was used, and the intentions that motivated it.

Japan, being forced into world politics, emulated "*the West*" and became a predatory aggressor. It was much smaller than China, less civilised, socially organised in clans, and therefore more mobile. It quickly established a capitalist economy—and became Imperialist in the British sense. It demonstrated its fitness to be treated as an equal by "*the West*"—which would otherwise have trampled over it—by declaring war on what there was of a Chinese Government and taking a piece of China into its possession. And then, showing that it had really arrived, it engaged in war with Russia, a European Power, and won.

Britain made a Treaty of alliance with it—an Equal Treaty. It was one of the victorious Allies in the Great War, and took another piece of China as reward.

Then Japan's difficulties began. Although it was the USA that forced it out of its peaceful self-sufficiency, the mode of its response did not please the Yanks. *Manifest Destiny* had led the US by rapid movement to the shores of the Pacific, but it was impossible for it to stop there. The US half-continent now imagined itself an island off the Asian shore and the rise of a strong state across the Pacific did not fit its agenda. As Britain was making an Ally of Japan, the US was contemplating war on it. At the end of the Great War Washington gave London an ultimatum: it must end its Treaty with Japan or else face an arms race with America. Britain did not renew the Treaty, and the League of Nations rejected a Japanese motion about racial equality. In terms of realistic politics this marked Japan down as an enemy.

After Britain launched another World War in 1939, the US began to exert pressure on Japan. In 1940 it gave it a kind of anti-Imperialist ultimatum which would destroy it,

if complied with—and Churchill, the Imperialist, backed it. Japan, forced into a corner by two Great Powers, fought instead of crumbling. It launched a pre-emptive strike on the American navy on an island thousands of miles away from America—but that was only a pin-prick. But Japan demolished the British Empire in Asia and its slogan, “*Asia for the Asians*”, took root even though it was defeated in the War.

The USA provoked it into war, demonised it, defeated it, and then humiliated it by mass slaughter of its civilian population. If there was such a thing as International Law—as distinct from Kangaroo Courts organised by the dominant military Powers—Hiroshima and Nagasaki would be war-crimes.

The President of all the world encouraged the notion that there is International Law. He visits the scene of the war-crime against Japan but makes it clear that apology is out of the question, adding insult to injury.

There are some who admit that International Law is a propaganda figment, but maintain that there is a morality of international relations. Unfortunately the morality runs on the same lines as the ‘Law’. The insulted and the injured are immoral. A sense of rightness adheres to those who triumph in great wars, and the defeated are required to admit that they were wrong and should mend their ways—meaning that they should do what those who defeated them require them to do.

An upright and influential British Liberal, Charles Dilke, published a very influential book, called *Greater Britain*, at the height of British Imperial Power in 1869, in which he described the world as being made up of *dear* people and *cheap* people. He also said that the Anglo-Saxons were *the greatest exterminating race the world had ever seen*. (That book is not mentioned in the Wikipedia entry on Dilke.)

Both statements were obviously true at the time. It might be argued that they were not *really* true but only appeared to be so. *Really* in this usage means the opposite of actual. It means that the factual truth did not correspond with some transcendental ideal. Sir Charles Dilke also held some ideals, but he did not say that unrealised, and probably unrealisable, ideals were the real truth of the world.

Things have changed since those times. The English are no longer the *dearest* people in the world. They are now more moderately priced. It is their Anglo-Saxon offspring across the Atlantic who are the *dearest* people. And they are even *dearer* than the English were. The consequences of displeasing them are even greater than the consequences were of displeasing the English when they were top dogs.

The English realised at the end of the Great War that primacy was passing to their monstrous offspring. The decisive moment in the change was the British concession to the US at the Washington Naval Conference with regard to the Japanese alliance.

The *cheap* people of the world are even *cheaper* under American dominance than they were under British. Freedom is more openly equated with freedom of capital. Ways of life which differ from the Anglo-Saxon are less tolerated. The will of the State in its activity in the world is more matter-of-factly equated with law and morality. The *dear* people must have their rights, whatever the cost, while the *cheap* people must relativise themselves, see themselves in perspective, and act on the basis of a sense of their unworthiness.

That is the world we live in. The ideals spun out of the illusory world of the United Nations gain no purchase on the actual affairs of the world. They do not constitute a realisable ideal. Generation after generation of people who asserted them naively against the power structures of Finance Capitalism have found themselves manipulated into those structures as pioneers.

The first step towards the restoration of a stable world in which peoples might live contentedly in radically different ways, and tolerate each other’s existence, is dissent from the United Nations, which was formed by the unprincipled alliance of two mutually hostile world systems that were thrown together in a war that was brought about by the bungling self-contradictory world policy of the British Empire when it became the director of the world in 1919. □

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# The 1938 Capture and San Pedro Imprisonment of Frank Ryan

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by Manus O’Riordan

On January 1, 1991, under the heading of “Government compiled a list of suspected Nazi supporters”, and the subheading of “Reports on the Cabinet papers by Colm Boland, Geraldine Kennedy, Pdraig Yeates, John Walshe and Jim Cusack”, the *Irish Times* purported to report:

“The document also contains details of Frank Ryan, the senior IRA figure who played a significant part in the IRA’s efforts to recruit the help of the Nazis for a wartime campaign against British targets in Ireland. The document says there was little doubt about the German’s (sic) ‘interest’ in having him released from custody in Spain where he was imprisoned after fighting in the Civil War. Ryan was released and went to Germany in July 1940 and died in August that year while aboard a German submarine taking him from Wilhelmshaven to the west coast of Ireland. It is believed he suffered from a ruptured ulcer. There is no date on the document, although it would appear to have been drawn up in the early 1940s. The IRA and the Nazis never succeeded in establishing any campaign in Ireland during the War.”

That *Irish Times* “report” had made an ass of itself in conflating Sean Russell and Frank Ryan, as it had to concede a week later, on January 8, when publishing a letter from a T. D. Connolly, which also pointed out that Ryan “was released due to the intervention on his behalf by de Valera.” Nonetheless, on October 8, 2005, the *Irish Times* would facilitate a sneering character assassination by the discredited academic Peter Hart, as he lauded Fearghal McGarry’s “marvellous biography of Frank Ryan, the republican saint / Nazi collaborator”.

On February 13 last, as Ireland Secretary of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, I gave the oration in Dublin’s Glasnevin cemetery at the rededication of the tombstone of Irish Republican Socialist and International Brigade leader Frank Ryan, which had been refurbished by Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland. Andy Irvine sang his “Ballad of Frank Ryan”, which he had previously sung in Belfast City Hall on November 24 last. (See [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=PjQMm\\_zAhrE](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=PjQMm_zAhrE) for a recording.)

This May 28 I gave an illustrated lecture - “The story of Irish brigadista Frank Ryan” - at the International Seamen’s Club in Hamburg, Germany. There was nothing in either of these two addresses that had not already been covered by me in the March, June and September 2012 and the December 2014 issues of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, so I will not be repetitious.

See also <http://irelandscw.com/docs-Ryan2.htm> and <http://irelandscw.com/org-RyanComm.htm> for my overview of Ryan, refuting in detail Fearghal McGarry’s “collaborator” character assassination and the slanders published by the *Irish Times*.

The purpose of this article is to focus on Ryan’s capture by Fascist troops, his behaviour at that point, his imprisonment

in the Fascist concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardeña, outside Burgos, and his response to his interrogators, as exemplified by his handwritten answers, published for the first time in this magazine.

In his 2009 memoir, *Brigadista - An Irishman’s Fight Against Fascism*, Dubliner Bob Doyle wrote of the Aragon retreats of Spanish Republican forces at the end of March 1938: “We (the British Battalion) had been marching all night... Frank Ryan had just come from Madrid where he’d finished his *Book of the XV Brigade*, and had joined us going into battle. He didn’t have any position of command in the Battalion, although he was a captain, so he was marching back in the ranks beside us. He had no revolver or rifle. There were four of us Irish together and I thought it strange, as Frank was an officer but was with us in the ranks, even though George Fletcher was in command, with Wally Tapsell as political commissar.” (p 63).

They marched right into an ambush at Calaceite, near Gandesa, mounted by Italian Fascist troops. Tapsell was shot dead on the spot, while Fletcher was wounded, but escaped. In his 1982 book, *British Volunteers for Liberty*, Bill Alexander related: “The machine-gunners (including Bob Doyle - MO’R) held their positions on the hills for over an hour before the threat of encirclement forced the remaining few to retreat. The losses of the Battalion were severe. Out of the 650 men who marched through Calaceite that morning, 150 were killed or wounded, though the full count could not be known till much later when the names of the 140 taken prisoner became available from Burgos jail.” (p 179).

As they were marched off as prisoners, Frank Ryan said to Bob Doyle: “They launched my book today.” Some book launch! Bob Doyle further related that an Italian officer “picked out Frank Ryan and asked him for details of the Brigade, its arms and complement. Ryan said he would give them any personal information they required but no military information whatsoever. With this the Italian reached up and slapped him across the face and we had to restrain Frank from retaliating.”

The British and Irish prisoners were joined by a New York Jewish volunteer from the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, Max Parker, who had been captured separately. In his 1979 book, *Connolly Column*, my father Michael O’Riordan reproduced Parker’s testimony, while Parker also gave a slightly differently worded account to his fellow Lincoln Battalion prisoner Carl Geiser, from a Swiss Mennonite family, for Geiser’s own 1986 book, *Prisoners of the Good Fight*. The following is an amalgam of both versions:

“A fascist officer demanded to know who their commanding officer was. Captain Ryan immediately stood up. The English prisoners - all of them were in pretty bad shape, but fearing for Ryan’s life, they all shouted ‘No Frank! No! Sit Down!’ But Ryan simply said ‘I am’ ... We were marched against the



oncoming traffic - vehicle and soldiers... Since I was the only person there who admitted knowing Spanish, I became the official interpreter and was at the head of the procession with Frank Ryan. He kept shouting words of encouragement to us; to remember who we were; why we were in Spain, to maintain discipline. Large convoys of Italian fascist troops rolled slowly past us, spitting at us and yelling obscenities... We marched for some distance. Around noon, we were put in an area off the main road. Captain Ryan then demanded loudly to know when we would be fed and given water. I acted as his interpreter, speaking Spanish to an Italian officer who approached us. Frank repeated his demands for food and water... At this point, another officer joined us. He was German - Gestapo. He told us who he was. He got into a discussion in English with Captain Ryan... He wanted to know why Frank was fighting in Spain instead of in Ireland. Frank told him it was the same fight in both places... Frank told him, spelled it out for him; then asked the Gestapo officer *what he was doing in Spain*... After several minutes the Gestapo man told Frank 'You're a brave man', wished him luck, and left." (O'Riordan, pp 119-20; Geiser, pp 211-2).

Ryan and his fellow-prisoners would be brought to the concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardena, described, as follows, by Bob Doyle: "San Pedro was an old monastery built around the fifth century. Believed to be the burial place of El Cid, a hero of Spain's wars against the Moors, it had not been used since the 1920s because it was in an advanced stage of decay. After the fall of the north in October 1937, it was reopened as a concentration camp for processing prisoners from Asturias and the Basque Country who had escaped the firing squads... Their fate was to provide the slave labour to help construct Franco's 150 prisons needed to house two million prisoners from the subjugated north and later the final conquest in 1939." (pp 71-72). By 1938 San Pedro would also have an intake of 300 International Brigade prisoners. A common grave outside San Pedro's eastern wall contains the remains of nine International Brigade prisoners who died there through medical neglect. Spanish Republican prisoners were executed in San Pedro, but of the 66 of them buried in that common grave between January 1938 and May 1939, it is not clear how many of them had been executed, as distinct from those dying through medical neglect. Frank Ryan would spend two months in San Pedro, before being transferred to another Burgos prison, where he received a death sentence, later commuted.

It was one of my privileges in life to have corresponded with and met a number of International Brigaders who had been imprisoned in San Pedro: my fellow-Dubliners and close friends Maurice Levitas and Bob Doyle; my friend Dave Goodman as well as Jimmy Moon and Bernard McKenna from England; Carl Geiser and Max Shufer from the USA; and Karl Kormes from Germany.

In November 1987 I gave a lecture in the Irish Jewish Museum, off Dublin's South Circular Road, entitled "Irish and Jewish Volunteers in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War", and primarily telling the story of "a neighbour's child", the Dublin Jewish Communist Maurice Levitas. (See <http://irelandscw.com/obit-MLevitas.htm> for my February 2001 obituary.) During the course of that lecture I related some experiences of the San Pedro concentration camp that the above named International Brigaders had provided to me. Dave Goodman: "Following their recapture of Teruel in February 1938, the Fascists had the initiative, so our experiences were of falling back and seeking - but not finding - a position we could hold. After a number of actions, retreats and forced marches, came the Calaceite ambush which resulted in the capture of a large number of International Brigaders - including Morry

Levitas and myself, as well as Frank Ryan." As Bob Doyle also described it to me: "We were captured in an ambush by Italian troops of a mechanised division of the Black Arrows on the 31st March 1938 heading towards the River Ebro. Franco had launched the final offensive (towards the Mediterranean) with added military strength from Hitler and Mussolini."

Calaceite was located on the Aragon front near Gandesa. In 1981 Maurice Levitas described his capture there in an interview with his fellow prisoner, Carl Geiser. I was extremely grateful to Carl for providing me with the transcript of that interview. Maurice recalled: "We were walking up to an established front line to relieve somebody else when down the centre of this road came these Italian whippet tanks in great number. My little group had a machine gun, and we had small arms, and we moved over into the field. However, capture was to prove unavoidable. We were surrounded by Italian fascists ... We had already been set upon to dig what we had taken to be our grave, and we had already been subjected to some questioning ... We certainly expected to die there..."

And not without reason. Between March 10 and April 14, for example, as many as 140 American volunteers had been murdered after being captured. (I have no figures for other nationalities.) Bob Doyle had an additional reason to fear for Maurice Levitas's safety in particular. He told me that at one stage the Fascists lined up the prisoners and shouted: "*Communists, Socialists, Jews and machine-gunners - ¡un pie adelante! (one step forward!)*" Needless to say, no one budged. But Bob described Maurice, a Dublin Jew, as being full-bearded at the time and looking as he put it, "just like somebody straight out of the Bible". So when they were taken away for the night Bob slipped Maurice his razor and advised him to shave. What then saved their lives? Very simple. At that stage in the war Mussolini became concerned at the large numbers of his own Fascist troops that had been captured by the Republicans. So he sent new orders to the front to hold Internationals (though not Spaniards) as hostages for the purpose of later bartering for prisoner exchanges. Also captured on the Gandesa front that same night and imprisoned with Frank Ryan, Maurice Levitas, Bob Doyle, and Dave Goodman was Max Parker.

