

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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The issue of neutrality is in the air again. It needs as a foundation a treatment of the one positive act of neutrality—the wartime neutrality—from the viewpoint that sustained it, and a cold look at the war in which it was sustained. And it needs to be understood that it was *armed neutrality* made effective by a will to fight.

The neutrality of the Irish state in Britain's Second World War of the 20th century was a forceful action which depended for its effectiveness on the existence of a degree of military power and of willingness to use it.

Neutrality was maintained without the actual use of force against Britain, but in the certainty that any breach of it would be met by the reunited force of Irish nationality.

Irish military history in the twentieth century is officially unwritten because it is the history of the IRA.

The army of the Irish state has fought no war except the 1922 war against the elected Irish Republic, which is best considered as a proxy British war. It was Britain that enabled that anti-Republican army to exist. It could not have fought its war against the IRA if the British Government had not financed it, armed it and insisted that it should make war on the IRA.

It would not have wanted to make war on the IRA if the British War Cabinet had not insisted on it.

The 'Civil War'

That war between the Free State Army and the Irish Republican Army is called a *Civil War* but there were no civil grounds for it. It was not fought over some divisive issue that had arisen within the body politic, civilian or military, in 1919-21. Those who waged the Free State campaign against the Republic in 1922 had shown no yearning for the Crown in 1919-21. They fought for the Crown in 1922 only because the Crown threatened to mobilise the resources of the Empire for a comprehensive reconquest of Ireland if the Irish did not submit to its will.

A case can be made for the submission to the British Imperial will. It is the eternal case for submission to dictatorial Power. And it is the case that was made by many Free Staters. But it was not the case that was made by the Strong Man of the Treaty, Michael Collins, or by his political colleague, William Cosgrave.

Collins denied that he acted under duress when he made a deal with the British Government that was in breach of the terms set by his own Government. That is understandable. Saying that he submitted to the dictate of the overwhelming power of Empire when he signed the Treaty, and made his colleagues sign it, would have been an act of rebellion. It was necessary to say that he had freely accepted a good deal that was generously offered.

But that was a game that wouldn't play. The Treatyites won their 'Civil War'. But, since it was not a war for an ideal, they did not know what to do next with the Crown and the Empire for which they had fought.

A few, with Kevin O'Higgins as their standard bearer, tried to enter into the spirit of the thing that they had been obliged to fight for—Crown and Empire—but they couldn't bring it off. They were not to the manner born, and natives who copy it bear the mark of the *slibhín*, both in spirit and style.

Cosgrave tried to destroy the Republican principle in the populace by making the taking of the Treaty Oath not only a condition of entering the Treaty Dáil but of standing for election. He was willing to exclude representatives of the majority of the population from sitting in his Legislative Assembly in order to make a debating point about the Treaty in the mid-1920s, just as a couple of years earlier he said he was willing to kill 60,000 anti-Treatyites with British guns rather than negotiate an end to his 'Civil War'.

Unconditional Surrender—those were his only terms. He failed to get them. Arms were buried, to rise again. The populace, as soon as the prospect of a British terrorist reconquest faded, voted Republican again. The Treaty Oath was circumvented by use of mere signatures without a Bible anywhere nearby.

Treatyism withered because it no longer knew what it was about after winning its 'Civil War'—which must be the only time the victor in a Civil War had no ideal to realise and therefore had to make way for those whom he had defeated in war without being able to poison their motives.

Historians of recent times have begun to write about a "*physical force movement*" pure and simple in Irish political history. I know of only one such: the physical force body armed by the British Government that fought a war without an ideal and then withered.

Britain, acting through Michael Collins, subverted a section of the IRA and caused it to make war on the other section. If Collins had not been armed by Britain, he would have lost the war which he chose to launch in July 1922.

But we must be charitable in these things. If he had not been armed by Britain, and if his every move had not been monitored by Britain, it is a virtual certainty that he would never have launched this 'Civil War'.

He was not a monster, after all. He was only a bungler, who greatly overestimated his influence with the IRA, and his manipulative abilities in his relationship with Whitehall.

The Free State Army won its only war and then it shrivelled. In victory it had to ward off a mutiny of Republican officers who had joined it on a false promise. Thereafter it was understood that the only war it would ever engage in was a war of the Crown and Empire.

The IRA was beaten in 1923 but survived. Fianna Fail emerged from it and took power before Britain was ready to call on the Free State for support in another World War, as it had called on the Home Rule Government-in-waiting in 1914.

Difficult though it is to imagine today, Fianna Fail was a Republican Party in those times. When Britain was ready for its next World War, in 1939, De Valera had been in power for

seven years and Free State Imperial sentiment was demoralised and Fine Gael, emerging from its Fascist period, did not dissent when the Government declared that it did not intend to make war on Germany at Britain's call.

Churchill's Claim

Churchill came to Office. He denied that the Irish state had the constitutional authority to make its own decisions on war and peace. The Irish Government, having repudiated the Treaty, took no heed. And Churchill did not try to make good his assertion that Britain had continuing Constitutional authority over the Irish state in matters of war and peace.

If he had acted, he would have been met by the re-united force of Irish nationality with the IRA at its core—the IRA having already declared war on Britain.

The Free State Army, fed by a new intake, substantially shed its Free Statism.

The war in defence of Irish neutrality in the World War did not have to be fought because it was taken to be certain that it would be fought if necessary.

The position of the Government was that, if the neutrality of the Irish state was violated by Britain, in the general war declared by Britain, it would resist British incursion by force—meaning, in Churchillian terms, that it would rebel against the Crown—and would ally itself with Britain's enemy.

This was stated in general terms—it would ally itself with the Power that did not invade it—but it was generally understood that the only Power that was likely to invade it was Britain.

Germany had no designs on Ireland—or on Britain either. It was Britain that declared war on Germany, in 1939, after five years of close collaboration with it. And Churchill declared that Britain had the right to occupy the Irish state for the purpose of making war on Germany.

Churchill chose not to occupy Ireland, but he said at the end of the War that this decision was taken on the ground of expediency, and that, if he had decided to occupy Ireland, he would have been within his rights in doing so. We can assume that the ground of expediency on which the decision not to

invade was taken was the probability that invasion would have reunited the Irish national forces that had been broken up and set in conflict with each other in 1922, and the probable effect of a second Anglo-Irish War on American opinion, America being a fellow-neutral of Ireland for the first two years of Britain's war on Germany, and having within it a strong Irish component.

Was Churchill right in his opinion that, under the terms of the Treaty, the Irish state did not have the right to be at peace with the King's enemy? There is no system of law under which the matter can be judged. There is no objective right and wrong about it. If Churchill had decided to invade the Irish state, Parliament would have supported him, and the legality of the matter would have been settled by action.

Parliament did not recognise any judicial function in the state which could pass judgment on its decision, or any moral function either. In the English Constitution the Judiciary and the Church are instruments of the Government, as the Crown in Parliament. (And it is the purpose of Brexit to restore that Constitutional position, which was in danger of being undermined by membership of the EU.)

Nationalist Ireland had asserted itself as sovereign by the 1937 Constitution, and had made that sovereignty practically effective in wartime by securing British withdrawal from the Irish Ports in 1938. Differences between two sovereignties are ultimately resolved by war, which used to be known as "*the reason of Kings*".

Ireland in 1939 was by its own reckoning a sovereign state, although by Britain's reckoning it remained under British sovereignty on certain matters. Other states were in a similar position with relation to Britain. Two of them were Iran and Iraq. Each of them declared itself neutral when Britain launched its second war on Germany, and maintained diplomatic relations with Germany. Britain invaded both of them, remade their Governments, brought them into its war, and demonised as Nazi stooges the national Governments it destroyed.

If it had chosen to invade the Irish state it would undoubtedly have presented De Valera as a Nazi stooge—and George Orwell would have applauded. For ulterior reasons, not for reasons of principle, it chose not to invade—and as Churchill put it, he left the Irish to "*frolic with the Nazis*".

Empire v. League

In everything that it did in 1939-40—and for many years before 1939—Britain acted on its own Imperial authority. An international body existed: the *League of Nations*. The League was a largely British creation. But Britain chose not to act internationally through the League.

De Valera put much effort into the League in the mid 1930s before coming to the conclusion that it was a bogus institution that did more harm than good by fostering illusions. Britain created the League for a short-term purpose of its own in 1919, and then subverted it by giving priority to the Empire in international affairs.

We can assume that, if Britain had been acting as a member of the League, and if in 1939 it had dealt with Germany through the League, instead of acting unilaterally as an Empire, Ireland would not have been neutral. But, since it acted only as an Empire, De Valera acted as the leader of a sovereign nation-state whose credentials were still being questioned by the Empire.

The Empire declared war on the issue of Danzig—an inconceivably trivial issue on which to throw the world into war. Danzig in 1939 was an unsustainable remnant of the

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Versailles Treaty, which had been shredded by Britain during the preceding five years.

Danzig was a German city close to East Prussia, which was a physically detached region of the German state as reconstituted by Versailles in 1919. It lay within the territory of the Polish State, though not under its sovereignty. It was a kind of city-state under the sovereignty of the League, but with its own Government. Relations of mutual hostility existed between Danzig and the Polish State. The Polish State had constructed the new port of Gdynia, rather than use the port of Danzig. There was in 1939 no possibility of bringing Danzig under Polish government without war, but it might easily have been transferred to adjacent East Prussia. And it was over this anomalous remnant of the Versailles Treaty—the rest of which had been shredded by Britain without reference to the League—that Britain chose to launch a World War—without reference to the League. And yet, accepting the Versailles Treaty was a condition of League membership!

Germany had been acting in breach of the conditions of the Versailles Treaty ever since Hitler came to power in 1933. It was able to do so only because Britain supported it.

Germany was not a major European Power when Hitler took Office in 1933. The responsibility to hold it under the Versailles conditions lay with Britain. The United States had repudiated the Treaty and disengaged from European affairs. Britain had established its ascendancy over France, and therefore actual responsibility for upholding the Treaty lay with Britain. What Britain did was neither to uphold the Treaty, nor repudiate it, but destroy it piecemeal by means of particular bilateral arrangements with Germany.

Germany was a middle-ranking European military Power in 1939 only because Britain had decided that it should be so. It had a conscript Army because Britain allowed it. It had a Navy because Britain, under the Naval Agreement of 1935, authorised it to build one. It had merged with Austria because Britain permitted it, after having forbidden the merger of democratic Germany with democratic Austria. And Britain had broken up Czechoslovakia for it, giving it the Czech arms industry.

All of this was done outside the League. And then, when Britain in 1939 suddenly decided to make war on the Germany it had created, that too was done outside the League.

And De Valera did not comply with an international obligation to fall into line with the latest turn in erratic Imperial policy!

The Slibhín View

“Ireland managed to stay out of the war. Yet at the end he gratuitously stained Ireland’s international reputation through offering his sympathies upon the death of Hitler to the German minister Edward Hempel. This act of diplomatic pedantry done in a fit of pique following a heated row with the overbearing American minister, put Ireland in the dock of world opinion as a neutral that mourned Hitler, and it did enduring damage to its post-war reputation. Dev’s lame excuse that Hempel had behaved impeccably was simply not true. Furthermore, and unlike the Irish public at large, shielded by strict censorship, Dev knew plenty about Hitler’s monstrosities across Europe...” (Eunan O’Halpin, in the *Irish Times*, November 3rd).

This fits in with the modern view, largely written by Irish *slibhíns*, that the Irish lived in illusion during Britain’s second war on Germany, mistaking the shadows cast for them, by a State that was only a short step away from fascism, for substance—not even allowed to know that there was a World

War on because their shepherds assured them that it was only a local Emergency. We lived in the flickering darkness of Plato’s Cave, seeing shadows with weakened eyes that would be blinded by sunlight, and then for a further generation we lived in mental darkness etc. And, if truth be told—and in the end truth must be told—it all had to do with the fact that we were ruled by priests who deprived us of the Bible.

A flock of Professors tell us that we called the World War “*the Emergency*”. I was there and I know that we called it the *World War*. I asked my mother why it was happening and she explained that Britain seemed to need a Great War every generation. I don’t recall that anybody thought that it was anything but a British War. Britain was the great war-making state in the world. And I recall a particular night when it was thought that the British Army would be back amongst us in the morning and preparations were made for resistance.

Towards the end of the War I was reading the papers, and the War was the big news in the papers.

The War was discussed freely. So were the post-War arrangements, particularly the Trials. Possibly the Trials were not as freely discussed in the papers as they were by the populace. The general opinion was that they were show trials, without law. I found out later that that was also the opinion of a senior American Judge, who refused to take part in them.

Ireland was not in the condition of Plato’s Cave during the War, but a strong case could be made that University life in Ireland today is, in its History Departments, living in a Plato’s Cave, in which it studies the world through shadows cast for it by Whitehall.

Neutrality 1939-41

With what world opinion was Ireland’s reputation damaged by De Valera’s Neutrality policy? There wasn’t any world opinion in 1939 or 1940. Britain declared war on Germany, with France in tow, and bungled it, and then denounced France for making peace with Germany, with the approval of its democratically-elected Parliament, in the war which it had declared on Germany, at the instigation of Britain, and lost.

Ireland recognised the Vichy Government as the legitimate Government of France. It recognised Petain as the legitimate President of France. Four years later Petain was sentenced to death as a traitor because he did not continue the war without an Army to fight it, and with the victorious enemy in a position to take over the state if it did not make an agreement. And I recall the view of the Slieve Luachra peasant that it would be an outrage on natural justice if Petain was executed.

Britain “*fought alone*” from June 1940 to June 1941—so it tells the world. By means of the Royal Navy, which still dominated the oceans of the world, it prevented a settlement of Europe with pin-pricks here and there, but it did not in any real sense *fight* the war. It had relied on France to do most of the fighting, as in 1914 and, when France fell in May/June 1940, it looked for somebody else to do the fighting—hoping it would be the United States.

But the United States was neutral, just like Ireland. And Roosevelt had won a third term as President by bending to the popular demand that there should be no American military return to the European mess.

And Russia was neutral too. And its propaganda was directed against what it described as British efforts to “*Spread The War*”.

The two potentially dominant states in the world, which became dominant through the success of Britain's efforts to spread the war, stood, as neutrals, for the settlement of the European War in 1939 and 1940 and most of 1941.

They only went to war after they were attacked.

When do the shadow-watchers in Trinity College judge that a world-opinion came into being which judged neutrality in Britain's war on Germany to be indefensible? Surely not before the United States was brought into it in December 1941!

But, before America came in, Russia was in. The British refusal to allow peace to be made in Europe brought about the German/Russian War.

There was an opinion among the German military that Britain would settle if the Bolshevik State in Russia was knocked down. And there was an expectation, not only in Germany, that Russia would be knocked down easily because Stalin had destroyed the Officer Corps of the Russian Army with his insane purges.

But the Russian defences held firm, despite some initial reverses. And then the Russian will to fight, combined with population, resources and industrial capacity, ensured the defeat of Germany. And Britain became, in effect, an onlooker in the War it had started, engaging in some actions which in terms of the German/Russian War can only be regarded as skirmishes.

The most consequential British action was a provocation of Japan—its ally in the 1914 War—which led to its Asian Empire being swept away by Japan, never to be restored even though Japan was defeated by the USA in a separate war.

The USA entered the war in Europe only because Germany declared war on it when the Japanese/American War began. Japan did not reciprocate this German gesture by entering the war in Europe, i.e., the war between Germany and Russia. It had made a peace agreement with Russia, and it held to it until Russia broke it in 1945, when Japan was on the verge of collapse.

When the US was brought into the war in Europe it was eager to fight it, but Britain insisted on skirmishing for a further two years while the issue was being decided on the Russian Front. It held out against American pressure for engagement in France in 1942 and 1943, and only agreed in 1944 when further delay would possibly have brought the Russian Army to Calais.

The ideal outcome from the British viewpoint was that Germany and Russia should inflict irreparable damage on one another. Churchill could not say so at the time, but he admitted soon after that he had never seen Communist Russia as anything but the fundamental enemy. And he was concerned long before the end of the War that defeat of the incidental enemy against which the British war had been launched was bringing the fundamental enemy to power in Central Europe.

The War, as far as Churchill was concerned, was never about Fascism. Churchill was a Fascist. He said so plainly. He made a pilgrimage to Rome to do homage to Mussolini and to praise Fascism as the antidote to Communism. He was opposed to Appeasement, but what he meant by Appeasement was concessions that damaged the Empire—such as the transfer of the Irish Ports to the Irish state in 1938—which made Irish neutrality in the War a practical proposition.

Germany became an enemy because of the gross mishandling of British foreign policy, and not because it became Fascist. The war against Germany is represented as being an unnecessary war in Churchill's account of it.

Nationalist Ireland, as a principled neutral, was under moral obligation to produce a principled account of the war that accorded with its part in it. It failed to do so and allowed itself to be swamped with sub-Churchillian rhetoric.

Fascism

A review in the *Irish Examiner* (20 October 2018) of an American book about Spain (*Scots And Catalans* by J.H. Elliott, reviewed by Frank MacGabhann), is illustrated with a portrait of General Franco, and the reviewer comments that the author—

“praises the Spanish ‘transition’ to democracy, which allowed lifelong fascists to become democrats overnight and left the crimes of General Franco go nearly 40 years unpunished in the interests of national harmony following Franco's death in 1975. Elliott might have mentioned that Franco remains the only European fascist dictator whose reputation is protected by the state that he so cruelly ruled over and who was allowed to die peacefully in his bed, unlike his allies, Hitler and Mussolini...”

Well, the War was Churchill's War, insofar as it was not Stalin's War, and Churchill, to the best of my recollection, was a Francoite. And Franco was not an ally of Hitler, only a fellow-Fascist. And Fascism was not internationalist. Nationalism was the whole point of it.

Franco might have put Britain out of the Second World War by making common cause with Hitler in 1940 and taking Gibraltar, instead of which he blocked Hitler at the Pyrenees—a thing which Britain chose not to do in the Sudetenland.

He deplored the Anglo/German War as a European Civil War, but was a *de facto* ally of Britain in it. He was only an ally of Hitler in the war on Russia. If the US had failed to pressurise Britain into opening the Second Front in 1944, the Red Army might have reached the Pyrenees and put paid to Franco, but there was never any prospect of Churchillian Britain doing that. And then in the 1950s Fascist Spain became a pillar of the Free World.

As for Fascists becoming democrats overnight—how did Germany become a democracy almost overnight after 1945 if fascists did not become democrats on a mass scale? Opposition to Nazism had been scarce, but a moment later there were democrats in plenty—and Communist East Germany published detailed accounts of where they had come from.

But there was nothing wonderful, or fraudulent, about it, in the light of Churchill's view that Fascism was the means by which capitalist civilisation was saved from Bolshevism in Europe.

India

The notion that Ireland was a pariah in the post-War world because of De Valera's conduct in the war is a strictly Anglophile notion. Dev made a triumphal visit to India in 1948 just after it became independent. It is customary to treat India as a democracy, and if it is, then it was the most populous democracy in the world. And it was ruled by a political party that had refused to take part in Britain's War. The Government of India was in the War only because it was a Department of the British Government.

The Congress Party had demanded independence and, unlike the Irish Home Rule Party, without it refused to play a part in world politics in the service of Britain. It declared neutrality. And there was a strong movement in India, led by

Subas Chandra Bose, that in 1941 allied itself militarily with Japan.

The British Government of India made use of India as a resource in the War, and in the course of doing so it caused a Famine in Bengal, 1943-44, in which the deaths were not counted carefully. The death of Bengalis through starvation weighed very light in the British scale of values. The Bengalis were, in the language of the eminent Liberal ideologue of Progress, Gladstone's lieutenant, Sir Charles Dilke, "*a cheap people*" (see his *Greater Britain*).

The Bengal Famine of 1943 is not mentioned at all in Churchill's History of the War, and Churchill's Nobel Prize-winning literature dominated academic history for a generation.

A recent account by an Indian, published in America, *Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire And The Ravaging Of India During World War 2* by Madusree Mukerjee, says that, according to the best estimates, between one and a half million and three million Bengalis died in the Famine, while Britain had ample resources to relieve them, and that British conduct might have been prosecuted as a War-Crime.

But of course the victors are incapable of having committed War Crimes!

There was, after 1945, a congenial world out there in which Irish neutrality against Britain appeared not only sensible but heroic. But it is a world about which Anglophile academia knows nothing.

The Northern War

The second Irish military action of the 20th century was the IRA war against the British State, on behalf of the Catholic community in the undemocratically-governed region of the British state that is called Northern Ireland. At one point in that war a British Army of 26,000 was deployed against the IRA.

I did not support that war. At the outset I proposed that the government of the Northern Ireland region of the British state should be democratised into the political system by which the state was governed. If that had been done, it is extremely improbable that there would have been a war. But it was not done, and there was a war. And, while I did not support it, I could not deny the evidence all around me that it existed.

The Irish State de-legitimised British sovereignty in the Six Counties by asserting Irish sovereignty over them. The IRA made war on the British State over this region of it. The Irish Constitution declared that British sovereignty in this region was illegitimate. But the Irish Government did not support the War launched within the disputed region, and did not even acknowledge that the Republican military action constituted a war.

And, when a settlement was made, Irish Governments would not even acknowledge that Republican actions had been military, but insisted on treating them as outbursts of criminality.

Ireland, according to the ideology of its State, has had no military history in recent centuries. It lives next door to, and heavily under the influence of, the most belligerent war-making state in the world in recent centuries. No other State in the world is in the same league as Britain when it comes to major war-making.

The Irish citizen, left with no Irish military history, is naturally subject to the gravitational pull of British militarism. And the more respectable the citizen, the more he lives in British military history. And the most respectable seem to feel that British war-making is next door to pacifism—if it is not the most effective form of pacifism.

Brendan Clifford

Russia's Future As Seen by Alexander Dugin and Alexander Solzhenitsyn

By Peter Brooke

The theme proposed for this discussion is 'Mother Russia. What it about Russia that enables it to resist liberalism?' And I've been asked to talk specifically about 'contemporary thinkers who oppose the liberal outlook' - perhaps with particular reference to Alexander Dugin and Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

This of course immediately poses the question 'What is meant by "liberalism"?' In an article in the journal *Labour Affairs*, referring to the situation as it was in 2015 before Jeremy Corbyn became leader of the Labour Party, Chris Winch offered what might be a useful guide. He doesn't quite define liberalism but he outlines one of the necessary conditions for its success in government - the existence of a coherent governing élite. Discussing why parliamentary democracy suits it without being one of its necessary characteristics, he says:

'A parliamentary democracy is invariably run for and on behalf of an elite often through competition through sub-elites of the dominant oligarchic group, bound together by wealth, thus satisfying classical liberal aspirations for the maximum freedom in public and private life, for that elite. The advantages of organisation, incumbency, family connection, wealth and political know-how all make this possible and relatively plain sailing' (Labour Affairs, May 2015).

He continues:

'the dominance of both social and economic liberalism, which privileges on the one hand the unrestrained development of individualism and on the other, the market mechanism as the means of securing and preserving the wealth of elites, the stealthy privatisation of public services such as health and education, the narrowness of opinion that is tolerated as acceptable in the commercial and state media and the grinding down of the legal right to take industrial action. The market tends to favour those with connections and insider knowledge and thus tends to reinforce privilege, something liberals have always deemed indispensable for themselves.

'All the main political parties support this agenda and that is why we call them all liberal parties. They are all the product of the dominance of an elite and exist to promote the agenda of that elite, albeit with small differences of emphasis. They are able to ensure that the parliamentary system that had been developed through class struggle to open up some alternatives to the liberal view and liberal practices can be turned to the advantage of the liberal agenda.

'One other point, liberalism has always flourished on the basis of exploitation. The UK is a master of this, not only domestically,

but in the way in which it continues to Hoover up wealth from all over the world, sustaining the domestic population way beyond its own productive capacities. That is almost a defining characteristic of liberalism. Without this ability it would wither and die.'

The idea here - essentially that liberalism is rule by an oligarchical élite big enough to generate sub-élites - seems to me to correspond rather well to what Russia is at the present time. As I understand it, the Soviet Union was based on a very large but tightly disciplined élite whose power was not based on the possession of property. They did possess property but that was a consequence, not a cause, of their possessing power. In the 1990s that system exploded resulting in a free-for-all and the emergence of a new but utterly anarchic oligarchy whose power was now firmly based on the possession of property. Putin's achievement, and it is admirable, was to impose some discipline on the situation - to oblige the élite to behave more like a class, or caste, thus preventing, or at least inhibiting, the intrusion of foreign élites. What the free-for-all would be like without the discipline can be seen in Ukraine.

ALEXANDER DUGIN

Alexander Dugin has sometimes been seen as the *eminence grise* behind Vladimir Putin. He is indeed closely associated with two important ideas that Putin has taken up - the 'multipolar world', as opposed to a 'unipolar world' in which the US is the sole hegemonic power, and 'Eurasia' as one of the poles, centred on Russia. I will look at these shortly. But first, an idea which, I think, hasn't been taken up by Putin, on the subject of élites. Putin's élite still seems to be an oligarchy of wealth on the British liberal model. What Putin has done in relation to disciplining a property based élite could be compared with what Robert Walpole did in forming the 'Whig oligarchy' in the early eighteenth century. In both cases a great deal of bribery and corruption was involved. What Dugin is aiming for in this situation is, however, an oligarchy based not on the possession of wealth but on spiritual superiority.

What would be the ideas on which such an élite would be formed? Dugin offers three:

- 1) the 'traditionalism' of René Guénon
- 2) the 'new beginning' of Martin Heidegger
- 3) Russian Orthodoxy.

It may be that the first two (Guénon and Heidegger) are specifically for the élite while the third (Russian Orthodoxy - or Roman Catholicism, or Islam, or Buddhism, or Shamanism, or whatever) simply provides the necessary link between the élite and the populace at large.

I need hardly say that neither Guénon nor Heidegger are Russian but they are very important to understanding Dugin (as is the English founder of geopolitics, Halford Mackinder, whom we shall meet again later on).

RENÉ GUÉNON (AND JULIUS EVOLA)

Guénon's basic argument is that society should be constructed on the basis of a religious idea. All the great religions as we encounter them are 'exoteric' forms of a hidden 'esoteric' teaching known only to an élite which learns it not through book learning but through a process of initiation. In the West this idea has been almost completely lost and, through the effects of Western influence, it is fast disappearing in the East as well. In France (Guénon was French) the authentic exoteric forms are Roman Catholicism and, in some of its branches, Freemasonry. Guénon himself lived in Cairo and was initiated into a Muslim Sufi order. His own writings, however, are very orientated towards Hinduism. His English admirers include the Orthodox theorist Philip Sherrard and the Buddhist Marco

Pallis. They were both involved in the formation of an inter-religious discussion group, the Temenos Academy, under the patronage of Prince Charles.

