

# Irish Foreign Affairs

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

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## Editorial: This World and the Next: Britain and the Jewish Question

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During the midsummer of 2018 the Jewish press in Britain warned the Jewish community that it should be prepared for a mass exodus from Britain if the Labour Party won the next General Election. The Party was declared to be “*institutionally anti-Semitic*”, and generally racist, by the Jewish nationalist lobby, the Zionists.

The characterisation of the Labour Party as institutionally anti-Semitic by Jewish nationalists was echoed within the Party leadership by the Deputy Leader, Tom Watson, apparently supported by a majority of Labour MPs.

The message that came across through television to the public was that the Party had fallen into the hands of anti-Semites when the general membership, against the advice of its Parliamentary leaders, had elected Jeremy Corbyn to be Party Leader.

Corbyn had been the most consistently, and the most actively, anti-racist MP in British politics for a generation. He was therefore a very unusual choice to be Party Leader. British Establishment policy is mildly, and selectively, racist. It is not remotely possible that this racism should lead to extermination. Marginal discrimination in the struggle for upward social mobility was the most that it could achieve—and the most that it aspired to achieve.

I was a bus conductor at a big North London bus garage in the mid 1950s. The bus drivers were, in my experience, mainly ex-servicemen of the anti-Fascist War and the conductors Irish and West Indian, with a handful of Irish drivers.

There was a labour shortage in the British economy in the post-war generation. That is why there was such a strong presence of West Indians. They were imported. They were brought in, rather than coming in. And one of the importers was the famous racist Enoch Powell.

When it became necessary to employ West Indians as drivers, the matter was approached delicately. The management must have known that I consorted with West Indians because one day I was interviewed and asked if I would be happy to work with a black driver.

Black drivers were phased in gradually and in a comparatively short time they became more the rule than the exception. The racism of the society modified itself to accept them.

The anti-Irish bias of the society—which was evident in every sphere—was sharpened in that period by the IRA invasion of the North in 1956. I saw no point in resisting it. I had not gone to Britain thinking I was British, as many West Indians had.

Some time later I married an Arab—a “*blackie*”—and that brought another race reflex into play. The word “*miscegenation*” was not in use but the thing was noticed. Race-mixing—white and black—was frowned upon. The mixing of non-white races was not even noticed. They were in popular English eyes, just a single race of non-whites.

In a recent BBC radio discussion of the British Empire it was said that one good result of it was multi-culturalism, which is the enemy of racism.

How did English multi-culturalism come about? Not through multi-culturalist British action in the world.

British action on the world was conducted on an unquestioning assumption of British racial superiority and a profound hostility towards alien cultures. “*Let England not forget its precedence in teaching nations how to live*”, John Milton said in an Address to Parliament in 1641. Milton, a poet of Protestant Christianity, went on to become Cromwell’s Secretary of State.

It was self-evident that the nations themselves did not know the right way to live. If they did, they would be living as England lived. And how was England living in 1641? It had no actual way of life but it had *the plan* and was working on it.

Teaching nations how to live is a delicate matter. The first thing is to stop them from continuing in the false way of life in which they were immersed. That task was begun in Ireland in 1649, soon after the King under whom the Irish were willing to live had been killed. And the first announcement that Cromwell made to the Irish after he landed was that they must stop going to Mass in order to fit themselves to become free. And, to encourage them in the path of spiritual freedom, they were relieved of their earthly encumbrances.

What was begun in Ireland in 1649 was continued here, there and everywhere for 300 years. The world was littered with the wreckage of nations that England had been teaching how to live. The wreckage was free in the sense of having been cut adrift.

In the last, and most destructive, of its many Great Wars England had bankrupted itself, and had brought Soviet Communism into dominance in Central Europe. But America had undertaken to remake the part of the world that had not been liberated by Russia so that it might have a market for the immense industrial capacity it had developed in order to supply the war.

England was the first beneficiary of the restoration of world capitalism engineered by the United States. Through its own efforts it had brought its world to the brink of destruction.

It had been saved in the first instance by Hitler’s refusal to make an all-out effort to win the War by crushing its departing army. He was concerned that the British Empire should continue to be the major presence of European civilisation in the world at large.

And then, when Communist forces established military dominance over the German Army in Russia and began to push it back, the USA took matters in hand. It compelled Britain to get back into the fighting war (which it had abandoned for mere bombing in 1940) in 1944, so that the Soviet advance could be stopped before it reached the Channel.

And then it remade the capitalist world market out of what it had saved for capitalism, securing its defences, giving it purchasing power and a new money system, and allowing the British Empire to restore its connections.

Britain was broken as a World Power. It had undermined itself in the two wars that it declared on Germany within a twenty-five year period, and had the appearance of winning. It was broken. But, as the major instrument of US policy in the world, it was wealthy. And it was unable to supply the demands of its wealth out of its own population. The basic British stock, so to speak, was not even maintaining itself. It seems to have been in decline since about the third quarter of the 19th century. (G.B. Shaw was of the opinion that the working class collectively grasped the elements of Ricardian/Marxist political economy and set about reducing its supply in order to increase its wages.)

There was a chronic shortage of labour in the British economy. But there was free labour around the world as a result of British action. And that free labour was imported—labour which had cost Britain nothing to produce.

The need for imported labour quickly outstripped the Irish supply. And the Irish, being white, had little multi-cultural effect on Britain. Multi-culturalism begins with the West Indians. They had something in themselves that was not assimilable by the State English Puritanism of the 1950s, and that was met by distaste on the side of the host. But the West Indians were indispensable. They were there for good, and in increasing numbers. They were followed by Asians of various kinds: “*coloured*” intermediates between black and white. And finally by Africans.

England did not become “*multi-cultural*” out of the growth of moral conviction that all men are equal, or that racial distinctions are groundless. England was not born again through the fire of its war on Nazi Germany. Its part in that war was minor, after it had used its world power to launch it. It was racist before the war, and it was racist after it. But the action of its racism at home did not go beyond discrimination.

It ‘welcomed’ immigrants of various races—that is, it let them in because it needed them. Then, as their numbers built, it had to accommodate them in the interest of civil peace. Its immigration policy was no more philanthropic or altruistic in substance than that of the United States—which needed to import people in bulk to fill out the vast empty spaces created by multiple genocide. (As I write Doris Day is on the radio,

singing about the (ethnically cleansed) “*beautiful Indian country that I love*”.)

Are the Jews a race?

“*Rooms To Let*” notices in London around 1960 often specified “*No Irish*” or “*No coloured*”, but I never saw a “*No Jews*” notice.

The Irish and the West Indians found no difficulty in renting rooms in those times when people with rooms to let could express their racial bias freely. Expression of such racial bias was made a criminal offence a generation later, apparently as part of the same development that led to the ending of the casual renting of rooms. And the legal prohibition of certain modes of expression has not led in actual life to the disappearance of the thing expressed, to say the least.

Bias against Jews was not expressed in *Rooms To Let* notices because there were very few Jews in the lower social stratum which lived in rooms rented on a weekly basis. Anti-Semitism therefore did not figure in the most public form of expression of racial bias. It was a middle-class phenomenon, and it was expressed discreetly but operated effectively.

The Jews were expelled from England in the 13th century, their presence being held to be incompatible with social stability. They were reintroduced by a decision of the Puritan Parliament in the 1650s, after England had destabilised itself and set out on the construction of a new mode of life. They were allocated a function in that new mode of life, and were held to that function.

They were seen as a hyper-active minority, economically, intellectually, artistically, politically, which, while being treasured, must be prevented from getting out of hand. There were no anti-Jewish laws, but there were anti-Jewish practices. The best-known anti-Jewish practice was the real but unacknowledged quota system applied them in the Public Schools.

Within the working class there was a hazy notion of them as remote people who were well able to look after themselves, but no feeling about them resulting from personal contact, as there was in the middle class. John Buchan was the popular middle-class novelist of the Great War, which he hailed as the first middle class war and was its semi-official contemporary historian. And in his novels, as I recall, the ultimately distasteful figure was the greasy Portuguese Jew. (I never got around to finding out the reason why.) And attention has recently been drawn by a Jewish defender of Jeremy Corbyn to the feelings of physical distaste of Jews freely expressed by Virginia Woolf, daughter of Leslie Stephen, one of the great liberal intellectuals of the late Victorian era, in private correspondence.

A number of Jewish intellectuals, highly placed in English society, have attempted in recent decades to make a public issue of middle class anti-Semitism. One of them, as I recall, was Princess Diana’s lawyer. Their facts were not disputed but their *exposés* were stifled with indifference.

But an effective campaign has been launched against Jeremy Corbyn as the anti-Semitic leader of a Labour Party whose latent anti-Semitism he has activated and reinforced, and whose victory at a General Election would be fatal to Jewry in England.