Bob Doyle described San Pedro as follows: "We had no cells in the prison but an area for 700 International prisoners and another for 2,000 Asturians and Basques." The Basque prisoners included nuns in the infirmary who, despite pressure from both Church and military captors, refused to agree to the lie that it had been the Republicans themselves who had bombed and destroyed Guernica, rather than Hitler's Condor Legion that had in fact perpetrated that war crime. Carl Geiser, in one of the most powerful prison books I have ever read - *Prisoners of the Good Fight* - described how all prisoners in San Pedro were questioned by German Gestapo agents: "Finally we were taken to a field and ordered to strip ... Behind a table sat a Gestapo agent with a ledger. As each prisoner was identified, an assistant using callipers called out the length, breadth and depth of his skull, the distance between his eyes, the length of his nose, and described the skin colour, body type, wound scars and any disability. Next each prisoner was instructed to stand in front of a camera for a front and side view and close-up of the face. We were now 'scientifically' classified." Later, sociologists came to the prison armed with a two hundred-item questionnaire which the International Brigaders were compelled to complete. Bob Doyle recalled: "The Nazi sociologists made every effort to prove to the German people that we were sub-normal, depraved, etc. This was supported by the Bishop of Burgos who addressed us prisoners as such. We had a written question test first, followed by measurements of the body and then photographed



naked.” Maurice Levitas added, “I suppose that since we were stripped for these measurements my Jewishness was at least ‘suspected’. And that must have been the case for several of my comrades.”

It was certainly the case with Dave Goodman. He told me: “On the question of the Fascist attitude to Jews I can only refer to a story in a Franco paper we were given in San Pedro ... In fact I managed to bring the cutting out of the camp with me.” Dave sent me a photocopy of the cutting that partly read as follows: “In our war ... Judaism, organised and ambitious, is in the forefront of these international interests, its contingents’ participation, egotistical and cold-blooded, which succeeds only in throwing all flesh on to the fires. Some unlucky ones, whom we show here wearing spectacles, were entrusted by their race brothers to play their part in this effort to the limits of death. And here in Spain ... they are paying for their sins under the justice of the rifles.” Accompanying this newspaper item were four bespectacled photographs with the caption, “More Jews of the Reds’ International Brigades.” Dave Goodman commented: “I was surprised to find that two of the four photos are of me!”

Beatings were quite arbitrary. In *Prisoners of the Good Fight*, Carl Geiser wrote: “Severe beatings were administered in a cellar room known as la Sala de Tortura ... One day, early in July (1938), Bob Doyle from Dublin, Jack Flior from South Africa, and Bob Steck from the USA, sat down to eat their lunch. Steck recalled: ‘Tanky (a Spanish fascist sergeant) pointed to Jack ... to me and to Bob. We were marched into the Monastery, down to the cellar ... Tanky returned with five soldiers, some of whom carried tree limbs... Tanky struck Jack with his club made from a bull’s penis. He was ordered into La Sala de Tortura.’ There is no need for me to provide further details from Steck’s description of how the sickeningly horrendous and systematic beatings of each of them proceeded in turn. A few days later the camp was visited by a pro-Franco correspondent of the *New York Times* named William Carney. Geiser related: “When he seemed sceptical about our being beaten, the others turned Bob Steck and Bob Doyle around and pulled up their shirts revealing long red welts across their backs. Carney was visibly taken aback... Carney did reveal later in an article that Bob Steck had shown him ‘several red welts on his bare back’ but said he had received them for ‘not giving the Fascist salute to their flag and always refusing to kneel in church’.” Carl Geiser also recorded another incident: “Maurice Levitas, a bit slow to respond to an order, was given ‘a bit of a bashing’ by Tanky and thrown into the calabozo (another punishment cell below ground).” Sean Cronin’s biography of Ryan brought back many memories to Maurice Levitas. He wrote me: “I found it fascinating. So far as my sojourn in San Pedro was concerned and even before that, at Calaceite, many memories were renewed. It was a great privilege to have known him. I think that we all knew we were in association with someone special at the time. Well Manus, I started writing this letter at midnight ... and in the writing of it memories crowd in upon me ... playing chess with Frank Ryan in San Pedro, his great leadership and example to us all.”

The San Pedro prisoners who were most at risk from the fascists were the Soviets and the Germans. Hence, where possible, the Soviet prisoners pretended to be Polish citizens, while some German prisoners pretended to be Dutch, Swedish or Polish. While beatings of other prisoners were arbitrarily administered by the Spanish fascists themselves, Bob Doyle recalls that the brutal beatings of German anti-Nazi prisoners were organised by the Gestapo officers who visited the camp. Bob wrote of some of his German fellow prisoners: “Some tried to escape, knowing their inevitable fate. They were interrogated at pistol point and forced to sign ‘requests’ saying they wished to return to the Fatherland, and they were sent for torture. Similarly with the Czechs who came from Sudetenland who discovered

they were now German.” On January 6, 1939, the British and some other international prisoners, including the Irish, were removed to San Sebastian prison. Bob Doyle recalled hearing Basque prisoners, including priests, being systematically executed there by Franco. Eventually, on February 6, there was an exchange of 67 International Brigade prisoners for 70 Italian fascists. In May 1941 the German anti-Nazi prisoners at San Pedro were transferred to a concentration camp at Palencia. A typhus epidemic broke out in July and, of the twenty prisoners who contracted it, nineteen died. A German prisoner in the camp, who was lucky to avoid the epidemic, and also lucky enough to get away with the pretence that he was Polish, was Karl Kormes. He eventually succeeded in escaping to Gibraltar in 1943 and continued the fight against Hitlerism, first as a member of the USA’s Office of Strategic Services, and finally fighting with the Red Army on the Eastern Front that destroyed the Nazi Army in 1945. In later years Karl Kormes entered the diplomatic service of the German Democratic Republic and served as its ambassador to Yugoslavia and Ecuador, and I met Karl in Barcelona in 1988, along with Carl Geiser.

In 1996 I participated in Spain-wide commemorations of the 60th anniversary of the International Brigades, along with my father and numerous other veterans, as we did again for the 65th anniversary in 2001. My father passed away in 2006 and I did not attend the 70th anniversary commemorations. Nor did I attend the 75th anniversary commemorations in 2011, when only a handful of International Brigade veterans were still alive. But in that year, for the very first time, a commemoration was tolerated in front of San Pedro. The former concentration camp had been transferred to the Church by Franco in the 1940s. Fully refurbished, and with it now functioning as an “El Cid tourist attraction” money spinner for the monks, their wish was for its concentration camp history to be swept under the carpet. Hy Wallach was a New York volunteer who had been imprisoned in San Pedro for seventeen months, and who had recalled and spoken of Frank Ryan’s Connolly Commemoration lecture to his fellow prisoners. It was his daughter Nancy Wallach who would speak on behalf of International Brigade prisoners’ families at that 2011 commemoration.

See [www.albavolunteer.org/2011/11/nancy-wallach-speaks-at-san-pedro-de-cardena-tribute-event/](http://www.albavolunteer.org/2011/11/nancy-wallach-speaks-at-san-pedro-de-cardena-tribute-event/) and [www.albavolunteer.org/2011/11/celebrating-75-years-of-the-ib-at-the-san-pedro-concentration-camp/](http://www.albavolunteer.org/2011/11/celebrating-75-years-of-the-ib-at-the-san-pedro-concentration-camp/) for details, and see the 41st to the 47th minute of <https://vimeo.com/86338701> for film of the historian of San Pedro, Nacho Garcia, relating its history as a concentration camp at the place itself.

This April I participated in 80th anniversary International Brigade commemorations on the Andalusian front, where the Irish brigadistas of the Connolly Column had first gone into deadly battle in Christmas 1936. I then travelled northwards to the other end of the country for a commemoration in Burgos, where Nancy Wallach was once again a speaker. It was my dearest wish to pay my first visit to San Pedro, about which I had been writing for three decades, but our host, Nacho Garcia, only received permission from the Abbot for a visit on April 16, by virtue of it being a former prisoner’s daughter who wished to visit. So, as the tourist buses rolled up, we were discreetly allowed to enter past an otherwise permanently locked gate, in order to lay wreaths on the soft ground of its unmarked common grave, my wreath being in the colours of green, white and orange, as a tribute in the names of Frank Ryan and the other Irish who had been imprisoned there.

On our return to Burgos, Nacho spoke of his researches among the Francoist military archives held at Ferrol, Galicia,

into the questionnaires that had to be completed in respect of each International Brigade prisoner upon their arrival at the San Pedro concentration camp. The norm was for the prisoners' responses to be given verbally and then translated and typed up by the interrogator. These documents would appear to be accurate accounts of the prisoners' responses, including their defiant adherence to the cause for which they had fought. But there was no guarantee that this would be the case, or that inaccurate statements would not be falsely attributed to the prisoners. One statement particularly leaped out at Nacho Garcia during the course of his researches. Frank Ryan had refused to comply with that indirect procedure, and insisted on giving his own handwritten response to each of the questions, the only document he was prepared to sign. Nacho kindly allowed me to copy down the text of the Ryan document he had discovered, and it is published here for the first time.

In 1986, Bill Alexander wrote of Ryan's capture and imprisonment: "Ryan, of Brigade Staff, set an immediate example of courage. He made no attempt to disguise his rank and when asked by his Italian captors if he was a Communist replied, so that all around him could hear, *'I am an Irish Republican, but if I were a Communist I'd be proud to say so.'* Later they were herded as exhibits - filthy, unshaven and ragged - through the streets of Zaragoza. Some began to hum revolutionary tunes. It was possibly Ryan who struck up Connolly's 'Rebel Song', taken up with gusto and spirit by nearly all the prisoners. Later, in prison, Ryan said that, as the senior officer present, he would not give the fascist salute, and he never did during all his captivity. Later he used his standing and his religious beliefs to secure the removal of a vicious priest who vented his sadism in the compulsory Masses." (pp 186-7).

In *Frank Ryan: The Search for the Republic*, his definitive 1980 biography, Sean Cronin provided the following testimonials from Ryan's American fellow prisoners: "In the files being collected by Carl Geiser there is this tribute by Max Parker: 'Among many memorable and heroic people I have encountered, Frank Ryan stands out. He was with us in San Pedro for two months. Whatever happened to him after that is something of a mystery (but not to Cronin himself, whose reproduction of the wartime correspondence between Ryan and Irish Minister Leopold Kerney clearly established Ryan's wholehearted commitment to work for de Valera's objective of defending Ireland against fascism, imperialism and war - MO'R), but I'm sure whatever his fate he met it with courage and dignity which even our Fascist captors seemed to recognise and respect. He was very impressive, intelligent, articulate, incorruptible, strong. He was an inspiring figure and we welcomed inspiration.' Carl Geiser says: 'He had a very commanding personality. I heard a story that when he and some of his comrades were captured, Moroccan troops started to take personal possessions from them. Ryan ordered them to stop and they did, although he was a prisoner himself.' Because of this

*'commanding personality'* Ryan was never beaten by a guard, although he refused to run in the courtyard, sing the anthem, or give the Fascist salute." (pp 142-3).

The following handwritten document is a further testimony to the integrity of Frank Ryan's political and religious principles, and the courage of his convictions, to which he would firmly adhere to the very end of his life in June 1944.

## FIRST PUBLICATION OF FRANK RYAN'S RESPONSE TO HIS FASCIST CONCENTRATION CAMP QUESTIONNAIRE

### Nationality and work

Frank Ryan. Irish nationality. Born in Limerick. Residing in Dublin since 1924. 35 years of age. B. A. of the National University of Ireland. Formerly a teacher. Since 1927 journalist. Editor of various Republican papers, including "The Republic" (*An Phoblacht* - MO'R). Catholic. Participated in the Irish War of Independence 1919-21 and in the Irish Civil War of 1922-23, in the Irish Republican Army in which held the rank of Commandant (= Major).

### Political history and ideas

Belonged to the "Sinn Féin" (Republican) party of which Mr. de Valera was President. Subsequently belonged to the Irish Republican Congress - a left-wing Republican Party which aims at the unifying of Ireland and at complete independence from England. I am still a member of this party, and one of its leaders.

### Why did you come to Spain?

Two reasons. (1) In October 1936, ex-General O'Duffy, who had been dismissed by the Irish Free State Government, led a party of Irishmen to Spain "to fight for the Catholic faith" with General Franco. Believing that religion was not at stake in the Spanish war, and in order to show that O'Duffy did not represent the Irish people, I came to Spain. (2) I also came because I believed that General Franco was getting aid from Germany & Italy, while the other side was denied aid by the "Non-Intervention Pact". My sympathies were with the Madrid government, which I regarded as a democratic government.

### And what do you think now?

My views are still the same.

**Frank Ryan**  
**April 4, 1938**

□

Websites associated with atholbooks.org:

<http://www.david-morrison.org.uk>

<http://www.british-values.com>

<http://drpatwalsh.com>

<https://lefroggydotcom.wordpress.com>

<http://heideggerreview.org>

<http://atholstreetpeople.org>

# The Breaking of British Imperial and Financial Power 1940 – 1945

By Feargus O Raghallaigh

## Introduction

In the end the twentieth century proved to be the ‘American Century’, unquestionably and unquestioned. By the end of the nineteenth century the US had given rise to a new stage of capitalism – based on large, multi-branch, monopolistic companies combining entrepreneurial leadership with an embryonic modern management and drawing on the public capital markets. It had also become an imperial superpower, controlling Central and South America (the Western Hemisphere) and also a huge power in the Pacific. Neither feature – the economic dynamo and the political superpower – was quite appreciated whether at home or abroad. By the end of the twentieth century both were understood (if not accepted by all). Key to the hegemonic rise was the defeat, economic, financial and political, by mid-century of the British Empire. By century’s end the great Soviet power of Russia had been reduced almost to a state of nature.

The American agenda for the present century seems simply to be to entrench its position. Politically there is the ‘pivot to Asia’ – the renewal of the historic role in the Pacific but now with a focus on China. There are though continuing distractions in both Europe and the Middle East. On the economic front at this point there is the vision of going beyond simple trade – the globalisation agenda with now the concrete focus on completing the TTIP with Europe and the TPP for Asia-Pacific.

## The defeat of the British Empire

Ed Conway is a British economics journalist. He is the author of what is considered a very good journalistic account of the Bretton Woods conference of 1944 *The Summit: The Biggest Battle of the Second World War – fought behind closed doors* (Abacus Books, 2014). The title might on first sight be thought to push things a bit but then on a reading of the book, perhaps not.

There is any amount of stuff, academic, historical, technical on Bretton Woods as a monetary system and on its collapse or break-up in 1971. Even though the conference was organised as a journalistically open affair – and attended by a press army – there are no big pieces of straightforward journalistic story-telling such as that authored by Conway.

*The Summit* is first of all a journalistic exercise, telling a big yarn – and doing it well. It has a narrative, characters, incident, plots (lots), sidetracks and a beginning, middle and end. It maybe overdoes things somewhat in some respects – the Soviet team are every evening paralytic drunk in the bar and the poor old Kiwi minister Walter Nash is (at best) “dreary”. Keynes on the other hand is always the star.