It isn't immediately obvious how all this translates into politics. Guénon wrote two powerful and influential polemics against modernism - *La Crise du monde moderne* and *Le Règne de la quantité*. But by 'modernism' Guénon means everything - the whole of industrial society. He wants a return to a society based on agriculture and manual crafts. In laying out this ideal he is not concerned with practical politics. He is simply declaring the principle, the truth as he sees it, and measuring how far removed from this truth our society is.

Dugin, however, is concerned with practical politics. He wants Russia to be a great power that can defy the American 'liberal' Empire. But it is impossible to imagine how one can be a great military power without being a great industrial power.

It happens, though, that there is something of a bridge between Guénon and practical politics in the person of the Italian, Julius Evola. The sub-title of Dugin's book, *Putin v Putin* - 'Putin viewed from the right' echoes the title of Evola's book *Fascism viewed from the Right*. Evola translated some of Guénon's writings into Italian and visited him in Cairo but it seems to me improbable that Guénon was very aware of his political activities. The main thing Evola was known for in Italy was trying (unsuccessfully) to persuade Mussolini to suppress the Roman Catholic Church, which, we remember, Guénon saw as an authentic exoteric religious form, and re-establish Roman paganism (which I think goes largely unremarked in Guénon's writings). But for me the complete disconnect between Evola's position and Guénon's is revealed in the fact that he supported the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, flagrantly a case of a 'modern' society destroying one of the very few societies left in the world that Guénon might have regarded as 'traditional'.

I see very little of Guénon in Dugin apart from the polemic against modernism which, since it is not a polemic against industrial production, seems to me to be largely rhetorical.

AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER

As with Guénon I don't see that Heidegger translates easily into practical politics (and, also as with Guénon, since there is more to life than practical politics this doesn't particularly bother me). Heidegger of course famously joined the Nazi Party when Hitler came to power in 1933. In the first issue of the *Heidegger Review*, John Minahane gave what seems to me to be a very convincing account of what Heidegger might have hoped from the Nazis at least in their early days in power:

'The un-happened history of Martin Heidegger was this: the German intellectual elite, including the Nazi elite, were gripped by his [Heidegger's] thinking with the force of a new revelation; the Germans came to accept that their national resurrection required them to take up where the ancient Greeks had left off; without "dis-inventing" or forgetting anything, the Germans ceased to allow the uncontrolled spread of technology regardless of its social effects, and so they saved the German rural communities (the heart of the nation), with the flight from the land being stemmed and actually reversed; there was no World War II (and therefore, of course, no Holocaust), but the spiritual force of the German revival affected Russia, so much so that in due course the grotesque, production-fixated, hyper-liberal Bolshevik dictatorship collapsed and Russia became Russia again.'

Given that saving German rural communities and disciplining the growth of industry was a large part of Hitler's programme outlined in *Mein Kampf* such hopes were not wholly unreasonable. But again we can see the paradox. Hitler believed that saving the German peasant and restraining the

growth of urban life required more land, therefore an expansion eastward. Which required a military capability. Which required industrialisation. Heidegger, like Guénon, had to accept that his role was to assert a principle and an initiative which remained individual without being able to reduce it to practical politics.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY

The third support for Dugin's spiritual/political élite - Orthodoxy - is, at least apparently, much more substantial and of course much more 'Russian'. It has the great advantage that it already exists as a collective phenomenon. But from what I would think was Dugin's point of view it has at least one major disadvantage. It already has an élite of its own and that élite does not at all resemble the natural ruler Dugin has in mind.

This élite should not be confused with the hierarchy of the Church (maybe Patriarch Kirill and his supporters would be closer to Dugin's ideal). The élite is made up of the Saints, who may or may not be priests and bishops but who, as an anthropological type are almost the polar opposite of Dugin's idea of what an élite should be. I want to illustrate this with a story you may feel is frivolous but I think it illustrates what is truly great in the Russian Orthodox - and therefore the Russian - tradition, indeed what ultimately will stand against the dehumanisation which is what we really have in mind when we criticise 'liberalism'.

The story comes from a book called *Everyday Saints* by Archimandrite (now Bishop) Tikhon (Shevkunov) concerning life in the Pskov Caves monastery. This was the only monastery in Russia that was never closed throughout the whole Soviet period. It is on the border with Estonia and was actually in Estonia and therefore out of the Soviet grasp until 1940, but it also managed to resist the persecution unleashed in the 1960s when Khrushchev boasted that he would live to see the last priest recant his profession on TV.

Everyday Saints is a very popular book in modern Russia. This particular story concerns a Bishop, Vladimir Rodzianko, son of Michael Rodzianko who was President of the State Duma at the time of the February 1917 Revolution. As such Michael Rodzianko features prominently - and rather unkindly - in Solzhenitsyn's great account of the Revolution - *March 1917*. His son Vladimir was brought up in exile, first in Yugoslavia (as was) then in the US. He became a priest and then, after his wife died, he was persuaded to become a monk, and a Bishop. In the Orthodox Church a married man can become a priest but a priest cannot marry. Priests are either single - monks - or married. Only monks can become Bishops.

The 'Anthony of Sourozh; referred to in this story was a very well-known figure in Orthodoxy in London. I had the privilege of hearing him preach towards the end of his life in the 1990s and of attending his funeral.

'However, right before taking the monastic vows, the future monk asked his spiritual father, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, an unexpected yet heartfelt question. "Well, Your Grace, I will now receive the monastic vows from you. I will undertake for the Lord God and His Holy Church the great monastic vows gladly. As for the vow of chastity, I totally understand what it means. I fully accept the vow of poverty as well. All the vows related to prayer are also perfectly clear and acceptable to me. But as for the vow of obedience—here I can't understand anything!" "What are you talking about?" Metropolitan Anthony was very surprised. "Well, I mean," Father Vladimir reasoned, "instead of starting me out as a simple monk, you're immediately making me a bishop. In other words, instead of being a novice and obeying the commands of others, my job will mean that I'm the one who will have to

command and make decisions. How then do I fulfil the vow of obedience? To whom will I be a novice? Whom will I obey?" Metropolitan Anthony grew thoughtful for a moment, and then said: "You will be in obedience to everyone and anyone whom you meet on your journey through life. As long as that person's request will be within your power to grant it, and not in contradiction with the Scriptures."

'Father Vladimir was very pleased by this commandment. But later it turned out that people who made the acquaintance of the bishop did not have an easy time of it all in dealing with his constant willingness to carry out his decisive and unequivocal fulfilment of this monastic vow. Partly I'm referring to myself. Sometimes, the bishop's understanding of his holy vow of obedience would prove to be quite a trial for me. For example, we might be walking together through the streets of Moscow—on a miserable day, through the pouring rain. And we are in a hurry to get somewhere. And suddenly an old babushka with an old string shopping bag called an avoska ("perhaps bag" [Soviet citizens used to carry a bag with them in case something unexpected, a pair of shoes or something like that, appeared in a shop window - PB]) stops us. "Father!" She quavers in the voice of an old woman, not realising of course that she's speaking not just to a simple priest, but to a bishop, no less—and what's more, a bishop from America! "Father! Please can't you help me? Please, bless my room! This is the third year that I've been asking our Father Ivan, and he still hasn't come. Maybe you'll take pity on me? Will you come?" I hadn't even managed to open my mouth, and the bishop was already expressing his most passionate willingness to carry out her request, as if his whole life long he had only been waiting for the chance to bless Grandmother's little room somewhere. "But your Grace," I say desperately. "You don't even have the slightest idea where this room of hers might be. Grandma, where are we going?" "Oh, not far at all. Just the other side of town—in Orekhovo-Borisovo. It's only forty minutes by bus from the last stop on the Metro. Really—it's not that far," she warbles joyfully. And the bishop, cancelling all our important plans (since it was impossible to contradict him in such situations), would first traipse headlong all the way to the other end of Moscow, the largest city in Europe, to a church where a friend of his gave him the necessary vestments and utensils needed for a house blessing. (Of course, I tagged along with him.) All the while Grandma, beside herself with joy (Lord only knows where she got her strength) and unable to contain her happiness, ceaselessly told the bishop all about her children and grandchildren who never visit her anymore . . . Then, after the expedition to the church, off we went in the other direction, jam-packed like sardines in the crowded Moscow Metro at rush hour, standing all the way and with several long walks to change train lines through the jam-packed corridors, and then standing that way as we rode all the way to the end of the line, on the very outskirts of Moscow. From there, just as Grandma had promised, it was a forty-minute bone-rattling ride in a dusty old bus, also crammed full to overflowing. But finally the bishop blessed and consecrated Grandma's little room, all eight meters square, on the ninth floor walk-up of some hideous Communist project housing. And he did it with sincerest prayer, majestically, and triumphantly, just the way he always performs any divine services. Then he sat down with the ecstatic Grandma (actually, both of them were ecstatic about each other) and praised to the skies her humble offerings—little Russian pretzels called sushki, and tea over-sugared with sickly-sweet cherry jam, full of pits . . . Then, with immense gratitude, he accepted as an honour and did not refuse the crumpled one rouble note that she stealthily handed to her "Father" as she said goodbye. "May the Lord save you!" she

called out to the bishop! "Now it will be sweet for me to die in this little room!"

DUGIN AND EVOLA ON THE ÉLITE

I've given you what you may think is a very ordinary story at such length because the atmosphere of it is so radically different from what we find in Dugin. In his book *Putin v Putin*, Dugin says of his spiritual élite:

'Naturally, the best way to create an adequate political elite is through revolutions and wars. In such cases the strongest, the aristocracy, come to power. A time of peace is usually the time of mediocre leaders or 'sub-passionaries'. According to Gumilev [Lev Gumilev, geographer, son of the poet Anna Akhmatova - PB], there are a hundred sub-passionaries per one true passionary. They are different from the masses in that they want something but cannot achieve it, and they make up a class of the 'sub-élite'. There is a popular Eurasian slogan: 'career or revolution'. If one can get a career, he will get on in life. If not, he will opt for a revolution. The only thing that will not be tolerated is obedience. A man of the elite, a man of a ruling type, is not ready to tolerate the rule of someone worse than him. And he will not tolerate it. He will either be integrated into this power and improve it or he will destroy it. No society can exist without an elite class. If a society does not have its own elite, its place will be taken by a foreign one. If we cannot rule by ourselves, somebody else will rule us. Eurasianists believe that a country should be ruled by the best representatives of the society. The basis of Eurasian method of selection is the aristocracy, the passionaries.'

He envisages this élite being formed through a military religious order, perhaps resembling the Templars or Hospitallers of mediaeval Christendom:

'the Italian sociologist Wilfredo Pareto proved that the establishment of entities similar to the oprichnina [the private army formed by Ivan the Terrible with a view to suppressing the power of the feudal aristocracy - PB] is a classic motif in political history. When the ruling elites 'freeze up' and are shut down, the important process of elite rotation comes to a halt. In order to bring new blood into the ruling class, it is sometimes essential to create parallel hierarchies. These hierarchies are based on personal qualities, energy, courage, passion, and ideological convictions — in short, on energetic idealism, as opposed to previous hierarchies where noble origin, wealth and clan connections guarantee a high position in the political-administrative system. Therefore, the Russian oprichnina is a textbook example of the law of elite rotation: a cadre revolution from above. The parallel hierarchy is usually created on the basis of special ideologies or even cults. Hence the chivalric orders, mystical Islamic orders (tariqas), Indian Tantric sects, Taoist and Buddhist sects in China and Japan, and so on. Every parallel hierarchy has its sacrality, its symbols, and its charismatic pole located in the centre of the entire structure as the organising element.

[...]

'The centre of oprichnina sacrality was the figure of Ivan Vasilievich the Terrible himself and the symbolism of death that constantly occupied his mind and his imagination. It is known that Ivan personally prepared three Orthodox canons, one of which was dedicated to the Angel of Death, the terrible Angel (and this canon is still widely used by Old Believers). Therefore, the oprichnina was a parallel hierarchy with its own specific symbolism, rituals and purposes. But the oprichnina theorist Ivan Peresvetov (some authors dispute his existence and even claim that 'Peresvetov' was a pseudonym for Ivan the Terrible himself) was significantly influenced by Turkish Janissaries, the militant Sufis of the Sublime Porte, another secret order with its own symbolism and rituals.'

At the end of this he complains that

'even Putin himself, contrary to the wailings of his opponents, does not have anything in common with an authoritarian, charismatic dictator. So, only an Order can save the day, along with everything that it entails.'

None of that, despite the appeal to Russian history, has anything to do with Orthodoxy. But it is rather reminiscent of what Evola (*Notes on the Third Reich*) evokes as the course of action available to Hitler but which he failed to take:

'the idea that could have served as a corrective to Hitlerism was that the state should be based, not so much on a single party, as on something similar to an 'Order.' A fundamental task in the Third Reich was the creation of cadres trained by means of a systematic formation of an elite, conceived as the main 'bearer' of the idea of a new state and its corresponding worldview. The difference from the earlier, ancient tradition was that in Germany, in addition to qualities of character, physical requirements were taken into consideration, among them the 'race' factor, with special emphasis on the 'Nordic' type. There were two principal initiatives taken by the Third Reich in this direction. The first initiative was the constitution, backed by the party, of three Ordensburgen, that is, three 'Order castles.' It was a question of complexes with edifices of an architecture that was inspired by the ancient Nordic-Germanic style, with large grounds annexed, including woods, fields and lakes, where, after an initial selection, young people were welcomed for a military, physical, moral and intellectual education including 'worldview.' Special attention was paid to courage and resolve with rather dangerous tests. Among other things, judicial proceedings were sometimes held in these castles with aspirants, or Junker, who followed the progress of the trial as an audience. Cases were chosen where honour and other ethical values played a role, to test the moral sensibility and natural faculties of judgment of the aspirants in the discussions that followed. Rosenberg supervised all the Ordensburgen and so his ideas served as the principal basis for the indoctrination, which, given the reservations we expressed concerning them, introduced a problematic factor into the system. While the young men were in these institutions, they led a life of a 'society of single men,' almost isolated from the rest. When they left, they would be in possession of a special preferential qualification to hold political offices and obtain positions of responsibility in the Third Reich or, it is better to say, in what the Third Reich was supposed to become. Of far greater importance was the initiative represented by the SS'

[...]

'The true organiser of the SS was Heinrich Himmler, who was nominated Reichsführer SS or Führer of the Reich for the SS. Himmler was of Bavarian origin and had a Catholic education. When he was studying agriculture in 1919, he joined a corps of volunteers that fought the Communists. His political tendencies were philo-monarchist and Right-wing conservative, inherited from his father who had been the loyalist instructor of Heinrich, hereditary prince of Bavaria. He was especially fascinated by the ideal of the Order of Teutonic Knights, which we spoke of earlier. He wanted to make the SS a corps that would perform the same function of the state's central nucleus that the nobility had played with its unquestioning loyalty to the regime, but in a new form. For the formation of a man of the SS, he considered a blend of Spartan spirit and Prussian discipline. But he also had in view the order of Jesuits (Hitler jokingly used to call Himmler 'my Ignatius of Loyola)'

After all that, liberalism, I think, begins to look quite attractive.

THE 'EURASIAN' PROJECT

Dugin envisages a great future for Russia as the centre of a new 'Empire' - he isn't afraid to use the word, though he also calls it a 'great space': 'Eurasia'. Eurasia broadly corresponds to what used to be the Russian Empire and then became the Soviet Union and then the Commonwealth of Independent States. And Vladimir Putin has been trying to reconstitute it as the 'Eurasian Union.' Interestingly one of the main political advocates of the Eurasian Union has been Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan. Dugin is able to point to a substantial body of theory supporting the Eurasian idea, going back to a group of *émigrés* in the 1920s centred round the linguistic theorist Nicholas Trubetskoy. Trubetskoy had in mind a Russia facing East and recovering its Asiatic or 'Turanian' character in opposition to the European or Romano-Germanic influence which he saw as disastrous, and which included Marxism (in England, Oswald Mosley and others saw Marxism as an 'oriental' tendency!).

But the Eurasian project also includes the possibility of an alliance between Germany and Russia, bringing the whole Eurasian land mass into a unity in opposition to the 'transatlantic' US and UK. This conflict between land and sea, Rome and Carthage, had been announced in England by Halford Mackinder, supporter of the sea, and was taken up in Germany by Carl Schmitt, supporter of the land. In both Germany and the Soviet Union there were those - they included Heidegger - who saw the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact not as an unnatural short term tactical manoeuvre but as the first stage in changing the geopolitical shape of the world. So far as I can see the slogan 'From Vladivostok to Dublin' was coined by Jean Thiriart, a Belgian political theorist, closely associated with Dugin. During the Second World War Thiriart advocated a European Great Space centred on the German Third Reich. He complained that the project had been ruined by Hitler's narrow German nationalism. *From Vladivostok to Dublin* was the title of a book he planned to publish in 1987, advocating a union between Europe and the Soviet Union. He expected the initiative to come from the Soviet Union and indeed I remember thinking at the time that Gorbachev's reforms were being conducted with a view to detaching Germany from the West and orientating it more to the East. This perspective was of course, overtaken by events.

SOLZHENITSYN'S ALTERNATIVE VIEW

Dugin's view is that given Russia's geographical position in what Halford Mackinder called 'the heartland' of the Eurasian continent, it has no choice but to be 'great', to engage in a great project, in this case the reconstruction of a post-Soviet Great Space with itself as the centre. Otherwise it will finish as a peripheral part of the transatlantic Great Space (which is how many commentators on the BBC, stressing Russia's weakness, its pretensions above its status, like to see it). Solzhenitsyn on the other hand, while still wanting to defend Russia against Western influence, economic and moral, wanted a renunciation of great adventures. He reckoned that Russia had enough on its hands recovering from the great adventure of International Communism.

It has to be said that a very large amount of Solzhenitsyn's work still hasn't been published in English translation. This includes his last major work - *Two Centuries Together* - a two volume history of relations between Russians and Jews in the period following the seventeenth and eighteenth century incorporation into the Russian Empire of parts of what had been Poland (including Ukraine and Byelorussia) with their substantial Jewish populations. Most importantly there are still five volumes to go of his major life's work, *The Red Wheel*, his history of the Revolution, the continuation of *August 1914* and *November 1916*. Four volumes dealing with *March 1917*

(the first of these has recently been published in English) and two with *April 1917* - dealing with the 'February Revolution' (February in the Julian calendar still in use at the time in Russia. Following the Gregorian calendar the 'October Revolution' took place in November.) It is only quite recently that the original version of *The First Circle* was made available in English - the version most people have read was a bowdlerised version Solzhenitsyn prepared in hopes of getting it published in the Soviet Union. I think that even the definitive version *the Gulag Archipelago* still isn't available in English. The version we know was based on material he had been able to obtain under very difficult circumstances in the Soviet Union. But it was reworked since, incorporating material that had come his way in exile.

There are reasons for this collapse of interest in the man who in the sixties and early seventies was being hailed as the greatest living writer and they are to some extent told in two volumes of autobiography (only one of them available in English translation) that recount the time of his exile, given the title *The Little Grain Managed to Land Between Two Millstones* - the millstones being the Soviet machine and the somewhat more nebulous US left-liberal media.

As Solzhenitsyn tells it, during the Soviet period he had a mighty enemy, the Soviet machine, but he still felt that everything else - the whole dissident community, the whole world outside the Soviet sphere of influence - was behind him. In the early days of his exile, however, he began to realise that this was based on a misunderstanding. It was a very fortuitous misunderstanding because this solidarity was the perfect tactic for the struggle against the Soviet machine. Nonetheless many of those he thought were supporting him or who, indeed, themselves thought they were supporting him, were in fact his natural enemies. The issue that divided them was, in the first instance, Russia - the extent to which what Solzhenitsyn and his allies both regarded as the Soviet tyranny could be identified as a Russian tyranny. But there was also the question of revolution since Solzhenitsyn had come to the conclusion that he did not want a revolutionary overthrow of the existing regime.

This began to emerge as an issue with the publication in the Soviet Union of his *Letter to the Soviet leaders*. It was a genuine letter, sent privately and not released publicly (i.e. to the underground *samizdat*) until it was clear that he wasn't going to receive a reply. It was sent in September 1973 and 'published' about the time of his exile in February 1974. Although his contempt for the Soviet leaders comes over very clearly he is nonetheless recommending policies that presuppose they will continue in power. He recommends that certain positions of authority should be open to non-Party members, but he isn't calling for democracy. Neither here nor anywhere else does he call for a popular uprising. His last public appeal before his exile - *Live not by lies* - is, as the title suggests, simply a call to refuse to perpetuate a false ideology. His quarrel is with the policies of the government not with the principle of authoritarian government as such.

Solzhenitsyn describes how in the course of writing *The Red Wheel* he came to believe that the real revolution was not in October but in February - that is, the 'liberal' revolution. He had intended to bring his story through to 1922 which, at the rate he was going, would have been impossible, but the decision to stop in April 1917 (actually 18th May with summary account of later events) was not - or at least not just - a matter of running out of steam. He felt that by then Russian liberalism had lost all power of initiative and that power was there for the taking by anyone sufficiently ruthless and determined (and who was there other than Lenin?). And this was the possibility that worried him when he contemplated the possible collapse of the Soviet Union. And of course it is what he saw when the Soviet system

did collapse, resulting in his book *Russia in collapse*, published in 1998.

NO GREAT ADVENTURES

But to return to Alexander Dugin's theme of Russia's need for a great mission in the world, this ambition is precisely one of the aspects of Soviet policy criticised in the *Letter to the Soviet Leadership*. And in *The Problem of Russia at the end of the twentieth century*, written in 1994 just before his return to Russia, he criticises the empire building projects of the Tsars. Indeed he has little time for the Eurasian theorists of the 1920s, nor for the 'National Bolsheviks' - also admired by Alexander Dugin, founder with the novelist Eduard Limonov in the 1990s, of the 'National Bolshevik Party'. The National Bolsheviks hoped that they could return to Russia and come to terms with the Bolsheviks - that the Bolsheviks were working for Russian greatness, that, in the words of one of the leading representatives (who of course ended up being shot in the Gulag) Nikolai Ustrialov, Bolshevism was like a radish - red on the outside, white (Great Russian patriotic) on the inside. In *Russia in Collapse*, Solzhenitsyn calls the Eurasians 'nothing but a decadent aspiration and sign of moral weakness.' If put into practise, the 'Russian specificity' would be lost in a Muslim majority. Later in the same book he attacks the journal *Vetche* (Assembly), launched by Vladimir Osipov as an organ of militant Russian nationalism: 'These new theorists of misfortune are united in trying to find how to save Russia through "eurasianism" or how to rid themselves of Christianity through Neo-Paganism.' He almost certainly has Dugin in mind.

Solzhenitsyn's project was the very modest one of simply restoring a decent life in Russia which involved in his view first of all reducing the territory as far as possible to the Slav Orthodox heartland. He would have wanted to include Ukraine in this Slav heartland but recognised their right to secede if that is what they wanted (in practice this question of secession became more complicated because of the large numbers of Russians living in the seceding entities). The main task was to rebuild Russia from the bottom up, not worrying about democracy at the national level, with the formation and conflict of political parties which he saw as an entirely pointless division of the national effort, but establishing at local level the equivalent of the nineteenth century *zemstvos*, or even - he wasn't afraid to use the word - 'soviets', provided that these soviets would be in reality what the old soviets were on paper - organs through which decisions could be made at local level by representatives elected as individuals not as members of a party. He greatly admired the local level democracy that he saw in the cantons in Switzerland, but also in the US. Above all, he wanted to restore the interest in and commitment to rural life, to restore the taste the people once had for working the earth, a taste destroyed first by collectivisation then by a rationalisation of the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) system introduced by Khrushchev, gathering them together into ever larger units.

All this is obviously much less exciting, and perhaps less apparently relevant to our own preoccupation with finding a force that can confront the Anglo American aggression that weighs on the world at the present time but I tend to see it as much more positive than Dugin's great geopolitical project. If it is happening. But I don't know if it is happening or not. What is happening rather confirms Dugin's view that Russia has no choice - it has to have an ambitious foreign policy. The aggression of NATO in Georgia and in Ukraine, the prospect of losing Crimea as a base for the Black Sea fleet, have compelled Russia into adopting a more 'aggressive' stance towards the world, as the US-UK-France-Turkey-Qatar-United Arab Emirates-Saudi aggression in neighbouring Syria eventually forced a very reluctant Vladimir Putin to intervene there.

But on a perhaps more positive note something that is happening within Russia and that I do regard as very positive is the renewal of the life of the Church and in particular of the monasteries, the mood that is reflected in the passage I quoted earlier from *Everyday Saints*. Whatever the politics of the society, whether they are liberal or authoritarian, a society that encourages the monastic life and regards the Saint as the highest human type is a society that is radically different from the sort of society we are living in. And that is, it seems to me, how 'Mother Russia' can best resist the debilitating force which, for the purposes of the present discussion, we are calling 'liberalism.'

Substance of a talk given in Belfast, June 2015

More material on the issues raised in this essay - in particular on Dugin, Heidegger and Solzhenitsyn - can be found in the 'Politics and Theology' section of my website - www.peterbrooke.org □

The Battle for Baku, 1918

By Pat Walsh

August/September 2018 marks the centenary of the Battle for Baku, one of the more obscure events of the Great War of 1914 that nonetheless was something of lasting historical importance - even after its result was seemingly nullified a few months after by the British Great War victory. It is also a fascinating story of geopolitics, double-dealing and betrayal.

In September 1918 a combined army of Ottomans and Azerbaijanis captured the strategically important city of Baku on the Caspian Sea from a motley alliance of Russian Soviets, Cossacks, British Imperialists and Armenian Dashnaks. Even the Ottoman's allies, the Germans, opposed the advance.

The Government of the Azerbaijani Republic, the first democratic government in the Moslem world, took control of its capital, and began the process of state formation.

A few months later at the end of 1918, with the defeat of the Ottomans and their forced evacuation under the terms of the Mudras Armistice, the city of Baku came into the possession of Britain, the victorious power of the Great War. However, the fact that the Azerbaijanis had repossessed the city and established it as the capital of a declared republic, on top of British War declarations of "*rights of self-determination*" and geopolitical objectives in relation to Bolshevik Russia, meant that the Paris Peace Conference had to recognise the substance of the result of the Battle for Baku.

So how did the Battle of Baku come about and what was it all about?

First of all it was about British relations with Russia. Russia has for centuries been Britain's main geopolitical concern in the world. Only in two periods since 1815, when Britain's Balance of Power policy has determined making war on Germany with Russia as a temporary ally, has Russia not been a primary global enemy and object of policy. That was what the 19th Century Great Game was all about and the mantra that "*By Jingo... the Russians shall not have Constantinople.*"

In 1907 the Liberal Imperialist agreement with Russia settling outstanding affairs and partitioning Persia, signalled the procurement of the Tsar as a temporary ally in the Great War of *Germania Deledda Est*. The Tsar would give lend of his army - the Russian Steamroller - so that Germany could be properly encircled, and ground into dust by the attritional force of the Royal Navy, England's primary weapon of war, with Russian and French military forces doing the squeezing on land.