Corbyn was obviously bewildered by this campaign. He had all his political life been comprehensively anti-racist—pedantically anti-racist one might say, putting all anti-racisms on an equal basis and not prioritising intellectually. And he is also a general anti-Imperialist, which is not practical politics in Britain.

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The effectiveness of the campaign against him has pointed up the weakness of the other-worldly Labour Left in which he has lived, and the structural weakness of the Party in having no counterpart of the Tory *1922 Committee*—a back-bench Committee which serves as a ballast.

Corbyn belonged to the Left which maintained its ideals and therefore never expected to gain control of the Party. But the previous leadership, probably influenced by Blair's charismatic effect on the mass which enabled him to cut through the protective conservative influence of party traditions with his radical rhetoric, gave the mass membership the power of electing the leader. Corbyn could not get his name on the ballot paper by his own political resources. It was put there as an act of charity towards a worthy but hopeless cause by members of the right of the Party. And he won.

Until then the Labour backbenches were always occupied by the Left, but now suddenly the Right found themselves there. And, now the Backbenches stretched right up to the Front Bench. They refused to serve the new leader. They called for a new leadership election, but they lost again. They then looked for indirect means of undermining Corbyn and restoring themselves, and therefore they supported the anti-Semitic charge against him when it came along.

The Tory Party lives in the history of itself, and therefore in the history of the state. The Labour Party, by comparison, lives in slogans. It has little sense of how it came about, or of what it did, apart from creating the NHS. And what the Left knows beyond that is a conviction that the Right has always sold out. And Corbyn apparently knows nothing of the role of the Labour Party in Jewish history. Or, if he knows, the knowledge has not been brought to bear on current politics.

(Or maybe he has been advised not to take issue on the matter because the brand of *Anti-Semite* will do him no harm electorally, and that the nature of the campaign against him will only reinforce the vague feeling about Jews that is widespread in society.)

On September 9th of last year, when the campaign was at its peak, Sir Anthony Seldon of the University of Buckingham was interviewed on Sky News. He was asked if the issue of Labour Party *Anti-Semitism* could be resolved while Corbyn was leader. He replied:

“Well the simple answer is, Nobody knows. I imagine that it is the conviction which Jeremy Corbyn will bring to it. So much of this does focus on his history and record and expressions of dislike and discontent with Jewish people and with his Anti-Semitic views. So, if he shows that he really has now got it, and understands the concern of the Jewish community, I think that there could well be a coming back into healing. But he does have to have a *mea culpa* as a real moment where it's seen not just as a tactical change of mind but an inner and deep recognition that he has offended many hundreds of thousands of people who historically have been sympathetic to his Party.

*Sky News:* In your view, would it be simpler if he stood down as leader of the Labour Party?

*Seldon:* Well, we'll have to see what happens. It will obviously be easier to heal this, I believe, when the principal figure who has been responsible for the recognition of a widespread Anti-Semitism is no longer the Labour Leader. But, look, let's wait and see what he says and how much conviction he carries. Perhaps he'll make a gesture and move—maybe he's already gone to the Concentration Camps, to visit Auschwitz, and show that he does understand the long and deep history of the Jewish people, along with obviously many other minorities too. But

that kind of gesture would I think go a long way to show that this is not just a political move but is a genuine change of heart.

*Sky News:* Sir Anthony Seldon, thanks very much for speaking to us.”

The suggestion here, that Corbyn denied that large numbers of Jews were killed by the Nazi SS during the War, was not questioned, nor was the clear statement that Corbyn expressed dislike of Jewish people.

Corbyn did not try to defend himself against these patently absurd allegations. Possibly he judged that the attempt would be futile in the atmosphere of media hostility generated against him, actively fuelled by his Deputy, Tom Watson, and supported—actively or passively—by a majority of his own Parliamentary Party. These were resentful at his having gained the leadership of the party, with the support of the membership, against the elite. He relied on his record of consistent anti-racist activity, and particularly his record of activity against anti-Jewish racism, over many decades.

It is possible that many MPs of the old guard were motivated by honest ignorance as well as by political resentment. The normal course of development of Labour MPs is to begin as left radicals, hot on all the issues, and to mature into an essential acceptance of the *status quo*, and to withdraw from all those activities which, worthy though they might be, are of no political value career-wise.

Corbyn did not “*mature*”. Patronisingly, they nominated him for the leadership election so that there might appear to be a contest. And, suddenly, without any preparatory course of opportunist development on his part, this alien figure from their past was Party Leader, bringing all his lost causes with him.

He was incomprehensible to them. The charge of Anti-Semitism was dropped into the situation. The Lost Leader, Tony Blair, reappeared on the scene to explain that extremes meet and that the radical Left, with its unrealistic notions of Imperialism and Colonialism, had joined the radical Right on the ground of anti-Semitism.

\*

The British Labour Party has not had many high-powered intellectuals in its leading circle. One that it had was Richard Crossman, whose political career stretched from the 1945 Labour Government to Harold Wilson's Government in the 1970s. And his political presence was continued after that with the publication of *The Crossman Diaries*—diaries in which he gave a day-by-day account of Cabinet business. He was Leftist to the extent that he wrote a book jointly with Michael Foot in the 1940s—Foot who became ultra-Left Party Leader in 1980 and issued an Election Manifesto that was described as “*the longest suicide note in history*”.

Crossman's most influential act was in the late 1940s when he was appointed by the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, to the Palestine Commission; suffered a strong conversion to Zionism; and set about subverting the approach which he was appointed to facilitate.

Fifty years ago, after I got to know something of the detail of European history after the First World War, I wondered why Anti-Semitism was so widespread in Europe then. It was obvious that it was not invented by Hitler and was far from being limited to Germany.

I understood that the proper way, in post-1945 British culture, to think about Anti-Semitism was to think that there

was no reason for it. But how could such a widespread social phenomenon come to exist without a reason? It seemed to me that, to hold that Anti-Semitism was entirely irrational, in the sense of existing without a reason, was itself irrational. And it is not the Jewish view.

The best account I could find was by a Jewish author in the late 1930s. He explained that the destruction of the Hapsburg Empire by Britain and France in 1919 was the cause of it. The Jews were the commercial and professional middle class of the Empire. The Versailles Conference (Britain and France) broke up the Empire and concocted a series of nation-states in its place. These states were not the product of strong nationalist developments from within, but were Imperialist constructions from outside.

Their nationalist development lay ahead of them. The Jewish middle class of the Empire was in the way of the development of the weak native middle classes which were suddenly established in State power, and it was squeezed.

If that was not the whole of it, it was a great part of it.

Crossman gave a different explanation, which he expressed in a number of publications. This one is from *An Englishman Looks At Palestine*:

“I am going to tell you what my prejudices are. First of all, I have the prejudice of a Gentile, a discovery which I made in the course of these 120 days, and I discovered that the most dangerous person is a person who says to you, ‘I don’t know what anti-Semitism means’.

“Every Gentile has the virus of anti-Semitism in his veins. You know that we all carry the bacillus of pneumonia inside our system. What happens is that this bacillus is quite harmless unless we get run down, and then suddenly it comes out in a disease.

“Exactly the same is true of anti-Semitism. Every Gentile has an inclination to it. When he becomes morally run down, it comes out as a violent disease. The only way to check it is to know that you have got it and not pretend that you haven’t. Then you can make the rational compensations that are necessary in this life of Jew and Gentile.

“That was something I learned not to be ashamed of in talking to Dr. Weizmann who said to me, ‘Well, of course you carry the virus around. We too carry the virus around with us. That virus comes out if we are not rational.’

“The test of democracy in the modern world is how it manages the Jewish problem. It is a very simple test of freedom. Judge every country by the treatment it accords to the Jews and you have a standard of decency and democracy...”

*An Englishman Looks At Palestine* was published by the South African Zionist Federation, Johannesburg. It is undated. The British Library copyright stamp is “Feb 50”.

South Africa passed Crossman’s test of democracy. The Jews in South Africa organised themselves as part of the apartheid system, and were specially commended for their loyalty by Dr. Malan, founder of systematic Apartheid.

Crossman’s explanation of Anti-Semitism is explicitly racist, and it comes to us with the explicit approval of the Zionist leader, Dr. Weizmann.

The main British inner-circle writer on the Jewish Question, or the Jewish Problem, immediately before the War, and during it, seems to have been James Parkes. In the Oxford War Pamphlet, *The Jewish Question*, in 1941, he takes it that there is an objective problem about the Jewish presence in

European life, and not a problem conjured out of nothing by Nazi irrationality.