Keynes is one of the three principal protagonists of *The Summit*. The other two are his *bête noire* at the conference, the US Treasury’s Harry Dexter White and White’s boss, the then Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau. The central figure throughout though is Keynes. To that extent the book is a biographical account if one narrow in scope, Keynes’s role in WWII culminating in the Bretton Woods conference and the intellectual origins of that role. Second, it is a detailed vivid

journalistic account of the Bretton Woods conference, the three-week international gathering held in June 1944.

Third, one of the book’s central themes is something little emphasised these days, indeed little appreciated at all. It is the primary focus of this essay. It is the extent to which for an important segment of the US elite WWII was seen as the great opportunity to destroy the British Empire as both a global-political entity and a world economic and commercial power. It is this aspect that I examine in this note.

By the 1930s (arguably even earlier) the British Empire was what stood in America’s own path to confirmed global supremacy – both politically and economically. 1940 represented the great opportunity to dispose of the obstruction and this was one of the objectives pursued by Harry White and Henry Morgenthau. ‘Bretton Woods’ was the culmination of their project. This is not the story of a Special Relationship but of British humiliation. The final terms of surrender would include Britain dismantling Imperial Preference; embracing global free trade; divesting itself of its most prized external assets; lumbering itself with a US-funded (and dollar denominated) war debt; and finally the requirement to first, repay that debt and second, take on a further loan to enable debt servicing and a basic capacity to trade in the new, global free trade regime that was to be the post-war world economy. On behalf of Empire Keynes resisted this agenda, fought it tooth and nail. He fought it in his role as the main British government envoy to Washington on issues of war finance. In the end though he recognised and accepted defeat. He even spoke in the House of Lords on 18 December 1945 for accepting the ‘terms of surrender’ as it were.

On this account White and Morgenthau (and particularly the latter, who was especially committed to the destruction of the City) carefully plotted their agenda. The critical moment for them was Roosevelt’s (initially vague) proposal in December 1940 for what would eventually become the Lend-Lease Agreement.

Churchill had become PM in May 1940. Conway makes the point (chapter five) that with his takeover the British war aim changed fundamentally: “When Winston Churchill became Prime Minister ... he immediately changed the country’s footing to one of total war. Out of the window went the carefully honed financial plans for an affordable conflict (plans honed in part by Keynes himself); instead Britain was to fight the war on a basis of unlimited liability.” War spending rose sharply regardless of capacity. The money would literally run out “by the first half of 1941. As in the Great War there was only one obvious source of financial support thereafter: the United States.”

The problem was Churchill was banking on Roosevelt – who really had no independent power in the matter. The President would have to confront an American public deeply opposed to engagement in foreign wars, particularly ones they would inevitably fund through lending to belligerents all of whom would default on their debts, post-war (as they all did after WWI, including the British). Further, Roosevelt was through



much of 1940 preparing to contest the Presidency in November (seeking re-election for a third term). The Americans also were pretty much of the view in 1940 that Britain was likely facing defeat with France already fallen by the summer – creating very large global-political problems for the US super-power. At the Treasury Department White was that summer even beginning to sketch out a post-war global commercial agenda based on a possible British defeat: *“Should Germany succeed in defeating France and England the United States will be confronted with a new situation fraught with grave problems. The problems are so vital that we must prepare for all eventualities.”*

Keynes too was by summer 1940 also contemplating the shape of a post-war new world economic order – though it did not feature British defeat. This in a way is the key that Conway has cut – his conceit as it were, in chapter five (titled Lunatic Proposals): to link White and Keynes and their imaginings of post-war worlds but also to connect them both in their musings to a broadcast made in July 1940 by the then German economics minister Walther Funk. It was on Conway’s narrative the Funk speech that led ultimately to Bretton Woods (and arguably even the eurozone).

Funk in his broadcast set out a scheme for an economic and financial New Order for a putative Nazi-dominated post-war Europe. It was noted everywhere. In a neutral US it fed into a strong view that Britain might be facing defeat and America should plan accordingly – thus the White exercise in the course of the summer of 1940.

In Britain Harold Nicholson sought reassurance from Keynes that Funk was talking rubbish – his were the ramblings of a lunatic. Instead Keynes replied that Funk’s scheme was brilliant. Conway quotes from the Keynes papers: *“In my opinion about three quarters of the passages quoted from the German broadcasts would be quite excellent if the name of Great Britain were substituted for Germany or the Axis as the case may be. If Funk’s plan is taken at face value, it is excellent and just what we ourselves should be thinking of doing.”* And off he went scheming and working up what would eventually become the official British proposal at Bretton Woods, there to be confronted with Dexter White’s competing American vision. Each of the three schemes had their different emphases, nuances and architectures of course. However on one central point both White and Keynes essentially followed Funk. There would be an end to the Gold Standard; exchange rates would be set in a fixed regime; there would be for participating countries a central clearing office (to cope with imbalances and to advance trade); and there would be regulation of trade with non-member states to ensure a balancing of flows with the rest of the world.

The Funk scheme would obviously clear or settle through a Berlin-based institution and the pegging currency would be the Reichmark. The geographic scope of the market would be central and western Europe. In trade terms borders would be swept away. White proposed Washington as the home of the clearing union, Keynes saw only London. Keynes and White saw their schemes in global terms, not European. However the Americans emphasised also from almost the beginning, free trade, declining tariffs and the Most Favoured Nation rule. Keynes saw the retention of Imperial Preference and initially, strict bilateralism (actually barter). He also saw huge problems for British governments resulting from their international indebtedness (including to the colonies and dominions) as a result of war. Sterling would be the weak link in the new system and this needed to be managed. Both also saw the end of the

Gold Standard – though the US view would change with time. Other structural features would also emerge. There would be a clearing mechanism (it became the IMF) and a development and reconstruction bank (the World Bank or International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to come). In essence however in Conway’s narrative it was Funk who put in motion a process that would build momentum to end with Bretton Woods.

The other side to it all was Roosevelt. By December 1940 he had won his presidential election and could dream and scheme to a different agenda. It was expressly more pro-British though also short of full and open engagement in war as an ally of Britain. Neither Congress nor the public would buy that. The idea was for something that financially might come to the same as full belligerency. He was though faced with the separation of powers constitutionally; a Congress committed to steering clear of it all; and a nation equally firm on non-engagement – not least because the WWI belligerents had all defaulted on the American war debts. The machinery of state – the Treasury, the Department of State and so on – also had their own agendas. Ultimately Roosevelt was faced with political and bureaucratic counterweights and the rule of law. There was a battery of legislation that could only be slowly (and cannily) chipped at and repealed – for example the Neutrality Acts – and which hindered war financing.

Roosevelt’s lightbulb moment as it were was after much effort and a Caribbean conversation with Churchill, Lend-Lease – at first quite a vague notion expressed in homely terms.

*“Suppose my neighbor’s home catches fire, and I have a length of garden hose four or five hundred feet away. If he can take my garden hose and connect it up with his hydrant, I may help him to put out his fire. Now, what do I do? I don’t say to him before that operation, “Neighbor, my garden hose cost me \$15; you have to pay me \$15 for it.” What is the transaction that goes on? I don’t want \$15—I want my garden hose back after the fire is over. All right. If it goes through the fire all right, intact, without any damage to it, he gives it back to me and thanks me very much for the use of it. But suppose it gets smashed up—holes in it—during the fire; we don’t have to have too much formality about it, but I say to him, “I was glad to lend you that hose; I see I can’t use it any more, it’s all smashed up.” He says, “How many feet of it were there?” I tell him, “There were 150 feet of it.” He says, “All right, I will replace it.” Now, if I get a nice garden hose back, I am in pretty good shape.”*

The president did not have his way: this is another Conway point. A homely idea had to get through Congress and both the State Department and the Treasury. It did not: it was refined into domestic legislation (the Lend-Lease Act) that had to take the hurdles of the enactment process; and an accompanying formal international agreement setting out binding terms (the Lend-Lease Agreement). In fact it became a series of international agreements as Lend-Lease was extended to one ally after another. The Act and the Agreement turned Roosevelt’s homely fire hose into something else entirely.

It was in particular in the course of going through the State Department and US Treasury mills that (for the British) the poison was slipped in. Enactment caused delay, for the British inordinate as overseas assets had to be liquidated to pay for the war. However it was Article VII of the draft agreement as well and the Morgenthau/White interpretation that really upset things. Even before Lend-Lease was at all functional, Morgenthau had decided the British simply could not be

believed on the issue of their financial circumstances. This is a significant theme in the book, Americans' utter distrust of the British from the beginning – British beggary was on this view an act, a calculated deception. The answer was forced liquidation of British foreign investments including their US holdings and in particular for Morgenthau the fire-sale of Courtauld's prized American Viscose company to US financial investors for half-price.

Another theme is the Americans' sense of outrage at Keynes's behaviour, attitude and as they saw it his deep lack of respect for the US governmental system and the normal protocols. Conway gives us the impression that Keynes was, even for the run of British officials and diplomats, a boor of the first order. He would spend a long time in America on a number of visits between 1940 and 1945, representing the British in key and sensitive negotiations including at Bretton Woods. He never changed his approach or accommodated himself to the complexities of Big Government (this was New Deal America) or the constitutional and institutional arrangements associated with the separation of powers. In the detailed negotiation of the proposed Lend-Lease Agreement he was seen by Morgenthau in 1940 as a saboteur sent to sucker America and scupper the Viscose deal. On Conway's telling it never really got any better in the ensuing five years.

Conway leaves one with the view that Keynes never understood – even remotely – the US system of politics and government – or if he did, he held it all in some kind of superior contempt. Maybe it was a combination of both actually. He did not understand, he made no attempt to appreciate and he thought them all to be a nest of vipers:

*“... the separation of powers ... meant there was no single locus of power. White House support for a policy offered no guarantee that it would pass into law through Congress – even though the Democrats had a majority in both houses. Even the Executive itself contained complexities that seemed to pass over Keynes's head ...*

*For Keynes, who was accustomed to waltzing into Downing Street and influencing government policy with a few well-executed conversations, the encounter with this nest of vipers was deeply frustrating. ‘To the outsider it looks incredibly inefficient,’ he wrote. ‘One wonders how decisions are ever reached at all. There is no clear hierarchy of authority. The different departments ... criticise one another in public and produce rival programmes. There is perpetual internecine warfare between prominent personalities.’” (Conway, p113)*

Keynes did not do himself any favours either, in Conway's assessment.

*“What passed for wit in Britain more often than not came across as insulting and snide in the United States. From Keynes's perspective, on the other hand, many of his American counterparts seemed disturbingly uptight.*

*“Within a few weeks of his arrival ... Keynes managed to irritate almost everyone. The British Embassy was put out when he insisted on going to see the Treasury Secretary alone ... The State Department was horrified about his attitude towards Lend-Lease; and Morgenthau was simply infuriated by everything he did.”*

Keynes also seems to have decided that he had the ear of the president and that this was all that mattered. He did not really have Roosevelt's ear and anyway the president was not at all his

own master in all of this. The separation of powers and popular sentiment mattered. The Hill also counted and above all there was the defaulted debt from WWI. This truly rankled with just about every element of the US system and society.

One is left wondering why on earth Keynes was sent as the financial envoy to America. At one level it was an accident – the man most likely to have been sent into the role, Josiah (Lord) Stamp – had been killed in an air raid. Keynes was seen as his natural number two. However one also is inclined to speculate that the man's sheer energetic sense of self-belief and maybe overbearing personality could not be resisted.

Roosevelt came up with an undefined idea for Lend-Lease. It was turned by Congress and Treasury and State into something else, a deal with a very large price attached – and a firm resolve that there would be no welching this time. During Keynes's stay in Washington in 1941 as he was negotiating the details for Lend-Lease the Americans held back on their price until the last minute – until just a few days before he was set to return to London with the terms. He smelled a rat though he did not quite know what would be demanded from him – except that it might have something to do with Imperial Preference. It was worse than his worst nightmare when he read it.

The months of negotiations were tough. The mutual distrust was total – and for the British they amounted to humiliation, to being treated almost as a defeated enemy power. *“Morgenthau asked Keynes and his colleagues to come to his office each day to explain what Britain's dollar position was: how much money it had and what it needed in the way of materials. Then the Americans would decide how much aid they could hand out. [I want to know] down to the last sou what the British Treasury position is,” said Morgenthau.*” It is all rather reminiscent of the activities of the Troika during the recent bail-outs. Indeed Conway makes the point that these daily secret meetings in Washington were “an early precursor of the sessions bankrupt countries would later have to submit to under International Monetary Fund programmes.” At the end of it all also there was the last-minute revelation of the extraction price, Article VII of the proposed agreement.

The draft was handed to Keynes by Dean Acheson.

*“Scanning the document, when Keynes came to Article VII he spluttered in amazement. The clause called for a deal between the US and the UK (and potentially other countries) aimed at ‘mutually advantageous economic relations between them and the betterment of world-wide economic relations’ – in other words, an economic pact on the future shape of the global economy. That much was uncontroversial – in fact it was welcome to Keynes. It was what followed that was disturbing: the deal should ‘provide against discrimination in either the United States of America or the United Kingdom against the importation of any product originating in the other country.’*

*“He asked Acheson whether this meant the elimination of Imperial Preference. Acheson said it did – whereupon he later recalled, Keynes ‘burst into a speech such as only he could make’, warning that such a commitment was simply impossible.”*

However Keynes and the British had to swallow the pill – and there would be further humiliation over the following years, culminating in Bretton Woods but also the terms of financial settlement between the US and the UK in relation to war debt. That's the story for Part 2 of this note.

*Final wording of Article VII as it is in the final agreement:*

*“In the final determination of the benefits to be provided to the United States of America by the Government of the United*

Kingdom in return for aid furnished under the Act of Congress of March 11, 1941, the terms and conditions thereof shall be such as not to burden commerce between the two countries, but to promote mutually advantageous economic relations between them and the betterment of world-wide economic relations. To that end, they shall include provision for agreed action by the United States of America and the United Kingdom, open to participation by all other countries of like mind, directed to the expansion, by appropriate international and domestic measures, of production, employment, and the exchange and consumption of goods, which are the material foundations of the liberty and welfare of all peoples; to the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce, and to the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers; and, in general, to the attainment of all the economic objectives set forth in the Joint Declaration made on August 14, 1941, by

the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

At an early convenient date, conversations shall be begun between the two Governments with a view to determining, in the light of governing economic conditions, the best means of attaining the above stated objectives by their own agreed action and of seeking the agreed action of other like-minded Governments.”