However, the German State, organised in an effective manner for defence, proved a tougher nut to crack than anticipated and it was the Great War anti-German alliance that fractured first. The Tsarist State began to collapse from early 1917. However, the Caucasus front only crumbled after Lenin, delivered by the Germans in his sealed train, gave the signal for disengagement by the Russian peasants through his Decree on Land. Then, Britain's Eastern War front began to dissolve.

Major-General Lionel Charles Dunsterville (school friend of Rudyard Kipling and the model for "Stalky" in *Stalky and Co.*) who led the British defence of Baku, recalled in his 1920 memoir of events what the thinking was behind his mission, which originally was intended for Tiflis but which was diverted to Baku as the Ottomans advanced:

"The object of the mission I was ordered to proceed to the Caucasus at the end of 1917, as well as the enemy plans that led to the dispatch of the mission, can best be set forth briefly under this letter of the alphabet.

One of the big items in the deep-laid pre-war schemes of Germany for world-domination was the absorption of Asia Minor and the penetration into further Asia by means of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. When Baghdad was taken by the British in March 1917, and the prospect of its recapture by the Turks appeared very remote, the scheme for German penetration into Asia had to be shifted further north and took the obvious line Berlin-Baku-Bokhara.

In this latter scheme it was evident that the Southern Caucasus, Baku and the Caspian Sea would play a large part; and the object of my mission was to prevent German and Turkish penetration in this area.

Fate ordained that, just at the time that the British thwarted the more southern German scheme by the capture of Baghdad, the Russian breakdown opened the northern route to the unopposed enterprise of the Germans. Until the summer of 1917 the Russian troops held firm, though it was obvious that the process of dis-integration could not long be delayed. Their line extended from South Russia, through the Caucasus, across the Caspian, through North-West Persia until its left joined up with the British right on the frontier of Persia and Mesopotamia, east of Baghdad. By the autumn of 1917 this line was melting away, troops deserted en masse and the entire army announced its intention of with-drawing from the struggle and proceeding home.

Thus in the neighbourhood of Erzurum the Turkish Army, acting unconsciously as the Advanced Guard of German aims, found nothing between it and the long-coveted possession of the Southern Caucasus, with the exception of a few Armenian troops, disorganized, without cohesion and equally impregnated with the spirit of the revolution. But, as the line of the Turkish advance lay through their homes, they were compelled to offer resistance. Tiflis, the capital of the Southern Caucasus, was likely to fall without serious resistance into the hands of the enemy, and the capture of this town would give the Turkish-German armies control of the railway line between Batumi on the Black Sea and Baku on the Caspian, the enormously valuable oilfields of Baku, the indispensable minerals of the Caucasus Mountains, and the vast supplies of grain and cotton from the shores of the Caspian Sea.

The scene of conflict being too far removed from any of the main areas of the war — Baghdad to Baku is 800 miles — it was quite impossible to send sufficient troops to meet the situation.

The only possible plan, and it was a very sound one, was to send a British mission to Tiflis. This mission, on reaching its destination, would set to work to re-organize the broken units of Russian, Georgian and Armenian soldiery, and restore the battle-line against the Turkish invasion. The prospects were

considerable, and success would be out of all proportion to the numbers employed or the cost involved. It was attractive and practical.

The honour of command fell to my lot, and I set forth from Baghdad with the leading party in January 1918." (The Adventures of Dunsterforce, pp. 2-8)

In late 1917, with the collapse of the Russian lines, an enormous vacuum began to appear in the Southern Caucasus. The Russian occupied areas of the Ottoman Empire and their Caucasian hinterlands, which had been under Tsarist administration for a century, were suddenly up for grabs. And the primary British concern became that the Germans and/or the Ottomans were going to push eastward.

The War plans and geopolitical anticipations of London were shattered with the disintegration of its Russian ally. The War that had been waged by Britain to curtail German commercial success and growth, and its rejuvenation of the Ottoman State, now threatened to lead to further German growth and Ottoman expansion eastwards. The victory of the great Moslem Ottoman State over the British Empire would have dire consequences for the "prestige" of England and its projection of racial superiority over the "Orientals".

Britain was forced to improvise, as best it could, by this unanticipated chain of events. The major object of Britain in these circumstances was a reconstruction of a Caucasian front to replace that manned formerly by the Tsar's forces to prevent an Ottoman advance. Anybody would do to man the new front. The important thing was to form it out of everybody and anybody, and worry about it later.

The best available material for such a front were the Armenian Dashnaks. They had rejected substantial Young Turk overtures on the outbreak of the Great War to instead go into insurrection against the Ottoman State, staking the future of their community on the gamble of being able to construct *Magna Armenia*, a great Armenian state stretching from the Caucasus into half of Turkey from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.

The Armenians were the most militarised people left in the region. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians joined the Tsarist forces, including many Ottoman Armenians, whilst Dashnak bands operated behind Ottoman lines in harassing the Ottoman war effort and attacking Moslem settlements to prepare for the incorporation of land into a future Armenian state.

Whilst the Armenian Insurrection was initially successful and had even succeeded in capturing Van and Erzurum, the future capital of an Armenian state, in conjunction with the Tsarist armies, the Russian internal collapse left the Armenians holding the line alone against the Ottomans.

The Armenians remained the primary material for a reconstructed front for Britain. They had numbers, were militarily trained, armed and had a will to fight the Ottomans, now lacking in the Russian peasants. They were the first objects for financial and material support by Britain in late 1917. The British knew that the Armenians would not be enough by themselves to form a new front in Eastern Anatolia/the Caucasus. They were found to be unreliable in many instances, and without Russian control more concerned with deserting the front and going off to devastate Moslem settlements in the hinterland to prepare the ground for *Magna Armenia*.

It is important to understand that in the circumstances of late 1917/early 1918 Britain would support any Russian administration — even Bolshevik — that would continue to wage the Great War against Germany and the Ottomans. Kerensky was welcomed on the understanding that he could reinvigorate a fading Russian effort against Germany, through popular, democratic catch cries. However, as Basil Lockhart, the senior British Agent in Russia, noted, it was Kerensky's continued

support for waging the War that finally did for him against the Bolsheviks.

So the Bolsheviks were supported, even after the conclusion of Brest-Litovsk and the ending of hostilities with the Germans on the understanding that they would continue to resist the Ottomans in the Caucasus because of Russian geopolitical concerns, particularly in retaining the oil of Baku for the Russian state.

Lenin, having dissolved the Caucasus front with his Decree on Land, found he had to reconstruct it to keep the Baku oil fields for the Russian State the Bolsheviks aimed to command. Both British Imperialists and Bolsheviks sought out the only substantial military force in the region for their respective interests – the Armenian Dashnaks – to man the line against Ottoman advance.

In January 1918 Lenin issued his decree 'On Armenia' declaring official Bolshevik support for an Armenian state and nominated Stepan Shaumyan, who led the Baku Commune, as Prime minister in waiting, of it. The Bolsheviks then began to repatriate and assemble the more than 100,000 Armenian veterans of the Tsarist army to the region. This represented a Bolshevik trumping of British War propaganda. The British War Cabinet, although it had urged in private the foundation of an Armenian state in the Caucasus in December 1917 as a barrier to Ottoman advance, had been careful not to formerly declare such a War aim.

Baku's oil was undoubtedly indispensable to the Bolsheviks. Trotsky remarked to the Central Committee that Baku was more strategically important than Moscow. Over 80% of Russia's supply came from these fields. Lenin was steadfast in his belief that the Bolshevik state would not survive without this oil. (During the Second World War three-quarters of Soviet oil still came from Baku. Hitler would have won the war without the Soviet tanks driven by Baku's oil. Newsreel footage from 1942 shows Hitler, alongside other Nazis enjoying a cake made in the form of a map of the Caspian region, with the letters "B A K U" decorating it, under the swastika. Hitler comments: "Unless we get Baku oil, all is lost." Stalin's army included more than 650,000 Azerbaijanis in its ranks who defended against Nazi expansion eastwards. And Hitler sacrificed a great army at Stalingrad to get hold of Baku's oil, in the turning point of the War.)

The oil of Baku was also coveted by Britain. It was recognised by Lord Milner that it was the best field in the world. However, to control Baku the Caspian needed to be controlled and it was an inland sea not greatly accessible by the Royal Navy without military forces to secure the ports. The prohibitive expense and logistical difficulties of a sustained and large military commitment was beyond Britain by late 1917 because the Germans/Ottomans had proved so costly to defeat.

Baku became more strategically important for Britain in late 1917 with the collapse of the Tsarist State. The territory that formed Azerbaijan was a land bridge between Europe and Asia, South of the Caucasus mountains, and the only route around the large Caspian Sea. To the South lay Persia (Southern Azerbaijan) which Britain had signed over to the Tsar's sphere of influence in 1907 but which it now wished to take itself. Further South was the main part of Persia/Iran, with its British zone of influence guarding the Gulf and the Indian Empire. To the South West was British occupied Mesopotamia/Iraq.

In December 1917 Lord Milner signed an agreement on behalf of the British War Cabinet with the French Prime Minister, Clemenceau, dividing the territory in Southern Russia of one party to the Triple Entente up between the other two allies. France would take Ukraine and Crimea whereas England would get Georgia and Azerbaijan as spheres of influence after the anticipated Russian disintegration and the winning of the Great War.

Lord Milner insisted on an Eastern Committee being established and attached to the War Cabinet in March 1918 to give priority to strategic thinking about the region that had been lacking due to the understanding that it was a Russian sphere of influence for a century. *The Times* now described the Caspian as a vital British interest, on 29 September 1918. The general Southern Caucasus could operate as a buffer between the Turks and Russians after the War if Britain was able to construct states there. The famous geopolitics professor, Helford Mackinder, theorised this as part of his famous *Heartland* theory. But first, Britain needed to defeat the Germans and Ottomans before such a policy could be attempted.

In 1917 Britain saw this area as potentially the new German *Drang nach Osten*, replacing the feared Berlin-Baghdad Railway that British forces had prevented by conquering Mesopotamia. Berlin-Baku-Bukhara took the place of the pre-War bogey Berlin-Baghdad as the outlet for German commercial expansion to the east, and India, in the nightmares of British statesmen and geopoliticians. Ottoman military advance would facilitate this – despite the fact that Berlin was actually against an Ottoman Caucasus expedition, preferring the Turks to fight in Syria against the British.

While Bolshevism was the ideological opponent of English Liberalism the British continued to support the Bolsheviks if it meant the strengthening of a front against the Ottomans and Germans in a temporary alliance. For one thing the Bolsheviks were not thought to be likely to last in power, given the mountain of problems that confronted them and the White Russian forces that could be expected to weaken them, with British assistance.

Whilst supporting the Soviets in holding the line in the Caucasus, at the same time Britain sent in its agents to undermine the Bolsheviks. General Dunsterville made an alliance with the Cossack Colonel Lazar Bicherakov and incorporated his forces into his own. Bicherakov, although opposed to the Bolsheviks and Baku Soviet, was persuaded to support the expedition to Baku to defend Russian interests there. Bicherakov, a White Russian, took command of the Soviet army.

In July 1918 the Bolshevik-controlled Baku Soviet was split when a request was made of it to allow British forces to join the defence of Baku. The Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who wanted to continue the Great War generally, proposed a motion to accept the British offer. The Bolshevik leader, Stepan Shaumyan, asked Stalin's advice and he was told to reject the embrace of British Imperialism, which was seen as a more dangerous enemy in the long term than the Turks. There is some evidence that Stalin starved the Baku Soviet of men and supplies to prevent the Armenian, Shaumyan from conducting a more aggressive policy against the local population.

The Armenian Dashnaks sided with the SRs and Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks and the motion was carried. Armenians contacted Dunsterville to bring him into the city. Shaumyan and the 26 Bolshevik Commissars left Baku to wait on a future Red Army. However, they were murdered on the shores of the Caspian, either by SRs/Mensheviks, White Russians or British agents. Shaumyan and the Bolsheviks had earlier attempted to leave the city but had been returned by a Soviet warship from the Caspian. It all became a shambles with so many conflicting interests involved.

The Baku Soviet was dissolved and replaced by the Central-Caspian Dictatorship made up of Social Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Armenian Dashnaks. The first of the British forces arrived in Baku on 4 August. By 17 August General Dunsterville and his thousand strong force sailed into the city. This brought the number of defenders including Armenians, White Russians, Soviets and British to around 10,000 men.

Lloyd George resisted the sending of a larger British force for a number of reasons. One suggestion seems to have been

that he had a preference for a Turkish occupation of Baku rather than a Bolshevik one. It is always hard to assess Lloyd George's motivation in things given his tricky nature. Strategic and logistical issues were probably much more important. Britain was maintaining large armies on a wide range of important fronts due to the expansion of conquered territory. Also supply was difficult from British occupied Baghdad when no railway existed to Baku.

The Central-Caspian Dictatorship had a weak social base in the city, however. The majority of its forces were Armenian, who had attacked the Azerbaijani majority in the city and conducted a massacre of 12,000 Moslems in Baku at the end of March, when Shaumyan controlled the Soviet. The March events had burnt Soviet bridges to local Moslems, who from that time onwards put their faith in a Turkish deliveration.

The Bolshevik and British courting, arming and training of the Armenians and their determination to use them as a military force in the Caucasus had big implications for the Azerbaijani people.

The problem for the Azerbaijani Turks (or Tatars, as the Russians and Armenians called them) was that to survive as a people they had to cohere into a nation under the shock of events during 1917-18. This meant developing a military expression to defend themselves against the Armenians, who were intent in taking as much of the territory they lived on as possible, despite the fact that everywhere outside of Erivan (where the Armenians had a 60/40 majority) there was an Azerbaijani majority.

The March massacres had been sparked off by the arrival of a small group of armed Azerbaijanis from the Native Division of the Tsar's army on a ship in Baku. The sight of armed Azerbaijanis was taken as a provocation by the small minority that ran the Baku Soviet and their Armenian allies. It signalled what might be to come so they decided to prevent the future through massacre of the majority.

There is evidence, from a conversation he later had with M.A. Rasulzade, President of the Azerbaijani Republic, that Stalin regretted the appointment of Shaumyan to head the Baku Soviet and held him responsible, as an Armenian nationalist, for the March events. Shaumyan would have probably conceded to the British Imperialists if it wasn't for Stalin's opposition. He had earlier agreed to the transit of British forces through Baku in February and had been working, along with Trotsky, with the British in Tiflis.

The surviving Azerbaijani population and those who had retreated for safety to the outer parts and outside the city in Abseron, awaited a reckoning with those who had attacked them in March. They numbered around 80,000 according to General Dunsterville. Their presence in the vicinity would make it difficult for a minority force to hold the city when the bit came to the bit.

Under the Batum Treaty of June 1918 the Ottomans had promised the Azerbaijanis military assistance to uphold the domestic security and stability of the territory declared to be the Azerbaijan Republic on May 28. At that time Dashnak irregular forces under Andranik etc. were acting outside the provisions that the Armenian Erivan Republic had signed with the Ottomans at Batum, were attacking Moslem settlements in pursuit of a Greater Armenia.

As the Ottoman forces advanced into the Ottoman territory that the Tsarist forces had held since 1916 and which the Armenians had controlled from late 1917 they found wells filled with the bodies of Moslem civilians, mass graves and terrible scenes of massacre. To advance and save the largely unarmed non-Armenian population behind the Armenian lines became an absolute imperative.

The Ottomans constructed a small force called the Caucasus Army of Islam whose purpose was to train up the largely unmilitarised Azerbaijanis into forming a functional fighting force under Ottoman staff. Only the Azerbaijani elite had played any part in the Tsar's armies as officers and the mass of society had remained apart from the Great War until it came to them. However, the events of 1917 and the Armenian military activities against the Moslem populace necessitated the growth of informal militias which now joined the first national military expression in gaining a capital.

Despite being called the Army of Islam, four-fifths of its officer staff were initially Christian and former Tsarists. It had a strong secular character and actively excluded Moslem clerics from its ranks.

It seems to have been the project of Enver, Talat and Cemal and was not widely welcomed by Istanbul. The Army of Islam that besieged Baku was an Ottoman force made up of around 14,000 men, about two-thirds Azerbaijani, and commanded by Enver Pasha's brother, Nuri, a young and inexperienced officer. It had shown its capability when the 20,000 strong Baku Soviet forces, including the Dashnaks, had attacked it and the Azerbaijani government-in-waiting in Ganje, but had been repulsed and driven back to Baku in July.

This offensive was important in cementing the Ottoman/Azerbaijani relationship. The Ottomans had, at first, not recognised Azerbaijani independent statehood and Nuri and his brother Enver seem to have desired a more hegemonic relationship with the Azerbaijanis. The more secular Azerbaijanis were also viewed with some suspicion by Istanbul. However, the successful repulse of the Baku Soviet forces by the Ottoman/Azerbaijani army at the end of June established a more equitable relationship and brought on the common purpose of liberating Baku from the Soviets/Dashnaks.

Major-General Dunsterville describes the complex military/political situation at this time in early July when the Baku Soviet army failed to hold an important sole bridge at the Kura River, which had the potential to block the Turkish advance on Baku:

"The strength of the Red Field Army was calculated at about 10,000 men, and if they really had been soldiers and had had any fight in them the plan evolved by Bicherakov should have been successful. But as usual, revolutionary troops are only troops on paper, and in the field, where each man is out only to avoid being killed, they count for nothing.

The situation in the South- East Caucasus at this time was as follows: The Turkish Caucasus-Islam Army, about 12,000 strong, composed of about one-half regular Turkish troops and one-half levies from the local Mahomedan races in the South Caucasus, was advancing from the Tiflis direction along the railway line with a view of capturing Baku. They were much hampered by the bad state of the railway and rolling-stock and shortage of fuel for the engines. The Germans in Tiflis also were doing their best to prevent the Turks getting to Baku at all, as they had a private arrangement with Lenin, and through him with the Baku Government, that the town should be peacefully handed over to them. To see the Turks in Baku would be almost as bad as to see the British there.

This peculiar situation resulted in a most extraordinary state of affairs. In their anxiety to prevent the Germans obtaining possession of Baku, and also in their eagerness to take any chance of fighting the Bolsheviks, many Russian officers joined this Turkish force, and when we were later fighting against them in Baku we had Russian officers on our side, while the enemy had as many on his." (The Adventures of Dunsterforce, pp. 167-8)

The Germans had made a secret deal with the Bolsheviks to prevent the Ottomans/Azerbaijanis from capturing the Baku oil fields for a

25 per cent. cut of Baku's oil. The Germans attempted to pressurise Istanbul to stop supporting the thrust into the Caucasus on the basis that it violated Brest-Litovsk. But to no avail. Istanbul continued to operate an independent policy in support of the Azerbaijanis.

The Germans actually assembled an army of 40,000 in Georgia to join in the capture of Baku and take over the administration of the city. But the Turks sensibly sabotaged the roads and railways to prevent the German ambitions. The Ottomans were willing to fight their German allies if they stood in the way of Baku's liberation.

Shaumyan made a big mistake in sending the Baku Soviet army onto the offence into Ganje. He should have conserved his forces for the defence of Baku. It was most probably the ambitions of the Armenians to capture this land that led to this error. The expectation would have been that the new Azerbaijani army could be easily routed. But this proved a fatal miscalculation and represented a real turning point in events.

The failure of the Baku Soviet force to hold the bridge at the Kura River left the road open to Baku for the Ottoman/Azerbaijani forces. In retreat the mainly Armenian Baku Soviet army conducted a scorched earth policy against local villages and their populations.

Dunsterville's force was the worst of all worlds for the defenders of Baku, particularly the Armenians. It was too small to effectively defend the city but was enough to encourage the belief in the defenders that it was worth resisting the Ottoman/Azerbaijani army.

Dunsterville, as well as having little respect for the fighting capabilities of the Baku Soviet forces also had not much time for the Armenians in the city, considering them to be incapable of organisation and not reliable fighters. He later called them "*worthless cowards*" in his memoir. He recognised that the more fearsome Dashnaks operated in the countryside, roaming around and attacking Moslem villages and sometimes engaging Ottoman forces in battle.

On their part the Armenians felt let down by the British force which was too little and too late. When Bicherakov, antagonised by the Central-Caspian Dictatorship's leadership, decided the game was up and withdrew his Cossacks from the city to Dagestan, any skilful defence of the city was removed. On 13 September Turkish troops broke through the Wolf's Gap and trapped the British forces with their backs to the Caspian.

By this time Major-General Dunsterville had concluded that the defence of Baku was hopeless and after obtaining the required permission from London his forces had decided to escape by ship to Persia. His Armenian allies were not so fortunate after the city fell on September 15. Probably 6,000 or more died in fighting and general acts of vengeance before order was restored by Nuri Pasha after the capture of Baku. Fearing retribution, 30,000 Armenians, half the resident population, left the city on boats.

The British War Office blamed the Armenians for the fall of Baku. It immediately fed this narrative into the English Press. *The Times* headline of 20.9.18 was "*British Leave Baku: Defection of the Armenians*". On the same day *The Daily Mail* headlined: "*Baku Evacuated: Armenian Treachery to British*". This prompted Arnold Toynbee to protest from the Propaganda Ministry about the danger of making public such views before the public.

The reaction in England to the fall of Baku is probably the reason why accounts such as that of Pasdermadjian began to appear in the Anglosphere, emphasising the military contribution of the Armenians to the defeat of the Ottomans and the winning of the Great War. However, the negative impression the fall of Baku produced, along with the witnessing of the reality of Armenian nation-building by British military men, would have tended to weaken the moral case of their Liberal enthusiasts against the pre-War traditional pro-Turk orientation that now began to resurface after the War propaganda had outlived its usefulness.

The Armenians had made for very useful propaganda material for the British War effort, particularly in the U.S. during the Great War. There was, after all, a long-standing Nonconformist Liberal fondness for the Christian Armenians and their suffering from the "*cruel and merciless Turk*". This was a handy point of confluence with Puritan America and its powerful Protestant missions in the Near East that influenced the President and Congress.

However, the experience of dealing with the Armenian Dashnaks on the ground gained by ordinary British soldiers resulted in a different attitude being taken to Armenian claims at the conclusion of the War. The Dashnak tendency to pursue Magna Armenia through wiping out local non-Armenian populations was distasteful at the least for the British, who, after all, had a large Moslem Empire to consider.

The British betrayed their Armenian allies when it suited them to do so. The Armenians had provided cannon-fodder for their Tsarist ally from 1914. After the 1917 Revolution and the dissolving of the Russian lines the Armenians had held the front against the Ottomans. However, in the post-War settlement they became surplus to Imperial requirements.

But what is new or unexpected about that?

The project of Magna Armenia was clearly both insane and unsustainable and the Dashnaks would not let it go. Only Liberal simpletons (including President Wilson) still clung to it by 1919. While Liberal idealists provided the moral narrative for Britain's Great War they did not dictate Britain's policy in the world. They were a froth on the substance of the British State, which was hard-headed and did not get where it was in the world from believing its own propaganda.

Nuri Pasha took the city of Baku in the name of the Republic of Azerbaijan and it became the *de facto* capital of the new state. At this point the Ottomans occupied all of Northern and Southern Azerbaijan (across the Aras river in present day Iran) and beat off a British push toward Tabriz in Persia. Georgia and Armenia had been rendered quiescent. And then the War was lost in the West and the Mudros Armistice required the evacuation of Ottoman forces from Azerbaijan.

Although the new Azerbaijani state only remained independent until the arrival of British occupation forces in mid-November a start had been made to state formation which the British facilitated over the following year in the interests of forming a series of buffer states against the Bolsheviks to the north after Denekin's defeat by the Red Army in the Russian Civil War.

Although Britain backed the White Russians with finance, material and military advisors, Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, always opposed sending British troops to Russia. He remained lukewarm towards the Whites during the Russian Civil War. The Whites, if victorious, would restore a strong and united Russia, and Lloyd George regarded a weak Russia, ruled ineffectively by the Bolsheviks, as a better outcome for British interests. The only thing that was consistent about British policy was the objective of weakening Russia, whatever the final government. The British Government failed to support the 3 Caucasus states they had assisted establishing and they fell to the Bolsheviks after Denekin was defeated.

In the space of two years Baku went from Soviet/Dashnak to Ottoman to British to Azerbaijani and finally to Bolshevik hands.

Although the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic was crushed by the Red Army in 1920, its 23 months of existence and experience of establishing an administration at Baku, after fighting for its capital, was a formative event in the national consciousness that could never be erased from the memory. As Mammed Rasulzade said: "*Bir kərə yüksələn bayraq, bir daha enməz!*" (The flag once raised will never fall!) □

Centenary of Benedict's Lost Peace

By Pat Walsh

Last year marked the centenary of Pope Benedict XV's attempt to stop the Great War in 1917. It was the Pope's final great effort to halt the catastrophe that was destroying Christian Europe, as well as destabilising its Moslem hinterland. He failed against Britain's determination to see the Great War it had launched through to fruition, no matter what the cost to humanity.

Remarkably there has been no attempt to mark this important centenary. We live within the British narrative and the world that the waging of the Great War to the bitter end created. And we are increasingly reminded of this by events today.

Over a decade ago I wrote a series of articles in the Irish Political Review about Pope Benedict's attempt to stop the Great War in 1917. These were issued in pamphlet form by Athol Books with the title 'Britain's Great War, Pope Benedict's Lost Peace'.

In the time since it has become apparent to me that there was another reason why Britain rejected Benedict's Peace of 1917.

This was to do with the desire on England's part to promote revolution in Germany and destroy its social fabric before the conclusion of the Great War. The fact that Germany's social, political and economic structures were successfully unbalanced by Britain producing Hitler and the Nazis is perhaps a good reason why this feature of the Great War on Germany is seldom heard about today.

I was recently sent the editorial of *The Daily Telegraph* (15.8.1917) which discussed Benedict's Peace proposals. It suggests that the Catholic Centre Party and its leader, Mathias Erzberger were attempting to stop the War in collaboration with the Pope:

"Germany, having failed to attain the peace she wants through her Socialists is now trying what can be done by means of her Catholics... Outside Italy... the largest compact and homogeneous Catholic community in the world is to be found in Germany... Catholicism has been a powerful buttress to German particularism. A thorough process of democratisation would probably sweep down the political barriers between the German States, and the Bavarian Catholics would then lose many of the autonomous powers they now possess... It was always one of the certainties of the war that a victory of the Allies would be followed by some kind of revolution in Germany."

Britain was determined to conclude its Great War on Germany only when its objective of destroying the successful social, economic and political fabric of the country was attained. For that reason it turned down the chance of peace in 1917 while knowing the cost of this to Europe and its hinterlands – and it pressed on in grinding Germany down.

But what were the results of this British decision to continue the War?