He does not, as Crossman did some years later, with authoritative Jewish approval, trace it to a biological source. He says that it is there as an objective potential which will be activated by a particular circumstance. And that circumstance is the presence of a Jewish population above a certain percentage amidst a non-Jewish population. And he recommends that in the post-War settlement care should be taken that Jewish populations are kept below that number.

Parkes with his Oxford pamphlet and Crossman with his Zionist pamphlet are in agreement that there was a Jewish problem which had objective grounds, and they could hardly disagree with Hitler’s comment towards the end that he had at least resolved the Jewish problem in Europe for the time being, much though they might deplore the means by which he did it.

I am not saying that Crossman and Weizmann had it right. I am only showing that they held that there was a profound difference with social consequences between Jew and Gentile. And that, of course, was Hitler’s view. And Weizmann’s view was not an eccentricity within Jewish nationalism—Zionism—but was a belief that energised it.

This belief was elaborated within Nazi culture by Rosenberg.

In the 1960s I worked for a year as a street-sweeper in the Swiss Cottage area of London, which was then a strongly Jewish area. Hampstead Central Library was located there, and I found that it had a large quantity of material on the Nazi era. I spent my lunch-hour reading it. I copied out the following extract from a translation from a Rosenberg publication that I found there, which I don’t think I published at the time. It was written by Dietrich Eckhart:

“...the Jewish religion completely lacks belief in a supra-sensible Beyond... the Jews, with their religion oriented to purely earthly affairs, stand alone in the world! This should not be forgotten for a single moment... For it is this exceptional situation which explains why a “shady nation” such as the Jews has survived the greatest and most glorious nations, and will continue to survive, until the end of all time, until the hour of salvation strikes for all mankind. The Jewish nation will not perish before this hour strikes. The world is preserved... only by a positive yea-saying to the world. Among the Jewish people this world-affirmation is totally pure, without any admixture of world-denial. All other nations that have ever existed, and exist today, had, or have, such an admixture, characterised by the idea of a Hereafter...”

“The denial of the world needs a still longer time to grow so that it will acquire a lasting predominance over affirmation of the world. At this time it seems again to have sunk to a zero point; its opposite, symbolised by the Jewish people, is triumphant as never before. It seems as if the inner light has completely vanished from this earth. But... it merely seems that way. Denial of the world cannot perish because it is part of the soul of mankind... The non-Jewish peoples... are the custodians of world-negation, of the idea of the Hereafter... Hence, one or another of them can quietly go under, but what really matters lives on in their descendants. If, however, the Jewish people were to perish, no nation would be left which would hold world-affirmation in high esteem—the end of the world would be here. This would also be the case if the Zionist idea were to become a reality, namely, if the entire Jewish people would unite to become a national entity in Palestine or somewhere else.

“...the Jew, the only consistent and consequently the only viable yea-sayer to the world, must be found wherever other men bear in themselves—to the tiniest degree—a compulsion to overcome the world. The Jew represents the still-necessary counter-weight to them: otherwise that urgent craving would be fulfilled immediately, and thereby could not usher in the salvation of the world (since the Jewish people would still remain in existence), but would destroy it in a different way through the elimination of the spiritual power without which it cannot exist either... I wish... to demonstrate that the world could not exist if the Jews were living by themselves. This is why an old prophecy proclaims that the end of the world will arrive on the day when the Jews have established the state of Palestine.

“From all this it follows that Judaism is part of the organism of mankind just as, let us say, certain bacteria are part of man’s body, and indeed the Jews are as necessary as bacteria. The body contains... a host of tiny organisms without which it would perish, even though they feed on it. Similarly, mankind needs the Jewish strain in order to preserve its vitality until its earthly mission is fulfilled! In other words, the world affirmation exemplified by Judaism in its purest form, though disastrous in itself, is a condition of man’s earthly being—as long as men exist—and we cannot even imagine its non-existence. It will collapse only when all mankind is redeemed.

“Thus, we are obliged to accept the Jews among us as a necessary evil, for who knows how many thousands of years to come. But just as the body would become stunted if the bacteria increased beyond a salutary number, our nation too would gradually succumb to a spiritual malady if the Jew were to become too much for it. Were he to leave us entirely (as is the aim of Zionism, or at least it pretends to be) it would be just as disastrous as if he were to dominate us. The mission of the German nation will come to an end... with the last hour of mankind. But we could never reach it if we lost world-affirmation, the Jew among us, because no life is possible without world-affirmation. On the other hand, if the Jew were continually to stifle us, we would never be able to fulfil our mission, which is the salvation of the world...”

So enough Jews were needed to keep the German nation in existence, but not so many that would submerge its existence. For all his paganism, Rosenberg remained in this respect a good Christian.

The Jew as the symbol of world-affirmation, as against the world-negation of Christianity, appears also in Nietzsche, but Nietzsche did not see the Jew therefore as a necessary evil. Having himself opted unconditionally for world-affirmation.

If it was in order for Marx to represent the Jew as the symbol of commodity relations, it is certainly no less in order to represent him as the symbol of the unconditional will to live. With a precarious basis of existence, and under a wide variety of adverse circumstances, the Jewish community survived in dispersion for 2,000 years. Reference can be made to its economic function in mediaeval Europe to explain this survival, but it is far from explaining it.

“...the Jewish communities played a specific economic and social role in European feudalism during the period of its decline; they are doing so again, but this time their role is ideological and political. Formerly their fate was linked to that of feudalism in decline, today it is linked to that of a world imperialism in decline...” (*The Arab World And Israel*, Monthly Review Press, p.97).

But this glib generalisation from the fashionable intelligentsia of the ‘new left’ does little to enlarge the understanding of the Jewish question. The Jews had been surviving in dispersal for a thousand years before they began to provide marginal economic services to European feudalism. And isn’t it remarkable that a people whose “*fate was linked to that of feudalism in decline*” so easily survived, and flourished after the extinction of that feudalism?

Heinrich Heine, the German Jewish literary critic, populariser of German philosophy, and democratic political propagandist, who converted to Christianity in his youth—since baptism was, as he put it, the entrance ticket to European civilisation—wrote in his *Confessions* (shortly before his death in 1855):

“I see now that the Greeks were only beautiful youths, but that the Jews were always men, strong, unyielding men, not only in the past, but to this very day, in spite of 18 centuries of persecution and suffering. Since that time I have learned to appreciate them better, and were not a pride of ancestry a silly inconsistency in a champion of the revolution and its democratic principles, the writer of these pages would be proud that his ancestors belonged to the noble house of Israel, that he is a descendant of those martyrs who gave the world a God and a morality, and who fought and suffered on all the battle-fields of thought.”

“Judea has always seemed to me like a fragment of the Occident misplaced in the Orient.”

One of the most remarkable things about Jewish survival is that, from the second century (Bar Kochba’s revolt) until the 1920s, it was achieved entirely without military force. There was no Jewish Army, or guerrilla force, between the second and the twentieth centuries.

Of all the peoples prominent in antiquity, only the Jews survive today: and they survive, not as a remnant of antiquity, but as a thoroughly modern people. And even the Jews of antiquity have a modern aspect, particularly when contrasted with the other peoples of antiquity, even with the Romans and Greeks. They appear as the harbingers of modern society in ancient times.

The contemporary account of the Jewish War of AD 66 by Josephus, a Jew who assimilated into Roman civilisation, has a very modern aspect. It describes the national war of a small people against a great, and cultured, Empire at the height of its power. The Jewish rebellion against Rome is probably the first historical event that can be considered a national war. It was entirely unlike those between Rome and the European tribes.

The unity of the Jews at the time was far from being a tribal unity. It existed through intense ideological conflict within Jewry of a kind that was occurring nowhere else at that time, and that was to have a much greater impact on history than were the intellectual disputes of Greece and Rome.

Christianity is a variant of Judaism and, even when it broke with Judaism over the question of rites, it remained based on Jewish literature. The psychology of European civilisation (which was the nucleus of modern civilisation in general) was forged essentially by the Jews, and carried into Europe, through the Roman Empire, by the Christian offshoot of Judaism. It is quite different from that of the noble Romans, the philosophic Greeks and the barbaric Germans, though it has been modified by all of them. So there was ample ground for Heine’s observation that Judea seemed like “*a fragment of the Occident*”

*misplaced in the Orient*". (Or, as Marx put it: "Judaism has maintained itself, and even received its supreme development, in Christian society... Judaism has survived not in spite of, but by virtue of, history": *The Jewish Question*.)

The great difficulty in dealing adequately with this matter is that there is no adequate history of Christianity, or of the Jews, with relation to the development of European civilisation. That there are connections is obvious, but the tracing out of those connections is another thing.

It was natural that Marx, when he was forging a new world view on the basis of the achievement of the bourgeois phase of European civilisation, should be concerned to emphasise the break between Marxism and all that went before it in Europe, rather than with establishing the element of continuity. Engels later made some notes towards a history of Christianity, and that work was undertaken in earnest by Kautsky (*Foundations Of Christianity*), but was not carried very far. Since Kautsky no progress has been made by socialists.