So this finishes out the Lend-Lease story and sets it up for Bretton Woods and related matters and events, including the business of GATT and also the position relating to the USSR - which was actually a member of the Bretton Woods negotiation and was intended to be a founder member of the IMF and the World Bank - but the Cold War stepped in. □

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## Thoughts on Lord Esher (Part Three)

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### By Pat Walsh

I noticed that Lord Esher said the following in a biography of Lord Kitchener he had published in the 1920s:

*“The German invasion of Belgium, although it made no vital difference to the resolve already taken by Asquith and Grey, preserved the unity of the nation, if not the integrity of the Government. The Opposition leaders, Lord Lansdowne, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Balfour, by a gesture unusual in the annals of our political history, threw the weight of their support into the balance for the Prime Minister. Strict exaction in the way of public responsibility may demand an adverse judgment on the policy of Ministers who, by an earlier declaration of their moral engagement to France, might have led the rulers of Germany to shrink from precipitating the world into so great a conflict; especially if it can be shown that the certainty of having the whole force of Great Britain thrown into the scale against them would have induced them to pause.”* (The Tragedy of Lord Kitchener, pp.21-2)

I think this passage is important in candidly revealing three things:

Belgium was beside the point about whether Britain joined the war.

The Liberal Cabinet were hustled into supporting the War by a crucial intervention by the Unionist frontbench.

Britain refrained from deterring Germany from marching through Belgium by refusing to make its position clear at the crucial moment.

On the first point:

As E.G. Jellicoe noted in his 1925 book, *Playing the Game*:  
*“Cabinet had met... on Saturday morning. There had been some talk about the neutrality of Belgium, but that apparently did not appeal to all the Members of the Cabinet a sufficient justification for declaring war, and consequently late on Saturday, the Tory leaders gave their opinion... Lord*

*Lansdowne and Mr. Bonar Law, with probably Sir Edward Carson, were all for solidarity, and for as the decision of the Cabinet hung in the balance, to stiffen the flabby backs of the dissentients, and following the lead given by the atmospheric article in The Times of the previous day, a letter was sent to the Prime Minister on the joint authority of Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Bonar Law.”* (p.165)

The letter, now contained in Lloyd George’s papers, from the Unionist opposition of 2<sup>nd</sup> August offered Asquith a blank cheque and helped concentrate the minds of the opposition to intervention:

*“Lord Lansdowne and I feel it our duty to inform you that in our opinion as well as in that of all the colleagues we have been able to consult, it would be fatal to the honour and security of the United Kingdom to hesitate in supporting France and Russia at the present juncture; and we offer our unhesitating support to the Government in any measures they may consider necessary for that object.”* (LG/C/611/20)

The letter from the Unionist opposition does not mention Belgium. It was the British ‘obligations’ to France and Russia alone, organised through Liberal Imperialist/Unionist collaboration over the previous decade that bound Britain to provide military and naval support at the vital hour. As Jellicoe noted:

*“The truth could not be told. Public opinion – the ‘atmosphere’ – must be rallied by something of a just and righteous cause... it should be a war of ideas, with the holiness of something like a crusade for justice and freedom about it.”* (p.166)

This letter from the Unionist opposition was not marked ‘Private’ inferring that it could be used publicly against the Liberal Government if they chose to ignore it. It was delivered in time for the crucial cabinet meeting that morning. Churchill advised both Bonar Law and Balfour on the drafting of the letter so that it would have maximum impact.



This made it clear that the Unionist opposition were for military intervention with or without Belgium and it meant that a revolt within the Cabinet would not prevent the intervention only ensure that a coalition took Britain into the War rather than a Liberal Government.

After the War, in 1923, Bonar Law made a speech explaining why he was in favour of intervention in the European War and the sending of the letter:

*“If an earthquake were suddenly to swallow up the whole of Germany, we ought to gain materially and not lose, because Germany was a rival – a competitor to a greater extent than she was a customer.”* (Playing The Game, p.165)

So Britain’s decision to go to War had nothing to do with Belgium. Belgium simply ensured a Liberal Government declared War rather than a coalition.

It was the Cabinet meeting of August 2 that decided War with Germany was inevitable – before Germany’s entry into Belgium, as noted on Walter Runciman’s invitation to the meeting (WR 135/92). Grey threatened resignation if the Cabinet did not support War. Asquith read out the letter from the Unionists at this point.

What is more striking is the evidence from Lord Esher’s journals that the Liberal Imperialists – Asquith, Grey, Haldane, Churchill – had been determined on war with Germany even before Austria had declared war on Serbia. In his Journal dated 17th January, 1915 Esher reported a conversation with John Morley. Morley told Esher that on the 25th July – 3 days before the first declaration of war – Sir Edward Grey told the Cabinet that England should tell France she would be supported in a war on Germany. A number of Liberal Ministers were opposed to this and stated they would resign. On the following day these dissenters were told by the Prime Minister, Asquith, that if the Government broke up a Coalition would have to be formed to take England to war. This had the desired effect as most of the dissidents pledged themselves to the Liberal Government for Imperial and patriotic reasons. England, therefore, entered the war with a Liberal Government.

So the decision to join a Balkan War, which would encourage it to become a European War, and which, through Britain’s intervention, would make it a World War had nothing at all to do with Belgium. Belgium merely functioned as a means of holding the Liberal Government together and would serve as the means by which anti-war Liberals would become fierce warmongers with good consciences.

Only John Morley remained immune from this because his conscience made him end his political life rather than become implicated in what was being done. As Churchill later related, he jumped too early on principle:

*“The majority of the Cabinet was for leaving France and Germany and the other Powers great and small to fight it out as they pleased, and Morley found himself looked on as leader by a gathering band. But the issues were clouded and tangled. There was Belgium and the faith of Treaties. There was the undefended coasts of France and the possibility of the German fleet ‘on our very doorstep’... Morley was no doctrinaire or fanatic. The ‘doorstep’ argument weighed with*

*him. It persuaded the Cabinet... So when later on he told me he must resign, I said in effect that if he would wait for two or three days more, everything would be clear, and we should be in full agreement. The Germans would make everyone easy in his conscience. They would accept all responsibilities and sweep away all doubts. Already their vanguards pouring through Luxembourg approached the Belgian frontier. Nothing could recall or deflect them. They were launched; and the catastrophe now imminent and certain would convince and unite the British Empire as it had never been convinced and united before. ‘They cannot stop now. If they tried they would be thrown into utter confusion. They must go on in spite of frontiers, treaties... Remember all the others are marching too...’* (Great Contemporaries, pp.104-5)

Germany had been manoeuvred into a position in which only an attack through Belgium would be adequate for its defence against a two front attack. It was inevitable she would go through Belgium if she valued her existence as a state. Only Britain could deter Germany and it chose not to.

One gets the impression that Morley saw this and could not bring himself to be part of it. He jumped early before there was no political reason not to jump. He refused to let himself be carried along to the War by a clarifying of the issue that was bogus.

On the third point – that the Liberal Imperialists “*might have led the rulers of Germany to shrink from precipitating the world into so great a conflict*”:

Britain’s activity/non-activity – during July and August in encouraging the development of a conflict and then joining it turned it from being a purely European contest involving Germany and Austro-Hungary against Serbia, Russia and France into a conflict involving billions across the globe. Britain’s freedom of action was the major element of uncertainty in the situation that had the effect of promoting the War. During the critical few days at the end of July, Britain had in great measure the power to determine the course of events in Europe. If it had declared its intention to commit its army in support of France that would have exerted considerable influence on German behaviour, which would in turn have greatly influenced Austria, and Austria might well have warded off Russian mobilisation by taking a different attitude to Serbia.

Or, if Britain had declared its intention to be neutral under specified conditions, that would have influenced French behaviour in drawing back, and discouraging Russia. But England did neither of these things. Instead, it gave the Germans hope that it would remain neutral, encouraging the Kaiser to back Austria, whilst signalling to the French and Russians its intentions if they went ahead.

After Austria had declared war on Serbia both sets of alliances then eagerly made representations to Britain to determine her position. The Germans argued that if England declared it would remain neutral, France and Russia would not dare to fight. The French and Russians argued that if England declared she would side with them, Germany and Austria would at once back down.

But Asquith and Grey decided to do neither and maintained a dangerous ambiguity in Britain’s position. They, instead, by their deliberate inactivity encouraged neither side to draw back, and instead, both alliances to war. As Churchill said: “*They*

*must go on in spite of frontiers, treaties... Remember all the others are marching too..."*

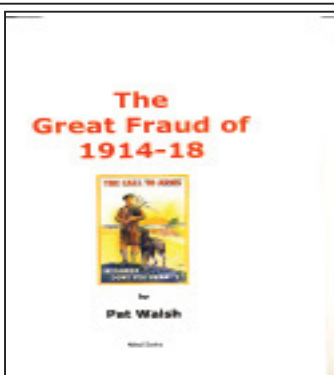
Britain could have prevented the German march through Belgium by declaring its intention to make War on it if it did. Germany would then have had to think again in the light of the certain knowledge that the British Empire would throw its great weight against her, behind that of France and Russia. Germany would be encircled by land and sea and hemmed in for an effective blockade to be maintained upon her. But if Germany had thought again and not gone through Belgium it would have been much harder for the Government and its allies in the Unionist opposition to overcome the Gladstonian backbenches for a simple Balance of Power War. England would have entered the War in disunity, and with much greater difficulty raised the mass armies it believed essential for seeing off Germany, good and proper.

The British State, in the critical moment, did not have a position that the other European states could take account of when deciding what they should do. It looked like indecisiveness by British statesmen at the critical juncture - a thing referred to briefly by a number of commentators at the time - and it has become customary to say that Britain drifted into the war. But it was nothing like that at all. Asquith, Grey, Haldane and Churchill had all decided a week before the Declaration of War that, in the event of a conflict occurring in Europe, Britain would take part in it. They calculated the chain of events and their drift, encouraged them to occur, and then in the time-honoured fashion of the Balance of Power strategy, they entered the war as part of a military alliance against their main European rival. That is illustrated well in Churchill's account of his attempts to hold Morley back until events had run their course.

Britain was the only real free agent in the situation and was not bound by treaty to join forces with France or anyone else. Its options were open and it was not under any obligation to take part in the war. Britain could afford to let a European conflict run its course and sit back and watch the territorial sorting out as a result of it, without risking any loss itself. But it decided that the great opportunity had arrived, for which it had planned for a decade, to play for much higher stakes.

The Liberal Imperialists practised a strategic deception on the Germans that encouraged them into war by making them delude themselves that Britain would stay out of it. That is a further revelation from Lord Esher that historians have chosen to ignore.

The volumes of Esher's Journals and Diaries I have were obtained cheaply from a second hand bookshop in Belfast a couple of years ago. The previous owner was, I see, the notable historian, Keith Jeffery. □



## The Great Fraud Of 1914-18

By Pat Walsh

Athol Books 2014

The Great War of 1914 was Britain's Great War. But it should also be called Britain's Great Fraud on Ireland and the world. When Britain encouraged and then entered the European war that was taking shape in August 1914 it made it into a Great War. It was Great Britain that put the Great in the Great War. That is to say that without Great Britain's participation in it there would have been no Great War. In entering the European war Britain stated its aims in grand universal terms that were idealistic in the extreme.

These aims were not only idealistic and unachievable but they were fraudulent. The objective of the Great Fraud was to show to the world that Britain was fighting a good war against an evil that had to be vanquished. The war was proclaimed as being for "civilisation against the Barbarian", for "democracy" against "Prussianism". And it was also supposedly a "war for small nations" for "poor little Belgium" or for "gallant Serbia" and for a host of other long forgotten things. But what it came down to was a pulverising of Germany and the taking of its trade and markets in what was a traditional Balance of Power war catastrophically invested with a great moral mission.

The Fraud that was perpetrated on Ireland and the world, concerning the character of the war Britain proclaimed itself to be fighting, was produced in order to convince any doubters, at home and abroad, about the rightfulness of it. These reasons were also later useful in enlisting the cannon fodder necessary to see the job through. And when Britain's Great War did not prove great enough to achieve its objectives and the United States had to be procured as an ally to complete the job the Great Fraud was both perpetuated and enhanced. A massive propaganda effort was launched that not only coloured the settlement of the war to the detriment of Europe and beyond but also created the myths that mystify understanding of it to this day. And so vast armies were recruited for the waging of the war and millions of people were killed in it, including tens of thousands of Irishmen who enlisted in the British Army to fight, inspired by the professed ideals of establishing 'Democracy' and the 'Rights of Small Nations' universally, and especially in Ireland. Britain's Great War and the Home Rulers decision to take part in it had momentous consequences for Ireland.

Out of it came the fall of the Home Rule Party and of 'Imperial Ireland' as a result of Britain failing to win the quick victory that was expected. As well, in revulsion against the murderous British swindle, there came the rise of the Irish democracy and the Irish Republic.

# James Connolly and the Great War

## Why Connolly and Larkin Supported Socialist Germany in World War 1

By Pat Muldowney

In a famous photograph of Irish Citizen Army outside Liberty Hall during World War 1 a prominently displayed banner reads – *'We serve neither King nor Kaiser, but Ireland'*

On the other hand, Jim Larkin did significant war-work for Germany in the USA. And the 1916 Proclamation reads: *Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.*

According to the excellent history of the Labour Party on display at the Labour 2012 Centenary Conference in Galway, *'the proclamation of the republic was written by Connolly and printed in Liberty Hall. Connolly was also appointed Commandant-General of the Rising.'*

So how is the declaration of neutrality in the Liberty Hall banner to be reconciled with the Proclamation's declaration of alliance with the Central European Powers in the Great War?

Well, Connolly speaks for himself on this. His explanation makes perfect sense.

In an article published on 15 August 1914, Connolly wrote as follows in *Forward*, a publication of the Independent Labour Party in Glasgow:

### *A Continental Revolution*

*And now, like the proverbial bolt from the blue, war is upon us, and war between the most important, because the most Socialist, nations on earth. And we are helpless. What then becomes of all our resolutions, all our protests, of fraternisation, all our threats of general strikes, all our carefully-built machinery of internationalism, all our hopes for the future? Were they all sound and fury signifying nothing? ...*

*Is it not clear as the fact of life itself that no insurrection of the working class, no general strike, no general uprising of Labour in Europe could possibly carry with it or entail greater slaughter of Socialists than will their participation as soldiers in the campaigns of the Armies of their respective countries ...*

*I am not writing in captious criticism of my Continental comrades. We know but little about what is happening on the Continent ... But believing as I do that any action would be justified which put a stop to this colossal crime ... I feel compelled to express the hope that ere long we may read of the paralysing of the internal transport service on the Continent, even should the fact of paralysing necessitate the erection of socialist barricades ... Even an unsuccessful attempt at Socialist Revolution by force of arms ... would be less disastrous to the Socialist cause than the fact of Socialists allowing themselves to be used in the slaughter of their brothers in the cause. A great Continental uprising of the working class would stop the war ...*

On 22 August 1914 Connolly wrote in similar vein in *Forward*:

### *A Martyr for Conscience Sake*

*[Noting that Socialists throughout Europe seemed to be protesting against the war but then agreeing to fight it, Connolly wrote:]... what does it mean? It means that the Socialist parties of the various countries mutually cancel each other, and that as a consequence Socialism ceases to exist as a world force and drops out of history in the greatest crisis of the history of the world, in the very moment when courageous action will most influence history ...*

*We know that not more than a score of men in the various Cabinets of the world have brought about this war ... and that all the alleged 'reasons' for it are so many after-thoughts invented to hide from us the fact that the intrigues and schemes of our rulers had brought the world to this pass. All Socialists are agreed upon this. Being so agreed, are we now to forget it all ... because some twenty highly placed criminals say our country requires us to slaughter our brothers ... The idea outrages my every sense of justice and fraternity. I may be only a voice crying in the wilderness, a crank amongst the community of the wise; but whoever I be, I must, in deference to my own self-respect, and to the sanctity of my own soul, protest against the doctrine that any decree of theirs of national honour can excuse a Socialist who serves in a war which he has denounced as a needless war ...*

This is consistent with the "neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland" neutrality line. And the note of desperate disappointment is understandable.