Stephen McKenna, a disaffected English Liberal writing in 1921, honestly described the implications of the British decision to prolong the war in 1916:

"When the belligerents took stock before settling down to the trench-warfare winter campaign of 1916-17, all must have felt that the war had reached its climax. The general exhaustion was so great that, even if hostilities had ceased, every country would have been crippled; if hostilities continued, they would continue on a scale of unlimited effort in which no reserve of strength would any longer be husbanded. Set free on her

eastern frontier, Germany must mass all her resources in one last effort to break through the western line; the Allies must hold out till the attempt had spent itself and then strike one last blow at a worn enemy; Germany must in turn prevent the allies from holding out by cutting their sea communications. If unrestricted submarine warfare ranged America on the side of the allies, it must have been felt that either the war would be over before any effective help could be given or else that, in the final, hopeless, death-grapple, a few million soldiers more or less would not substantially change the degree or character of Germany's defeat.

"Many of those who meditated on the war from its climax in 1916 to its end in the Versailles conference may wonder whether they did wisely in execrating and howling down anyone who shewed the courage to advocate peace before the sphere of war underwent its last desperate expansion. The government stood by its policy of a 'knock-out blow'; the knock-out blow has been dealt. Is anyone the better for it? The fire-eaters who proclaimed that anything less than the unconditional surrender of Germany would entail another German war within their generation now proclaim with no more doubt or qualification that Germany is preparing her revenge... The added two years of war, then, have not brought such security as Rome enjoyed at the destruction of Carthage; the added bitterness of those two years, on the other hand, has made more difficult any goodwill and any common effort to substitute a sane and better system of International relationship.

"Worst of all are the worldwide economic depression and political unrest for which the protraction of the war was responsible. Had negotiations been opened in 1916, the Russian revolution and its consequences might well have been averted; Germany, Austria and Turkey might have been left with stable governments and yet with enough experience of modern warfare to discourage any taste for further adventures; and Italy, France and Great Britain – in that order – might have been saved from insolvency. The war, if ended at that time, would have ended without American help; and peace would have been concluded without American intervention. This last result might by now be a matter for regret if thereby the world had been cheated of the equitable and permanent peace, such as President Wilson sought to impose on the militarist party of the Versailles Conference; but it would perhaps have been better for the terms to be drawn by M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George on Carthaginian lines than for the world to be tantalized by a glimpse of statesmanship that revealed the universal spirit and then to be fobbed off with a compromise which embraced even the good faith of England." (While I Remember, pp. 171-3.)

This was written in 1921 before the effects of the Great War had become clear. Who can honestly disagree with this analysis – that if peace had been concluded in 1915, 1916 or 1917 the world would have been a much better place than it subsequently turned out to be?

Europe was prevented from heading towards a desirable negotiated peace by Britain's persistence in its crusade to destroy Germany, primarily through the belief the Royal Navy could starve Germany into submission, given time and resilience amongst Britain's allies.

Once the Allies stopped the German defensive manoeuvre at the battle of the Marne, four years of trench warfare ensued. Although the Germans launched the most effective offensives

of the war, they were always strategically on the defensive and the possibility of a negotiated settlement lay entirely with the Allies. But the British Cabinet never for a moment contemplated a negotiated settlement, despite all the losses in men and materials they suffered and the fact that they did not seem to be making any territorial progress. They coldly calculated that the Allies could suffer heavier losses than the Germans and still win so long as they had a better rate of attrition proportionate to population than the Germans. England believed that, in the long run, the Royal Navy would do its work on Germany if the line could be held for long enough on land.

Britain's wavering French and Russian allies were convinced to continue the war to the bitter end as the result of an intimation that the United States would be likely to join the allies if Wilson was re-elected and gained the necessary influence in Congress.

Although President Wilson was re-elected to a second term in late 1916 under the slogan, 'He kept us out of war' he was already intending to enter the War on the Allied side. This was because Lloyd George had let it be known to Wilson that the peace settlement was only open to the belligerents – and many of the belligerents wanted a 'vengeful peace'. If Wilson wanted to be humanity's servant he had to join the victors to affect the peace and help Lloyd George prevent a 'vengeful peace'.

America's initial view of the war had coincided with that of the Pope – there was nothing morally at issue between the belligerents, it could only be bad to get involved in it, and a settlement should be made without the destruction of any of the nations fighting it.

But the U.S. at the same time set about making Britain financially dependent upon it – largely through J.P.Morgan's banking empire – by giving it the necessary credit to keep waging its war. The U.S. at the same time set about making Britain financially dependent upon it. Loans were in violation of American neutrality but Morgan's got around this by issuing \$2 Billion in credit to the Entente. American industry, in propping up London, became an adjunct of the British war effort. Of the five million pounds the British spent on weaponry and supplies each day two million pounds was being spent in the United States. By 1916 40% of Britain's war material was being supplied by the U.S.

Whilst this factor helped America in the medium term to undermine the British Empire's power and replace it on the world stage it also tended to place the U.S. in the position of having to make a necessary defence of its investments if there was danger of its client going under with its debts unpaid.

By 1916 France and Russia were broke and London was paying for its war on American credit. In March 1917 there was only 114 million pounds of gold left in the Bank of England's vaults to cover further loans. If this had been exhausted British finance would have collapsed and brought down a large section of American industry with it – and a catastrophic effect on the U.S. economy.

British credit largely financed the Great War. John Maynard Keynes was the paymaster to Britain's Allies. He gave a talk to the Admiralty in March 1916 in which he told them: "*We bribe whole populations. It is our money that keeps the Allies sweet.*"

In October 1916 Keynes issued an important memo from the Treasury entitled '*The Financial Dependence of the United Kingdom on the United States of America*'. It noted that up until that point Britain had been funding its Great War 3/5 by selling its gold and securities and 2/5 by obtaining loans on the international market.

The problem emerging was that the gold and securities accumulated by the British Empire over the previous 200 years were running out in paying for the War. During the following 6 months, if the War was to be waged as vigorously as it had,

Keynes calculated that the gold and securities available to the Treasury would only fund 1/5 of the War, leaving 4/5 to be funded by loans. And then it would be nearly 5/5 through loans, by the end of 1917. This financial exhaustion was going to make Britain highly dependent on the goodwill of the U.S. in continuing its War. As Keynes noted:

"A statement from the United States Executive deprecating or disapproving of such loans would render their floatation in sufficient volume a practical impossibility, and thus lead to a situation of the utmost gravity... Any feeling of irritation or lack of sympathy with this country or with its policy in the minds of the American public... would render it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to carry through financial operations on a scale adequate to her needs. The sums which this country will require to borrow in the U.S.A. in the next six or nine months, are so enormous, amounting to several times the entire national debt of that country, that it will be necessary to appeal to every class and section of the investing public.

"It will be hardly an exaggeration to say that in a few months' time the American executive and the American public will be in a position to dictate to this country on matters that affect us more nearly than them. It is, therefore, the view of the Treasury, having regard to their special responsibilities, that the policy of this country towards the U.S.A. should be so directed as not only to avoid any form of reprisal or active irritation, but also to conciliate and to please." (10.10.16)

This raised the issue of War aims, since the possibility of having to conclude a peace was now raised for the first time. Lord Lansdowne, in a memo to the cabinet on 13 November, on the subject of what terms peace might be dictated to the enemy, emphasized the cost of the Great War and how it might affect the peace if the War continued into 1917 and beyond:

"Shall we even then be strong enough to 'dictate' terms?... We have obtained within the last few days from the different Departments of the Government a good deal of information as to the situation, naval, military, and economic. It is far from reassuring. What does the prolongation of the war mean?"

"Our own casualties already amount to over 1,100,000. We have had 15,000 officers killed, not including those who are missing. There is no reason to suppose that, as the force at the front in the different theatres of war increases, the casualties will increase at a slower rate. We are slowly but surely killing off the best of the male population of these islands. The figures representing the casualties our Allies are not before me. The total must be appalling.

"The financial burden which we have already accumulated is almost incalculable. We are adding to it at a rate of over £5,000,000 per day. Generations will have to come and go before the country recovers from the loss which it has sustained in human beings, and from the financial ruin and the destruction of the means of production which are taking place.

"All this is, no doubt, our duty to bear, but only if it can be shown that the sacrifice will have its reward. If it is to be made in vain, if the additional year, or two years, or three years, finds us still unable to dictate terms, the war with its nameless horrors will have been needlessly prolonged, and the responsibility of those who needlessly prolong such a war is not less than that of those who needlessly provoked it.

"Many of us, however, must of late have asked ourselves how this war is ever to be brought to an end. If we are told that the deliberate conclusion of the Government is that it must be fought until Germany has been beaten to the ground and sues for peace on any terms on which we are pleased to accord to her, my only observation would be that we ought to know something of the data upon which this conclusion has been reached." (Cab 37/159/32, 13.11.16)

This must have been a bombshell to those attending the Cabinet. Edward Grey in his reply said that it would be “*premature*” to look for peace and a “*betrayal of the interests of this country*” to advocate it as long as there was a belief Germany could be defeated; or the military situation was likely to improve in the Allies favour; or that Germany was injured internally more so than England, making recovery more difficult for her. It was only if the situation was predicted to deteriorate for the Allies over the following months that it would be ever justified to “*wind up the war at once on the best terms achievable.*” (Cab 37/160/20)

Shortly after this Asquith resigned as Prime Minister, giving way to Lloyd George.

This was the reason why the British continued to reject German peace offers and the Pope’s initiative of 1917 – because it was felt that peace would be a defeat if it left Germany stronger, which it would do if Britain had not the ability to dictate peace terms to her. But by the same count Britain had to change the character of its Great War in deference to the fact that it was in hock to the U.S. And that meant it would need to do things that would have great implications for the world it would inherit, but would be too weak to assert itself upon.

President Wilson was influenced by a message from the American ambassador to England, Thomas Nelson Page, a strong Anglophile, that Britain would be bankrupt within two weeks, if the U.S. did not enter the war and provide her with funds. Also in the picture were cables from the U.S. embassy in Paris, warning that French morale was cracking. These were communicated to Congress. Wilson’s support produced the “*knockout victory*” statement of Lloyd George in which he declared that the war must go on until Germany was crushed.

The Vatican knew the US was not truly neutral in the first two years of the war and it deplored Washington’s arms trade that facilitated the waging of the War longer and on a bigger scale than would have been otherwise possible. Benedict also regarded the Anglo-American tactic of carrying munitions on passenger vessels, like the *Lusitania* – using civilians as human shields – as reprehensible.

With America’s resources fully available to it and Wilson removed as a moral opponent – in that he couldn’t talk about ‘an honourable peace’ anymore – it is not so difficult to understand why the Pope’s Peace Note of 1917 came an unwelcome time for Britain.

The Irish Catholic of April 2005 told us that: “*On August 1, 1917, Benedict issued a peace proposal in which he urged the warring parties to unilaterally reduce their armaments.*”

The Pope’s Peace Note, in fact, went a lot further than that. Why did the Irish Catholic seek to minimise information on this important proposal? Is it sheer ignorance, shoddy journalism or the result of a paralysed mind unable to deal with the great political questions, symptomatic of Ireland today?

The Pope’s Peace Plan had its origins within the German side – since it was the Germans, rather than the Entente who desired a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Times actually called it the “*German Peace Move*” in an editorial. There was nothing odd about Germany wanting peace at this of all moments – at the time of its greatest success in the war.

Germany had secured its defence by a military ability that the Entente had not bargained for. But it knew that from here on only a long and wasteful war of attrition could defeat it. It wanted to secure a peace at this point to prevent further loss of life and the inevitable political and economic destruction that a fight to the finish would end up in across Europe. So a number of elements in Germany supported the Vatican’s efforts in going for a negotiated settlement.

Benedict believed Germany was the key because its strong military position could make the concessions necessary to satisfy Allied demands.

In Germany, a group of Reichstag members, led by the Catholic politician, Matthias Erzberger, passed a peace resolution in the Reichstag in July 1917. This offer did not make any demand for retaining the occupied areas of Belgium or France. The German peace offer seemed to offer possibilities, and the Vatican envoy to Germany, Eugenio Pacelli, (later Pope Pius XII), who conducted most of the Vatican’s peace efforts during the War, was sent to explore with the Kaiser and his Chancellor, Bethman-Hollweg, what terms might be feasible. Apparently, the Germans agreed in principle to a limitation of armaments, withdrawal from Belgium and other occupied areas, disputed territories being decided by international agreement and the creation of international arbitration courts.

Having achieved an understanding with the Germans Benedict drew up his Peace Note to all the belligerent powers, setting out systematic proposals for bringing the war to an end and securing a just and enduring peace. He had it communicated to the Entente what Germany was willing to concede.

This is what *Fear Faire* said in the *Catholic Bulletin*, March 1939, about Benedict’s peace proposals of 1917, in a time when Ireland knew something of history:

“By the middle of the year 1917 the possibility of a sweeping victory for the Central Powers was gone. On the other hand, the Allies were facing such a strongly entrenched enemy and were themselves were so war-worn, that they, too, had little hope of triumph, unless at the cost of long-prolonged struggle and incalculable losses. The time had come when both sides were weary of suffering and neither had high hopes. On August 1st, Pope Benedict issued his appeal to the warring nations to end what he described as a fratricidal conflict and negotiate a just and durable peace. He laid down the conditions on which alone a peace could be established. The moral force of right must rife in international affairs in place of the material force of arms. Conquered territories must be restored. Claims to indemnity must be put aside; the freedom of the seas must be guaranteed; armaments must be decreased, and international affairs must be adjusted in the future by arbitration. Where there were conflicting claims to given territories, as in Alsace Lorraine, in Poland, and in the Trentino, the decision must rest with the population of the area concerned, and the will of the people must be found by means of a plebiscite. These peace proposals are manifestly those which would have saved the world not merely from a prolongation of the war, but from the disasters which have followed it. Almost everybody now, even in the most stubborn quarters, realises that the Allies made a disastrous decision when they rejected the Pope’s proposals. It was the Allies more than Germany who were to blame for the Peace Proposals being refused. It was President Wilson who replied to the Pope, on behalf of the Allied Powers, that peace could not be made with such a Government as Germany then possessed. The Allies would not deal with a Germany ruled by the Kaiser; and by refusing to do so they committed themselves to days to come to deal with a Germany ruled by a Hitler. Little they guessed what they had done when they flung the Pope’s appeal to the ground and went on with the war for a year that was filled with hitherto unparalleled suffering. Little they knew, when at last they had beaten their enemies to their knees at the end of 1918, and when they were able to dictate a peace to their own liking, how much better they would have done to accept the just and unrevengeful peace which Pope Benedict had recommended eighteen months before.

“So the peace that was no peace came. Benedict lived to see the Peace Treaty signed and the effort to crush Germany undertaken.”

The Germans and the Austro-Hungarians were favourable to the Pope's proposal, although Berlin avoided specific commitments until the allies had responded. But despite this blame is spread evenly for the rejection of the Peace Note on America, Britain and Germany. It is realised that no one else had the means to continue fighting on a substantial scale without the participation of these three.

It is said that Chancellor Bethman-Hollweg was overthrown at this time by the German army leaders – who were still fixated on a German military victory – and this scuppered the Papal initiative.

German war aims had been relatively modest until this point – basically recognition of Germany as a legitimate power in Europe which could go about her business without being threatened with destruction.

There were two views in Germany as to what should be done in mid-1917. One view was to go all out for peace on the basis of Benedict's plan because things could only get worse for Germany and its position. The other, held by some Prussian military leaders, like Ludendorff and Hindenburg, argued there was no way out of the situation but through a decisive military victory – as Britain would never make peace until it was decisively beaten. There was much to encourage this latter viewpoint in 1917 as the Russian enemy on the Eastern front was on the verge of collapse and if a blow could be struck in the West with transferred troops before American numbers arrived peace might be achievable on German terms.

The attitude taken by the Entente to Benedict's Peace Note determined that this latter view won out in late 1917/1918. It was, unfortunately, correct.

The new Provisional Russian government welcomed the Papal mediation. But the leaders of France and Italy, with largely Catholic, extremely war weary populations, were concerned. They wanted a fight to the finish to achieve their territorial aims set out in the secret treaties with England. But they hesitated to take direct issue with the Pope in view of his moral influence on their peoples. So France ignored the initiative, Clemenceau describing it as "*peace against France.*"

The British merely acknowledged it and then decided to let President Wilson answer for all of them.

Wilson had a unique role – that of giving the proceedings of the Allies the character and tone of disinterested ideals of justice and liberty. By 1917 a lot of the gloss had gone off the Entente propaganda that had generated and sustained the crusade against "*Prussianism*" in its early days. But Wilson, with his liberal, neutralist and disinterested credentials, was a useful moral cipher to dress up Allied War aims. He gave the war a new aura of idealism just as the early idealism was fading. He projected the war as a struggle to make the world safe for democracy. Lloyd George referred to one of Wilson's speeches as "*one of the greatest sermons in the history of the world.*"

Wilson was the alternate moral compass in the world to the Vatican and England was prepared to use him if that meant it won its War – by hook or by crook.

President Wilson saw the timing of the Pope's message as mischievous. Socialists had just convened a peace conference in Stockholm to appeal over the heads of rulers to the workers of the world. In Petrograd, the Bolshevik wing of the Russian revolution had already called for peace on the basis of no annexations and self-determination for all peoples, and pressurised the Provisional Government into going along with them.

The Pope was saying many of the same things Wilson had said before he opted for war (he had called for "*peace without victory*" in a statesmanlike pronouncement early in 1916). But these former pronouncements were things of no use to the War-like attitude that was now necessary to cultivate in Americans for the fight of good over evil.

Wilson's reply to the Pope's Peace Note that there could be no discussion with the German Government, only with the German people, and then the war would end in a couple of hours after regime

change, suggested the Great War was all about establishing democracy in Germany and nothing else.

America's entry into the War and Wilson's moral rejuvenation of the Allied cause put paid to Benedict XV's Peace Note – the last chance Europe had of averting catastrophe.

It was very unlikely that Germany would have won the war, even if the United States had not come in on the side of the Allies. Germany was eager to negotiate a fair peace arrangement at the time when Lloyd George's "*knock-out victory*" declaration put an end to all prospect of successful negotiations.

Had sincere peace negotiations, along the lines proposed by Benedict XV, taken place the result would have been the "peace without victory," which Wilson described in his statesmanlike pronouncement early in 1916 when the U.S. was officially neutral. There would have been a negotiated peace treaty made by relative equals – militarily demonstrated by the stalemate in the war. This would certainly have been far preferable to the Treaty of Versailles and its effects. A negotiated peace would have saved the world from the last catastrophic years of war. It would have rendered unnecessary and impossible the brutal blockade of Germany for months after the 1918 Armistice – a blockade that starved to death hundreds of thousands of German women and children. And it would also have made impossible the rise of Bolshevism, Fascism and National Socialism – all products of the disintegration of the social fabric, effected by the war and blockade – and the coming of a second world war.

But Britain did not want another "*moral force of right*" in international affairs. It wanted to maintain itself as the "*moral force of right*" by winning the War and determining the post-war outcome. It wanted to use the "*material force of arms*" unilaterally in future, just as it had done, when and where it sought fit, and not let any international body tell it otherwise – as it demonstrated in relation to the League of Nations in the 1930s.

It did not wish to restore the conquered territory it had grabbed from Germany in Africa, or that it had taken from the Ottomans in the Middle East. It wanted to impose indemnity on Germany to pay for the war (and escape from its own American loans as far as it could – Bull the Bilker, as the *Catholic Bulletin* called Britain in the 1930s.)

It did not want "*freedom of the seas*" restricting it severely during the war and rejected Wilson's call for it in his Fourteen Points. When Britain talked of the "*freedom of the seas*" it meant its freedom to police the seas in its own interests determining how much freedom should be allowed to other nations and what size of navies they could have.

It did not want arms limitation, except if exceptions could be made for it to police its empire, by bombing Arab and African villages off the map, if they did not pay their Imperial taxes for the privilege of British authority.

And it mostly did not want plebiscites and democracy determining the fate of territories – as witnessed by its behaviour in Ireland in 1918 when the local population decided they did not want Britain any more. Elsewhere in its vast and expanded empire obstacles were put up against other reluctant subject peoples exercising this right.

Another reason Britain did not want plebiscites and democracy determining the fate of territories, except where it suited disrupting another power – was because it had already made secret arrangement for the sharing out of spoils which it did not want democracy interfering with.

We cannot predict how history would have turned out if Benedict's Peace initiatives had been acted upon by Britain. But we know what did happen when they were rejected. So we can conclude one thing. The future of Europe, including the expansion of Bolshevism, the growth of Fascism and Nazism, the Second World War, the concentration camps, the Soviet occupation of Europe, the Israeli state built on the plantation of Palestine, the destabilisation of the Middle East etc. were the responsibility of those who rejected Benedict's efforts in 1917. □

Polish Independence Celebrated in Dublin

By Manus O’Riordan

Sunday November 11th was a day of both commemoration and celebration in Dublin. During the morning, two different commemorations simultaneously took place to mark the centenary of the First World War Armistice. The Royal British Legion commemorated their dead with a banners parade and a service of remembrance at the Islandbridge war memorial. Simultaneously, the state commemoration took place in Glasnevin cemetery, addressed by President-elect Higgins, where all the dead were remembered, and with readings by the British, French and German Ambassadors, and the US chargé d’affaires. A full diplomatic presence was then involved in the wreath laying ceremony, including the other great power, Russia, as well as Austria, Hungary and Turkey who, together with Germany, had been saluted as “our gallant allies in Europe” in the 1916 Rising’s Proclamation of an Irish Republic.

The evening time was an occasion of celebration, with the formal inauguration of Michael D Higgins for a second term as President of Ireland. But, in between, that afternoon, there was another occasion of both commemoration and centenary celebration - but overwhelmingly the latter - on the part of Ireland’s Polish community. For it was Poland’s Independence Day, first proclaimed on November 11, 1918. This celebration, held by the Irish Polish Society, was primarily a cultural affair, beginning with the National Anthem - “**Mazurek Dąbrowskiego**” (otherwise called ‘Poland Is Not Yet Lost’) - sung as only Poles themselves can sing it. But there was also another song sung by all, but not known by heart, which is why the lyrics were distributed to all present, and which followed a lecture by Patrick Quigley entitled “Josef Pilsudski and the Birth of Modern Poland - Dictator or Liberator?” Just prior to his lecture, Quigley had posted: “All the Irish media commentary on the ending of WW1 relates to the British Army, but 1 million Poles were killed or injured in the war. November 11th was the historic day Josef Pilsudski took control in Warsaw and began the reconstruction of Poland.”

See www.pana.ie/download/IFA-6-4.pdf for “Not So Much Poles Apart: The Markievicz Two Nations”, my review of Patrick Quigley’s 2012 biography, *THE POLISH IRISHMAN: The Life and Times of Count Casimir Markievicz*. Quigley’s most recent book (2016) is a further biographical study, *Sisters against the Empire: Countess Constance Markievicz and Eva Gore-Booth, 1916-17*. Quigley’s Pilsudski lecture was an illustrated one. When he quoted Brendan Clifford on how both “Connolly and Pilsudski had allied themselves with Austria and Germany during the Great War”, the slide that he showed on screen was the cover of the 1985 Athol Books publication by Brendan Clifford, *James Connolly: The Polish Aspect: A Review of James Connolly’s Political and Spiritual Affinity with Joseph Pilsudski, Leader of the Polish Socialist Party, Organiser of the Polish Legions and Founder of the Polish State*. The audience response was a mixture of bemusement and amusement: the bemusement registering pleasant surprise on the part of the 99 percent of the audience not previously aware of the Connolly/Pilsudski affinity; and amusement because the photo of Pilsudski was juxtaposed with a 1902 photo of Connolly who was then sporting an identical handlebars moustache as Pilsudski. “Twins!” someone loudly exclaimed, to general laughter.

“My, Pierwsza Brygada” (‘We Are the First Brigade’), also known as ‘*Marsz Pierwszej*’ (The March of the First Brigade) and ‘*Legiony to żołnierska nuta*’ (The Legions Are a Soldiers’ Song), was one of the best-known songs of the Polish Legions formed during World War I by Józef Piłsudski. Extolling the First Brigade of the Polish Legions, the song is considered an important emblem of the early-20th-century struggle for Polish independence. The song’s melody was borrowed from the Kielce Fire Department band. This had probably been composed by Captain Andrzej Brzuchal-Sikorski, the band’s conductor from 1905, and later bandmaster of the First Brigade of the Polish Legions. It was he who arranged and first conducted the song. The earliest recognized version of the song appeared in 1917, the words being composed spontaneously during the war by several individuals including Colonel Andrzej Hałaciński and Legions officer Tadeusz Biernacki. Between 1926 and 1927, many of Piłsudski’s supporters viewed the song as the national anthem of Poland. While restored as the anthem of the Polish Armed Forces, it is now primarily a marching tune, lyrics unsung, with a particularly stirring performance recorded by a marching band in Corfu, Greece.

But, following Patrick Quigley lecture, and with text in hand, Ireland’s Polish community now celebrated the centenary of Poland’s Independence by singing, with enthusiastic gusto, three of the six verses from this anthem of Pilsudski’s “Polish First Brigade” of the First World War’s Austro-Hungarian Army, which translate as follows:

The Legions are a soldiers’ melody
The Legions are a sacrificial pyre,
The Legions are a soldierly pride,
The Legions are a soldierly fate.

Chorus:

We are the First Brigade,
A group of marksmen,
On the pyre we have thrown
Our whole life’s fate
On the pyre, on the pyre.

How much suffering and how much toil,
How much blood and tears have flowed,
Yet despite it all there is no doubt
That the end of the journey gave us strength.

We are the First Brigade...

They cried that we had gone stark raving mad
Not believing us, that there is a way!
Bereft of all, we have shed our blood
With our dear leader at our side!

We are the First Brigade...

See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=hUhreWtyg10>
and <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Cn5CE7kwJY0> for recordings.

I am grateful to Patrick Quigley for making this text of his Irish Polish Society lecture available for publication.

JOSEF PILSUDSKI - DICTATOR OR LIBERATOR?

- a Lecture by Patrick Quigley

Pilsudski's return

When you travel around Poland you will come across in almost every town and city a memorial, sometimes more than one, featuring a man with long moustaches wearing a long military overcoat. These are mostly statues, but some memorials are creative – all celebrate the life and heroic exploits of Josef Klemens Pilsudski (1867-1935). When I ask Poles about Pilsudski, I get a lot of different answers, so today I will explore the person behind the heroic image and pose the question: was he a dictator or liberator, or perhaps a mixture of both? His second wife, Alexandra, said that he “aroused the hot or the cold, but never the lukewarm, in people.” I am no Pilsudski, but I hope I do not leave you lukewarm today.

On this special day it is appropriate that we remember the man who became Commander of Staff of the miniscule Polish armed forces on this day 100 years ago. When he woke up on the morning of 11 November 1918, he was facing the toughest fight of his life. Two days later he would become Head of State, the supreme ruler of Poland. The story of how Josef Pilsudski managed to unite a broken country in the dramatic days and weeks after 11 November is one of the most remarkable in modern history.