In fact there has been an increasing tendency among Marxists to dismiss the significance of European (or Christian) civilisation as compared with others. This appears to have resulted partly from Communist strategy with regard to the colonial revolution, and partly from the increasing involvement of bourgeois intellectuals in the Marxist movement. The influence of both tended to dismiss the significance of European capitalist civilisation as compared with the civilisation of those countries and continents which became colonies of Europe. In the case of the former this would have had the function of increasing the self-confidence of the colonial people, while in the case of the latter it has to do with the bad conscience of capitalism.

A good example of the latter will be found in the introduction to the recent [this was written a generation ago] Penguin edition of Marx's 1848 writings by David Fernbach. In these writings Marx, in forthright style, makes European civilisation his starting point. He justifies German and Hungarian dominance over the Slavs on the grounds that it was this that held most of the Slavs within the influence of European civilisation. And he treats certain Slav communities which succumbed to Islam as having, by virtue of that fact, dropped out of historical significance.

All of this is too much for Fernbach, with his bad bourgeois conscience. This is Marx's European prejudice, his "Europocentrism", says Fernbach. He hints that Marx later overcame this "Europocentrism", and even became an admirer of Hinduism though no actual evidence of this is presented.

In fact Marx and Engels remained unashamedly "Europocentric" to the end, and the course of history has remained Europocentric in the sense that it has evolved by developing throughout the world (through trade, missionary activity, colonialism, anti-colonialism, anti-missionary activity etc), the conditions and conflicts which characterised Western Europe alone in the 19th century. And the most successful Communist Party that has so far developed was unconditionally "Europocentric", though it existed in a state that was half-Asiatic. (In one of his last statements on the matter, his *Address To The Youth Leagues*, Lenin went out of his way to emphasise that capitalist civilisation was the starting point of Communism.)

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Marx, who commented that Judaism reached its fullest development in a Christian society, was a Prussian Jew writing in England. Prussia was the Protestant state in Germany—one could even say that it was the Protestant state in Europe. Some of the German petty kingdoms were Protestant but they were not modern states. Hegel's glorification of Prussia said little

more than that it was a state amongst the petty-kingdoms—a state of the English kind.

Prussia was the historic ally of England, until England decided to destroy it because it had become too much like itself. And England was more Protestant than Prussia. Irish reformers in the early 19th century cited Prussia as proof that it was possible for a Protestant state to allow religious freedom, and also as an example of tenant-right in a landlord system.

Marx must have been thinking about Protestant England when he made that remark about Judaism culminating in Protestant society. The observation clearly did not apply to Roman Catholicism, which was a historical combination of a number of things that were woven into the structure of the Roman Empire by the Emperor Constantine, injecting an element of idealism into the Empire which revived it and led to the emergence of what we know as *Europe*.

England, when wrenching itself apart from Renaissance Europe, and establishing itself as an absolute sovereignty, placed the Bible at the centre of its culture as unquestionable truth. This Bible is the history of a people chosen by God to be his agent in a world that had misbehaved and was in need of being chastised.

At the beginning of the Protestant Revolution proper, in 1641, John Milton, the future Secretary of State to Cromwell and a strict Biblicalist, wrote, in an Address to Parliament "*Let England not forget its precedence in teaching nations how to live*". And it can be said that England has ever since been acting as the agent of Providence against the world with catastrophic consequences for everything it touches—beginning with Ireland.

This Bible is the Jewish *Old Testament* with a puzzling Christian appendix. And, while it would not be sufficient to say that it was the influence of this book on the English mind, conscious and subconscious, that produced what we know as the Middle East Problem, it seems unlikely that things would be quite as they are without it.

Protestant Christianity was beginning to crumble in the English mind when the Liberal Government launched the First World War, but the notion of Providence is very much in evidence in the writings of English officers conquering Palestine in 1918.

The war was justified by the slogan, *The right of nations to self-determination*. It was not explained until after the war that this right was meant to have a very special application, which negated it for the most part. It was not intended to apply to the Irish, for example. Nor in Palestine did it apply to the actual people of Palestine. It was a right conferred on the Jewish people who had been deported from Palestine, or who had emigrated, two thousand years earlier, after their state was destroyed by the Roman Empire.

The territory was to be opened up to Jewish colonisation of Palestine, with Jews coming from around the world, so that the Jewish State projected by Britain as an Imperial measure could be given foundations.

The wording of the Balfour letter is vague, but Lloyd George, Churchill and others involved in the enterprise in 1917 later gave testimony that the making of a Jewish State in Palestine was what they intended.

Balfour himself admitted that his "*Declaration*" was an exception to the principle for which they said the war was fought, and was justified by the fact that the Jews were an exceptional people. But, in the light of the consequences, the category of "*exception*" hardly applies here. The declaration that the Jews, wherever they lived, were a nation with national

rights in Palestine, and the measures set in motion to give effect to those rights, subverted the principle of the League of Nations at the outset. It was on a par with other destabilising measures adopted by Britain and foisted on the League: the intensification of the Starvation Blockade on Germany after the Armistice, the plunder of Germany, and the refusal to allow France to disable humiliated Germany; and the war on the elected Irish Government.

The motivation of the Balfour Declaration was a combination of Imperial *realpolitik* and anti-Semitism. The Jews were an exceptional people, a remarkable people, but a people that had to be kept in their place, and they were getting out of hand. Their presence in European affairs—look at the Russian Revolution—needed to be diminished, but at the same time it was necessary that they be preserved. That is quite explicit in Churchill's writings. And it accords quite well with Eckhart's article published by Rosenberg.

Amongst the Jewish colonists in Palestine under the British administration in the 1920s and 1930s there was some frank discussion of the reality they were engaged in. Many preferred mental evasions and euphemisms, but the Jabotinsky tendency (called *Revisionist* for a reason that I forget) insisted that what they were engaged in was conquest and subjugation of a native population that would resist.

A generation later Isaac Deutscher, who had grown up in traditional Jewish culture in Poland, and gone through a phase of systematic Enlightenment culture, to become an influential intellectual in English Left liberal publishing, tried to explain the fierce expansionist Zionism in Palestine post-1945 in this way:

"A man once jumped from the top floor of a burning house in which many members of his family had already perished. He managed to save his life; but as he was falling he hit a person standing below and broke that person's legs and arms. The jumping man had no choice; yet to the man with the broken limbs he was the cause of his misfortune. If both behaved rationally, ... (the) man who escaped from the blazing house, having recovered, would have tried to help and console the other sufferer; and the latter might have realized that he was the victim of circumstances over which neither had control. But look what happens when these people behave irrationally. The injured man blames the other for his misery and swears to make him pay for it. The other, afraid of the crippled man's revenge, insults him, and beats him up whenever they meet. The kicked man again swears revenge, and is again punched and punished. The bitter enmity, so fortuitous at first, hardens and comes to overshadow the whole existence of both men and to poison their minds.

"You will, I am sure, recognise yourselves (I said to my Israeli audience)..." (*The Non-Jewish Jew and other Essays*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p136).

The Israeli audience did not recognise itself in the 'parable', which is in fact a very feeble parable. Those Jews were not refugees fleeing from a burning building and trampling over innocent bystanders in their panic. To have relevance, the parable would have to include the breaking into another man's house and taking possession of it, putting into effect an operation for which the ground had been laid out long before the emergency.

If those Jews had been mere refugees in blind flight from overwhelming danger they could not have formed themselves into an effective state in two or three years and set about doing

to the natives of Palestine the kind of thing that had been done to them in Europe.

The framework of the Jewish State in Palestine had been constructed under British authority twenty years earlier.

James Parkes, in 1945, classified as "*refugees*" only a minority of displaced Jews who were intent on going to the United States. Those whose aim was to go to Palestine were just returning home after a period away. They were not intruders in Palestine. The intruders were those who had taken over their home and lived in it for a thousand years.

Brendan Clifford (To be continued)

## Ireland's Great War On Turkey, 1914 - 24

By Pat Walsh  
Athol Books 2009

Ireland's Great War on Turkey is largely a forgotten event in Irish history. That is despite the fact that it was probably the most significant thing Ireland ever did in the world. That war lasted from 1914 until 1924—when the Irish Free State ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and finally, along with the rest of the British Empire, made peace with the Turks. It made the Middle East (including Palestine and Iraq) what it is today, and had the catastrophic effects on the Moslem world that persist to the present.

Ireland's part in the Great War on Turkey was an embarrassment to Republican Ireland and its historians and the details of the War became forgotten. The more recent historians of a revisionist disposition and the Remembrance commemorators have also refrained from remembering it, for other reasons.