The socialist movement had, in the preceding generation or two, pushed through huge advances in all spheres. The ruling elements in each of the central and western European countries had enacted major reforms. In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, for instance, the new Liberal government of Asquith introduced the Old Age Pensions Act in 1908. (In a phrase of the period, to some of the beneficiaries the Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George was "the greatest Irishman that ever lived"!)

But in August 1914 the rhetoric of international solidarity between the national components of the European socialist movement turned out to be just rhetoric.

What did Connolly want? What might he have meant by an attempt at Socialist Revolution by force of arms, as he called it?

Jim Larkin's ITGWU showed what could be accomplished by strike action by inhibiting the movement of British troops during the War of Independence. A general strike of transport and munitions workers in 1914 would have had powerful effects on the belligerent governments. Could it have led on to seizure of state power by the strikers? Could they have formed their own militias like the Irish Citizen Army?

It is possible that a transport and munitions strike would have been suppressed by overwhelming military force, the participants interned, and their leaders executed as fifth columnists in the pay of other governments.



But, just like Ireland's 1916 Rising, a powerful example would have been given to the population at large, putting a brake on the belligerence of governments, and perhaps eventually bringing about the cessation and return to the *status quo ante* which Pope Benedict XV proposed, and to which the Central Powers actually agreed. (It was Britain which, accustomed to actually winning its many wars – mostly against herders, farmers, hunters and fisherman who lacked proper modern weapons – forced a fight to the finish and consigned millions more to perdition.)

In fact Connolly did not simply give up and retire from the fray in 1914. His moment of disillusioned despair was temporary. He took stock of the situation and prepared for action.

In Larkin's newspaper, *The Irish Worker* (29 August 1914), Connolly characterised the war as "*the war of a pirate upon the German nation*":

### ***The War upon the German Nation***

*Foremost and most successful European nation in this endeavour to escape from the thralldom of dependence upon England's manufactures stands the German nation. To this contest in the industrial field it brought all the resources of science and systematised effort. Early learning that an uneducated people is necessarily an inferior people, the German nation attacked the work of educating its children with such success that it is now unreservedly admitted that the Germans are the best educated people in Europe. Basing its industrial effort upon an educated working class, it accomplished in the workshop results that this half-educated working class of England could only wonder at ... It was determined that since Germany could not be beaten in fair competition industrially, she must be beaten unfairly by organising a military and naval conspiracy against her ... remember that the war found England thoroughly prepared, Germany totally unprepared ... The British capitalist class has planned this colossal crime in order to ensure its uninterrupted domination of the commerce of the world.*

The week previously, in *The Irish Worker*, 22 August 1914 (*America and Europe*), Connolly took issue with the idea put out by British and Home Rule papers that American public opinion was practically unanimous on the side of Britain and its allies, telling his readers that American opinion was almost universally hostile to Britain. Native-born Americans were suspicious of Britain. The Irish in America were hostile to Britain. And the immigrants from Central Europe, notably Jewish and German immigrants, were hostile to Russia on the side of Germany: "*The German press is the most powerful press in America not printed in the English language*", and it was read not only by Germans, but by Hungarians, Poles, Lithuanians, Czechs, Slavs, and Jews.

"*One may be sure that the German journalists [in the then-massive U.S. German-language press, presumably] have kept well to the front the fact that the German Government offered to concede all that the British Government had asked for in the matter of Belgium, and had even asked the British Government to name its own terms of neutrality, and that the British Foreign Minister concealed this fact from the Parliament when speaking before the declaration of war.*" The Jews were "*surely one of the most influential of the races represented in America ... Particularly is this true of the eastern states, and in the commercial and journalistic world.*"

And the Jewish press would be at least hostile to Russia. (In the *Irish Worker* of 12 September 1914, Connolly, in *Friends of Small Nationalities*, quoted New York Jewish newspapers, in

German and Yiddish, as declaring Germany and Austria to be the least anti-Semitic nations in Europe.)

*America and Europe* concludes:

Finally, as a word of warning this week. Do not let anyone play upon your sympathies by denunciation of the German military bullies. German military bullies, like all tyrannies among civilised people, need fear nothing so much as native democracy. Attack from outside can only strengthen tyrants within a nation. If we had to choose between strengthening the German bully or the Russian autocrat the wise choice would be on the side of the German. For the German people are a highly civilised people, responsive to every progressive influence, and rapidly forging the weapons for their own emancipation from native tyranny, whereas the Russian Empire stretches away into the depths of Asia, and relies on an army recruited from amongst many millions of barbarians who have not yet felt the first softening influence of civilisation.

Connolly was not the only observer taking this position. In *The War Against Europe* (pamphlet, September 1914, New York edition), Roger Casement wrote:

"England fights as the foe of Europe and the enemy of European civilization. In order to destroy German shipping, German commerce, German industry, she has deliberately plotted the conspiracy we now see at work. The war of 1914 is England's war. For years she has been plotting how she could, without danger to herself, destroy the peaceful menace of German prosperity. A few more years of peaceful expansion by Germany and the chances of success would be less if not quite gone. Since August 1911, the sole object of British foreign policy has been to put Germany in a false position and to arrange for the blow to be struck by other hands – by hired hands.

"Today we see the triumph of British diplomacy. Russia and France have been nerved up to the task. The sword has been drawn against Germany, and England ... enters joyfully into a struggle that, while it shall never touch her shores, or interrupt or lessen a single English meal, must end in the laying waste of Germany and the annihilation of the only European people who had shown themselves capable of serious competition in the peaceful arts of commerce and industry. In order to achieve this crime England is prepared to hand Europe over to Russia. Herself a non-European power she cheerfully contemplates Europe dominated by an asiatic Power ...

"In this war Germany fights not only for her own life – she fights to free the seas and if she wins she fights to free Ireland ... The fight may be fought on the seas but the fate will be settled on an island. The crippling of the British fleet will mean a joint German-Irish invasion of Ireland and every Irishman able to join that army of deliverance must get ready today."

Military domination of eastern Europe by Russia actually came about thirty years later, in very different circumstances. In the light of actual events (German defeat of Russia in the Great War), it may be a bit difficult to see what Casement, who had been a prominent insider in the British diplomatic corps, was getting at in his 1914 pamphlet.

In the Allied theory of the impending Great War, Britain would help France to hold the Germans on the western Front, while "the Russian streamroller" would overwhelm the eastern front by pouring its inexhaustible Asiatic hordes of human cannon fodder into the heart of Central Europe.

Making this happen required removal of the British military veto on Russia's heart's desire, the warm-water Mediterranean port of Constantinople, birthplace of Russian Orthodox religion and culture: "Czargrad". Throughout the 19th century Britain had opposed Russia's designs on Turkey, and fought its last but one war (Crimea) against armed white people in order

to defend Turkey (and the Middle East/Afghanistan) from Russian pressure on the vulnerable western flank of Britain's Indian Empire.

But now the steamroller of Russian autocracy was to be deployed against socialist Europe.

A brutal, if brilliant, war strategy. Sure enough, secret treaties ceded Constantinople (and 'Turkish Armenia' and 'Kurdistan' and 'Persian Azerbaijan' to Russia, while, in rest of the Middle Eastern carved-up, France was awarded territory between the new British Middle Eastern territories and the expanded Russian Empire, to serve as the buffer against post-War Russia that Turkey had been throughout the 19th century. (Not to mention awarding Palestine to the Zionist movement.)

The full facts and full horror of this were not totally evident in 1914. The secret treaties had yet to be formalised. But the broad outlines and intentions could be discerned, just as NATO machinations can be observed today.

Connolly was well-connected to the European socialist movement, and he had lived in America. There is not scope here to assess the details of the geopolitical analysis of himself and Casement, and how historic enmities were overturned out of the blue, and turned into alliances. ("We are at war with East-Asia. We have always been at war with East-Asia.")

These days we are told we must choose between Boston and Berlin, between German welfare capitalism and the financial piracy of Wall Street and the City of London. Indeed, Berlin itself has had to choose between Boston and Berlin. Germany's lurch towards Boston a decade or so ago fed steroids to the Celtic Tiger and gave it its fatal heart attack.

But in regard to King and Kaiser in 1914, Connolly's choice of Berlin's welfare capitalism over London's finance-capitalist-militarist piracy gets support from an unlikely source.

On 19 February 1916, in his newspaper, *The Workers' Republic*, under the heading *The German State*, Connolly published part of the concluding chapter of *Socialized Germany* by Frederic C. Howe.

Frederic Clemson Howe (1867–1940) was a member of the Ohio Senate, Commissioner of Immigration of the Port of New York, and President of the League for Small and Subject Nationalities. His book on Socialized Germany can be read in full at <http://archive.org/stream/socializedgerman00howeuoft#page/n7/mode/2up>

Howe was very much on the Anglo-Saxon side, and represented President Wilson at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. ( In another book <http://archive.org/stream/whywar00howe#page/232/mode/2up> (*Why War*, 1916), Howe gave his views of the true origins of the Great War.) Howe's *Socialized Germany* book is essentially good advice to the Allied side on how they needed to get their act together in order to keep Germany down.

Unlike Howe, Connolly was not an Anglophile. Connolly's dream of joint European Socialist action against war was dead. He had done his utmost to get better wages and conditions, housing, health care, pensions, and all the rest, so that people did not have to live like animals.

But the catastrophe had occurred. The William Martin Murphys, the Redmonds, the bishops, the newspapers, and the rest, had endorsed and encouraged something far worse than unemployment, low wages, miserable housing and diet. They were shovelling the people that Connolly had worked for into trenches to die like animals. They were screaming for the slaughter of young men who had never done any harm to Ireland or its people.

What is the use of jobs, housing, wages, pensions if you are dead at 20?

But Connolly had the Irish Citizen Army, and he prepared to actually do something about the catastrophe. The Socialist movement failed to act in 1914. But Connolly did not sit around in despair, thinkingly longingly of what might have been, and now could never be. He took action in 1916. Did he achieve anything?

At the very least, the Rising changed the rules of the game, in Ireland and perhaps more widely. The Military Governor Lord French arrived with many of thousands of troops, with plans at the ready to conscript 100,000 young men, so they could be forced at gunpoint into the war and then shot dead if they refused to kill other young men who had never done them any harm. But Conscription was averted, and tens of thousands of lives were saved. Ireland has not gone to war in other countries since then. It has dipped its toe in the water by sending a few soldiers to Afghanistan. It remains to be seen whether Connolly's legacy is completely lost.

And what about Connolly's "gallant allies" in the Rising? His gallant socialist allies? Here is an extract from the part of Frederic Howe's book published by Connolly in 1916:

"Fatherland" signifies many things to the German; it has many other meanings than patriotic attachment. And all of the activities described in the previous chapters form part of German Kultur as the Germans use the term. Kultur is not limited to educational and aesthetic things. Kultur includes history and traditions, politics, statecraft, and administration; it includes state socialism, social legislation, the conservation of human life, and the promotion of the well-being of the people. All of the individual and collective contributions which Germany has made to the world form part of Kultur as the German understands the word. These contributions are colossal. And they are largely social.

*This emphasis on human welfare is one of the remarkable things about the German idea of the state. Almost all of the achievements enumerated have been brought about in the short space of a generation. The greatest advance is coincident with the reign of William II. Bismarck laid the foundations of the structure, but his work was horizoned by the conditions of his generation and the unification of the empire. It remained for William II to give unity to the work by harmonizing the landed aristocracy and the commercial classes with humanism in legislation, and by calling to his aid the scientific thought of the nation and identifying with the state the contributions of the universities and technical schools, the scientists and artists, the educators and the business men.*

Connolly's extract includes description of Productive and Distributive Socialism as implemented in Germany. Here are the Preface and Contents of Howe's *Socialized Germany*:

Much of the material for this book was ready for publication in the fall of 1914. It is the product of rather intimate knowledge of German life during the past quarter of a century. When the war broke out the manuscript was laid aside to await its termination, but as the contest wore on and the extraordinary resources of Germany were disclosed, it seemed to me the book should be published, partly as an explanation of the efficiency of Germany, but primarily as a suggestion of a new kind of social statesmanship which our own as well as other countries must take into consideration if they are to be prepared to meet the Germany which, in victory or defeat, emerges from the war. For the "German peril" is only in part a military peril. It is a peace peril as well. The real peril to the other powers of Western civilization lies in the fact that Germany is more intelligently organized than is the rest of the world. The individual German receives more from society. He is better protected in his daily

## Habsburgia and the Irish: Postscript

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By Pat Muldowney

life. The gains of civilization are more widely distributed than they are with us. His dignity and his personal liberty are on a different, and from our point of view on a lower, plane than in America and Great Britain, but his daily and his hourly needs, and those of his wife and family, are better cared for. And

the individual man is more efficient. He is better prepared for his work. He enjoys a wholesome leisure life. He is assured protection from la misere in old age. The workhouse does not await him if he falls by the wayside.

It is my belief that Germany had just reached the beginning of her greatest achievements. Had not the war intervened, the next generation would have seen her competitors in industry, trade, and commerce outdistanced at an accelerated speed that would have soon left them far and possibly permanently in the rear.

If this is to be averted, new ideas of the obligations of the state must animate our legislators. There must be an abandonment of the old conception that the only business of organized society is to protect the individual from domestic and foreign aggression. There must be a wide extension of public ownership, a greater control of the aggressions of privilege and property, a big programme of social legislation, a change in our system of education, and the exclusion of privileged and business interests from the long ascendancy which they have enjoyed in our political life. It required the war to make this clear to Great Britain. It should shake us from our complacency as well. ...

Frederic C. Howe.

New York, September, 1915.

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[An earlier version of this article was published in IFA September 2013. This present version is for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of James Connolly.]

Foreign policy is something that states do, not private individuals. In ancient and modern times there have been interesting overseas forays by Irish persons. Such as U Dhammaloka (a.k.a Laurence Carroll, 1856-1914), a world traveller who, as a Buddhist monk in Burma and Singapore, mounted an energetic personal challenge to western imperialism. Famous in Japan but not in Ireland, Lafcadio Hearne (1850-1904) became an agitating journalist in America where, in breach of miscegenation law, he married African-American Alethea Foley. When he finally settled in Japan, where he remarried, his literary efforts in Japanese and English enabled each side to interpret the other, and are the basis of his reputation in Japan.