The ending of the Great War was a time for rejoicing, a time of sad remembrance and also a time of great hope that the sacrifices would be worth it. There was a determination that people should govern themselves in a new world order. As a result of the war three great empires – the Russian, the German and the Austro-Hungarian had crumbled. There had never been anything like it since the fall of the Roman Empire – and that took centuries. Patriots in many Ireland and Poland expected the post-war settlement at Versailles would bring freedom to the small nations – expectations of self-determination were high.

What problems did anyone attempting to rule Poland face on that cold November morning? After 123 years of partition the country was unprepared for the complex process of creating a modern state. The Regency Council in Warsaw, established by the German occupiers in 1917, had no legitimacy and very little power. Rival groups in Lublin, Poznan and Krakow were attempting to set up governments. There was another rival grouping in Paris, the National Committee, headed by Pilsudski's rival, Roman Dmowski and supported by the Allied Powers. Many of the major battles in the east had been fought on Polish territory leaving large tracts of countryside devastated with food shortages. There were peasant revolts, armed bands in the countryside, strikes and attempts to set up soviets in some cities. Rather than coming together Poland appeared to be tearing itself apart. There was no agreement where Poland started or ended and local wars were breaking out in all directions. Ukrainians and Poles were fighting in eastern Galicia and Lithuania nationalists were claiming lands Poland regarded as Polish. All nationalities wanted to expand at the expense of the others. The Versailles Treaty allowed Germany to maintain a large army in the eastern borderlands and 80,000

Wehrmacht troops remained in Poland. Meanwhile tension was growing in the east where the Bolsheviks were setting up soviet republics. It was the beginning of a conflict that would ignite into a massive war. Things were so bad that few people could grasp just how desperate the situation was. He later admitted with slight understatement that “the chaos, inside and outside, for those first weeks awed me.”

A short time before he had been a prisoner in the German fortress of Magdeburg when his jailors showed him a newspaper. It featured an article about a new Polish government in Warsaw. Was he the Josef Pilsudski named in the article as the Minister for War? He had to admit that he was the same man. The jailors thought it was a great joke – a Polish joke - the Polish Minister for War sitting in a German prison. They had a laugh and went about their business. It was a perfect symbol of the situation: Germany was firmly in control of Poland and intended to keep it that way. No one was more surprised than Pilsudski some days later when two Germans appeared in his cell. Revolution had broken out in Germany and he was to be returned to Warsaw. It is not clear what intentions the German High Command had for him as the revolution spread to Berlin and he was rushed back to Warsaw.

He arrived at the Vienna station on the afternoon of Sunday 10 November. One of his first stops in Warsaw was to visit Alexandra and Wanda, the daughter who was born while he was in prison. Pilsudski was separated from his first wife so he and Alexandra were unmarried. She wrote: “I had been afraid that Wanda would be shy and give him an unfriendly reception, but in the first few seconds of their acquaintance she made up her mind to love her father. She regarded him gravely, head a little on one side, and then held out her arms to him with a radiant smile.” After a short reunion with his comrade and lover he left with friends to begin reconstructing the country.

He would later say that he found power lying in the gutter and picked it up. Just like you would pick up something shiny and place it in your pocket. He was modest in his choice of metaphor, but slightly misleading. Power is the one thing people will do anything to acquire and retain. Power is something you rarely find in the street, but within 24 hours of his arrival the Regency Council appointed him Chief of Staff of the 5,000 strong Polish army; on Wednesday the Council dissolved itself after transferring its powers to Pilsudski as Head of State.

He was surprised at the pace of transformation: “In the course of a few days, without this man making any efforts, without any violence on his part, without any bribery ... something most unusual became a fact. This man became Dictator... this man issued edicts universally obeyed; his orders were listened to passively; willingly or unwillingly, they were executed; he nominated officials both military and civilian... I am only concerned with the fact, the simple fact, the historical fact, which I cannot otherwise describe than by using the word ‘Dictator.’” He was careful in the words he used to describe this unique situation: “There was neither election nor violence. Here something quite different occurred, an achievement of the moral energy of the nation as it found itself in an exceptional situation.”

It was typical of his modesty that he did not claim any credit for himself, but attributed his elevation to “the moral energy of the nation.” He asked himself: “Where are we to seek the cause of the surrender of this power to the man known as Josef Pilsudski? How did he become Dictator of Poland without imposing his power by any violence ... whence this phenomenon? This man was welcomed for one thing for which he was considered extraordinary; one thing gave him the moral right to occupy this position ... he wore this uniform; he was the Commandant of the First Brigade.”

The word dictator has negative implications in English, but was used in Poland to describe Kosciuszko and the other leaders of rebellions. When Pilsudski assumed power in Poland his actions were not legal, but were not illegal either – the situation was unprecedented. He only accepted the role on condition that it was an unavoidable step towards establishing democracy. If the term dictator applies then he must be qualified as a “benevolent dictator.”

From the moment of his arrival he acted with the seriousness of a leader by gathering information on the situation. Delegation after delegation came to meet him. It was as though had prepared for this role all his life. He ruled by force of moral authority and people were prepared to obey someone who appeared to know what he was doing. His first task was to deal with the potentially explosive problem of the German garrison. Some of the soldiers had revolted and set up soviets; others were selling weapons in the streets. Pilsudski met a delegation of soldiers and persuaded them to disarm hand over their weapons while he arranged their evacuation to Germany.

The Hero

In the 19th Century, the English writer, Thomas Carlyle, saw history as a struggle between order and chaos. In his view the drift into chaos could be averted by the appearance of a hero who would restore harmony, mainly by force of personality. We have seen in recent examples the horrors unleashed when societies fall apart such as Syria and Yemen. Carlyle’s remarks about Great Men could, of course, apply also to Great Women. Writing in 1841 Carlyle bemoaned the lack of belief in heroes. “Show our critics a great man, a Luther for example, they begin to ... make him out to be a little kind of man. He was ‘the creature of the Time,’ they say; the Time called him forth ... Alas, we have known Times *call* loudly enough for their great man, but not find him when they called.”

Carlyle’s views were derided as simplistic by Social Darwinists and Marxists, but partly vindicated by later theorists such as the American philosopher, William James, who wrote of a synergy between the hero and the environment in which each influenced and moulded the other. When Poland called at one of the most critical moments in her history, it was Pilsudski who answered.

What kind of man was he? Norman Davies paints a devastating portrait in his history of Poland, *God’s Playground vol2*:

“First, he was a conspirator, not a statesman. His habits of mind were formed by the harsh realities of the Russian underground. He knew little of compromise or patient accommodation, and had little in common with politicians like Daszynski, the socialist, Witos, the peasant leader, or Dmowski, with whom he was later expected to co-operate.” Davies goes on: “Secondly, he was a fighter. His natural instinct when faced with an impasse, was to shoot his way out. This was to be the hallmark of his diplomacy, and in 1926, of his approach to constitutional problems.”

The gunfighter reference is illuminating; he sometimes found himself in positions when the only option was to fight his way out of a tight corner, and it worked in a spectacular fashion in August 1920.

Davies sums up:

“Thirdly, he was a rogue elephant. He possessed all the political vices in full measure: he was wayward, reckless, rude, vindictive, childish, taciturn and unpredictable. He was embarrassing to his colleagues, and offensive to his opponents. He was incapable of observing Party discipline, or founding a coherent political movement.”

He makes Pilsudski sound like Donald Trump! How on earth could a person with all these flaws come to be ruler of a country of 30 million people and be accepted as the founding father of

modern Poland? Professor Davies’ indictment would be more than enough to destroy the reputation of any political figure. The answer lies in his conclusion:

“But in 1918-21, he played a part in Polish History which no one can fairly deny. Like that of Churchill twenty years later, his ‘Finest Hour’ stood in the midst of a lifetime strewn with blunders and failures. Yet such was the force of his personality, the strength of his nerve, and the obstinacy of his resolution that he imposed his will on the lesser and more cautious men around him. There is no other figure in the recent history of Poland to whom Józef Pilsudski can be compared.”

His second wife, Alexandra, paints a more intimate portrait in her Memoirs of 1940: “He was the least egotistical of men, pliant in his outlook, always ready to listen to the opinions of others... And he was intensely shy. To the end of his life public speaking was an ordeal for him.” She explains his secretiveness as a reaction to the need to always be on his guard against spies and informers. His relations with others are also viewed in a poetic light: “To him the human soul was a harp with many chords and he knew ... which ones to touch in making a friend or winning over a political opponent.”

The historian, Richard Watt, described Pilsudski as:

“Stern, silent, having no close friends but many close followers, Pilsudski enjoyed the respect of practically every Pole. Above all, Pilsudski looked the part of a leader. He invariably wore a plain military uniform without insignia. He was a handsome man of medium height, close-cropped grey hair, heavy eyebrows, thick moustache and piercing blue-gray eyes. His figure was sturdy without being too heavy. In Poland at a time when everybody talked too much and revealed everything about himself, Pilsudski was reserved and impenetrable.”

Life of Pilsudski

Josef Klemens Pilsudski was born on 5 December, 1867, on his father’s estate at Zulow, 60 km north of Vilnius, the fourth of 12 twelve children. On both sides he was descended from aristocratic families, but his father was unlucky with money and lost heavily; in 1874 they moved to a modest dwelling in Vilnius which Josef came to love. Alexandra suggests he had a Scottish ancestor, named Butler, who came to Poland after the rebellion of 1745. Pilsudski said he inherited his intellectual gifts from his father and his love of country from his mother. He spent long hours with her talking about the heritage and history of Poland. It was a difficult time to be a Polish citizen in the Russian Empire which attempted to stamp out any expressions of Polish identity in the aftermath of the 1863 rebellion. Josef read clandestine books in the Polish language smuggled from the Austrian partition. In 1887 he was wrongly accused of treason and sentenced to five years in Siberia.

He followed in the footsteps of many Polish rebels, some of whom he met in their lifelong exile. When he returned to Vilnius he studied the programmes of the socialist organizations that were springing up. He saw the terrible conditions of many workers in the city who regularly had to work 14-hour days from 8.00am to 10.00pm with a half hour lunch break. He read Marx’s ‘Das Kapital’ in Russian and was dismayed at his emphasis on goods over humanity. He was aiming at a fusion of patriotism and socialism that brought him into conflict with sections of the socialist movement. “It was then the fashion of socialism began. This fashion came to us Vilnians from the east, from Petersburg. If I had met the Warsaw socialism of the time, which openly denied national questions and opposed the insurrectionary tradition, I should have so resisted its influence that I would have rejected the socialist idea itself.”

He told a British officer, Adrian Carton De Wiart, in 1919: “I’m a Lithuanian and we are an obstinate people” The remark highlights the importance of Pilsudski’s regional identity – he

idealized the multi-ethnic heritage of the Kresy, the borderland, in which Poles mixed with Lithuanians, Belarussians, Jews, Germans and Russians. He considered himself Lithuanian and Polish, rooted in the heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth which produced many of Poland's political and creative figures.

He devoted himself to political work and became a founder of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and editor of its paper, *Robotnik* (The Worker.) He opposed the socialists who adhered to the internationalist position espoused by Rosa Luxemburg. Pilsudski viewed the workers as the most likely section of Polish society to rebel against the occupying powers. He was known as "Comrade Wictor," a leader of an organization of conspirators engaged in propaganda work and constantly on the move. In these circumstances he met his first wife, Maria, and converted to Protestantism to marry her in 1899. Due to Josef's irregular lifestyle the couple drifted apart, but did not divorce. In 1900 he was captured by the Russian police and imprisoned in Warsaw. Friends urged him to feign madness which would lead to relaxed conditions. His acting convinced the authorities and he transferred to a sanatorium in Petersburg from which he was rescued by a Polish doctor. The experience was a gruelling one from which it took time to recover.

He resisted terrorist activities in the 1905 Revolution. In later years bank and train robberies helped to fund the movement, but there was little public effect apart from notoriety and the partition seemed more acceptable to the mass of the population with each year that passed. He became absorbed in military studies and educated himself from books, especially on Napoleon and the 1863 Rising. The Irish commentator, Brendan Clifford, described him as the first self-made general since Oliver Cromwell, but unlike Cromwell he had to learn the trade in secret. The Russian repression was so intense that he began to locate his activities in the Austrian partition where the organization used Rifle Clubs as a cover. The first clubs were founded in 1910 and began with one sporting rifle for every twenty members.

The Polish Legions

The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 gave Pilsudski the opportunity he had been waiting for. Unlike most socialists he welcomed the conflict as a means of ending the deadlock in the domination of Poland. His analysis was summed up in two sentences: "The problem of the independence of Poland will definitely be solved only when Russia shall be beaten by Germany – and Germany by France. It is our duty to lend our help to that aim..." To that end it was necessary to support Austria (and Germany) in their struggle against Russia. Many Poles took different views, especially in the Russian zone where they were enticed by Russian promises that the war would bring autonomy. Pilsudski's main rival, Roman Dmowski, took this view, as did Casimir Markievicz who joined the Russian army and took part in the Russian offensive in Galicia.

The Polish-born writer, Joseph Conrad, then living in England, who argued that "... the Poles *must* act. Whether this was a council of wisdom or not it is very difficult to say, but there are crises of the soul which are beyond the reach of wisdom."

The Rifle Clubs became the nucleus of Polish Legions which Pilsudski offered to fight alongside the Austrian army. The Austrian authorities were suspicious, especially when Pilsudski organized a personal invasion of Russian Poland on 6 August 1914 with a small band of 163 fighters. They set out from Krakow on a mission that was symbolic of the desire to fight for Poland's freedom. There were similarities with the motivation of the Irish rebels in 1916 – it was the gesture that could ensure success in the long run.

Within a week they were in Kielce in Russian Poland and hung the red and white flag in the marketplace. Pilsudski declared: "We wanted the Polish soldier not to remain a mystical entity deprived of flesh and blood. We wanted Poland who had forgotten the sword so entirely since 1863 to see it flashing in the air, in the hands of its own soldiers." He issued a proclamation from the governor's palace announcing a Polish government in Warsaw with authority over the Legions. Of course, there was no such government; throughout the episode Pilsudski acted as though he were the leader of a conquering army. Volunteers came across the border from Krakow, but the invasion failed to galvanize the local population - fear of the Russians was too deep.

He was disappointed when he had to join the Austrian retreat in the face of Russian advances, but the Kielce operation was the beginning of the legend of Pilsudski as the inspirational leader. The Austrian Command chided him for unauthorized action, but recognized his value as a military leader and allowed the Legions to exist as a separate force under Austrian command. He fought in the trenches with the soldiers and imbued them with strong morale and belief in their cause. The Legions would become his power base, willing to sacrifice all to follow him, but a source of resentment to those excluded from such intimacy. Their actions during the Great War would be vital elements in the cult that formed around him. "After a year of our legionary fighting, I was indeed astonished that our handful was still alive, that it had not been entirely forgotten in that furnace of history." He drew on Legion members to set up the secret Polish Military Organization, the POW, to prepare for independence.

His approach combined military activity with political strategy, recognizing that Russia would be defeated by the Central Powers; the next stage would be a struggle against Germany. By 1915 Germany and Austria troops drove Russia out of most of Poland and proposed the creation of a Kingdom of Poland in the newly-occupied territory ruled by a monarch linked to Germany and Austria. The German plan was for this Kingdom to raise an army of 70-80,000 which would guard the territory between Poland and Russia – the Ober Ost, freeing soldiers for the Western Front. Once the need to fight Russia was lessened Pilsudski withdrew his soldiers from the front line and marched to Warsaw.

It was a mutiny, but did not attract the usual penalty as the Germans were anxious to appease Poles and in December 1916 appointed a Provisional Council of State. Pilsudski agreed to join the Military Commission, but was wary of becoming a German pawn. The Legions were obliged to swear an oath of allegiance to the Kaiser in July 1917. When Pilsudski refused he was stripped of his command and the Legions broken up. In September the Germans brought him to the Magdeburg Fortress near Berlin and kept him in solitary confinement without information or influence on Polish affairs. It appeared the end of all he had worked for.

He was treated with courtesy, but kept without books or papers, uncertain of his fate. "While I was a prisoner in Magdeburg, the hangman stood always behind me. I was never sure of my life. I was shut in as in the grave, completely cut off from the whole world. I often thought of dear things, as of a kiss with which a man goes to his grave." The rooms were cold in winter and he suffered from heart problems and rheumatism. The isolation was the worst and he feared he would go mad – this time in earnest. "For people so scrupulously isolated as I was at Magdeburg, life becomes an almost unbearable burden. This was the harder for me for I had been torn from a life so full of variety ... Often too in my long lonely strolls through the

garden ... I saw the dear faces of friends, I almost heard their laughter ...”

He lived so intensely in his mind that he feared becoming detached from reality and gave up smoking for a fortnight as a test of will-power. His situation mirrored that of Constance Markiewicz in Aylesbury Women’s Prison. She came close to a mental breakdown due to lack of communication. She found creative freedom in a prison journal where she could draw. Pilsudski found freedom in writing, but had to keep his purpose secret from the German guards. He requested paper to compose a letter of complaint about his arrest and conditions. More paper was demanded as he struggled with legal expression. He compressed his writing and used ciphers to make maximum use of space. The writings were about the experiences of his First Brigade and the lessons he learned, published afterwards in Poland as *Moje Pierwsze Boje* (My First Battles.)

The Bolshevik revolution of November 1917 ended Russia’s involvement in the war. Most belligerents had plans for Poland – the Allies supported Dmowski’s Polish National committee in Paris with plans for a state dependent on France and Britain while the Bolsheviks were selecting Polish comrades for a Soviet-style republic controlled by Moscow. The Regency Council attempted to act as though it was in control of events; it appointed a new Prime Minister and attempted to gain international recognition.

Pilsudski was like a ghost at the table where a place was reserved for him in successive cabinets as Minister for War. When he returned on 10 November, he had to brief himself on the most important events of his absence. The more he learned the more daunting the task of reconstruction appeared. Thousands were unemployed and there was a lack of raw materials for industry. The Germans had carried away stocks of copper, cotton and machinery. There were six codes of law, four currencies, lack of co-ordination in the administrative system, two different railroad gauges. Almost everything was in short supply; students of Warsaw University crowded around the English teacher, William John Rose, whenever he took out his fountain pen.

“Poland is technically ruined,” Pilsudski told Socialist Party leaders, who hoped he would lead a social revolution. “For a while she must go on her hands and knees. This is not a time for experiments.” He was faced with a number of daunting, almost superhuman challenges. It is foolish to imagine that Pilsudski united Poland all by himself. He had the enthusiastic support of millions of Polish people at home and abroad. Most importantly, he had the experience and discipline of the Legions who formed the core of his new army. All through 1918 groups of Polish soldiers, formerly part of the Russian armies began appearing in the Eastern borderlands.

We can get some idea of the almost Biblical pace of events in the timescale for the week. For the first two days Pilsudski listened to reports from delegations. On Wednesday 13th he created a Left-wing government which lasted for four days. The Regency Council dissolved itself on the same day, entrusting its duties and responsibilities to the Polish people in Pilsudski. Saturday 16th November was the 6th day after his return on which he sent a message to the governments of Europe and America that Poland was an independent republic and requested her borders be respected.

On the following day he announced a government cabinet with representatives from the Socialists, Peasant parties and a scattering from the three partitions. Their first duty was to prepare a law for elections to the Sejm. At this juncture he said to the Socialist Party delegation: “Gentlemen, I am no longer your comrade. In the beginning we followed the same direction and together took a tramway painted ‘red.’ But I left it at the station

marked ‘Poland’s Independence’ while you are continuing the journey as far as the station ‘Socialism.’ Many have taken this statement as a repudiation of his earlier ideology, but it can also be seen as a desire to stand above party and class interests in the struggle to create Poland.

He saw that socialism can be interpreted in different ways, especially in Russia: “They are all imperialists, more or less camouflaged, not excluding the revolutionaries. An elemental centralism is the mark of their minds, eternally tending to the absolute.” While he did not continue to the station marked ‘Socialism,’ and recognized the right of all classes to exist, he took many radical positions in later years and relied on Left-wing parties for support.

The deputy of the British Military Mission, Lt-Colonel Adrian Carton deWiart, of met him early in 1919: “... it has been my destiny to meet many of the great men of the world, but Pilsudski ranks high among them – in fact for political sense, almost at the top. His appearance was striking to a degree, and his air that of the conspirator.” DeWiart’s political master, David Lloyd George, paused from repressing Irish demands for freedom, to express frustration with the Poles for choosing their own leader, describing Poland as “an historic failure... which had won her freedom, not by its own exertions, but with the blood of others.”

Pilsudski surmised that Poland alone would be helpless against either Germany or Russia and sought to redraw the map of Europe to this end. As regards Wilno the city of his childhood and youth was deeply important to him and he ensured its connection with Poland, even going so far as to create the territory of Central Lithuania. His action could be viewed as Polish imperialism, but modern writers like Timothy Snyder remind us of the fluid identity of the time. For many the use of the Polish language was a marker of social success. Pilsudski saw that the end of the Great War was only a hiatus in the struggle. In order to survive Poland would have to become a strong country in a federation with Lithuania, Byelorussia and Ukraine. The plan became known as Pilsudski’s Grand Design. The main problem was that the other nationalities were equally determined to live in independent states and the mixture of populations made it easier to stir up conflict than promote co-operation. Germany had raised expectations by recognizing an independent Lithuania in February 1918 and a Ukrainian state in eastern Galicia in April.

The euphoria of early November soon began to dissolve; Pilsudski was attacked from all sides - the Right thought him too Socialist and the Left attacked him for not being radical enough. On 23 November the Government announced an 8-hour workday with a maximum of a 46-hour working week and a social insurance scheme. Alarmed by such rampant Socialism the aristocracy and National Democrats planned a military coup. Elections planned for January 1919 were based on universal suffrage with no restrictions on grounds of property, sex, race or religion. Pilsudski was working on a number of fronts – using the army to defend and extend borders, negotiation with the National Committee in Paris to prevent dual representation at the Peace Conference. He won over the National Committee when he appointed Ignacy Paderewski as premier in mid-January in advance of the elections of 26 January 1919.

When the soldier artist, Josef Czapski, returned from a mission in Russia in early 1919 he had no idea where to find Poland – there were no signs, no custom posts, no border. Eventually he came to an inn and it was full of peasants and landowners, Jews and merchants all arguing and drinking vodka. Someone would shout “Up with Pilsudski” and someone else would reply “Down with Pilsudski.” Then he knew he was in Poland; he was in a free country.

Character & beliefs

Brendan Clifford, in *James Connolly: The Polish Aspect: A Review of James Connolly's Political and Spiritual Affinity with Joseph Pilsudski, Leader of the Polish Socialist Party, Organiser of the Polish Legions and Founder of the Polish State*, (1985), has suggested parallels between Pilsudski and the Irish socialist and 1916 martyr, James Connolly. Both were steeped in the history of their respective countries and believed socialism had to move beyond a position of anti-nationalism to connect the struggle for social justice with the deep-seated aspiration for national freedom. They both recognized the importance of military struggle and formed military organizations to fight for independence. Connolly was deeply aware of the revolutionary independence movement in Russia, perhaps strengthened by his close alliance with Constance Markievicz. Connolly and Pilsudski allied themselves with Austria and Germany during the Great War. However, Connolly was executed by the British without gaining power while Pilsudski achieved power only to find it entailed an endless struggle with competing class, elite and sectional interests.

Pilsudski studied the life and battles of Napoleon and in some minds, came to resemble him, especially in his attempt to stand above party political disputes. According to Alexandra he accepted ultimate power reluctantly because he feared the frail structure of the new State would not survive wrangling and indecision. "It was a position calling for the utmost delicacy of trust. If he held the reins too lightly they would drop from his hands and Poland would be delivered into the hands of quarrelling factions; if he pulled them with too much force the people themselves would rebel." It was hard to find a balance when the country was divided in almost equal measure between Left, Right and Centre parties – many divided among themselves. In some ways the border wars helped him to galvanize the population in a common struggle, especially in August 1920 when the future of Poland as an independent state was in jeopardy. His strength was a clarity of analysis that many of his enthusiastic supporters lacked. When urged to support a local rebellion he responded: "Think sometimes how patient I have to be all the time. Don't believe that I am a magician who can do anything, and that Poland is already a power before whom its neighbours shake with fear."

He preferred military life to politics; in war you can see your enemy in front, but in politics enemies are all around. In 1920 he achieved his greatest triumph at the Miracle on the Vistula, one of the most decisive battles in European history. A few months later his vision of a Grand Design ended with the terms of the Treaty of Riga. The Polish delegation, under the influence of Dmowski's party refused the Russian offer of Minsk leaving Belorussia divided and frustrating Pilsudski's dream of a Belarusian state allied to Poland. The nationalists looked to the past in drawing boundaries, but Pilsudski was looking to the future and the conflicts to come. When he died on 12 May, 1935, there was no-one who could replace him and the disaster he hoped to prevent came to Poland in 1939.

He retired from active politics, although not an exile like his hero Napoleon on Saint Helena. Carlyle wrote of Napoleon: "... it is notable how he still, to his last days, insists on the practical, the real. 'Why talk and complain; above all, why quarrel with one another? [he says to his followers] ... Say nothing, if one can do nothing!' He was a piece of silent strength in the middle of their morbid querulousness there."

He seems to have become a favourite subject for Polish artists, with treatments ranging from the depiction of the Field Marshall in all his glory in Casimir Markiewicz's idealized portrait to the subject of caricature in which affection rather than scorn is evident.

If you tap against these memorials you will find they are hollow inside. But Pilsudski was not a hollow man – he was imbued with a strong belief in his people and country. He was not an empty husk or a leaf whirled about in the wind, but like a tree with roots reaching deep into the soil of history. He was one of those who could see into the currents of life, of nations and people.

He belongs first to Poland as a reminder of the need to overcome divisions and allow vision to triumph over division. He belongs to Europe and the world as an example of the heroic individual who can overcome great obstacles and inspire millions. We can all learn from the life and struggles of Josef Klemens Pilsudski.

And so, we leave him on that cold and dark November day 100 years ago when the people of Poland were waking up to the realization that they were free at last, but that freedom involved great challenges and great dangers. Resolving the problem of the German soldiers was easy compared to the tasks before him which I hope we can commemorate and discuss on future occasions. I hope you appreciate we have been in the company of an individual who was remarkable in history.

He was one whom Carlyle described as "profitable company... We cannot look, however imperfectly, without gaining something by him. He is the living life fountain, which is good and pleasant to be near... On any terms whatsoever, you will not grudge to wander in such neighbourhood for a while."

Djenkuje! Thank you! □

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When *The Times* met with Trotsky in 1917

Manus O’Riordan

As part of its centenary series, “On This Day - The Times History of the First World War”, *The Times* (UK) of December 6 and 7 reproduced its two part December 1917 interview with Trotsky, followed by a further report on December 18, which are carried hereunder. They speak for themselves.