This book, the first history of Ireland's War on Turkey, explains why the British Empire really made war on the Ottoman Empire and why Irishmen found themselves part of the invasion force it sent to Gallipoli. It describes the forgotten political and military assault launched on neutral Greece and the devastating effect this ultimately had on the Greek people across the Balkans and Asia Minor. It explains the reasons for the establishment of Palestine and Iraq and why the United States was repelled from the League of Nations by the behaviour of the British Empire in the conquered Ottoman territories after the War.

It concludes on a positive note, describing the great achievement of Ataturk in leading the Turkish nation to independence from the Imperialist Powers. This was an event that Republican Ireland could only marvel at, from the confines of the Treaty and the British Empire—an Empire whose demise Ataturk set in motion through the successful Turkish War of Independence.



## The British War Crime at Scapa Flow on 21 June 1919.

By Eamon Dyas

Under stipulation twenty-two of section Five (Naval Conditions) of the armistice terms signed on 11 November 1918, the fleet of German submarines (of all types) were to be surrendered to the Allies within fourteen days of the signing.

Under stipulation twenty-three of section Five (Naval Conditions) “German surface warships which shall be designated by the Allies and the United States shall be immediately disarmed and thereafter interned in neutral ports or in default of them in allied ports to be designated by the Allies and the United States.”

Thus, the armistice terms made a clear and precise distinction between that part of the German Navy that was to be surrendered (the submarine fleet) and that part that was to be interned (the surface fleet). Stipulation twenty-three went on to list the German surface ships to be interned as follows: six battle cruisers, ten battleships, eight light cruisers (including two mine layers), and fifty destroyers of the most modern types.

These were the ships that the German Admiralty agreed to either surrender in the case of the submarines or have interned in the case of the specified number of surface ships designated by the Allies and the United States.

Discussions of the terms of the Armistice had been taking place among the Allies since at least early October and while agreement on the terms relating to the military land war had been relatively easy when it came to terms relating to the naval sea war things were not so easy.

The issues of contention centred around two main problems associated with President Wilson’s “Fourteen Points”. It was viewed as critical by the United States that the eventual peace terms should be seen to be consistent with these points as it was on the basis of these “Wilsonian principles” that Germany had requested the Armistice in October. However, as the negotiations between the Allies and the United States proceeded two of these points became problematic. One was point two of President Wilson’s Fourteen Points – the Freedom of the Seas – which the British feared would colour the naval terms and the other was the British demand that the German Navy’s surface fleet be surrendered to the Allies for distribution among their respective navies which infringed point four of Wilson’s principles – the demand for a post-war arms reduction. The British Admiralty insisted that the naval terms of the Armistice be consistent with the terms that eventually formed the naval terms of the eventual peace and therefore objected to any component of the Armistice that might hinder its capacity to impose a sea blockade on its enemies in any future war. It was feared that conceding Wilson’s concept of the Freedom of the Seas with its implied protection for neutral vessels would set precisely such an unwelcome precedent.

This represented the main lines of cleavage between the United States position which advocated the principle of the Freedom of the Seas but was resisted by the British, and the British position on the surrender and distribution of the German surface fleet which was resisted by the United States.

The United States was particularly sensitive to the prospect of one of the Allies, Japan, being in a position to enhance its already growing navy through the addition of any share of the German ships. Wilson was also keen to build a post-war U.S. navy as powerful as that of the British as part of his plan for his League of Nations project which required a level of parity between the American and British navies (of which more later). The prospect of the British Navy benefiting from any distribution of the German surface fleet would require a significant additional investment by the U.S. to meet the new level of British naval strength. It was these considerations that lay behind the U.S. opposition to what Britain proposed for the German surface fleet.

However, what emerged from the horse-trading between the Allies during the negotiations on the armistice terms was an outcome more favourable to Britain than America. During these negotiations President Wilson, after some brinkmanship, eventually conceded that Britain’s unique trading relationship with the world and its traditional reliance on the weapon of blockade gave it an exceptional interest in interpreting the principle of the Freedom of the Seas in a way that precluded the absolute right of neutral shipping to be exempt from interference on the high seas during time of war. It was therefore agreed to defer any decision on the subject to the later negotiations designed to formulate the terms of peace to be presented to Germany. Regarding the British demand for the surrender of the German surface fleet, Lloyd George was compelled to agree not to demand the surrender of the surface fleet but rather its internment. Although he didn’t get exactly what he wanted in this regard, he did get the next best thing, the incarceration of the German surface fleet in British waters and under British control again pending a decision on its future during the negotiations to formulate the terms of peace to be presented to the Germans at Versailles.

Then Lloyd George managed, through a diplomatic sleight of hand, to get the German fleet interned in British waters. The stipulation that the German surface fleet be interned rather than surrendered was agreed at a meeting of the Supreme War Council on 4 November but the original wording referred exclusively to the German surface ships being interred in a neutral port. However, immediately after the Supreme War Council adjourned on 4 November the British began the process of unpicking what had been agreed.

“Just after the Supreme War Council adjourned on November 4, the Allies, far from thinking about easing any of their terms to lure the Germans into signing, had second thoughts about the naval clauses. The British fretted that no neutral would agree to intern the German warships and proposed adding a clause that, if neutrals refused the task, the Allies would intern the ships in one of their own ports. At British urging, Clemenceau, House, and the Italians agreed to insert ‘or failing them [neutral ports], Allied ones’ in the clause requiring the internment of most of the German surface fleet.” (Armistice 1918, by Bullitt Lowry, published by Kent State University Press, 1996 p.147).

This turned out to be an underhand preparation for the British to take control of the German Fleet. The British Government

went on to ensure that no neutral port would agree to take custody of the German battleships. With Sweden and Norway already declining the responsibility the only remaining neutral country with a suitable anchorage was Spain.

“Whether Lloyd George planned for something like this change, that addition led to dissimulation on a grand scale. The British claimed that the Allies had to keep all the German ships in the same harbour, and only two convenient neutral ports of sufficient size existed. Both of them – Vigo and Arosa Bay – were Spanish. The British ordered their ambassador in Spain to make certain that the problem of controlling the enemy fleet set an unsurmountable obstacle to the Spanish government’s agreeing to intern the ships – that is, the ambassador was all but directly ordered to fail in his negotiations with the Spanish. Indeed, the first draft of his instructions included that direct order, but someone crossed it out, expecting him to understand what was needed without explicit orders.

The British had already decided what to do with the ships. The day before the British Foreign Office sent the ambassador his veiled instructions to fail, the Allied Naval Council was making plans to intern the German vessels at the main British naval base of Scapa Flow off northern Scotland.” (Lowry, pp.147-148).

Lloyd George had pulled off a master-stroke. When the Germans came to sign the Armistice on 11 November 1918 they had no knowledge of the fact that Britain had laid the ground in advance to ensure that the option of the German surface fleet being anchored in a neutral port was no longer a practical one. Even when, some days later, the German Admiralty was given the details of the destination to which the ships were to sail they remained under the impression that Scapa Flow was only a temporary anchorage where the ships would be inspected to ensure that they had been disarmed prior to being sent onwards to their eventual neutral destination.

### **The imprisonment of the German High Seas Fleet**

On 18 November 1918, in compliance with what it understood to be its temporary accommodation in British waters, the German Admiralty issued orders for its High Seas Fleet to make ready for sailing to Scotland. The man given the responsibility for organising the arrangements was Rear-Admiral Hugo Meurer and the man given charge of the fleet was Rear-Admiral Ludwig von Reuter. The Fleet consisted of five battle-cruisers, nine battleships, seven light cruisers, and forty-nine destroyers making a total of seventy ships in all (some ships were in repair at the time but sailed later). Prior to embarking on its journey and in compliance with the armistice terms the ships dismantled and removed all the technologically advanced fire-direction apparatus as well as the breech blocks from their guns. On the morning of Thursday, 21 November 1918, the German Fleet sailed towards British waters.

Admiral David Beatty, the Commander of the British Grand Fleet, had the responsibility of meeting and escorting the German ships into Scapa Flow. Beatty had served under Lord Jellicoe in the Battle of Jutland in 1916 where the British Navy came off second best in the only major confrontation on the open seas between the British and German navies. His experience at Jutland rattled him and his frustration was compounded by the fact that German naval tactics precluded a subsequent rematch between the fleets. In his mind the German Admiralty had denied him a victory over the German Fleet and his rightful place in the pantheon of great British naval heroes.

He was now determined to use the opportunity offered by the Armistice to impose as much humiliation on the German Navy as the occasion permitted.

“Beatty had told Meurer that ‘a sufficient force will meet the German ships and escort them to the anchorage’ in the Firth of Forth.