Such people are not, as such, representative. In contrast, the Young Ireland 1848 leader William Smith O'Brien, after serving a term of imprisonment in Tasmania, travelled in Europe and America until his death in 1864. His purpose was to observe political and social developments, publicising his views and observations in Ireland where he was held in high regard, even though he was no longer in active political leadership. Smith O'Brien's travel journals have not been published, but Dr. Gmerek's article (in English) gives a good insight.

His travels had a particular focus on Poland, Hungary, Lithuania and Austria in the aftermath of the 1848 upheavals, when the terms of Austria's rule over Hungary were relaxed. Likewise, to some extent, Austrian-ruled Galician Poland.

The Crimean War (1853-6) had pitted "the West" (including Turkey) against Russia. The line of conflict, though focussed on Crimea and the Black Sea, extended from the Caucasus/Middle East to the Baltic – just like today; likewise the issues which were fought over in that war. A Polish Legion under British leadership was recruited to fight against Russia. Austria and Prussia kept out of the war. Piedmont joined in, soon to become Italy. An Irish Brigade under Polish leadership was mooted, but quashed by Britain. On the other hand, some Irish Republicans sought contact with Russia through its American Embassy.

During Poland's January Insurrection against Russia (1863-4) Smith O'Brien condemned its abandonment by the West, especially Britain. The rising spread through Lithuania, Belorussia, and into Prussian- and Austrian-occupied Poland, but was suppressed by overwhelming Russian force. The 1864 re-conquest of Poland was also a defeat for the post-Crimea reforming policy of Tsar Alexander II, thereby setting the scene for later revolutionary upheavals.

A note on *William Smith O'Brien in Poland and Lithuania in the 1860's*, by Dr. Katarzyna Gmerek

from *Polska Irlandia: wspólna historia (Poland & Ireland: a common history)*

Dr. Gmerek's informative article can be found at

<https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/bitstream/10593/14394/1/W.S.O%27Brien%20Gmerek%20eng.pdf> □

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# Domenico Losurdo

## The Germans: A *Sonderweg* of a cursed nation?

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Domenico Losurdo is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Urbino, Italy. His books *Hegel and the Freedom of Moderns*, *Heidegger and the Ideology of War*, and *Liberalism* have been translated into English.

He was a member of the Italian Communist Party until its dissolution. He has written on Kant and Hegel, the philosophers of modernity, and Nietzsche, the critic of modernity, as well as on Marx and Stalin. He criticized in particular the notion of totalitarianism, a Cold War concept which allowed Hitler and Stalin, against the evidence, to be seen as equivalent historical figures.

'The Germans: A *Sonderweg* of a cursed nation?' has only been published in German. The translation below is by Angela Stone for IFA.

### CHAPTER 2

#### THE INTERNATIONAL ORIGINS OF NAZISM

##### 1. The North American Model

At this point it is necessary to ask a question: is it possible to understand the emergence of Nazism while looking only at Germany? References from two very different authors will help us to tackle this problem. A particularly useful quote is the excellent motto from Tocqueville: 'whoever has seen and investigated France alone will never—or so I dare to claim—understand anything about the French Revolution'[1]. In turn, Lenin speaks of 'three sources' and of the 'three components of Marxism', that is to say, 'German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism'. With both authors there is a strong emphasis on international frameworks. Why should we act any differently in our own studies of the theories and practice of the National Socialist counter revolution, why restrict ourselves to the national dimension?

It is notable that the authors who contributed to the ideology supporting the Third Reich, and the Nazi leaders themselves, do not make reference to the rejected Hohenzollern when they present their racial and colonial programme. What then are the models for Nazi ideology? The white North Americans' urge to expand certainly exerted an irresistible fascination on the Nazi leaders. In 1919, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck celebrated 'Americanism' or '*Amerikanertum*' as being synonymous with 'colonisation' and 'pioneering'. He went on to say that it was a 'great' and 'new principle', that, when properly understood, would lead to taking sides with the 'emerging nations' and the 'emerging races'[2].

'Americanism', Leopold Ziegler later stressed—in an essay of the same name which offered an analysis of this phenomenon—did not only express the 'mentality of the colonised races' or exist as a synonym for 'colonisation'. Americanism, he argued,

also stands for colonisation on a large scale, in the 'large space' of a 'violent *Lebensraum*'. The history of the United States was 'the history of an unprecedented expansion, an extension, a rise', and it confirmed, in vivid terms, the 'inequality and the imbalance in value between the different races' and between different individuals of the same race.

In 1928, Hitler himself spoke of the value of '*Amerikanertum*'. He saw it as the expression of a 'young, racially selected people' (Zweites Buch [ZB], 125). Germany felt a strong affinity towards the USA: the conquest of the 'Far West' recalled the epic progress of the medieval German knight to the east. According to Hitler, one must follow in the traces of this knight in order to create an enclosed territorial empire in Central and Eastern Europe. In doing so, one should bear in mind the American model, whose 'unprecedented inner strength' was praised in *Mein Kampf* (MK, 153).

But how should the German conquerors behave towards the subjected people? The intention was certainly not to found a multi-ethnic state. There was also no point in implementing assimilation and 'Germanisation' of the Slavs as, according to Hitler, it must not be forgotten that 'Germanisation can take place on the ground but never in people'. To believe that 'a black or a Chinese person can become a German because he learns German and is prepared to speak the German language in the future, and to give his vote to a German political party' would be ridiculous. For Hitler, 'such a Germanisation is in reality an '*Entgermanisation*,' or a reversal of the Germanisation process. This signifies 'the beginning of a bastardisation' and therefore 'the extermination of German elements,' 'the annihilation of exactly those qualities that once enabled conquering people to rise victorious' (MK, 428). The Nazi leader made reference to the United States once again, saying that the United States strived to merge 'the racially equal' or racially related elements (the European and, in particular, the northern immigrants) into 'a new nation'. This excluded those 'foreign-blooded people who had developed a national feeling or racial instinct' (in particular the Blacks). Hitler commented that 'the American union feels itself to be a Nordic Germanic state and in no way an international mishmash of races' (ZB, 131).

The plan to implement a racial state was closely connected with the programme of colonial continental expansion that was happening on an international level. It was not only Soviet Russia that was emerging as the sworn enemy of the white race and culture in Europe. France, too, was on the hated list. The abolition of slavery in France came with the Jacobin revolution, as well as the picking of black people as troops to fight not only in the war but also in the occupation of the Rhineland. France also tolerated relationships between black soldiers and German women, which led to the pollution of Aryan blood. Furthermore, the French did not seem to have any internal racial consciousness as they made no attempt to keep the purity of the Aryan race and therefore tolerated the 'bastardisation', 'blackening' and 'general niggerization' (*Verniggerung*) of the nation. (MK, 730 and ZB, 152).

Once more, the North American republic was used as a positive model for Germany. After stressing that 'the fusion of a higher race with a lower' leads to disastrous consequences, Adolf Hitler went further in *Mein Kampf*:

'History furnishes us with innumerable instances that prove this law. It shows, with startling clarity, that whenever Aryans have mingled their blood with that of an inferior race the result has been the downfall of the people who were the standard-bearers of a higher culture. In North America, where the population is prevalently Teutonic, and where those elements intermingled with the inferior race only to a very small degree, we have a quality of mankind and a civilization which are different from those of Central and South America. In these latter countries the immigrants - who mainly belonged to the Latin races - mated with the aborigines, sometimes to a very large extent indeed. In this case we have a clear and decisive example of the effect produced by the mixture of races. But in North America the Teutonic element, which has kept its racial stock pure and did not mix it with any other racial stock, has come to dominate the American Continent and will remain master of it as long as that element does not fall a victim to the habit of adulterating its blood.' (MK, 223-4)[i].

On this point which is so crucial to the fate of culture, Germany was unfortunately left behind. Germany carelessly granted state citizenship without taking regard of the 'race' or the 'physical health' of the immigrants, when instead they should have followed the USA's example:

'At present there exists one State which manifests at least some modest attempts that show a better appreciation of how things ought to be done in this matter. It is not, however, in our model German Republic but in the U.S.A. that efforts are made to conform at least partly to the counsels of common sense. By refusing immigrants permission to enter if they are in a bad state of health, and by excluding certain races from the right to become naturalized as citizens, they have begun to introduce principles similar to those on which we wish to ground the People's State.' (MK, 340)

The United States anticipated the Nazis distinction between 'citizens' and 'foreigners', which was sanctioned in the Nuremberg laws of 1935. But even before the Nazis seized power, Hitler stressed that neither a 'negro', 'Jew, Pole, African, nor Asian' could be a German citizen (MK, 339).

Alfred Rosenberg expressed himself in similar terms. In 1937 he celebrated the exemplary model of the United States, this 'superb country of the future', who should be praised for formulating the successful 'new ideas of a racial state'. These ideas, 'with youthful might' were instrumental in leading to the expulsion and deportation of 'the niggers and the yellow races' (*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* [MZJ], 666 and 673). In Germany, those with Jewish backgrounds were made to play the role of the Afro-Americans. Rosenberg wrote that the '*Niggerfrage*', was at 'the pinnacle of consciousness in the USA'. If the absurd principle of racial equality for the Blacks had been abandoned in the US, he wrote, then why shouldn't the necessary consequences also be drawn for the Jews and yellow races' in Germany? (MZJ, 668)

In view of the failure of Wilhelm II's policy to found a colonial empire abroad, and of the isolation resulting from the sea blockade led by England straight after the outbreak of the First World War, Hitler sought to build a continental colonial empire in Eastern Europe. In the *Table Talks*, recorded while the army went deeper and deeper into the east, Hitler stressed his point of view: the war against the 'natives' of Eastern Europe was to be compared with the war against the Native Americans; in both cases the stronger race will be victorious[4].

In fact, the 'native' Eastern Europeans, who were decimated in order to allow the 'Germanisation' of conquered and

occupied areas were like the Native Americans in one respect; but in another way they were like the Afro-Americans who were used as slaves to work and serve the master race. Sexual relationships and marriages were forbidden between the two races; miscegenation was banned just as in America in the centuries of black slavery and the regime of white supremacy.

The special barbarity of the Third Reich lay in their attempt to take over and radicalise colonial and racist traditions (and apply them to Eastern Europe), at a time when these traditions had been brought into turmoil by the huge emancipation movement of the October Revolution in Kielwasser. Furthermore, this attempt to revive colonial traditions in their worst forms, much to the disadvantage of the old civilised people, was not implemented under 'peaceful' conditions as with the conquest of the Far West, but instead took place in the midst of a cruel and merciless World War. These factors all inevitably added to the sense of atrocity. This proves the importance of taking the concrete, national and international, historical context of the developments of colonialism and imperialism into account rather than blaming the supposedly evil nature of the Germans.

## 2. Under Man and *Untermensch*

Also on a categorial and linguistic level we can see the American model's clear influence on Nazi ideology. One only has to consider the word '*Untermensch*' to see this. The term *Untermensch* is associated with dehumanisation and violent holocaust in Nazi ideology. The term is central to the theory and practice of the Third Reich, but, in actuality, an investigation into the origins of this term reveals a surprising discovery: '*Untermensch*' is nothing other than a translation of the American term 'under man'.

Alfred Rosenberg identified this connection and pointed it out in 1930, expressing his surprise at the US-American author, Lothrop Stoddard. The latter is responsible for coining the term in question, which appears in the subtitle of his book, *The Revolt of Civilisation: The Menace of the Under Man*, published in New York in 1922 and then as a German translation three years later in Munich (*Die Drohung des Untermenschen*). In 1933 the top theoretician of the Nazi movement acknowledged this less significant ideologist, who through his study of the 'fundamentals' of 'race research' warned of the danger that lay in the customary contrast between the animal world and humanity. In fact the last term covers two very different realities: the 'Nordic person' and the 'under man', of which Stoddard was the first to speak [6].

The US-American author we are referring to here was by no means an isolated individual in his country. He was praised by two presidents of the United States (Warren Gamaliel Harding and Herbert Clark Hoover). The comment from Harding is especially noteworthy: he recommends that 'everyone should take the time to read Stoddard's *Clashing Tides of Colour*, and should note that the problem of race occurring in the USA is simply part of a wider racial conflict that is taking place all over the world'. One can now comprehend the extent of the sympathy and enthusiasm that the Nazis had for Stoddard. When Stoddard spent a few months in Germany, he met not only some of the greatest 'scientists' in the field of race, but also the grandees of the regime, including Heinrich Himmler, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Richard Walther Darré and even Hitler himself [7].

For Stoddard, the mortal combat against the 'under man' was part of a highly significant racial eugenics programme. It was important to cleanse 'the race of its worst impurities', and to have a policy of 'racial cleansing', of 'racial purification'.

It was necessary to systematically apply the discoveries of Francis Galton and to adopt 'the science of eugenics' or 'race betterment' [8].

Now we come to another significant word in Nazi ideology that is mostly translated as 'racial hygiene'. At this point it is worth taking a look at the history of this particular term, which takes us back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The term '*Rassenhygiene*' was used by Alfred Ploetz when he made reference to the studies of the 'famous genetics researcher, Francis Galton'. Reflecting on his impressions of the USA, Ploetz described it as a place where the new science had enjoyed great triumphs. He commented that the reason for these triumphs were that the 'Aryans' found themselves in a battle against 'Indians, negroes, and mixed races', and the 'forward-looking yankees' were concerned that the new immigrants would be able to win the upper hand over the long-settled whites thanks to their abundant fertility [9].

Some years later a book appeared in Munich which in its title praised the USA as the exemplary model for 'racial hygiene'. The author, Austro-Hungarian vice consul in Chicago, praised the United States for the 'sobriety' and 'pure practical sense' which they energetically applied to tackle the important problem of racial hygiene. The task in hand was the successful execution of racial hygiene through encouraging the 'reproduction of the most racially competent' and discouraging that of the 'inferior'. Furthermore, this included a comprehensive 'assessment of immigrants' whereby not only undesirable individuals, but also 'whole races' would be weeded out [10]. Racial hygiene was also practised on another level: there was 'the ban on intermarriage' and 'extramarital mixing of white and black races'; any violation of these laws was punishable with up to ten years in prison. Those who facilitated the 'crime' could be prosecuted as well as those directly involved. Quite apart from the legal rulings we should not forget the importance of actual practices and beliefs with such strong messages as that 'the purity of the race will be almost unconsciously striven for, and mixing with Negroes or with Asian blood will be considered as a crime and a disgrace' [11]. We have now come again to the core of Nazi ideology and Nazi language, with the investigation into the terminology '*Rassereinheit*' (racial purity) as against '*Rassenmischung*' (mixing of races) and '*Rassenschande*' (racial defilement) or '*Blutschande*' (defilement of the blood).