(1) AN INTERVIEW WITH TROTSKY, *The Times*, December 6, 1917:

From our Special Correspondent, Petrograd, Dec 2.

Today I had an interesting conversation with the People’s Commissioner for Foreign Affairs. Trotsky, who had previously met me in Bulgaria, began the conversation by stating that negotiations for an armistice would begin this evening. The Government desired, not a separate peace, but a general peace. On this point he dwelt strongly. At first, he said, there would be not an armistice but a suspension of hostilities, during which the Russian Army would maintain a combative attitude.

In reply to my question how he expected the Allies to associate themselves so soon with the negotiations, in consequence of the pressure of the masses on the Governments, he said: “There will be three stages in the *pour-parlers*: One, suspension of hostilities; two, armistice; three, peace negotiations. The Allies can join when they like. The first and second stages would be temporary and provisional, then would begin the negotiations for a general peace.”

He maintained with great emphasis that the Government has no idea whatever of a separate peace, but of a general peace negotiated in concert with the Allies. He hoped that during the interval afforded by these preliminary proceedings the various peoples would react on their Governments to dispose them to take part in the negotiations.

In reply to my observation that the Government by its procedure has left little time for the development of such a movement on the part of the various democracies, he said that he contemplated a suspension of hostilities for a week or a fortnight for the purpose of negotiating a formal armistice. This period, might be prolonged, perhaps considerably, until a basis could be reached, in the first instance for an armistice and eventually for a general peace.

What he and his friends hoped for was a democratic, not an imperialistic, peace. They were against imperialism in all countries, Great Britain included. There would, therefore, be no such thing as secret diplomacy in the coming negotiations, whether for an armistice or a general peace. All proceedings would be published *de die in diem*.

(2) TROTSKY’S IDEA OF PEACE, *The Times*, December 7, 1917:

Trotsky, in the further course of my conversation with him (reported in *The Times* of yesterday) repudiated all idea of negotiating for the advantage of the Kaiser or of German Imperialism. In reply to the question whether the doctrine of

“no annexations” could be applied to Turkey, who has long misgoverned alien races such as the Armenians and Arabs, Trotsky declared himself in favour of creating independent States, or a confederation of States. He approved of the settlement of Jews in Palestine, but objected to appropriations of territory there by foreign Powers. He refrained from replying when I observed that the British occupation of Baghdad had been necessary to prevent its seizure by another Power. He opposed the idea of a protectorate. He showed me a telegram stating that some of the Mongolian tribes had asked for the protection of the new Russian “Government”, and said that he considered it a humiliation for any nation to ask protection of another, but that he was ready to accord support. On the delicate question of the repatriation of Russians interned in England, Trotsky said that the People’s Commissioners, considering the attitude of the British Government not convenable in refraining from meeting the request, decided to refuse permission for British subjects to leave Russia.

When I was taking my leave, Trotsky took occasion to express his profound admiration for the British nation, its love of liberty and illustrious history, and, above all, its literature.

Trotsky, who is still a young man, was born in Southern Russia, and educated at Odessa University. In 1901 he was exiled to Siberia for political agitation. In the following year he escaped and took up his residence at Geneva, where he renewed his political activity. During the revolutionary period in 1904 he returned to Russia and was elected to the Workmen’s Committee. Eventually he became President of the Moderate Revolutionary Party. By degrees he associated himself with the extremists under Lenin, and organized with him the movement of July 3 in Petrograd. He was arrested, but subsequently released. He played a leading part in the last revolution, was elected President of the Soviet, and subsequently became People’s Commissioner for Foreign Affairs.

(3) TROTSKY AGAINST THE CADETS, *The Times*, December 18, 1917:

The Petrograd Soviet has passed a resolution demanding the immediate promulgation of a decree quashing the elections of all Cadet Deputies. Receiving a military deputation at the Smolny Institute, Trotsky declared that the People’s Commissioners were engaged in a merciless and decisive struggle against the Cadet Party, and would stop at nothing in the prosecution of class warfare. In a speech to the Executive Committee of the Soviets he went even further. Replying to some speakers who disapproved of violence being offered to members of the Constituent Assembly, Trotsky said: “You are shocked at the mild form of terror we exercise against our class enemies, but take notice that not more than a month hence that terror will assume a more terrible form, on the model of that of the great French Revolution. No prison but the guillotine for our enemies. It is not immoral for a democracy to crush another class. That is its right.”

See also <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=oPBojGqo1TI> for footage of Trotsky arriving in Brest-Litovsk in December 1917 for peace negotiations with the German Reich. □

In Year Zero, a Contribution to the History of the German Press, by Hans Habe (1966)
Part VI. Translated by Angela Stone for IFA

CHAPTER FOUR [cont'd.]:

I will never forget a conversation that took place in the commandeered house of Munich publisher, Beck, not only because it concerned the fate of *Die Neue Zeitung*, but more especially because it both demonstrates the blind-spots of the Western Allies and refutes the Soviet lie that the West had planned a Cold War against the Soviet Union from the outset.

The conversation remained relatively urbane on the issue of the differences between Soviet and American occupation policies. But when I let myself get somewhat carried away and, with an eye to the future, suggested that we had to win the moral cooperation of the “better Germany” to our side, the Colonel hit the table with his fist.

“The Russians”, he said, “are our Allies, the Germans our enemies. You and Major Wallenberg have been contaminated by the Germans. You have gone native.” He snapped the folder in front of him shut. “I will inform General McClure of this conversation.”

With these words, he left the room.

It didn't look as if *Die Neue Zeitung* was destined to be around for long.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ISLAND IN SCHELLINGSTRASSE

Shortly before Christmas 1945, Major Wallenberg and I were summoned back to Bad Homburg. The mood was the same: anti-German and pro-Russian. We were strongly recommended - I say recommended, but it wasn't open to discussion - to immediately cease all criticisms of the Soviet Union.

On the way home in my car, we two American Majors - Wallenberg and myself - spoke about the conflicted situation in which returned emigrants in “foreign” uniform found themselves. Although General McClure treated us politely and correctly, it wasn't difficult to guess what they whispered about us behind our backs. The fact that we had fled Europe before the Nazi invasions did not protect us from their suspicions. When I had run the radio broadcasts from Luxembourg in the last period of the war I was warned not to give vent to “anti-German” feelings, although this warning was quite unnecessary; and now it was suddenly my “pro-German” feelings which I had to bring under control! The Americans were convinced that only a native-born American could be really immune to either pro- or anti-German feelings. Even mastering the language was enough to be suspected of being in danger of contamination. But Wallenberg and I knew very well that the Germans trusted us even less than they trusted the conquerors from the New World who were complete strangers to them. In 1945 the term “Re-education” had yet to become a dirty word, but most Germans still preferred to be lectured by a General from Missouri than a Major who had originally come from Berlin or Vienna. The abuse suffered in 1965 by Marlene Dietrich and Willy Brandt (what a strange association of names and ideas they are!) is exactly what Wallenberg and I encountered every winter night as we toured with our command car through Hessian forests and Bavarian villages.

But we didn't allow that deter us. Even before Christmas 1945 was out, we set about recruiting a German staff for *Die Neue Zeitung*.

A HITLER BIOGRAPHER IN DIE NEUE ZEITUNG

The difficulties we encountered are unimaginable today. I had strict instructions not to employ any German writers until they had been cleared by the American Secret Service. But as the secret service worked slowly, this proved unworkable in practice. I therefore took the responsibility on my own head for the German writers we employed and hoped that my knowledge of human nature would prove sufficient in making a good selection. But the secret service continued to “live” in Schellingstraße long after the chief editorial posts had been filled, and nearly every day one or other editor had to excuse himself from the editorial meeting because of a summons for questioning by the secret service.

To be fair I should state here that the secret service, or the intelligence service - there still wasn't a clear distinction between the two - employed extraordinarily sophisticated methods. “Victims” were not only subjected to highly embarrassing interrogations and had the most meticulous records compiled on them, but were also put through a “test” in the form of a clever intelligence quiz. One of my former NCOs, Paul Moeller, today a judge in Munich, devised a remarkable “card game”. Candidates were shown a range of pictures representing the variety of atrocities committed by the Nazis, including, for example, the torture of Jews, executions of prisoners of war by firing squad, forced recruitment of migrant workers, shooting of hostages etc. They were asked to put the cards in sequence in accordance with the awfulness of the crimes depicted, with the worst on top and the “mildest” at the bottom of the pile. On the basis of much practice, the selection made enabled you to determine with considerable accuracy the real disposition of the person being examined. I can no longer remember what was considered the ideal or most favourable card sequence, but I do remember how all former Nazis unanimously ranked the persecution of the Jews as the worst atrocity of the defeated regime. As I have already mentioned, former Nazis were convinced that the Second World War had come about as a “Jewish war”, that they had been defeated by the Jews and, most of all, that they were now expected in particular to distance themselves from anti-Semitism. If I had not suspected all along how close National Socialism had come to mere opportunism, the Moeller test would have proved it for me.

Incidentally, my knowledge of human nature proved to be neither infallible nor entirely misguided. I had deliberately entrusted the home affairs section of the newspaper to a German. That he was also responsible - together with Arthur Steiner - for the sports section only goes to show the meagreness of the pool we had to work with. The finest journalist I discovered in those days was Robert Lembke. He passed the atrocity “test” with flying colours, as I had expected, and is now a presenter on German television where he is a favourite with panel show audiences, a glimmer of light in bleak times. But one morning the secret service placed a dossier of embarrassing material on

my table. My business editor, in whom I had had full confidence, had “forgotten” to inform me that Lembke had previously worked in an identical role for the main Nazi Party paper, the *Der Völkische Beobachter*.

The deluge of candidates who came looking to work with us was almost as large as the number of subscribers. Entering my hall outside my office each morning gave me the impression that half of Germany wanted to become journalists. This enthusiasm for the newspaper industry was based on more than intellectual and professional ambition, and understandably so. Germany was starving, and while the pay wasn't too bad, a well-paid job had little meaning when you could hardly buy a piece of sausage anywhere, let alone a pair of shoes. The canteen, which I had set up in the cellar of the Schellingstrasse building, became the stuff of German legend. Contrary to instructions from headquarters, I took it as a given that any Germans who worked for *Die Neue Zeitung* would receive the same rations as our American colleagues. To make sure of this we set mealtimes at the same time for all staff, including the Germans working for us. Even at the height of the non-fraternization policy, American officers ate in the canteen alongside German typesetters, returned German emigrants in American uniform and German secretaries. I entrusted one of my NCOs with the exclusive task of ensuring the delivery of three or four times the rations our American staff were due from the quartermaster's depot in Munich. If you call that working the black market, then the management of *Die Neue Zeitung* were among Germany's most infamous black marketeers. As you can see, we were still on that ship of fools.

Now is a good time to recall what a typical issue of *Die Neue Zeitung* contained, and is in equal measure of historic and journalistic interest. To take one example at random, the issue of 25 October 1945 included coverage of the electoral victory of the Left in France; a feature by Professor Hans von Eckardt on purging the cultural professions; an article sketching Germany's path back to the United Nations; a report on the intensifying Spanish crisis; a world political review by Stefan Heym; news on evacuations and repatriations of prisoners of war; an explanation of the composition of the new Bavarian Government; a report on the voting rights of ex-Nazi Party members; the execution of Quisling; the extradition of Gauleiter Wagner; an article by Count Hermann Keyserling on the “inner emigration”; a polemic by Erich Kästner on the first Chaplin film to be shown in Germany; articles by Sigrid Undset and Alfred Polgar; a report on the London Kempinski restaurant by Pem; a note on the return of Jan Kepuras; a sketch by the young German artist Reinhardt Schmidhagen from his series “Guernica”; a poem by Manfred Hausmass called “Children with Paper Lanterns”; a report on a children's home titled “The Children of Indersdorf”; a language course “Everyone learns English”; readers' letters with titles such as “Help for Invalids!”, “The Air Raid Warden”, “Political Purges”, replies to the article “Mea Culpa” and “Don't Forget the Sergeant”; two polemics by Hans Habe entitled “From the Language” and “From the Newspapers”; “The ‘white list’ of German culture” [i.e. of those with minimal Nazi pasts]; the charges at the Nuremberg Trial with a feature on the former Chancellor von Papen; a feature “How the Complete Party Directory was Discovered”; an article in the business section by Munich City Councillor Josef Orlopp on “Price Discipline to beat Inflation”, and others titled “Weaker Market Trend” and “The Mittenwald Violin Making Industry”; a report on the new courts; and an item from Berlin recounting: “At least 100 tons of chestnuts have been collected by Berlin schools so far. The flour that can be made from them is rich in fats and protein and is distributed to children as nutrients, with the residue being made into animal feed and soap”; and finally,

sports news with a feature by Arthur Steiner, “The Football Style of Tomorrow”.

The hard slog required to produce such a newspaper was occasionally interrupted by colourful episodes. Thus one day a man contacted us who, as my orderly explained, had grounds to believe he would be immediately offered a position on the newspaper as he had, apparently, “rocked me on his knee”.

“The secretary”, the orderly continued, “told me we should be careful nevertheless. The man is wearing a fur coat.”

“What has she against fur coats?”

“She says that any man who owns a fur coat today must have been a big Nazi.”

Whereupon the wearer of the fur coat entered my office. Besides the fur coat he also sported a monocle, and he went by the name of Erich Walter Czech-Jochberg. (There is an enlightening piece on him on page 206 of that important source on the National Socialist era: Josef Wulf's *Literature and Poetry in the Third Reich*).

Erich Czech approached me with open arms, and indeed did have a certain entitlement to do so. While he hadn't quite “rocked me on his knee”, he had been a reporter on my father's Viennese Newspapers when I was still at school and had often visited us at our house. I remembered him very well.

I also remembered – though did not mention it and Erich Czech-Jochberg himself did not deem it opportune to remind me – that he had been among the Führer's favourite authors and had distinguished himself with books such as “Adolf Hitler in his Office”, “The Youth Book of Horst Wessel” and “How Adolf Hitler became Führer”. His most famous, however, was a biography of Hitler, “Our Führer”, published in Stuttgart in 1933.

I certainly encountered a lot of impertinence in those days. But the idea of Erich Czech as “a victim of the regime” volunteering to work “with heart and hand” for the Americans was surely one of the most impertinent of all. I must admit that a diabolical thought came to me.

“A fixed position is currently out of the question”, I said, “but you mentioned your historical knowledge - what would you think of doing a biographical article on Hitler?”

“You know, I thought you might come up with that excellent idea.”

“How long would you need for it?”

“Two weeks at most.”

Fourteen days later Erich Czech submitted his biographical piece. In the meantime, I had acquired a copy of his earlier work, “Our Führer”. Our editorial team compared and checked both versions and finally chose a chapter from both biographies dealing with the same period of Hitler's life. The feature we published reproduced the two chapters side by side in two columns, with a short introduction. Czech's 1945 version was pretty much the direct opposite, almost word for word, of what he had produced in 1933.

Following our publication of this “study in character deficiency”, I never saw Erich Walter Czech-Jochberg again. He sent someone to collect his writer's fee from our office, and I fear he used this to move to the East where, if the rumours we hear are true, he allegedly marketed his “historical knowledge” with greater success.

ARTISTIC MASTERPIECES IN A CARETAKER'S FLAT

Erich Walter Czech-Jochburg was not the only case of “personal reportage” we engaged in. *Die Neue Zeitung* was,

amongst other things, a unique journalistic experiment because the editorial was run like an infantry division without artillery or supplies. Our news sources were threadbare and precarious. The American-run news agency DENA was entrusted to a French modernist poet called Jolas - on the ship of fools anything was possible. This poet and his office of German-Americans excelled in servility. The news reports from DENA were so cringingly "Americanised" that they must have reminded Germans of Dr Goebbels' "Instructions on Language Use". I could make little use of these communiqués, a fact that caused persistent resentment at Bad Homburg, and instead continued to source most of our news from the radio, as before. My radio monitoring team run by Ernest L. Wynder and a gifted Greek, Andreas Gregoriades (now manager of Du Pont de Nemours in Geneva), placed a large volume of reports, often running to more than a hundred pages, on my desk each morning. These of course had to be meticulously sifted through, as they were anything but "official" news, and we bore full responsibility for everything we published. It was in reality an information black market.

I took personal responsibility for all reports we published from such personalised sources. One of these still sticks in my mind because of its historical importance.

Non-fraternization or not, one of our drivers had a German lover, a "Fräulein" as we used to say. One day, this good man - you will soon see how good he was - got in touch with me.

"Major, sir", he said, "promise me you won't report me for fraternization?"

"That depends on who you're sleeping with."

"My 'fiancée's' father is a caretaker. He lives near the destroyed Pinakothek gallery."

"So?"

"He has a small two bedroom flat. I find it slightly strange that there are two giant paintings hanging in one of the rooms."

Now this sparked my interest. "What sort of paintings?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "No idea. But they seem too big for a caretaker to me."

The good man was right. They were too big - not only for a caretaker. What the reporters I sent to the flat of the art-loving caretaker found were two of the most valuable paintings from the Pinakothek. They had been moved to the Führer apartment from where they were later "borrowed" by the plundering population. Around 1,000 valuable paintings had been moved to the cellars and bunkers of the Führer apartment and between 650 and 700 of these had already been handed in by people. I put just one condition on the authorities who liberated the caretaker of his "loan" - that the news of the discovery of the stolen pictures would appear first in *Die Neue Zeitung*. That's journalists for you: competitive to the last, even when there is no real competition!

Apart from that incident, I only "misused" my relationships with the military authorities twice to beat the licensed press to a story. The first time was when the files of the Nazi party, the NSDAP, were found. We were the "exclusive" recipients of the following press release: "American military authorities in Germany today located and seized the full membership list of the NSDAP. The list, comprising the names of some eight million people, was discovered by Major Browne, former detective police chief of Oregon. The membership list, which includes death sentences on certain national socialist leaders never carried out for unexplained reasons, contains not only the complete names of former party members but also those of approximately two million further people who applied for membership." God only knows how important I considered

this report to be at the time, but little did I suspect that fifteen years later some of these bold party members would hold ministerial positions. The second news item I "reserved" for *Die Neue Zeitung* was the report of the discovery of Hitler's "Final Testament", which we published verbatim and as an exclusive among the whole world press.

There is a point I would like to make about our competitors in the German "licensed" press. *Die Neue Zeitung* was considered "beyond competition" because of its unlimited resources, the fact that it was not dependent on advertisements and did not publish any, and because news sources were available to us that were closed to others. But I would stress that *Die Neue Zeitung's* special position due to its "absence of competition" enabled me to produce some quite unique reportage. Its nature as a hybrid between a commercial enterprise and a moral guide made it a unique phenomenon without competition in a capitalist economy. Journalists certainly serve a commercial purpose but their ambition is not a business one and is not driven by commercial success. They do not improve by trying to commercially outdo competitors, but rather only get worse if such is their focus. We see this in the competition between the German tabloids today, in the deadly rivalry between the post-war German illustrated magazines constantly trying to outdo each other whilst also undercutting each other. Prestigious quality titles in Switzerland, for example, such as the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Schweizer Illustrierte*, manage to maintain a high cultural standard, and are a monument to quality journalism that does not require competition to stimulate excellence. *Die Neue Zeitung* did not produce excellent journalism because my colleagues and I were exceptionally virtuous: we were successful with the public precisely because we did not need to worry about the public. Journalism is like those great lovers who conquer more women the less they run after them.

It is characteristic of Germany, where cultural questions almost always raise passions more than political ones, that the most difficult task we faced was finding suitable staff for the newspaper's cultural section, despite the devoted work that Erich Kästner and Luiselotte Enderle put in day and night and the excellent connections they both possessed. We ultimately had to rely on doing much of it ourselves, what we called "home cooking".

We have nothing to be ashamed of in this "home cooking", and it is really a shame that Kästner's collected articles from this time still haven't been published. In this connection I would mention in particular his feature entitled "Talent and Character". In this he recounted: "*In 1934 I was summoned to the office of the President of the Reich Chamber of Literature, a certain Dr. Wissmann, and he enquired whether I would like to relocate to Switzerland and start a journal there supported by secret funds to counter the émigrés. I noticed that he had thought more rigorously about the relationship between talent and character than I had. He seemed genuinely to be of the view from his experiences in the Ministry that talent and character were mutually exclusive traits.*" I should also mention Kästner's "Harlan or the White Skull Caps", on the long overdue prosecution of the director of Jud-Süss, and his educational "Thoughts of a Friend of Children". We also "cooked" Arthur Steiner's ingenious course "Everyone learns English" at home; the first theatre reviews by Freidrich Luft were published in *Die Neue Zeitung*, central to which were articles Alfred Kerr sent from London nearly every week. We also published Werner Finck's "New Year's Eve Speech 1945" and other noteworthy essays, such as Manfred Hausmann's "Art and Adversity" and Georg Dörge's "Karl May and Hitlerism".

Many important debates took place at Schellingstrasse, which we encouraged and facilitated. None seemed more important to me than the one sparked off by a bitter article

by Sigrid Undset, "Re-educating the Germans". Karl Jaspers responded to this piece with a most courageous and deeply thoughtful defence of the German people. If it is possible to "deal with" the past at all, then the following statements from Professor Jaspers's article published in *Die Neue Zeitung* on 4 November 1945 retain their relevance to this day:

"We hear the plea: four million German soldiers died in the war - that cannot have been for nothing, there must have been a meaning to this! The answer, however, is that there is absolutely nothing positive to be gleaned for the world from the meaning of these deaths. On the contrary, the terrible fact, which we can hardly dare admit to ourselves, is that around four million Germans died for a state that systematically killed about four million defenceless Jews (half a million of whom were German), tortured tens of thousands of its own citizens in concentration camps, killing many of them, turned its own people into a mass of slaves, developed a system of terror that meant that almost everyone ended up doing and neglecting to do things out of fear alone, that wiped out all that was true and good in the German people, and that, if it had won, would, as far as we can see, have spelled the end of German culture. We have to stand these facts vividly before our eyes, and thoroughly challenge every denial of them until a real conviction takes hold as to their fundamental truth. Our achieving of a German way of life based on truth depends on this."

Die Neue Zeitung also sought to oppose the provincialism that was beginning to re-emerge. This work was purely "home made" as we had to go out and with great effort procure almost every contribution ourselves. The Christmas 1945 issue included contributions by writers such as Carl Zuckmayer, Alfred Kerr, Franz Roh, Heinrich Mann, Bruno Frank, Karel Capek, George Bernard Shaw, Sigrid Undset, Antoine de Saint-Exupery and Sherwood Anderson. And the New Year edition included these five lines by Erich Kästner, now an oft-noted reference in literature: "Will it get better? Will it get worse? / People ask yearly/ we are honest: / Life is always / life-endangering."

I had come to Germany with the certain belief that one only had to unlock the drawer of the writing desk to release a wave of new German literature. But the writing-desk drawer proved to be as good as empty, with a very few exceptions. These included Werner Bergengruen's *Dies Irae*, which had been secretly printed and distributed during the Third Reich. Also, Ernst Wiechert had written *The Jeromin Children* during that time and had buried the manuscript in the garden of his house in Wolfratshausen. The anthology later compiled by Gunter Groll, *De Profundis*, included some beautiful poems wrested from his tortured breast during the terror. We considered ourselves very lucky when a young publisher, Kurt Desch, brought us one such poem by Ernst Wiechert. Desch was the first publisher to get a licence in Bavaria due to his courage during the terror. But in the whole twelve years of oppression, and apart from *The Jeromin Children*, not a single other work of importance appeared. In contrast to Georg Büchner's time, no other forms of literary resistance occurred in Hitler's Germany, apart from the outspoken writings left behind by Rudolf Borchardt, Albrecht Haushofer, Wolfgang Borchert and a few others. The continuity of German literature was a phenomenon of the German emigration.

THE ORIGINS OF "GROUP 47"

Where were all the young men? They had all either died in the war or, if they had survived, were now in prisoner of war camps. This simple discovery led to the founding of a special newspaper I would like to describe before continuing with the story of *Die Neue Zeitung*.

With hundreds of thousands of Germans still in captivity, the U.S. Army Information Department suggested reserving a certain proportion of *Die Neue Zeitung* for distribution in the prisoner of war camps. We certainly had enough in reserve to do this, as we were easily sating the hunger of the civilian population for news reportage. But I also agreed with General McClure's contention, which he set out in a memorandum, that "people behind bars have different interests from those who are free". I therefore proposed that a weekly newspaper be produced specifically for prisoners of war. This POW newspaper - *Rat und Tat* - was to consist of the news content of *Die Neue Zeitung* but with editorial and commentary provided by a team of politically-sound prisoners of war themselves. In proposing this, my actual hidden agenda was to create an outlet for new journalistic talent to emerge. My aim was to recruit the best of them for *Die Neue Zeitung* on their release. And in fact later on several valuable recruits did come from this source, notably our later chief reporter at *Die Neue Zeitung*, Karl-Hermann Ebbinghaus, the son of the President of Marburg University. But little did I suspect the cuckoo's egg it turned out I had planted in the American nest!

I can now reveal how I contributed, even if somewhat indirectly, to the birth of the writers' movement, "Group 47". During its first six months I had more trouble with our little POW paper than with the entire million newspapers we produced in Schellingstraße in Munich. The young Germans in the prisoner of war camps, most of whom had served at most a couple of months in Hitler's army, regarded themselves as entirely innocent. They hated Hitler and hated National Socialism, and they held their involvement with both to have been entirely an unfortunate accident. They even hated their own fathers. But they equally hated the Americans for still holding them in prison camps and branding them with the odium of "collective guilt". Many was the long night I sat with back bent working to fix copy they had produced for "my" newspaper. These young men were certainly not Nazis as such, but they gave vent to a very extreme form of nationalism directed mostly against the U.S. occupation forces. The later content of the Group 47 magazine, *Der Ruf* - a prestigious journal of considerable note - was produced mostly, if not entirely, by writers who had started out on the staff of my POW newspaper. The magazine was later banned by the U.S. Military Government - wrongfully, of course. In the *Almanac of Group 47* Heinz Friedrich was to write these quintessential lines on the *Der Ruf's* sense of purpose:

"Under one of the toughest occupation regimes following Germany's unconditional surrender, it was here (in *Der Ruf*) that young Germans first raised their voices to demand justice, truth and freedom. They refused to join in the general hypocritical phrase-mongering of the 'Re-education' programme of the Occupation Dictatorship, and instead (and dispensing with journalistic niceties) firmly demanded not only freedom of thought, but also freedom of movement. They denounced the victors' policies as retrograde, colonialist and inhumane, in short, as un-European."