“The British idea of sufficient force staggered the Germans as ship after ship loomed out of the haze in two long lines, which soon began to pass down either side of the [German – ED] High Seas Fleet in the opposite direction. They finally put about to escort the German ships into the Firth as German officers and ratings with telescopes tried to count them. There were over 250 Allied warships in all, almost the whole of the British Grand Fleet, one squadron of American battleships as well as representative ships from other Allied navies. It was the largest assemblage of seapower in the history of the world” (The Grand Scuttle: the sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow in 1919, by Dan van der Vat. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1982, p.119).

The British had arranged to assemble the largest concentration of warships in world history with the sole purpose of humiliating the German Navy – a navy that, before the war, had the temerity to seek to challenge its sea supremacy despite never having anything near the size of the British Navy. On 13 November, just over a week before the German Fleet was interned at Scapa Flow, Beatty had written a secret letter to the Admiralty in which he justified the planned spectacle:

“The enemy is required to hand over such a part of his fleet as will deprive him of the power of again contesting our sea supremacy, and this last act of his, which is the result of years of unsparing effort on the part of our officers and men and of ungrudging support on the part of our peoples, should in my opinion be arranged so as to afford an object-lesson, not only to our own countrymen and to those who live to see it but to all nations and to those who come after us.

“Advertisement of the deeds of the Navy is properly shunned by all naval officers, but the question to my mind touches great issues and its satisfactory handling will have widespread effects.

“The Navy can maintain its reputation for silence, but I would have the results of its long and devoted service displayed in a manner befitting an event so unexampled in our history so that all may see and remember.” (Quoted in *ibid*, p.121).

In other words the escort ritual was to be seen not only as a manifestation of continuing British naval power and a humiliation of Germany but also to send a message to those who might threaten that power in the future.

However, the humiliation was not to end with the arrival of the German fleet at the Firth of Forth. On their arrival Beatty ordered the unarmed ships to remove the German flag from their masts and not to have it re-hoisted again without his permission. The Germans complied under protest but despite several requests, as was its right as an unsundered fleet, that its flag-ship be permitted to re-hoist its flag, Beatty never conceded. The German naval officer in command of the interned fleet who protested was Rear-Admiral Ludwig von Reuter and he asked to meet Beatty but Beatty refused and in fact for the entire time the German ships were at Scapa Flow Beatty refused to meet the effective Admiral of the interned German fleet.

All this time both the German Government and von Reuter were not aware of the actual circumstances of the German fleet. They continued to believe that the fleet was merely being directed into the Firth of Forth in order to facilitate an Allied inspection of the German ships – something that was necessary in order to confirm that their guns had indeed been disarmed. After such inspection and confirmation it was believed that the ships would then be escorted to a neutral port as per the terms of the Armistice that Germany had believed it had agreed to. But even if he had discovered the thinking behind British actions by the time they arrived at Scapa Flow, unarmed and surrounded by British warships, it was impossible to do anything about it.

In fact it was into the second week of December 1918 before the Germans realised that they had been duped by the British. On 9<sup>th</sup> December the High Seas Fleet Command at Wilhelmshaven radioed the Commander in Chief of the British Grand Fleet asking the whereabouts of the German ships. The British waited until 2.53 p.m. on the following day to confirm that rather than the ships being at a temporary anchorage they were now being interned at Scapa Flow. Rear-Admiral Gothe, acting head of the German High Seas Command, protested to the British C-in-C that same evening pointing out that the Armistice set neutral ports as the first choice for internment. But of course the protest got nowhere in the face of this fait accompli.

Once in their charge the British sent naval representatives to inspect the German ships in order to confirm the fact that they had been properly disarmed and to find out what they could about their design and the state of morale among the sailors.

“Inspectors who went on board the vessels soon after their arrival were impressed by their construction. The multitudinous bulkheads below the waterline’, said one of them, ‘made them practically unsinkable’. There was some truth in this. The battle-cruisers Seydlitz and Derfflinger had suffered the most fearful punishment at Jutland, and yet they had survived and here they were (in contrast, the Royal Navy lost three battle-cruisers that day – Invincible, Indefatigable, and the Queen Mary). On the other hand, conditions on board left little doubt about the state of the German Navy’s morale. The ships were described as ‘dirty, foul-smelling, and ill-found’. A shortage of lubricating oil restricted them to speeds of 10 or 12 knots. A British rating, questioned by The Orcadian’s reporter about his impressions, replied, ‘I never saw anything in such an absolute state of decomposition’. When asked whether he was referring to the vessels, he said, ‘The ships – yes – and the crews, too – absolutely awful. No paint, filthy everywhere, and the men totally without spirit left.’” (The Final Betrayal, by Richard Garrett. Published by Buchan & Enright, Southampton, 1989, pp.79-80).

As subsequent events showed, the low morale among the German sailors observed by the newspaper reporter was something that continued to be an issue but one that was obviated to some extent over the coming months as the number of sailors originally manning the vessels was drastically reduced to one that left only maintenance crews on each ship. But in the meantime, this meant sailors were crowded onto ships that were not designed for crews to spend long periods of time cooped up in them. On top of that the British refused to feed the crews and food had to be imported from Germany. As one British sailor observed:

‘It was Christmas, 1918. The Seydlitz, being the largest German ship, carried the whole of the stores and supplies for

all the Fleet and it was the custom to collect one German rating from each ship or group and take them to the Seydlitz to draw stores and rations etc. Being the Christmas period, they drew extra fare, including Christmas crackers, streamers, hats and tinsel etc. The meat they drew was in awful condition. I know they were our late enemies but they were God-fearing men of the sea and mostly Christians and my heart softened to them as they, like us, were in a godforsaken place, but were trying to make the most of the first ‘Peace on earth, goodwill to men’ Christmas of 1918 in terrible conditions.’

Later, to supplement their meat rations, they carried out a few raids ashore and slaughtered a few sheep, much to the crofters’ concern.” (Quoted in *ibid.*, p.82).

As time went on, in order to supplement their rations the sailors were forced to fish from their ships and even resorted to trapping seagulls for food. While there were German naval doctors in the fleet there was no dentists and the British refused to supply one. Regarding the forays by the German sailors to the mainland, these were undertaken in defiance of the prohibition against them leaving their ships even for the purpose of visiting other ships in the German fleet.

Letters sent by the sailors to Germany were censored from the start and later incoming post was also censored. These restrictions even applied to Admiral von Reuter who was virtually cut off from contact with Germany. While permitted access to British newspapers his only source of information from Germany were newspapers that were usually a week old by the time they reached him. Radio contact was also restricted when the working radio on his flag-ship ceased to function and was not repaired. Any radio contact with the German authorities was then only possible through the use of British naval radios and only then with permission and with British naval personnel present.

To all intents and purpose the British adopted an attitude towards the German Fleet that was based on the assumption that it was in fact a surrendered fleet and the Admiralty was keen to provide such an impression to the public. However, because the Armistice terms precluded a specific description of the German surface fleet as a surrendered entity it proved necessary to conflate the actual surrendered status of the submarine fleet with the un-surrendered surface fleet. As a result the references in the press at the time referred to a surrendered German Navy and even when specific reference was made to the German surface fleet the press remained deliberately imprecise.

This imprecision relating to the idea of a “surrender” of the German Fleet was echoed within the operation of parliamentary politics at Westminster. In March 1919, Walter Long, the First Lord of the Admiralty, in the course of presenting the forthcoming naval budget before the Committee of Supply of the House of Commons had this to say on the subject of the surrender of the German Fleet:

“Was there anything in past great naval victories to compare with the surrender of the German Navy to the British Fleet? Was there ever anything more humiliating to an enemy. It was a greater victory than had ever been achieved by fighting. It marked the complete defeat of our most formidable opponents and a new step in the progress of the world towards peace.” (Belfast Newsletter, 13 March 1919, p.5)

Thus, as the summer of 1919 arrived the status of the German surface fleet at Scapa Flow had been established in the public's mind and in the minds of the politicians as that of a surrendered fleet for the allies to do with as they choose.

### **Changing position of Allies on the fate of the German Fleet**

The fear expressed by the British Admirals during the discussions on the naval armistice terms at the meetings of the Allied Naval Council in late October and early November 1918 was that the continued existence of the German surface Fleet, whether confined to home ports or interned in neutral ports, would be used by the German Government as leverage for extracting concessions from the Allies during the peace conference. What concerned the British most was to make sure that Germany came to the peace negotiations with as little leverage as possible. Having failed to have the issue sealed to its liking in the armistice terms the British were forced to accept the next best thing. The fact that the German Fleet was now interned in British waters and guarded by the Royal Navy, while not eliminating the potential use of the Fleet in this way, certainly diminished its worth as a bargaining chip and indeed increased the chances of Britain taking the lion's share in the event of it being traded off for some concession.