The linguistic influence of the American model also applies to other central themes in Nazi ideological discourse. It may suffice to say that even the term '*Endlösung*' (final solution) first made an appearance in books in the USA at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The reference was less explicit, perhaps, and was without Hitler's murderous implications, however it did suggest a 'final and complete solution' (in German: *endgültige und vollständige Lösung*) or the 'ultimate solution' (*die ultimative Lösung*) to the problem of the 'inferior people', in particular the Blacks [12].

It is also significant that the teachers of Nazism were not only Germans, as the theory of the German *Sonderweg* would have us believe. One cannot fully comprehend Nazism without recognising the prevalence of a world-wide desire to achieve the kind of terrorist white supremacist regime that had first been seen in the history of the United States. Those who focus their attention on Germany alone will never be in a position to fully explain the terrors of the Hitler regime.

When Hitler gave his speech in front of the Düsseldorf *Industrieclub* on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1932—a speech that finally won him the support of the representatives of industry for his rise to power—the Führer outlined the important choice that faced Germany and the whole world, a choice between 'the future or the downfall of the white race'. For his part, Hitler had fought

to his utmost to defend 'the absolute innate feeling of mastery by the white race' (Reden und Proklamationen [RP], 75 and 78). When reading this it is hard not to think of the pioneers of white supremacy in the southern states of the US. By the same token, when reading about the 'racist belief systems' that were expressed in the southern states by armed and uniformed people during the 'jubilee of the white supremacy' at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we are led back to Nazism:

'1. "Blood will tell." 2. The white race must dominate. 3. The Teutonic peoples stand for race purity. 4. The Negro is inferior and will remain so. 5. "This is a white man's country." 6. No social equality. 7. No political equality [...] 10. Let there be such industrial education of the Negro as will best fit him to serve the white man [...] 14. Let the lowest white man count for more than the highest Negro. 15. The above statements express the will of Providence.' [13]

Thus we are led back to Nazism, all the more because this catechism was advocated by people who dedicated themselves in theory and practice to the task of absolute 'superiority of the Aryans' and were even prepared to fight the constitution 'to the devil' in order to confront the 'terrible unholy national threat' of the Blacks. Despite a few individual critical voices who thought that, terrorised as they are, 'negroes do no one any harm', racist groups were still prepared 'to kill them and remove them from the surface of the earth' and are determined to install 'an absolute racial autocracy' with the 'full identification of the strongest race with the requirements of the state' [14].

That is not to say, however, that Nazism's regard for North America was without criticism; there were of course subjects about which they did not agree. For example, Hitler and Rosenberg both expressed negative opinions on the role that was ascribed to Jews there. Furthermore, it is important to note that the influence discussed here was by no means a one way street. Stoddard studied in Germany and was deeply influenced by Nietzsche. He coined the term 'Under Man' as a counterpart to the German philosopher's term, '*Übermensch*' ('above men'), and when he announced his total disgust for the 'Under Man' (who was consumed by envy of superior characters) he was probably influenced by the figures of the '*Schlechtweggekommenen*' ('vile and worthless individuals') or the '*Missratenen*' ('failures'), which Nietzsche frequently referred to.

The connection that has been made in this essay between Nazism and colonial tradition, particularly in the continent's methods of colonial expansion, was obvious to the great theoreticians of the anti-colonial liberation movement. When Franz Fanon called attention to the crimes, the 'deportations', 'massacres', 'forced labour', and 'enslavement' of that time—which colonialism had committed 'for centuries'—he also added that 'Nazism transformed the whole of Europe into a genuine colony' [16]. Today, unfortunately, the left are not in a position to effectively confront the dominant ideology which has every interest in acquitting the system of capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. Instead, the left sees only one holocaust and restricts itself to accusing one country and one single, cursed people.

### 3. Anti-Semitism in the USA and in Germany

After the 'Germanisation of the land' and thus, the decimation of the 'natives' of Eastern Europe, those left over had to work as slaves or partial slaves at the service of the master race. Jewish Bolsheviks, on the other hand, were to be completely exterminated. They were the '*Untermenschen*' who disturbed the natural racial hierarchy, encouraged and led the revolts of



the inferior races and even wanted to achieve ‘the extermination of the European races’, those ‘Aryan’ and ‘European-Aryan nations’.

It should be made clear that developments in anti-Semitism were not exclusive to Germany. Hatred of the Jews was virulent on both banks of the Rhine at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a point for which the success of authors like Edouard Drumont and the case of Alfred Dreyfus provide proof. These are the decades in which Germany seemed to be the centre of Judaism. In 1848, Engels wrote, ‘German is known as the Jewish universal language’, that is ‘in New York as it is in Constantinople, in Petersburg as in Paris’ (Marx Engels Werke, 5, 323). Even at the beginning of the First World War, Hermann Cohen, an important German philosopher of Jewish background, published a short book which discussed as its main theme, the concept that ‘Germanity and Judaism are intimately connected’.

The defeat and the treaty of Versailles did not at once lead to a radical change. The report by Leo Löwenthal concerning Germany in the twenties can be of interest here:

‘We used to laugh about the fact that there was a tiny hotel in Frankfurt [...] that had a sign saying ‘Jews not welcome’ or ‘Jews not wanted’. Then there was a small bathing place, Borkum near Norderney, that was ‘reserved’ for anti-Semites. But we didn’t take any of it seriously... I didn’t truly experience the kind of anti-Semitism that made it impossible to go to certain restaurants, hotels or clubs until I came to America.’[18]

Furthermore, Oswald Spengler felt the need to express his attitude towards the Jews in 1933, saying, ‘When we speak about race it is not meant in the way that is now fashionable with anti-Semites in Europe and America, namely, Darwinian and materialistic.’ This shows that the level of anti-Semitism in the United States seemed exaggerated and vulgar not only to an author of Jewish background whose beliefs were of the Frankfurt School, but also to a reactionary anti-Semite.

The North American republic is the primary country to have contributed the biggest part to the spreading of a motive that would later play a fatal role in the ideological spreading of the ‘final solution’. The theory of a Jewish influence that steered the revolutionary movement which shook the West was already common in the US ideology of the white supremacy—even before Nazi ideologists and agitators. Madison Grant stressed the ‘Semitic leadership’ of ‘Bolshevism’ and Lothrop Stoddard stigmatized the ‘Bolshevik regime of Soviet Russia’ as being ‘Jewish to a great extent’.

Here it is important to pay particular attention to the role of Henry Ford. Soon after October 1917, the car industry magnate tried to denounce the Bolshevik revolution as the result of a Jewish plot. For this purpose he founded a journal in 1919, the *Dearborn Independent* which enjoyed a large circulation. Articles from the journal were then published in book format in November 1920, with the title, ‘*The International Jew*’. This quickly became the first port of call for international anti-Semitism. Theories that played a central role in Nazi ideology can be found here, for example that ‘the Russian revolution has racist [Jewish], not political, origins’. The Jews seem to draw on humanitarian and social notions but, according to the book, in fact express a ‘racist desire for world domination’. Ford’s book also strongly contributed to creating credibility for and promoting the distribution of ‘*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*’ - a forgery created in the circle of the czarist secret police and published in Russian in 1903 in St Petersburg.

Later, Nazi bigwigs, like Baldur von Schirach and even Heinrich Himmler, went on to explain that they were inspired by Ford and that their work sprang from his ideology. Himmler in particular claimed that ‘the whole danger of Judaism’ was not realised fully until Henry Ford’s book, calling it ‘a revelation for us National Socialists.’ Next was the literature of the Protocols.

‘Both of these books showed us the path that we had to follow in order to free the afflicted people from the greatest enemy of all, the international Jew’, Himmler claimed. According to Himmler, Ford’s book together with the *Protocols* played a ‘crucial’ role for the formation of his ideas as well as Hitler’s. What is certain is that the ‘*International Jew*’ was published with great pride in the Third Reich, with forewords praising the American author and industrialist on his clarification of the ‘Jewish question’ (*Judenfrage*) and also stressing the connection between Henry Ford and Adolf Hitler.[22]

Regarding the virulence of anti-Semitism in France towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a leading Israeli researcher, Zeev Sternhell, spoke of the ‘French origins of fascism’ [23]. But this point of view is one-sided, even if it does have the merit of questioning the myth of a Germany who persistently represents the worst of the reactionary. It would be more accurate to talk of fascism and Nazism as having international origins. In the elaboration of the motives of the Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy, motives which allegedly threatened the whole world after first swallowing up their own country, the representatives of the White Russian counterrevolution, who emigrated from the Soviet Union to Germany, played a central role. But bigger still is the role that the North American model played in providing a blueprint for Hitler’s colonial and racial programme, particularly in the white supremacist southern states. With regards to the ideological preparation of the ‘final solution’, we must, of course, keep Germany in mind at all times, but it is essential that we do not lose sight of the international context.

#### 4. The racist counterrevolution from the USA to Germany

This is not a question of indulging in a banal ‘anti-Americanism’ as those who fail to submit to the holy image of the United States as the temple of freedom are often accused of doing. Quite the contrary, highlighting the influence that the American reactionary movement had on the German and European reactionaries is also to stress the value of this mostly forgotten great revolution that took place in the USA. The end of the American Civil War signified not only the abolition of slavery but also the emergence of a multi-ethnic democracy—even if under the difficult conditions of a long lasting state of emergency. In the southern states the former slave owners had turned into unruly rebels and the Union and their troops required the cooperation of the Blacks to gain control. Black people now had political rights and civil rights and therefore played an important role in voting and gaining access to representative bodies and, occasionally, leadership roles.

This period of reconstruction may have been the happiest period in the history of Afro-Americans but it was only liberating for a short space of time, until 1877. In exchange for their agreement to the unassailable national unity and protection of the industry that was benefitting the North, the former slave owners, who up until now had been kept under control by the government, shook off military and political control and won back their self-government. As a result, black people lost their political, and to a great extent also civil, rights through the passing of legislation: there was to be a racial state that implemented the strictest racial segregation, brutal oppression and degradation against those who were suspected of having even just one drop of non-white blood (one drop rule). This state exercised a gruesome terror regime against any black person who dared to question the regime of white supremacy, even if only in their sexual behaviour. The second American revolution that took place between the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era suffered such a disastrous defeat that it manifested on an ideological level as well: the idea of racial

equality was ridiculed and the dehumanisation of Blacks, who were represented as irredeemable savages or just plain animals, increased.

As György Lukács asserted, whilst the defeat of the Peasants' War in Germany and the 1848 revolution in Germany and Europe may well have influenced the international reaction which resulted in fascism and Nazism, what was much more influential was the failure of the Abolitionist Movement in America. The change that took place because of this had already been recognised by the most clear-sighted witnesses of that time. Friedrich Ratzel, one of the great theoreticians of geopolitics, painted a very distinct picture on his visit to the USA at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: the idea of loyalty to the principle of 'equality' had vanished, to be replaced by the reality of 'racial aristocracy'. This was not just a question of Blacks being robbed of their political rights. Although some may try to ignore it, according to Ratzel, the 'color line' was ripping American society apart so strongly that 'it even affect[ed] the Institute for the Blind'. Absolute segregation was enshrined in the law in the United States, as it was in society in general. 'Intermarriage' between the races was not only frequently forbidden by law but, in addition to this, couples of different races were often discouraged from marrying because their offspring were counted as Blacks and therefore subject to the same harsh discrimination. Afro-Americans were isolated as though by a cordon and shut out from the 'major national associations' (including the trade unions). The 'idealists' or the 'education fanatics' hoped for the welfare consequences of education and upbringing. In reality, however, the 'educated Negro families' were subjected to an even harsher discrimination, and were suspected of being the most dangerous members of the inferior race. Were there benefits to abolitionism? The 'social intercourse' between whites and blacks '[was] more restricted than at the time of slavery'. Moreover on a legal level the different pieces of legislation were undermined by the fact that legislation was interpreted completely differently according to race—as shown by the Lynch Law against the Blacks and the 'suppression and extermination of the Native Americans'. The immigrants from the east too, the last of the 'three groups of the "coloured"', were affected by the severity of the white supremacy regime.

It must be noted that after the Abolition Movement, the project of a society based on the principle of racial equality failed utterly. In the USA, there existed a society which 'avoid[ed] slavery but [kept] the type of subordination according to race amongst the social stratification', which adhered to the principle of 'racial aristocracy'. Ratzel came to the following conclusion: 'experience has shown that it is necessary to recognise race differences'; they prove to be much more enduring 'than the abolition of slavery which turned out to be a mere episode or experiment. A 'reversal' concerning the abolitionists and the supporters of the principle of equality took place. Ratzel claimed that these elements would have consequences reaching further than just inside the USA, insisting, 'we are standing on the brink of repercussions the effects of which will touch Europe more than Asia.' [25]

Ratzel was not alone in his prediction that ultimately the theories and practices of the white supremacy would exert influence beyond US borders. In 1926, Ziegler stressed that 'the fanfare of an America socially revolutionised from the top downwards' plays irresistible music that will fall on attentive and sympathetic ears across the Atlantic. This comes as a result of the theoretical recognition and practical application of the 'iron law of inequality', not only of individuals but also increasingly of races. [26]

In particular, it is Hoffmann, the aforementioned vice consul of Austria-Hungary, who recognised the expansive potential of

the racist counterrevolution which ensued in the failure of the Reconstruction. He commented that despite the 'Abolitionist Civil War' in the USA, there is still a 'ban on racial mixing' and a legitimisation for this was confirmed by the highest court. Also, in addition to this was the exclusion of Blacks from the right to vote as well as their segregation in churches, schools, public transport etc. 'The teaching of natural rights' was forgotten too, in this "free" country that is so often used as the symbol for freedom. Europe needed urgently to catch up on things here; in Europe the Blacks from colonies were treated as 'interesting and exotic' by society. What a difference between the behaviour of the Americans, 'so proud of the purity of their race', who avoid contact with non-whites, even those who only have 'a drop of negro blood' flowing through their veins! 'Never was there so much written or spoken about race and racial dominance as in America'. Indeed, 'Galton's dream, racial hygiene becoming the religion of the future, approached realization in America. In a course of victory without compare, his dream conquered the New World.' The spread of racial hygiene, which took the USA by storm, did not stop at its borders. To conclude, it was the "*homo europaeus*", the Germanic or Nordic type, who [found] in America its most numerous admirers.' [27] 'If America can in any way be Europe's teacher, then it [was] in the *Neger- [und Rassen]frage* (the issue of Negroes and race).' [28]

It is all the more necessary to note the example given by North America because the racial state had more than just one internal political meaning. We are dealing with a movement that aimed to 'cultivate a new, ideal, world dominating race'. This was an ideology that did not permit Europe to hang back, as 'the ennobling racial attempts of America were exemplary' and called on Europe to follow suit. [29]

The concern about lagging behind the USA in the practical application of a doctrine that would decide the fate of the world spread in Europe. In 1923, a German doctor, Fritz Lenz, complained that Germany was far behind the USA on developments in 'racial hygiene'. [30] After the devolution of power to the Nazis, the racial ideologists and 'scientists' stressed that 'there [was] a lot for Germany to learn from the systematic North Americans' example', according to Hans F. Günther in 1934. Günther went on to comment that luckily the Germans were not too far behind and they had started to catch up, recognising the importance of the 'iron law of inequality' for races and individuals, a principle handed over by the North American author Stoddard. [31]

Finally, Hitler himself referred indirectly to the ideology of white supremacy. In 1928 he sang the praises of the 'American union', who had 'put together special measures for immigration, inspired by the teachings of its own race researchers'. America's example, Hitler noted, showed that 'the National Socialist movement has the task of applying existing or emerging discoveries of race science to practical politics.' Furthermore, the teachings from beyond the Atlantic are also valuable to the National Socialists in a theoretical sense, Hitler commented, since we are concerned with scientific insights that illuminate world history (ZB, 125 u. 127).