In these lines Heinz Friedrich, whose first drama, not without reason, was titled *The Road to Nowhere*, perfectly reflects the attitude widespread among young German intellectuals at that time. In my attempts to attract young intellectuals for the newspaper, I visited the prison camps and invited young talented Germans to apply to *Die Neue Zeitung* on their release. I spoke with many of them when they came out, holding long conversations with young men such as the illustrator Meyer-Brockmann, who later worked for us off and on. But their attitudes were alarming. These young intellectuals rejected their fathers, but regarded themselves as right to feel totally free of shame. I tried to explain to them that while I

was opposed to the concept of collective guilt, I had expected to encounter some sense of a shared shame, but this fell on deaf ears. If you reduce everything to simplistic categories like “Nazis” and “Anti-Nazis”, they were certainly “Anti-Nazis”, one and all, but they exhibited a mind-set which they believed entitled them to express an unapologetic nationalism. They did not want to hear about the need to Re-educate a misled nation, and in fact did not look up to us in any sphere, seeing in us rather simply the “occupation dictatorship”. They never asked why the Americans had to occupy Germany or whether Hitler’s “Europeanism” was really “European” at all. They of course recognised and denounced the inhumanity of National Socialism, but their rejection of the Hitler ideology was of a purely academic nature while their opposition to the “colonialism” of the Americans was very practical indeed. What would later characterise the artistic culture of “young Germany” was already clearly recognisable here: opposition at all costs, confusing freedom with a ruthless exploitation of freedom, and an intellectual arrogance that dispensed with any real connection with the nation.

I tried to understand them. But these young Germans were politically untrained, and had not grasped how satanic Hitler’s trick of designating his party “national” and “socialist” had been. They hated “National Socialism” but did not realize it was impossible to be “left” and think nationalistically at the same time. They pointed to the nationalism of Americans - and forgot what had happened. I did try to understand them. The majority of these young German intellectuals had sat behind barbed wire. I myself had been a prisoner of war in 1940 after volunteering for the French army and understood that when you are behind barbed wire all you see is barbed wire. But their short-sightedness still alarmed me. While it is understandable to hate your guards, I expected of intellectuals at least that they would question how they had ended up behind barbed wire. In a letter to Thomas Mann I gave free rein to my concern, writing: “*These young people hate their fathers. But they hate their fathers’ enemies even more.*”

These efforts on my part to thrust the quill into the hands of young Germans led to the founding of *Rat und Tat*. Without the editorial group formed for the prisoner of war newspaper, the magazine *Der Ruf*, from which “Group 47” later emerged, would never have come about. I followed its development closely, but missed the early signs of that fatal fraternization between left-wing intellectuals and nationalism. Those signs were in fact clearly discernible from the start. Erich Kästner, editor of our cultural section, enjoyed complete freedom of expression at *Die Neue Zeitung*, courtesy of course of the “occupation dictatorship”. One evening he invited me to the opening of the famous cabaret, *Die Schaubude* (“The Show Booth”), much of content of which he himself wrote. And what a surprise it was! Half the programme consisted of little more than an ill-tempered rant against the Americans. While I was certainly critical of the cabaret in the review I wrote of it, fear of attracting the odium of the “occupation dictatorship” meant that I barely noticed the first slow and deliberate steps towards the suicide of German democracy.

I also failed to notice that we were in fact fighting a losing battle. While young German intellectuals continued their plaintive wail about the hardships of the occupation, the Americans remained clueless. Just how clueless they were was demonstrated by the disastrous founding of our third publication.

Washington decided suddenly on a further development of the American press in Germany and entrusted me with the founding of a first popular news magazine, to be called *Heute*. Although it was superbly resourced, *Heute* was to prove a complete flop. The reasons for this were simple, as

the editorial staff of *Die Neue Zeitung*, which had opposed the founding of the magazine from the start, had foreseen. My staff of returned émigrés in American uniform was not big enough for me to spare even one of them to serve as editor of *Heute*. All the trained and reliable German journalists available were working either on *Die Neue Zeitung* or in the licensed press, and finding further staff of that calibre was impossible at the time. Washington thereupon impulsively sent a team of American magazine experts over to Munich. I was soon at my wits’ end trying to deal with this editorial team, who were completely foreign to the German public. While they were under my command, I gave them free rein. *Heute* appeared as a facsimile version of *Life*, a magazine of a very high journalistic standard but totally unsuited to a German public. Newspapers and magazines do not easily transplant to foreign soil. The one good outcome of the *Heute* experiment was the realisation that Germans would not simply accept everything imposed on them. That their desire for good packing paper would mean they would consume anything put their way was finally thoroughly disproved.

With each passing day of the new year of 1946 it became ever clearer to me that my position was hopeless, despite the success of *Die Neue Zeitung* and the international esteem that it, as Germany’s biggest newspaper, enjoyed. Examples illustrating this are numerous, but I will mention a few.

“SIGNAL” AND WORLD HISTORY

One day Erich Kästner introduced me to the famous Berlin publicist Walther Kiaulehn, now a successful author and literary and drama critic with the *München Merkur*. Although Kästner had published some essays by Kiaulehn, I refused for weeks to meet him. This brilliant publicist, formerly a leading light with the Ullstein press in Berlin, had worked during the war for *Signal*, a propaganda magazine designed for circulation abroad and containing so many obvious lies every week that its distribution within Germany was strictly prohibited by the Propaganda Ministry. Shortly after the horrendous mass shootings at Lidice, carried out in 1942 in retaliation for Heydrich’s assassination, a propaganda justification of the massacre appeared in *Signal*, signed “W. K.”, which was how newspaperman Kiaulehn signed off his reports. I was in a quandary as to what I should do. I wanted to get hold of literate and capable Germans for my staff at any, or almost any, cost; but the reservoir of talent, which I had initially believed to be inexhaustible, was in fact empty. And how could I successfully head up a newspaper if I did not trust the recommendations of my highly esteemed cultural editor? Kästner explained that the “W. K.” who had justified the mass murder at Lidice was not the same man as Walther Kiaulehn - so in he came!

As bad luck would have it, after a few minutes we came around to discuss the latest war phenomenon, the bombing of towns and cities and the deaths of women and children it caused. That Kiaulehn spoke only of Dresden, Kassel and Berlin, never mentioning London, Rotterdam and Coventry, did not concern me particularly, as I had by now grown accustomed to such attitudes. In the quick-witted manner that was his way, Kiaulehn then went on to expound on the historical origins of the many abominations of the Second World War and, lo and behold, identified the historical source for Hitler’s atrocities in the American Civil War! That, he said, was where the murder of women and children had been given legal status and while Hitler saw himself as an emperor, he was in fact little more than an imitator of pioneering American behaviour.

The fact that I chose not to employ Kiaulehn is hardly important. But once the reins of *Die Neue Zeitung* had slipped

from my hands the Americans nevertheless opened the door to this man. But that conversation I had had with him, where his temperament had produced such blunt candidness, demonstrated for me the insurmountable nature of the challenge we faced in the new Germany. Another and even more significant fact was how few writers could be found who were genuinely concerned at the pernicious persistence of Hitlerite phraseology in the daily German language. One of the best German journalists of the time once brought me an essay denouncing the persistence of Nazi phrases and concepts in the language and demanding a return to uncontaminated German. It was an excellent essay by a man motivated by the best of intentions, but we couldn't print it precisely because even it was unknowingly saturated with Hitler-German.

It would be unjust to claim that the difficulties we faced were exclusively or even mainly due to faults on the German side, as our greatest difficulties, of both a personal and political nature, resulted from the behaviour of the U.S. Military Government, a topic which forms the subject of the final chapter of this book. □

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, NOVEMBER 13, 1918: THE LAST FALL OF "CONSTANTINOPLE"

Dr. Yusuf Turan Çetiner

[The following article was written by Yusuf Turan Cetiner to commemorate the fall of the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, to the British Empire a century ago. Turan Cetiner is the author of 'Turkey and the West: From Neutrality to Commitment (University Press of America, 2015).

Istanbul - or "Constantinople", as the British persisted in calling it - was to be the prize held out to the Tsar for the loan of his 'Russian Steamroller' that would roll all the way to Berlin. Whilst French and British armies sealed off Germany from the West and the Royal Navy controlled the seas around it, that Steamroller advanced from the East. However, the Steamroller was stopped and it began to roll back, crushing those who sent it on its way on Britain's bidding. That left the Tsar's prize unclaimed and in Britain's lap upon the winning of its Great War. For 5 years the British Empire held the great city with the Royal Navy's guns trained upon it. In response to the occupation Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) removed the capital deep into the Anatolian heartland, beyond the range of the British Navy. He began the Turkish resurgence which saw off the Greek and Armenian pawns and then came face to face with the British occupation. Winston Churchill threatened war from the Empire but then the British backed down, abandoning Istanbul to its rightful owners. Business was soon after concluded at Lausanne and the Royal Navy sailed away. Later, when they started to pass across the Bosphorus, it was as if they were sailing among a forest of steel. Then Lt. Col. Cevat heard the following words from Mustafa Kemal: "They shall go, just as they have come." Thrilled with these words, Cevat replied: "God will grant it to you my Pasha. You will drive them out." A smile appeared on Mustafa Kemal's face and he said: "Let's see it."

In the article Turan Cetiner presents information not generally known about in this part of the world. *Irish Foreign Affairs* is very pleased to present it to our readers.

Pat Walsh]

On May 29, 1453, following a siege which had begun on April 6, "Constantinople" fell to the Ottomans who were led by the 21-year-old Mehmed (the Conqueror), the seventh Sultan of the Ottoman Empire who defeated the Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos. Since that day, the names İslâmbol, İstanbul, İstanbul and Konstantiniyye were used interchangeably in Ottoman documents up until the Empire's dismantling in the immediate aftermath of the Great War.

Westerners continued to refer to the city as "Constantinople" well into the 20th century and most certainly during the Great War too. After 465 years, the "Queen of Cities" was once again captured by the Allies when Allied armada anchored in the Bosphorus on 13 November 1918, symbolizing the taking over of the city by a literally Christian coalition the members of which always referred to İstanbul as "Constantinople". The inference in the continued use of the name "Constantinople" was that the city was rightfully part of the Christian World and would be taken back at an advantageous opportunity. All the indicators were pointing to the fact that opportunity had arrived.

The capital of the Ottoman Empire remained under Allied occupation for nearly five years. The liberation of İstanbul by the armies of the National Assembly of Turkey, led by Mustafa Kemal came on 6 October 1923. The way in which the Ottoman capital was referred to was shaped by a political nostalgia and a twisted perception of its cosmopolitan society which wasn't a monolithic bloc in reality. From this viewpoint, the last fall of "Constantinople" and the liberation of İstanbul has remained one of the less debated issues of the Great War and it has remained an obscure period in the aftermath of the Armistice Day.

Beginning the Great War

Britain's gradual advancement across Ottoman territory, its mastery of the sea and air and, finally, the occupation of the capital, ensured the complete Allied victory over the Ottomans. Overwhelmed by the technical superiority of the Allies, including their mastery of the new theatre of war, the air, the Ottoman situation was desperate and the Armistice signed at Mudros soon had the consequences of a thorough defeat.

In the decades prior to the Great War, control or status of those lands comprising the Ottoman Empire had been of great importance to Britain. By the beginning of the 19th century, facing the advances of Napoleonic France and Russia, Anglo-Ottoman understanding had proven to be a plausible policy option to achieve this objective. Despite certain departures from this policy, such as the gaining of the possession of Cyprus through the agreement of the Sublime Porte (Bâb-ı Âlî, a metonym for the central government of the Ottoman Empire) in 1878 and the occupation of Egypt in 1882, both powers could still reconcile their existing interests.

Under the pressures of a chronically unpredictable political environment, recognition and consolidation of Britain's strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf by means of minimum expenditure and responsibility, rested upon protecting this status quo which was reinforced in the aftermath of the Crimean War. The Ottoman territories represented a giant buffer zone for Britain to be maintained against encroachment by rival Imperialist Powers. The strategic reorientation that Britain sought to achieve in the decades before the Great War was basically prompted by its perception of Germany as a major emerging rival. In view of its fast advancement into the Great Powers' rivalry, Germany had to be confronted and this had required Britain's rapprochement with, its traditional enemies, France and Russia.

The Balkan Wars came about as a result of Moscow's gaining a new vigour once the Anglo-Russian Agreement of

1907 was made. The 1907 agreement with Britain conveyed the impression to the Tsar that the British would no longer block advancement as they had in the time of Disraeli, through treaty of war. The Russian Foreign Minister concluded that it was the right time to drive the Turks from Europe and the Austrians from the Balkans. The Russian intentions were duly noted by the Sublime Porte, yet, there was little room for any manoeuvre as the Empire was under a great strain after the Libyan war and having lost its British ally there was no hope of assistance from abroad.

The Ottoman Empire was entering a period of change prompted by the need to respond to the forces of nationalism that were bringing the modern world of Western Europe to its doorstep. It was Young Turks – Les Turcs Jeunes or as said in Turkish, Jön Türkler, a coalition of reform groups that led a revolutionary movement against the régime of Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1908, who, under the shadow of his twice closure of the Ottoman Parliament in 1877 and 1878¹ was targeted by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).

The CUP was the political grouping of Young Turks, a strongly opinionated movement that sought to adopt elements of European nationalism to help bolster the Ottoman Empire against the external and internal threats that confronted it. The threats were symbolised by the Reval meeting of King Edward and Tsar Nicholas II in June 1908, as well as by various signs and suggestions of decline of the Ottoman Empire. The coming to power of the CUP in 1908 in a bloodless revolution and the formation of a new administration under the reinstated Constitution of 1876 constitutional monarchy began a serious attempt at modernization of the Empire.

When the Young Turks restored the parliamentary monarchy in 1908, Britain had a new opportunity to ameliorate its relations with the Sublime Porte. The CUP considered the Ottoman Empire as potentially “*Japan of the Near East*”² and expected that Britain would adhere to an alliance with the Porte just as it did with Tokyo in 1902. In 1909, when this proposal was made to Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, turned it down because he could not risk alienating Russia and possibly driving it into a rapprochement with Germany.³ The agreement with Russia had made the restoration of previous Ottoman-British relations less desirable than ever. Russia was the staunch enemy of the Sublime Porte, while its alliance with London was extremely important in order to push Germany out of the Great Power equilibrium. That said, this was certainly a just one part of a complicated pattern of rivalries and fears that culminated in the outbreak of the Great War.

The Early War Years and Air Targeting of “Queen of Cities”

By the spring of 1915, the war had stalled into a static trench warfare in the European theatre and the British War Cabinet was convinced that through attacking the eastern flank of the Central Powers, enemy forces would drain from the Western Front, making a breakthrough possible. However, assault on Gallipoli prove to be a poorly planned operation, which, stimulated another campaign in Mesopotamia.

1 Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 166.

2 Grey to Lowther, November 13, 1908 (Private), Sir (Viscount) Grey’s Private Papers, Turkey 1905-1910, PRO/F.O.800/79.

3 Feroz Ahmad, “Great Britain’s Relations with the Young Turks, 1908–1914,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 4, July 1966, pp. 302–329.

The pendulum of war in the Middle East included the gains and the losses of opposing empires such as defeat of the Allies in Gallipoli, the surrender of General Charles V. F. Townshend in Kut-el Amara on April 29, 1916 to the Ottoman forces, as well as the outbreak of the Arab revolt against the Porte which commenced on 10th June 1916. As the war intensified, Prime Minister Asquith and the liberal imperialists were convinced that nothing less than the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and its division up to the victors in the war could justify the sacrifices demanded of the Allied publics. As such, former considerations on the decentralization to be imposed upon İstanbul to give Turkey some prospect of a permanent existence in Asia rapidly vanished.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement concluded in May 1916, amounted to an ambitious partition of the Middle East in advance of territorial spoils of war. Capturing of Baghdad on March 11, 1917 by the British, and the fall of Jerusalem on December 9, left the Sublime Porte in a position to try avoiding the inevitable only. Meanwhile, the Zionist movement was also getting increasingly determined to get international support for their cause which led to the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917. All these developments underscored that the ultimate victory in the Great War depended on the result to be obtained in the Western Front.

With the British naval blockade tightening, 1917 saw the adoption by the German General HQ (Große Hauptquartier) examples of unrestricted submarine warfare and again in the same year, resorting to unusual methods of war for the submission of the enemy was once more brought to the forefront by the German air raids on London. Prior to that Zeppelin raids were launched on the British cities and the use of aircraft constituted another step in this new form of warfare. Particularly, the air attacks of July 1917 caused dramatic casualties.

As the air warfare unleashed the idea of attacking the cities, Germany took the lead.⁴ Terrifying air raids on London by the Zeppelins could not be retaliated by the RFC. However, General Hugh Trenchard, the father of the RAF and the pioneer of British bombing took up the idea of Lord William Weir made in the Spring of 1917 to develop a strategy for a long-range bombing campaign against Germany.⁵

Trenchard’s strong embrace of strategic bombing was clearly displayed to the French in notes he wrote that were provided to Allied delegations for a meeting of the Inter Allied Aviation Committee in July 1918. He advocated that air raids against Germany were not reprisals. “*Instead, the word ‘reprisal’ should be removed from the military vocabulary*”. *From the military point of view, these were operations against ‘military objectives’ and ‘civilian morale’, as important as those of the infantry.*”⁶ In other words, Trenchard rejected any restraint in bombing policy. Under these circumstances, it was not a difficult choice for the British military experts to engage in similar attacks when and where possible. İstanbul was then nothing more than soft target where poorly equipped Ottoman Air Forces were stationed.

The first air raid on İstanbul was on April 12, 1916, when two British planes engaged targets in the city. This was followed by building air defence system for İstanbul which could not be implemented before 1917. The raids on İstanbul in 1918

4 Ian Castle, *London 1914–17: The Zeppelin Menace*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008, p. 9.

5 Andrew Boyle, *Trenchard: A Man of Vision* (London: Collins, 1962), p.219.

6 Cited in, Andrew Barros, “Strategic Bombing and Restraint in ‘Total War’, 1915-1918”, *The Historical Journal*, 52, 2 (2009), p. 424.

started on March 9 and the last British air raid to İstanbul was on October 25.

The British raids in August were particularly severe, causing civilian casualties. The outrage in İstanbul prompted by these attacks hitting civilian targets and the Ottoman Government's embittered response was further increased with renewed raids in September.

The greatest air raid on İstanbul came on October 18, 1918. During the first wave at 11:30, seven enemy planes menaced the city for twenty minutes, dropping their bombs on the most crowded streets. The second wave came in the afternoon at 13:30, this time with five planes. Around 70 civilians were killed during these attacks and 200 wounded. Almost, half of the casualties were non-Muslims. Central districts of Beyazıt, Üsküdar, Eminönü, Galata, Unkapanı, Fatih, Samatya, Karaköy, Aksaray, Şehremini, Karagümrük, Fener, Kumkapı, Kasımpaşa, Eyüp, Hasköy, Pangaltı, Arnavutköy and Beyoğlu were hit. The greatest number of casualties was in Mahmutpaşa, where the Friday bazaar was regularly held and the day time attacks claimed their greatest toll.⁷

The raids coincided with Lord Weir, an advocate of bombing cities, being appointed Air Minister to Lloyd George's government in 1918. At this time Hugh Trenchard implored the War Cabinet to let him "attack the industrial centres of Germany" too.⁸ He declared himself unimpressed with any sporadic bombing the German air force had done over England and "*the few occasions French machines raided the Rhineland cities, it was always emphasized that such attacks were in the nature of reprisals. Trenchard was against retaliation; his sole concern was to cripple Germany by means of a sustained air offensive.*"⁹ İstanbul likewise was not spared from this new air war strategy.

Trenchard argued for a new form of aerial warfare distinct from the retaliatory sorties of the German and French machines - a strategic campaign of bombing cities. He described the role that strategic bombers could play in war in a study prepared for the Allied Supreme War Council in 1918 specifying two main objectives for the strategic bomber - to destroy the enemy's morale and material. In order to achieve this he argued for attacks on enemy industrial centres where striking at the centres of production could do vital damage and achieve the maximum effect on the morale of the enemy by striking at what he saw as the most vulnerable part of the enemy population. This entailed area bombing. In June 1918 over 70 tons of bombs were dropped on German cities and in July 85 tons were dropped on Cologne, Coblenz and other Rhineland cities.

In sum, in 1918, İstanbul was regularly subjected to air raids. Between 9 March and 25 October 1918, not less than a dozen air raids were made on the Ottoman capital. All air raids were night time attacks on March 9, July 9; 23; 27, August 20; 22; 26; 28, and September 13 and 23 except for the attack on October 18 and air skirmish on October 25.¹⁰

7 Mustafa Selçuk, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda İtilaf Devletleri'nin İstanbul'a Yönelik Hava Taarruzları" [Air Raids of Allies on İstanbul in the First World War], *Marmara Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 1, No: 2, Fall 2014 p. 105. Selçuk refers to the report of Eminönü'nün Police Station. BOA.DH.İUM.21-2/86 lef 118.

8 Boyle, *Trenchard*, p. 295.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 296.

10 Selçuk, *Birinci*, p. 100. In this one of the most detailed account of the air raids on İstanbul, the day time attack on 18 October is stated as the last of the air raids since the raid on October 25, 1918 did not reach the Capital. Cpt. Fazıl was the Turkish flying Ace who single-handedly engaged the enemy in this last air skirmish and was decorated for bravery.

Apparently, İstanbul, was an attractive target for the Allies for a few reasons. It was where Headquarters of the OHC and a few key military facilities were stationed. Besides, it hosted several important industrial, commercial and social targets. The air raids to İstanbul were planned and viewed as technical matters and with destroying some military targets as well as crippling the morale of İstanbulites in mind. Drop of propaganda leaflets and bombs at the same time was not uncommon either. This however, may only complete the discussion in part.

Conscription Policies and İstanbul's Place in the Ottoman War Effort

The value of İstanbul as a military target was of lesser importance when the population of the city was regarded as a whole, and as well as along with its national or ethnic identities. Erik-Jan Zürcher stated that throughout centuries, İstanbul with its outlying districts and a population of over a million, did not deliver a single soldier to the army.

Officers like Enver (later Pasha), and Niyazi (Bey -a salutation-, of Resna) had forced the Sultan Abdülhamid II to reinstate the 1876 Constitution on July 24, 1908 through the bloodless revolution of Young Turks. When the Young Turks came to power and began the second constitutional monarchy experience of the Empire after a break of three decades, they thought to use the universal conscription to achieve unity and equality among the different nations of the Empire.

The Young Turks, however had to fight a brief war against the forces of old rule in April 1909 in İstanbul. Armed elements of the conservative forces were discontent with the modernization attempts as the rumours included that army officers who had no formal education will be forced to retire and a rigorous modernization attempt would shake the foundations of centuries long traditions.

The success of the Young Turks in defeating the conservatives' armed opposition was owed to the Third Army or the "Army of Action" stationed in the Balkans and a strong infantry division of which was deployed in Salonika. Apparently, non-Muslim subjects of the Empire had shouldered this effort since the speech of Niyazi Bey, at the funeral of volunteers of this brief but crucial struggle in İstanbul had made it very clear. "*Brothers, here are men of every nation - Turks, Albanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Jews; but they died together, on the same day, fighting under the same flag. Among us, too, are men of every nation, both Mohammedan and Christian; but we also have one flag and we pray to one God.*"¹¹

Soon after they consolidated their power, in July 1909 military service was made compulsory for all Ottoman subjects. At the same time a number of Muslim groups such as, students in religious schools who had failed their exams, but also the inhabitants of İstanbul, lost their exempt status. In October 1909, the recruitment of conscripts irrespective of religion was ordered for the first time.

Although the representatives of the Greek, Syrian, Armenian and Bulgarian communities in İstanbul agreed to this in principle, the outcome was basically little more than frustration. Some suggested that the members of their community serve in separate, ethnically distinguishable uniform and in units officered by Christians, some of them like the Bulgarians stated that they wished to serve in the Balkan provinces only. The CUP did not accept any "counter-proposals" and concurrently, young Christian men who had connections abroad or wealth, opted to leave the country or get a foreign passport.

11 Harry Griswold Dwight, *Constantinople Old and New* (London: Longmans, Green&Co., 1915), pp. 446-447.

Those who could leave, change their nationality, or pay the much higher *bedel-i nakdî* (the cost of exemption), along with well-to-do Muslims were continued to be exempted from the compulsory military service including in WW1 years. For centuries, the Janissaries - *Yeniçeriler* which had been recruited from among the Christian peasantry in the Balkans and whose members converted to Islam in the European provinces were the only channel for a non-Muslim to join the military and climb the ranks for a better life. The Janissaries were disbanded in a tumultuous way in favour of a new army with European standards in 1826, to end the centuries old tradition of recruitment of poor Christian children into army. 1856 Edict which emphasized equality of the Ottoman subjects before the law provided a new incentive to conscript Christians which then represented no less than 30 per cent of the population. This however, short lived when the collection of a military service exemption tax from the Christian and Jewish communities was introduced by the state.¹²

In an atmosphere dominated by Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgarian declaration of independence in 1908, Italy's declaration of war and invasion of Italy in 1911, loss of Albania, Macedonia and part of Thrace, including Salonika and the European lands of the Empire which had once stretched into Hungary, with the exception of a small enclave in Thrace by 1914, the limited conscription system applied in İstanbul must indeed provide a less thought picture of the capital.

Meantime, not all the non-Muslims were looking for escape routes, or getting involuntarily conscripted, there were indeed volunteer non-Muslims in defence of the Empire. Without overlooking the loyalty of many non-Muslim to the Ottomanism ideal, it can be emphasized that Ahmad particularly points out to the case of Jewish elite and states that “*by August 1918, the last German offensive having failed, the survival of the Ottoman Empire was in doubt. But even in these circumstances the Jewish elite did not desert the sinking ship.*”¹³ Eventually, the Ottoman government found it more preferable to not to test loyalties and placed its Christian subjects in non-combatant duties. The number of soldiers in Ottoman Labour Battalions were said to be around 100.000. To set an example as to the composition of these units, number of soldiers in the labour battalions of the 1st Army's European divisions were 15,052 (%58,1 Greeks, Armenian %22,3, Jewish %4,5, Muslim, %12,4).¹⁴

It is equally important to note that despite the minimalized perception of discrimination or alienation among the İstanbulites, let alone the chauvinist or jingoist feelings' getting any upper hand in the capital, there was hardly a sense of mobilization in the city. As commonly agreed, building a military atmosphere or a sheer fighting spirit in a city the majority of which populated by non-Muslims was against any possible expectation. And coupled with its habitants' traditional avoidance of military service, as well as its prevailing dissimilarities with London, Paris or Berlin, İstanbul could hardly be considered as a hostile target the Allied bombing of which, however, had worked towards creating a counter-effect.

12 Erik-Jan Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918,” *International Review of Social History*, 43 (3) (1998), pp. 443-446.

13 Ahmad also adds that the Jewish political elite had never been monolithic, and its commitment to Ottomanism or Zionism would have been a matter for individual choice. Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2014), p. 111.

14 Cengiz Mutlu, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Amele Taburları* [Labour Battalions in the First World War] (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2007), pp. 50-52.

The necessity of the first all-out war of the world had encouraged a tendency towards a greater internal cohesion with the remaining loyal residents of the city regardless of their roots. And many of them had used the opportunities provided in the war and once more proved their membership in the larger society through an unconditional patriotism. When the war had taken a negative course for the Ottoman Empire, equalization of the İstanbulites prove to be so strong that actions that may fall into a category discrimination remain limited when compared to war torn cities of Europe. In İstanbul, the unchanging level of integration was the recipe for the cohesion in the city which remained unaltered throughout a period of five years under Allied occupation too.

Press and the Intelligentsia in İstanbul

After the Young Turk Revolution, freed from censorship and the scrutiny of domestic intelligence, İstanbul had started to enrich its cosmopolitan life with contemporary freedoms. A new socio-political life to encompass numerous age-old ethnic and faith communities was flourishing and various advancements to push back the thriving processes of social alienation and disintegration were on the horizon. The multi-ethnic and multi-cultural atmosphere of the city had always made it conducive to progress and another vigorous attempt had just started. Quite importantly, the atmosphere of the revolution was articulated in the intellectual field, an effort which was recognized as the birth Ottoman sociology.

Ulm-u İktisadiyye ve İctimaiyye Mecmuası [The Journal of Economic and Sociological Sciences] which was established by a group of critics and intellectuals, Ahmet Şuayb, Mehmet Cavit and Rıza Tevfik, was one of the symbols of this fundamental change. It put forward what the administration system of the country lacked, so to give a new hope to the cosmopolitan inhabitants of İstanbul.

From the works of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer to Emile Durkheim's *Qu'est-ce que la sociologie*, various contemporary discussions were regularly held. Solidarity was the prevailing outcome of these discussions and Solidarism was the proposed alternative, a third way, to socialism and liberalism, believing in a classless and harmonic society.¹⁵ Apparently, the CUP had found its ideology in this new climate and a series of new definitions for people, citizen, nation and nationalism were formed and deployed. All these endeavours underscored that İstanbul was going to be kept as one of the cradles of civilization.

In the absence of a history of alienation or discriminatory acts, yet with various elements backing the unity of the society in İstanbul and for some, cultivating a quiet indifference towards war and politics, very few paradoxes remained ready for exploitation by the Great War and the resulting occupation of the city. Whereas, these paradoxes did rise as seen in some journals of the time.

Concurrently with the war's rapidly approaching end, the press in İstanbul was embarked upon a new form of debate which was never seen before. On March 18, 1918, the daily, *İkdam*'s all of a sudden coverage of the democracy in England and the freedom of thought in France, arch enemies of the Ottomans and openly expressed anti-censorship stand caused a stir in the capital. Opponents of the CUP who were already back from exile were confused the most. These, however, were the signs of a policy change of the CUP and could only be explained

15 Sanem Güvenç-Salgırlı, “Structures of Knowledge in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic, 1731-1980,” *Journal of Philosophical Economics*, IV:1 (special issue, 2010), p. 191.

in accordance with a new political objective of achieving an “honourable general peace”, replacing the “ultimate victory”. The CUP, having seen the freedoms introduced by 1908 Revolution culminated in anarchy, had decided to prepare for an exit in a way it might be harmed the least.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, this new language of the press prompted unexpected thoughts as well. According to a coalescing group of defeatists, romanticists, some minority groups as well as a well-intended few, who were dispirited by the ailing Ottoman Empire, a vaguely defined longing for democracy, as some journals increasingly mentioned, was on the horizon with the approaching English occupation. An ambiguous notion of democracy was therefore prevailing since there was no thorough knowledge and accompanying discussion of what such a foreign rule had brought along in geographies as distant as Ireland and India. The romanticism towards the England ruled world was mixed with opportunistic feelings by some at the same time as others had already embarked upon a selfless patriotism. The picture of life in İstanbul under air attacks was complicated and often perplexed.

When the lifting of censorship except for military affairs was announced on June 9, 1918, the press in İstanbul greatly welcomed this decision. Commentaries in the press, such as *Ati*, stated that the lifting political censorship was an expression of trust in the maturity of the nation and its representative and interpreter, the press, which in return was fully conscious of the interests of state and nation.¹⁷

On September 30, 1918, an armistice between the Entente Powers and Bulgaria was signed at Salonika. London expected that the Sublime Porte would make peace proposals in early October. The terms of an armistice had already been drafted in London and with a few amendments, they were approved in Versailles on October 7 by a conference of the Prime Ministers of Britain, France and Italy.

Next day, it became known that the CUP government had resigned and that the new government at İstanbul would soon embark upon informing the United States of its desire to negotiate for peace. On 13 October, the Ottoman Charge d'affaires at Madrid requested the Spanish Government to ask the President Wilson to take upon himself the task of re-establishing peace. “*Before President Wilson could ascertain the wishes of all the Allies, a further Turkish offer of peace was received, conveyed by Major-General Sir Charles Townshend, taken prisoner at Kut, who was released for the purpose and arrived at Mitylene on the 20th October.*”¹⁸

Finally, on October 30, the terms of an armistice were agreed upon and signed on board *H.M.S. Agamemnon* at Port Mudros. Although there was no stipulation in the agreement about occupation except in places where there was an imminent threat to Allied security (Article 7)¹⁹, British troops began landing in the capital by November 13, 1918, soon to be followed by the French and other Allies. While neither Berlin, Vienna, Sofia or Budapest was occupied, İstanbul was treated differently.

It was inevitable that the Allied victory and Britain’s proclaimed intention of ending “the Turkish yoke” would prompt nationalist intentions among the minorities of the Ottoman Empire and a scramble for an expected redistribution of the spoils of war. By the turn of November, 1918, under the

atmosphere of armistice, separatist ideas of the Greek press in İstanbul were increasingly expressed in various articles. Many of these were communicated to the Turkish population by the Turkish journals. Along with journals in Armenian, when *Neologos* published an article titled “The Turks and Greeks” in Greek, it remarked the beginning of a new chapter of İstanbul under Allied occupation. Turkish journals of *Hadisat* and *Yeni İstanbul* quoted this article in Turkish which, in certain respects, was a testimony to vexed feelings of some Greeks.

The article put forward that a Turkish Journal in İzmir had stated that if the Rums [used in lieu of Greek in the Empire then] “*are discontent under the Turkish rule, they can get the hell out of here.*”²⁰ Indeed, this and similar agitations or bitter remarks were connected with a justifiable fear of Greek revanchism which would soon prove to be true in view of the Greek landing in İzmir on May 15, 1919. Whereas, they were not only exploited but contributed to emerging lines of division of the society.

Accordingly, *Neologos*, very much encouraged by the new circumstances said,

the Greek nation is the first son of this land who never left in the hardest times and will not leave it in such a time when even the Turks accepted the principles [of Wilson]. Therefore, despising our nation and expressing a ferocious hatred does not loosen our affiliation to the Turkish nation. Above all, once Turkey accepts the program [of Wilson] on granting autonomy to Christian nations living in the country to administer their historical and national rights, making decisions on us rests upon the vote civilized nations. Then the duty of us and the Turks, is not to incite each other but to defend its nation’s rights.²¹

Despite its giving room to an ostensible understanding with the Turks, however, *Neologos* soon joined other hardliner Greek journals of the capital which started to publish introductions of the commanders of the occupation forces and similar news. A caricature published in *Neologos* depicted a cannon ball fired by Wilson, turning to Venizelos, and landing on the dome of Hagia Sophia left very little to imagination as to this publication policy choice.²²

The Allied invasion of İstanbul on November 13, 1918, at a time when the exhausted nations of Europe could see no reason in fighting yet another battle (later crystallized by the Chanak Affair²³) and were tired of war and desirous of demobilization, was a disastrous act with great effects on the Turkish people. That said, the darkest years of the Turkish nation were still to come. The Greek Army’s invasion of İzmir on May 15, 1919 which followed the occupation of İstanbul was another terrible episode of the unended Great War in Turkey.

The British Prime Minister David Lloyd George instigated Greek invasion met with a certain defeat on September 9, 1922 and the Article 59 of the Lausanne Treaty found a definitive war guilt in the invading Greek Army’s conduct of - Britain’s proxy - war on Turkey.

Article 59

Greece recognizes her obligation to make reparation for the damage caused in Anatolia by the acts of the Greek Army or administration which were contrary to the laws of war.

16 Orhan Koloğlu, *Aydınlarımızın Bunalım Yılı* [The Year of Depression of our Intellectuals] 1918 (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 2000), p. 47.

17 Ibid., p. 44.

18 Brigadier General Sir James E. Edmonds, *The Occupation of Constantinople 1918-1923* (transcribed by Neil Wells) (Sussex: The Naval&Military Press Lts., 2010), p. 1.

19 Ibid., p. 2.

20 As published in *Hadisat* and *Yeni İstanbul* on November 9, 1918, *ibid.*, pp. 125.

21 Ibid., pp. 125-126.

22 *Yeni İstanbul*, 11 November 1918, *ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

23 For one of the most detailed accounts of this episode, see, David Walder, *The Chanak Affair* (GB: The Macmillan Company, 1969).

On the other hand, Turkey in consideration of the financial situation of Greece resulting from the prolongation of the war and from its consequences, finally renounces all claims for reparation against the Greek Government.²⁴

Conclusion: Some Thoughts on İstanbul and the Memory of 1918

There are various accounts of Turkish memory of 1918 many of which identified the Turkish population of the Ottoman Empire as victims of a war that the Sublime Porte did not start but its ruling government of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) failed to save the country from.

Triggered by events such as the seizure of war vessels of *Sultan Osman* and *Reşadiye*, ordered by the Sublime Port and built at Armstrong and Vickers shipyards on July 28, 1914, days before the outbreak of the war and the signing of the Turco-German Alliance Agreement, the CUP's inevitable siding with Germany darkened the prospects for a resilient constitutional monarchy which the CUP had originally aimed to build. In July 1914, the fundamental intention of the Sublime Porte was to survive the War and it was the Turks, rather than the Germans who initiated the proposal of an alliance for defensive purposes. But it was indeed "after having their offers of alliance rebuffed by Britain, France and Russia."²⁵

Throughout the course of events, the CUP adopted policies stretching from a mixture of Ottoman Imperialism and a loosely defined Ottomanism encompassing all faiths and nationalities within the empire, to jihadism and lastly to Turkish nationalism. This represented a short, but a highly volatile period of time the effects of which had gradually reached to empire's capital. Four years of waging a devastating war from European to Middle Eastern theatres and remaining the prisoner of an alliance throughout these years from which no escape could be found, resulted in the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1918, the gap between the rest of the lands of the Ottoman Empire and İstanbul was apparent. Less than half the capital's population was Muslim. The rest were a mix of Greeks, Orthodox Armenians, Roumaninas, Albanians as well as Sephardic Jews whose ancestors had escaped from Spain centuries before and Polish Jews fleeing the Tsarist oppression. The Greeks dominated the commerce and Europeans ran the most important industries. As such, there was a strong dichotomy between the general outlook of İstanbul and its value as a military target.

Saved from the conscription waves and the hazards of war theatres, people of İstanbul was predominantly busy with meeting their ends, only in a tougher way as was the case in other European capitals. The difficulties for the ordinary Turk who was literally a minority in the Empire's capital, however, was more serious. As a Turkish journalist wrote, "We have remained mere spectators while our commerce, our trades and even our broken-down huts have been given to the foreigners."²⁶

As for the usual marriage of wealth and culture in the city, war had taken its toll in İstanbul. The ruling Government of the CUP was evidently not immune from the ever encroaching corruptions in an economy which was increasingly getting

24 Treaty of Peace with Turkey, and Other Instruments signed at Lausanne 24 July, 1923. <http://treaties.fco.gov.uk/docs/pdf/1923/ts0016-1.pdf>

25 Pat Walsh, *Britain's Great War on Turkey*, Belfast: Athol Books, 2010, p. 97.

26 For general information on the population İstanbul and the quotation, see, Margaret Macmillan, *Paris 1919* (NY: Random House, 2003), pp. 370-371. Atatürk (young Mustafa Kemal) was only nineteen (1902) when he was in the Ottoman Military College which was on the north side of the Golden Horn, in the modern part of the city with its opera house, cafés, restaurants, banks, shops etc. "He enjoyed the city, but found it dangerous to governments." Ibid., p. 371.

harder to control. Prosperous segments of the society were fairly disoriented in this atmosphere. In addition to the opportunist entrepreneurs and well-connected businessmen, another group of wealthy families which opposed the CUP and yet paradoxically still maintained a good life engulfed in the international capital of the city - as generally thrived around the opponents of any given régime which went through similar times - was the cradle of a class of epigonic intellectuals.

On November 13, 1918, the day of the landing of British troops, Mustafa Kemal Pasha was back in İstanbul. He was recalled to the capital following the discharge of the Lightning Armies of Syria-Palestine Front. He was accompanied by his aide, Lt. Col. Cevat. He and his aide arrived at Haydarpaşa Main Station and tried to pass across the Bosphorus in a small military boat. However, it was the day of the arrival of Allied armada of 55 strength to include the famous Greek battleship of *Averof*. The transportation in the Bosphorus was stopped and Mustafa Kemal had to wait this to end in a teahouse which lasted for 3-4 hours. He was heard saying that it was a mistake of him to be back to İstanbul and he had to find a way to go to Anatolia.

Later, when they started to pass across the Bosphorus, it was as if they were sailing among a forest of steel. Then Lt. Col. Cevat heard the following words from Mustafa Kemal: "They shall go, just as they have come." Thrilled with these words, Cevat replied: "God will grant it to you my Pasha. You will drive them out." A smile appeared on Mustafa Kemal's face and he said: "Let's see it."²⁷ Next chapter for İstanbul was five years spent under the Allied occupation, during which the Turkish War of Liberation ensued. Allies' decision to formally occupy İstanbul which came on March 16, 1920 was nothing more than a statement of the obvious. It simply defined how the fate of İstanbul was finally defined without any poignancy and in its bitter truism.

Following the recapture of İzmir, on September 18, 1922, Mustafa Kemal announced to the Grand National Assembly that all Greek opposition in Anatolia was over. "Only the British forces in the Straits Zone and the Greeks in eastern Thrace remained. War between Turkey and Britain was only narrowly averted, largely because the British military commander, General Harrington, and Mustafa Kemal kept cool heads."²⁸

On the morning of October 2, 1923, "soldiers and crowd all moved towards the quay.. Almost the last soldier to embark was Harrington himself. He had exchanged a number of friendly letters with Ismet, [second in command of the Turkish Army] and left a final message for him which included a soldierly reference to the service of both British and Turkish troops in Crimea. The General had hoped to meet Mustapha Kemal, and had indeed made plans for a meeting on a warship in the Black Sea, but 'the Foreign Office had stopped it'. Harrington stepped out of his official Rolls-Royce and it was left on the quay. The ship's sirens hooted and a naval band played 'Auld Lang Syne'."²⁹

The city was left to Turkish forces on October 6, 1923 which were directed by the Grand National Assembly and its President, Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Turkish troops took the control of the city in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne signed on July 24, 1923, just a few months before the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923. □

27 Utkan Kocatürk, *Kaynakçalı Atatürk Günlüğü* [Chronology of Atatürk with Bibliography] (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2007), pp. 118-119.

28 Justin Mccarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923* (NY: Routledge, 1997), p. 385

29 David Walder, *The Chanak Affair* (GB: Hutchinson&Co, 1969), p. 351.

How King George V demanded Britain enter the First World War, by Anita Singh

A record of previously unknown meeting between George V and his Foreign Secretary reveals that the King told him to “find a reason” to go to war with Germany.

The letter documents a previously unrecorded meeting between George V and Sir Edward Grey.

It is a letter that throws fresh light on one of the darkest periods in Britain’s history.

A note which has remained in private hands for a century details a previously undocumented meeting between George V and his Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, on the eve of the First World War.

The King, mindful of his position as a constitutional monarch, made no public declarations about the situation in Europe in the lead-up to the conflict.

But in the newly-disclosed meeting, the King informed Sir Edward it was “absolutely essential” Britain go to war in order to prevent Germany from achieving “complete domination of this country”.

When Sir Edward said the Cabinet had yet to find a justifiable reason to enter the conflict, the King replied: “You have got to find a reason, Grey.”

Historians have no record of the meeting which took place at Buckingham Palace on August 2 1914, two days before Britain went to war.

It was revealed in a letter written by Sir Cecil Graves, Sir Edward’s nephew, who met with the King a month after his uncle’s death in 1933.

George V had summoned Sir Cecil – a future director-general of the BBC - to the Palace, where he offered his condolences before recalling the events of 1914.

The King “told me of the interview he had with Uncle Edward two days before the outbreak of war. It lasted for one and a half hours,” Sir Cecil wrote.

“He told me that Uncle Edward had said that he could not possibly see what justifiable reason we could find for going to war.

“HM said in reply, ‘You have got to find a reason, Grey.’”

The King told Grey “that, if we didn’t go to war, Germany would mop up France and having dealt with the European situation would proceed to obtain complete domination of this country.

“For that reason,” Sir Cecil wrote, “he felt that it was absolutely essential that whatever happened we had got to find a reason for entering the War at once...”

“The next day he had a private letter from Poincaré [the French President] urging our participation in the War, and almost at the same time a telegram arrived from King Albert [of Belgium] about the violation of Belgium.

“He sent this straight across to Uncle Edward with a note to the effect that here was the reason and there was no need for him to try and think of anything.”

On August 3, shortly after receiving the King’s note, Sir Edward gave a speech to Parliament in which he said “it is clear that the peace of Europe cannot be preserved”.

He returned to his room in the Foreign Office and made the now famous remark as he watched the lamps being lit outside: “The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.”

The following day, when the chimes of Big Ben rang out at 11pm, Britain was at war.

The letter was unearthed by Sir Edward’s great-great-nephew and grandson of Sir Cecil, Adrian Graves.

Mr Graves inherited Sir Cecil’s papers, which he kept in their original Asprey case alongside his fishing tackle, but had never studied them.

“My grandfather was involved in the First World War – he was one of the first to be captured, at the Battle of Mons, and later awarded the Military Cross. The case contained some of his records and papers relating to the war and his captivity.

“I decided to look through them as the centenary of August 4 was coming up, and I came across an envelope. Written on the front were the words, ‘Interview with King’. I had never known it was there,” Mr Graves said.

Among the heirlooms passed down to Mr Graves is Sir Edward’s gold pocket watch. It has no glass cover because the Foreign Secretary had failing eyesight and could tell the time only by touching the face.

Mr Graves said: “I hold it and think: was my great-great-uncle feeling the hands as they approached 11pm and realising that war was almost upon us?”

At the time of the meeting with George V, Britain’s Cabinet remained divided over whether Britain should go to war.

Prof Hew Strachan, military historian and author of the recent *The First World War: A New History*, said: “It is clear that the King took a more active role in thinking about the country’s foreign policy than most conventional accounts allow for.

“If Grey said these things, it was in order to make clear to the King that the Government was not yet in a position to support France. Belgium provided everybody with the way in.

“The letter stresses the thrust of Grey’s policy: the need to be firm with Germany while not encouraging the French and Russians to rush into war. Grey wants a diplomatic deal.”

Prof David Reynolds of Cambridge University, author of *The Long Shadow: The Great War and the 20th Century*, said: “What we are hearing here, if this is a true rendition of events nearly 20 years before, is a weary Grey airing his worries in private on August 2.

“The document also reminds us that George V, although always conscious of his place as a constitutional monarch, was a king who privately offered strong views to his ministers and that those views were taken seriously.

“From this document, we do learn something about Grey but we learn rather more about George V.”

Sir Edward’s remark about the lamps going out is the inspiration for the **Lights Out** project, which is urging every household in Britain to turn out the lights at 11pm on August 4.

His role in the conflict will be examined in a BBC Parliament programme, *To War*, broadcast on August 3, 2018, at 8pm.

The Telegraph, 9/7/2018

It wasn't Nazi Germany that sealed European Jews' fate. Only empires facilitated the Jewish diaspora's existence. Nation-states gave rise to its calamity

Ofri Ilany | Nov. 21, 2018, in Haaretz

When World War I ended, a hundred years ago this month, inhabitants of continental Europe confronted destruction on a vast scale. Some nine million soldiers and another six million civilians had been killed in a mass slaughter that dragged on for four years. Seven million POWs returned home. But the borders of the countries also changed unrecognizably. Four empires, which had dominated much of the Continent's area, disappeared from the map almost in one fell swoop. The German kaiser, Wilhelm II, fled to Holland by train and devoted his remaining years to wood carving. At the same time, the Austro-Hungarian Empire also collapsed. Emperor Charles I left his country and settled in Switzerland. The last Ottoman sultan remained on the throne until 1922, but his empire disintegrated at the end of the war. Russia's czar, deposed already in 1917, was executed about a year and a half later.

These empires were multinational and multilingual. For those living in the post-imperial era, it's hard to comprehend the shock generated by their sudden disappearance. The Habsburg Empire had existed for almost 500 years, and seemed to be eternal. "In this vast empire everything stood firmly and immovably in its appointed place, and at its head was the aged emperor; and were he to die, everyone knew (or believed) another would come to take his place, and nothing would change in the well-regulated order," wrote Stefan Zweig, in "The World of Yesterday."

But that isn't what happened. The map of Europe was redrawn. The Habsburg Empire broke up into a number of nation-states: Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the union of countries that would be called Yugoslavia all declared independence, and after them, Poland, Austria, and Germany also became nation-states, as did Turkey.

For many of the citizens of postwar nation-states, the collapse of the empires was a positive development. The arrogant, corrupt royal houses left the stage of history, to be supplanted by fresh states with flag, anthem and soccer team. European peoples who had fought for independence for more than half a century were at least freed from foreign rule. Self-determination became the definitive principle in international relations. In the areas that had been under the control of the former Ottoman Empire, too, several national movements also began to move toward the goal of independence – among them the Zionist movement.

Yet, was the victory of the nation-states over the empire really such a great achievement for the human spirit? These new entities were soon brawling with one another. But the national minorities who remained imprisoned in hostile nation-states – among them, Greeks in Turkey, Germans in Czechoslovakia – were especially bitter. Not one of the nation-states established after the war in Europe was ethnically homogeneous, and about one-third of their citizens, on average, were members of minority groups. Thus were planted the seeds that led to World War II.

The Jews suffered acutely from the emergence of the nation-states, which effectively sealed their fate in Europe. It wasn't the German character but the nation-states that gave rise to their calamity. Zweig emphasizes the great feeling of security the Jews felt in the multinational Habsburg Empire. "Having resided for more than two hundred years in the Imperial city [Vienna], the Jews encountered there an easygoing people, inclined to conciliation," he wrote. The Jewish situation in the

German and Ottoman Empires before the world wars could be described in similar terms. Only the empires facilitated their diaspora existence, within whose framework the Jews achieved some of the high points in their history.

Between 1918 and 1945, the new nation-states went about getting rid of their minorities. The Greeks were evicted from Turkey, the Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia and the Jews were annihilated or immigrated to Palestine – whose indigenous Palestinian majority was soon also expelled.

The attempt to create ethnically homogeneous states gave rise to some of the greatest disasters in the last century. The cultural diversity that existed in the imperial metropolises was erased and has never been restored. The national conflicts did not end after World War II. The disintegration of the multinational empires kicked off an endless series of wars, among them those in the Middle East.

Studies in recent years have underscored more than in the past the positive aspects of the multinational empires, including that of the Ottomans. In his 2017 book, "Jerusalem 1900: The Holy City in the Age of Possibilities," Vincent Lemire depicts the waning days of that empire as a time of prosperity. A fluid urban society existed in Jerusalem, and relative harmony prevailed among its various communities. In contrast to its usual image, the Ottoman Empire wasn't all that backward. In fact, it was the last power that succeeded in ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East.

The empires were monarchies, but in some cases their governments were subject to a constitution. Furthermore, before the Great War, ideas had been put forward about how to preserve the multinational structure while also vesting them with a democratic, even socialist structure. Marxist thinker Otto Bauer, for example, for example, advocated the preservation of the multinational structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while ensuring cultural autonomy for its various peoples.

Curse of nationalism

In the present era, we are witnessing renewed outbursts of nationalism in Europe and elsewhere. Poland and Hungary have become the leaders of this trend on the Continent, and a nationalist wave is washing over Austria, too. But it's not only happening in Europe: The nation-state law in Israel is an expression of this outburst too. The curse of nationalism is still with us – although there are alternatives to it. As citizens of nation-states, it is easy for us to imagine history as though the current political structure is the most natural one for the human race. Yet, for most of history humankind has lived in political frameworks other than nation-states, such as coalitions of tribes, city-states, sultanates and above all, empires. At least since ancient Egypt, empires have offered the most stable form of political organization. The nation-state, in contrast, is a new experiment, and it is in large measure turning out to be unsuccessful.

The nation-state is thus raising its head anew today, but behind the nationalist bluster lurks weakness. It's not at all certain that contemporary political whirlwinds will lead to the strengthening of nation-states in the long run. It's very possible that the future lies with multinational empires – which is not all that bad. The creation of almost 200 screeching nation-states has turned out to be a particularly poor way to cope with such global challenges as climate change, population movements and economic gaps. Maybe the empires knew how to do it better.

Blockading The Germans! - The evolution of Britain's Strategy during the First World War

with an Overview of 19th Century Maritime Law.

By Eamon Dyas.

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This is the first volume of a Trilogy examining overlooked aspects of the First World War and its aftermath from a European perspective.

Comprehensively sourced with scholarly research, it explains how Britain used a continental blockade to force the capitulation of the Kaiser's Germany by targeting not just military, but also civilian, imports—particularly imported food supplies, upon which Germany had become dependent since its industrial revolution.

After joining the European War of August 1914—and elevating it into a World War—Britain cast aside the two maritime codes agreed by the world's maritime powers over the previous almost 60 years – the Declaration of Paris in 1856 and the Declaration of London in 1909. In defiance of these internationally agreed codes, Britain aggressively expanded its blockade with the object of disrupting not only the legitimate trade between neutral countries and Germany but trade between neutral countries themselves.

Britain's policy of civilian starvation during the First World War was unprecedented in history. Whereas it had used the weapon of starvation against civilians in the past, in such instances this was either through the exploitation of a natural disaster to bring about famine (Ireland and India) or the result of pre-conceived policy against a non-industrial society (France during the Revolutionary Wars). Its use against Germany was the first time in history where a policy of deliberate starvation was directed against the civilian population of an advanced industrial economy.

This volume traces the evolution of Britain's relationship with international naval blockade strategies from the Crimean War through the American Civil War and the Boer War culminating in its maturity during the Great War. It also draws out how the United States—the leading neutral country—was made complicit in blockading the Germans during the war and brings the story up to America's entry into the War.

Eamon Dyas is a former head of The Times newspaper archive, was on the Executive Committee of the Business Archives Council in England for a number of years, and was Information Officer of the Newspaper.