Therefore, this is a useful key to have at our disposal, helping us to reach— beyond superficial appearances— an understanding of political and social conflicts, not only of the present, but also of the past.

## 5. Gobineau and the 'Anglo-Americans' as 'representatives' of the 'culture' of genocide

Above all, it is important to recognise one thing: if the tendency to frame the whole of Germany's history as some sort of build up to the 'final solution' is truly prevalent today, then it should

suffice to go back some decades before the Third Reich in order to contemplate the extent and full horror of genocide, as seen in the suffering of the Native Americans, and as seen quite plainly in the nation of annihilators, the Anglo-Americans. Let us read Arthur de Gobineau, who wrote that, contrary to the Germanic people who were prepared to 'share the country with the former occupiers', the Anglo-Saxon stock established in America, was characterised by their pitiless inflexibility towards the natives. It was 'not only their ways' that they 'could no longer tolerate' but also, their 'life' itself that they could no longer allow. The Germanic people, according to the French author, 'were too vigorous by nature to comprehend imposing the use of strong liquor or poisons on their subjects or foreign nations. That is an invention of modern times. Neither the Vandals, Goths, Franks nor the first Saxons would have considered it and even the civilisation of the ancient world, however refined and decadent, never had such an idea. Neither the Brahmans nor the Magi found the need to comprehensively wipe out anything that did not follow their way of thinking. Our civilisation is the only one which possesses this instinct for violence and murder, it is the only one to act—without anger, without agitation, but instead with exceedingly delusional mildness and sympathy, an expression of the most unbounded gentleness—to incessantly surround themselves with a horizon of tombs.'

Gobineau certainly considered moral blame in this case to be excessive and inappropriate, writing that 'the Anglo-Americans, as convinced and true representatives of this type of culture, fashioned their laws accordingly. One cannot blame them.' However, this judgment would not be accepted today if one try to apply it to Auschwitz and the administrative genocide. The Anglo-Americans were, in a certain sense, responsible for a one-off Holocaust: the radical way in which the Native Americans were eradicated 'was completely novel on earth'. [32]

Regarding the North American settlers, Theodor Waitz, a German race theoretician (a further irony of the story), pointed out the most complete example of the genocide of this time: 'According to the teaching of the American school [...] the higher races are determined to repress the lower races, as it has always happened on earth when there is a higher entity and a lower one. The perishing of the lower races corresponds to divine purpose and shows not only our recognition of the right of the white Americans to exterminate the Red Indians, but also identifies piety in praising the way they have always devoted themselves as enlightened and insightful tools in bringing about the realisation of extermination. The pious apostle of murder may feel sadness about the unfortunate fate of the Red Indian race, but he finds solace in the fact that the natural laws are being followed, laws which dominate the rise and fall of peoples, according to the natural drives and instincts which were planted in the individual races by the creator Himself.' [33]

Let us turn to F. D. Roosevelt, who was appalled by the terrible crimes of the Third Reich during the Second World War and was fascinated momentarily by the peculiar idea of the 'castration' of the Germans. Perhaps if the US-American statesman had been able to read Gobineau and Waitz and their tips on the extermination-racism of "the American school" then he might have had more doubts. Then F. D. Roosevelt would have understood that the idea of avoiding the repetition of such practices through the 'castration' of the people in power could have also affected the people to whom he himself belonged. There is one fundamental truth not to be forgotten: far from being the repetition of identical versions, history is remarkable for constant alterations and radical changes. It is time to end the myth of an identity which remains unchanged through time.

At this point we can add a consideration of a political character. For better or worse, however incompletely and insufficiently, Germany has attempted to come to terms with

the past and with the horror of the Third Reich. On the other side of the Atlantic, by contrast, the US-American leaders and ideologues celebrate their country as 'the oldest democracy in the world'. Such a historical presentation makes the fate of the Native Americans and the Blacks seem completely unimportant. There has not been even a vague attempt to process the past. And it is exactly this clear conscience that gives Washington the impetus to export 'democracy' by force of arms. Under these conditions, it is pure madness to strengthen the clean consciences of today's extremely dangerous imperialists with continued talk of an eternally reactionary Germany.

## Notes

1. L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution, Chapters 1 and 4
2. Moeller van den Bruck 1919, p 39sq., 84, 102,
3. Ziegler 1926 p.69-71, 73,77
4. Losurdo 2007, ch. 5 p 6
5. Stoddard 1984 and Stoddard 1925. Also see Losurdo 2009, ch 27 p7
6. According to Hermann Grauch in Poliakov, Wulf 1978, p 409
7. Köhl 1994, p 61; the judgement of Harding is quoted at the beginning of Stoddard 1925
8. Stoddard 1984, p.42
9. Ploetz 1895, p77sq
10. Hoffmann 1913 pp. ix, 17, 111, 114
11. Hoffmann 1913, p.67sq, 17
12. See Losurdo 2010, ch. 10 p4
13. Woodward 1963, pp. 335-6 (English translation)
14. Woodward 1963, p332
15. See Losurdo 2009 ch.27, p 7
16. Fanon 1961, p57
17. Cohen 1915, p48
18. Quoted in Scheible 2003, p13
19. Spengler 1933, p 157
20. Grant 1971 p xxxxi; Stoddard 1984 p 152
21. Ford 1933 p 128 sq. 145
22. See Losurdo 2007 ch. 5 p4
23. Sternhell 1978
24. Ratzel 1893 p 282sq,180sq
25. Ratzel 1893 p 179-182 and 283
26. Ziegler 1926 p 69-89
27. Hoffmann 1913 p. 114, 14
28. Id. Pp46 and 67sq
29. Id. Pp114, 14 and 125
30. In Lifton 1988, p. 29
31. Günther 1934 p 465
32. Gobineau 1904, Vol.4 pp278-81 (Bookvi, ch. Viii)
33. Waitz 1859 p. 430

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## Submission by *Jews for Justice for Palestinians* to the *Chakrabarti Inquiry into anti-Semitism and other forms of racism within the Labour Party*. June 2016

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Extracts.

### 3. Allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party

3.1 While JfJfP cannot comment on the details of individual cases, we do have some general observations.

3.2 As other commentators have noted, the scale and tone of media commentary has seemed disproportionate. A useful **collation of cases** up to 27th April by Jamie Stern-Weiner identifies allegations about ten individuals; and there were additional suspensions in May, though the number is unclear. Together, these instances do not substantiate the claim of a wave or trend of antisemitism in the Labour Party.

3.3 These early cases (eleven including Ken Livingstone's) were the ones that grabbed the media's attention and were used to support the assertion that "the Labour party has a problem with antisemitism" (or, as the *Daily Telegraph* headed a report on 4th May "Chief Rabbi: Labour has a 'severe' problem with antisemitism"). It is worth looking at them in more detail:

- Three involve allegations of language which resemble classic antisemitic stereotypes: "Jewish-Zionist bourgeoisie", "of Jewish blood" [of Tesco], "[the] Jews are so powerful in the US it's disgusting". They do not refer to Israel/Palestine and are easy to deal with and assess in the light of traditional understandings of antisemitism.

- By contrast, Israel/Palestine is the focus, to a greater or lesser extent, of the other eight cases. These are, therefore, more problematic. While we acknowledge that discourse on Israel/Palestine can involve antisemitism, this should not be assumed. It is anything but the norm. Our experience tells us that, with debate about Israel/Palestine, we are more likely to be in the realm of contested political analysis, where allegations or accusations of antisemitism are themselves part of the political argument, indeed, have often become a proxy for the Israel/Palestine debate itself. Such allegations demand, therefore, the most careful and dispassionate evaluation.

3.4 First it must be acknowledged that people who strongly sympathise with the Palestinians may express themselves (knowingly or not) in terms which resemble or include antisemitic stereotypes. Also, people with antisemitic beliefs may find in the Israel/Palestine controversy a convenient opportunity to express them. In our experience such cases are rare. But equally, passionate supporters of Israel may perceive antisemitic motivations in their opponents without tangible evidence to support such perceptions, or with 'evidence' that is itself shaped by political judgment. And Israel's supporters may seek political advantage by deliberately deploying claims of antisemitism whenever Israel is subject to criticism. In JfJfP, many such cases have come to our attention.

3.5 Indeed, as long-time campaigners in this contentious field, we have experience of an almost visceral tendency among some pro-Israel advocates to cry antisemitism at those who criticise Israel or speak out in support of Palestinians. It is now far too routinely claimed that antisemitism is either intrinsic to criticism of Israel, or is behind or underlies it. Many of us have experienced such 'kneejerk' accusations of antisemitism from

within sections of the Jewish community, and it characterises much media reporting.

3.6 As an example, strenuous attempts have been made to associate high profile critics of Israel with underlying antisemitism: extensive attacks on the newly elected Labour leader and the new President of the National Union of Students are notable instances. If such critics are not held to be antisemitic themselves, they are said to associate with people (or to have done so in the past) who are antisemitic, or they are accused of giving succour to antisemites, or of enabling an atmosphere in which antisemitism might flourish.

3.7 This mix of accusations – combining underlying antisemitism and ‘guilt by association’ – is hugely damaging to political discourse. It is also highly selective: when the Queen recently shook hands with acknowledged former IRA leader, Martin McGuinness, she was not excoriated for being a ‘republican terrorist lover’. Instead, her act was recognised as a valuable part of reconciliation. And much closer to the current issue: a succession of Israeli leaders has been drawn from the ranks of former paramilitary terrorist groups (the Stern Gang, the Irgun). With the establishment of the state of Israel, they slowly became part of the Israeli political establishment, and were accepted as legitimate political leaders on the world diplomatic stage.

3.8 JfJfP is not suggesting that the recent wave of accusations of antisemitism in the party is the product of conspiracy to ‘frame’ Israel/Palestine debate almost out of existence. But it shares the perception of a clear confluence of different interests, analysed well by **Prof Avi Shlaim and Gwyn Daniel**, who pose the very sharp question “Why now?”

#### **Related ‘framing’ issues**

3.9 Two further approaches to framing debate on Israel/Palestine feed usefully into the discussion here: deploying the law to restrict or close down political discussion, and using quasi-legal definition and prescription to narrow the scope of ‘acceptable’ discourse. They provide worrying examples of ‘framing’ debate morphing into ‘policing’ and ‘prohibiting’ it. That, in spite of huge effort and expense, they have not generally succeeded, provides guidance which we would urge the Labour Party to follow.

- First is the Employment Tribunal case *R Fraser v University and College Union* (Case Number: 2203290/2011). Here the plaintiff’s compendious complaints concerned his trade union’s management of internal debate about Israel/Palestine. His allegation that the UCU had engaged in (or permitted its members to engage in) a pattern of unlawful harassment amounting to ‘institutional antisemitism’ was comprehensively rejected on its merits. Furthermore, the Tribunal (at p44), was scathing about his having brought the case in the first place:

*“At heart, [the case] represents an impermissible attempt to achieve a political end by litigious means.”*

- Second is the long running attempt, dating back to 2004, to have the EUMC (European Union Monitoring Committee) “Working Definition of Antisemitism” accepted as the gold standard in defining antisemitism. This document includes various classes of criticism of Israel within its examples of what might be antisemitic. By insisting on the presumption that criticism of Israel is likely to be antisemitic unless shown to be otherwise, it seeks to shift the burden of proof of lack of antisemitism onto Israel’s critics. At one time this document was the focus of much debate, but it is no longer given any legitimacy by the Fundamental Rights Agency, (the EUMC’s successor body). Neither is the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Antisemitism pressing for its adoption, though we note with concern that it still considers it a ‘useful reference’ document. It is also disturbing to see that, in spite of being rejected by

the EUMC’s successor, it has been adopted by the College of Police and by the National Union of Students.

3.10 To summarise:

- Insofar as there is a perceived problem with antisemitism in the Labour party, much (though not all) of it revolves around allegations of content relating to Israel/Palestine.
- Much of the passion here springs from different views of the nature of this conflict and how it might be resolved.
- On examination, individual allegations will generally be found to be intrinsically connected to the language in which this conflict is discussed, rather than to antisemitism per se.

## **4. Boundaries of acceptable behaviour and language**

4.1 In JfJfP we have much collective knowledge and understanding of antisemitism. We know its history internationally, and its British story, including ferocious hostility towards East European Jewish migrants in the last quarter of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (culminating in the 1905 Aliens Act), the fascist Black Shirt incursions into the East End of London in the 1930s (and the support provided them by the Metropolitan police), the (largely unacknowledged) exclusion of Jews (or the application of Jewish quotas) by a wide range of social institutions (e.g. public schools, medical schools, golf clubs) well into the 1960s and 1970s.

4.2 However, JfJfP signatories have also seen Jews in Britain becoming well integrated at all levels of society in the last half century. Overt expressions of antisemitism are rare, and regarded as totally unacceptable. This is not to say that issues of antisemitism do not arise, but they are by no means what they used to be. While antisemitism is always worrying, and, like all forms of racism, must be combatted, by comparison with other minorities – most notably, today, Muslims, who frequently face virulent racism – hostility towards Jews is a limited phenomenon.

4.3 It would be surprising if such antisemitic attitudes as are found in the wider society did not permeate the Labour Party. Yet, considering all the recent complaints, we have not seen evidence that, here too, it is an overwhelming problem. Again, this is not to minimise it, but to place it in context of racism in Britain (including its political parties) more generally.

4.4 We must emphasise: it is precisely because we take antisemitism seriously, that we are so concerned when we see antisemitism allegations used as a weapon to defend policies of expansion, occupation and abuse of human rights by Israel. This misuse of antisemitism carries two potential dangers: it devalues its meaning and desensitizes people, making it much more difficult to tackle real instances of antisemitic language or conduct; it also closes down debate on Israel/Palestine, as people who disagree with Israel’s behaviour retreat into silence for fear of being on the receiving end of an antisemitism accusation.

4.5 We offer in this section some proposals to help combat antisemitism and to open up constructive dialogue on Israel/Palestine.

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