But Britain's "achievement" in taking physical control of the German High Seas Fleet at Scapa Flow had a knock-on effect which had not been anticipated. With the German Fleet now effectively neutralised the fear that the extreme British naval demands might lead to the German Government refusing to sign the Armistice no longer acted as a constraint on the ambitions of the its Allies. This change became apparent in the French position during January and continued to mature in the period to June 1919 during which time both Italy and Japan threw their weight behind French demands. The British had attempted to allay the American fears that the ships might be distributed among the navies of the Allies (with Japanese ambitions a particular concern for the United States) by appearing to endorse the idea that the ships should be destroyed or sunk. In February 1919 the dissenting position of the French became public knowledge. The Times reported this under the heading "Fate of German Fleet" as follows:

"Paris, Feb. 25. - The Temps, combating the proposal that the German Fleet should be taken to sea and sunk, says: - 'While the Fleets of other countries have not only been able to make good their losses, but even to increase their Navies, France has borne the whole of her losses, and has, furthermore, been obliged to cease work on Dreadnoughts in course of construction and to countermand orders sanctioned before the war. It can be understood that Great Britain and the United States regard the German vessels with disdain after the formidable increase in their Fleets, but we are not in the same case. Far from having made progress, we have gone back. It seems that the simplest method in the circumstances would be to share the German vessels among the Allies in the ratio of their losses, to dispose of in their own way. Those who despise them will be at liberty either to destroy them or to offer them to their less favoured Allies.' - Reuter. (The Times, 26 Feb, 1919, p.9).

The following day the reports on the work of drafting the preliminary terms of peace claimed that rapid progress was being made. However, when it came to the naval terms the Political Correspondent of The Times revealed the continuing areas of contention:

"The naval terms have been agreed upon with one important exception. The French Ministry of Marine reserves acceptance of the principle that the war vessels to be surrendered by Germany and those at present in the hands of the Allies shall be destroyed. The argument of the French is that during the war their fleet has suffered losses which, owing to Army requirements, French workshops and yards have been unable to make good. It is certain that on this point some agreement will be reached which will recognise the special position of France in the matter and at the same time prevent the Allies naval triumph from increasing the burden of naval armaments by distributing among them German ships the upkeep of which in money and men will be a heavy addition to the Navy. Estimates of all countries and perpetuate instead of diminishing the naval armaments of the world." ("Naval Terms Outlined", The Times, 28 February 1919, p.10)

On 9 March the meeting of the Supreme War Council continued differences on this issue led to it being left undecided and this continued to be the case up to the end of March. In the meantime the United States decided to go public with its own position in order to signal the strength of its opposition to any distribution of the German warships among the Allies. This took the form of a Memorandum prepared by the American Naval Advisers in Paris being given to the New York World for publication on 21 March. The Memorandum in question had been presented to the Council of Ten and had the support of President Wilson. In this the United States argued that any distribution of the German Fleet would increase the naval armament of the Great Powers by about 30 per cent. - something that could not be justified in view of the removal of the German and Austrian navies as effective fighting forces in Europe.

However, the Memorandum was also designed to serve notice on British ambitions by pointing out that it remained essential for the United States to have a navy as large as that of Great Britain. The Times newspaper reproduced the summary of the Memorandum as published in the New York World:

"The League of Nations must be strong enough to restrain, if necessary, its strongest member. No international navy made up of ships of heterogeneous types whose discipline would differ in training, in language, and in command, could hope to cope with the British Fleet. There must exist in such an international force a single unit which, with the assistance of the forces of the League, would be able to enforce the mandates of the League against any Power. The United States has satisfied its aims and may be relied upon to support loyally the League of Nations. The nations of the world know this and have faith in us. Should we ever fail in our international obligations there would exist in the forces of the League with the fleet of Great Britain to apply the remedy. Any distribution of the German ships on the basis of losses or of naval effort in the war would give the lion's share to Great Britain, which would mean that the American taxpayers would have to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to restore equality of strength." (Fate of German Fleet, The Times, 24 March 1919, p.14)

The Memorandum also revealed the basis of United States opposition to the distribution of the German Fleet in its concern for any increase in the naval strength of Japan:

"... there are but two great Powers in the world whose existence depends upon naval strength. They are Great Britain and Japan. In the past Great Britain built with the main idea of keeping a safe superiority over the German Fleet. The United

States in its desire to maintain the peace of the world and to help all nations must not forget the necessity of national safety. Any reduction of our relative naval strength would weaken our influence in world affairs, and limit our ability to serve the League of Nations. In considering the distribution of the German and Austrian vessels among the small Powers the possibility must be borne in mind of a naval alliance that would add these ships to the fleets opposed to us." (Ibid.)

With the French and the United States having, by the end of March, publicly presented their respective positions on the fate of the German Fleet it seems odd that the British, the only country that actually had physical control of that fleet's future, continued to hold off any official statement on the subject.

The only statement on the subject from a British government representative had been that of Lord Lytton, civil lord of the Admiralty in the House of Lords on 26 February when he expressed personal agreement with the sentiment of a Member of the House of Lords that the German Fleet should not be destroyed but sold at auction instead. However, he emphasised that this was his personal opinion and he was not in a position to offer anything more. On 6 March Bonar Law refused to give an opinion in answer to Ronald McNeill on whether the British representatives at the Peace Conference would support the French position. On 15 April, Bonar Law again refused to commit to an answer to the Government's position on the future of the German Fleet when asked by Viscount Curzon.

On 15 May, Thomas Macnamara, the Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, answered a question on the subject from Lieut.-Col. Hilder by saying that this was a decision that had still to be taken by the Peace Conference. The pre-determined terms of the Peace previously compiled by the Allies and the Americans had been presented to the Germans on 7 May. But, despite Macnamara's statement the Naval Terms made no mention of the future of the German Fleet then interned at Scapa Flow. Although it included restrictions on the future size of the German Navy in terms of ships and men the only reference to the German Fleet was that "All German surface warships interned in Allied or neutral ports are to be finally surrendered." The question of the distribution, disposal, sale or sinking of the fleet was not a factor in the Naval Terms presented to the German delegation on 7 May 1919. Between 9 and 29 May the German delegation submitted fifteen Notes to the Allies on issues of dispute in areas of the proposals that were in breach of Wilson's Fourteen Points. The German Government submitted its counter-proposals to the Allies on 29 May and on 16 June they received word that these counter-proposals had been rejected.

In the meantime the German naval officers at Scapa Flow were only receiving sporadic news of what was happening in the period following the submission of the German counter-proposals of 29 May. After 16 June rumours began to circulate that the Allies had lost patience with the Germans and intended to make good their ongoing threat to resume the war on Germany. It was these rumours that Admiral von Reuter later said led to his and his officers' decision to scuttle the fleet in order to ensure that it did not fall into enemy hands.

### **The Scuttling of the German Fleet**

Such an action would not have been possible until this time as the morale of the German sailors when they arrived at Scapa Flow was not conducive to them accepting the orders to scuttle

the ships. Many of them had an allegiance not to the German Admiralty but to the rebellious Soldiers Councils. The extent of the influence of the councils can be gauged by the fact that when Admiral von Reuter initially drew up a long series of orders for the internal organisation and administration of the interned ships he was compelled to have them counter-signed by the Soldiers' Council. The difficulties created by the councils were lightened to some extent when the newly established German Government issued a decree on 19 January 1919 which went some way in reducing the authority of the councils and restoring it to the officers. This meant that by June 1919, the situation regarding the crews manning the fleet at Scapa Flow in June 1919 was in marked contrast to what prevailed at the time of its interment in November 1918. The improvement that this represented was also made possible by the manner in which von Reuter used the reductions in the numbers of sailors at Scapa Flow in order to send the most committed members of the Soldiers' Councils back to Germany. He was unknowingly assisted in this by British impatience to reduce these numbers. This resulted in the evacuation of a high proportion of the German sailors. The details of the evacuation is given by one historian:

"About 20,000 men had brought the ships to British waters and the British were impatient to reduce this high number, probably higher than it needed to be for the last voyage because of shore accommodation difficulties in Wilhelmshaven. But the German naval authorities had great difficulty in finding the necessary steamers to do the job. Finally the SS Sierra Ventana and the SS Graf Waldersee arrived with supplies on 3 December. The former was due to take twenty-five officers and 1,000 men and the latter 150 and 2,200. There were scenes of pandemonium in the mere six hours the two ships were allowed to stay in Scapa Flow, with men piling aboard on one side and supplies were carelessly unloaded, with enormous losses compounded by large-scale theft, from the other, and the British patrol-vessels added to the chaos by trying to hurry things along. The Sierra Ventana, hopelessly inadequate for the task, had to stay until 8 a.m. the following day as unloading was ineffectually completed. The decks of the Friedrich der Grosse alongside were piled high with disorganised mounds of supplies to be distributed round the fleet by the British. About 600 more men went home on the two ships than intended, making a total of about 4,000 who were taken to Wilhelmshaven. Two more ships, the SS Pretoria and the SS Burgermeister, arrived on 6 December to collect 250 officers and 4,000 men and 250 officers and 1,500 men respectively. The Pretoria loaded crews who came from the Baltic Fleet based at Kiel while the smaller ship took North Sea crews back to Wilhelmshaven. This second stage of the reduction in crews was rather more orderly, as the two ships involved were better suited to the task. On 12 December the third and last stage began with the arrival of two further merchantmen, the SS Batavia, for 200 officers and 2,800 Baltic Fleet men, and the SS Bremen for the rest of the North Sea personnel – 500 officers and 1,500 men – to Wilhelmshaven. After more anarchic scenes, the two ships left Scapa Flow, escorted as usual by British warships, into the open sea, on the 13<sup>th</sup>. One of the few points the Germans had won in their discussions and arguments with the British related to the size of the caretaker crews, which were more than twice as large as the British said they would leave aboard equivalent ships kept in port in a minimal state of readiness and repair." ("The Grand Scuttle: The Sinking of the German Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow in 1919", by Dan van der Vat. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1984, pp.134-35).

The numbers of sailors permitted to remain with the interned fleet after these evacuations is difficult to ascertain as the British made no attempt to compile accurate numbers claiming that as they were interned personnel and not prisoners of war they were under no obligation to do so. The author of the above book appears to agree with the figure indicated in German archives of around 4,400 officers and men living on the interned German fleet up to March 1919.

Later the British began to demand a second large-scale reduction in crew levels to bring them down to levels normally associated with the size of caretaker crews of British ships reserved in port. This would have meant reducing the number of German sailors by around half. Von Reuter initially objected to this figure by arguing that the figures provided by the British as adequate caretaker levels were for ships normally in port whereas the German ships were not in port with no access to port facilities and were in fact anchored some distance from land.

However, he began to relent in early May as his plans for the scuttling of the fleet in the event of a breakdown in the peace talks began to take on a more urgent perspective. He knew that the numbers of men required to scuttle the ships was much lower than were already on board those ships and by reducing their numbers he exposed less of them to the anticipated reaction of the British in the aftermath of the scuttling.

A violent incident involving some radical sailors became the excuse for reviving the issue of crew reductions and went some way to explaining to the British why he changed his mind. As a result, the final evacuation of sailors was undertaken by SS *Badenia* and SS *Schleswig* on 18 June just three days prior to the scuttling.

According to van der Vat's calculations, after the two ships had returned 2,700 men and officers to Germany on 18 June there remained around 1,700 still on board the German fleet at Scapa and this was the number present at the outset of the scuttling operation. However, for reasons already given these figures need to be treated with some caution. (More on the use of this figure later). For instance the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* of 23 June 1919 gave a figure of 10,000 sailors being on board at the time of the scuttling but this is likely to have been a highly exaggerated figure.

By now the British had already laid down plans to seize the German ships. On 16 June, the day that the Allies issued the ultimatum to Germany for the acceptance of their terms for peace, detailed plans for the seizure were compiled by the man charged with overseeing the custody of the German ships at Scapa Flow, Vice-Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle. The plans were that the German ships would be seized on the expiry of the deadline of 21 June. This deadline was then extended to 7 p.m. on 23 June.

The 21<sup>st</sup> June was the same day that von Reuter had decided on scuttling the fleet as he anticipated a German government refusal of the peace terms, and, being deprived of access to reliable communications, was not aware of the extended deadline to 23 June issued by the Allies on 17 June. On 20 June orders were issued by the Admiralty that the German ships were to be seized on the expiry of the extended deadline of 7 p.m. on 23 June and their crews were to be landed in the Cromarty Firth. The Admiralty orders also stated that "it is to be remembered that their status will have become that of prisoners of war" – an

obvious acknowledgment of their non-prisoner legal status up to that point.

Without being aware of any of this, as far as von Reuter was concerned the Allies were about to make good their threat to resume the war on Germany in the event of the deadline expiring without an agreement. Then, when the First Battle Squadron, under Vice-Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle, the British Commander at Scapa, consisting of five battleships two light cruisers and nine destroyers, sailed out towards the North Sea on the morning of Saturday, 21 June to take part on a gunnery exercise leaving a small number of boats in the Flow to guard the German ships, he came to the natural conclusion that the British Navy was once more at war with Germany. It was then that he executed the order to scuttle the German ships to ensure that they did not fall into British hands. Von Reuter's action in this regard was completely consistent with the standing orders of the German Navy which placed the responsibility on the officer in charge to ensure that his ship was not taken by the enemy.

Von Reuter gave the order to send the pre-arranged message by flag-signal ordering the scuttling of all ships at 10.30a.m. The order was repeated by semaphore and by morse code on the signal lamps. As the German ships were strung out over a wide area it took some time for the message to travel from ship to ship and some on the outer reaches of the fleet only received the order an hour after it had been sent.

The first German ship to sink was the *Friedrich der Grosse* at 12.16p.m. followed by the *König Albert* at 12.54 p.m. At 1 p.m. news of the sinking German ships reached Fremantle's squadron and he ordered an immediate return to Scapa. The first of Fremantle's ships arrived back in Scapa at 2 p.m. and the last at 4 p.m.

### **British Admiralty's cleansing of home waters**

What happened between noon and the evening of 21 June at Scapa Flow has never been properly explained. There have been various accounts and there are certain things can be confirmed by the force of their repetition in these accounts. The British Admiralty did not deny that German sailors in lifeboats were fired upon by British sailors as they were seeking to flee the sinking ships. The British Admiralty also admitted that the purpose of this shooting was to convince the German sailors to obey British orders to return to their sinking ships. It is also admitted that some of Admiral Fremantle's ships, after returning to Scapa fired salvos of shells at what we do not know but presumably at the German ships. What remains in dispute is responsibility of the British naval officers in issuing orders to fire and the number of casualties both direct and indirect resulting from these orders.

The claim that no German sailors drowned appears to be the least convincing part of the British Admiralty's account. This assertion was challenged in some newspaper reports almost immediately after the event, notably by a special correspondent of the *Leeds Mercury* (see: *Many Germans Presumed to Have Been Drowned*, *Leeds Mercury*, 24 June 1919, p.1). Other newspapers carried eye-witness accounts that indicated significant numbers of drowned sailors. In one case a small fishing vessels happened to arrive at Scapa as the scuttling was in progress:

"When the fishermen had been at the pier about five minutes they heard something that seemed like the firing of a rifle, and

immediately afterwards one of the German destroyers toppled over and sank. Shortly afterwards further firing was heard, and the men saw two German vessels heel over and sink. The crews on board these vessels jumped overboard just as the vessels were settling down. One of the fishermen who was standing on the pier observed one of the big German warships with two white funnels sink and also saw a British vessel take a large German warship in tow and run her ashore. Small boats were launched from the British vessels and proceeded to pick up the men in the water, but in spite of this the fishermen are of the opinion that a great number must have been lost.” (How They Went Down: An Eye-witness’s Story, Gloucester Echo, Monday, 23 June 1919, p.3).

Another account that appeared in several papers at the time was that of a naval officer:

“A Cowes naval officer who witnessed the sinking of the German Fleet at Scapa Flow, writing home says: - ‘The Hun officers sank the ships. The men knew nothing about it until the ships began to sink, so, naturally, many men were drowned. On one ship, The Kaiser, the whole crew perished. Some got on rafts, but the water was too cold for them. Many German officers tried to get ashore, and were shot when refusing to stop. The whole of Scapa Flow was covered with oil.’ (German Warships Crew Drowned at Scapa: Naval Officer’s Story of Scuttling, Yorkshire Evening Post, Thursday, 26 June 1919, p.7).

Likewise, the Daily Herald on 24 June reported a figure of between 300 and 700 casualties with “some hundreds of German sailors” having perished.

Also, one historian, quoted a local reporter of the Orkney Herald as follows:

“The sea for a time around the sinking ships was alive with German sailors. Some were on rafts, others in boats; whilst a large number with lifebelts on threw themselves into the water. Of these latter, many were drowned, as it was impossible to keep afloat in water which, by this time, was covered with a thickness of oil emitted from the reservoirs of the doomed ships. We understand that a number of others were killed or wounded while trying to effect their escape seawards, and who would not surrender when called upon to do so.” (The Final Betrayal: the Armistice 1918 . . . And Afterwards, by Richard Garnett, published by Buchan & Enright, Southampton, 1989, p.87).

Yet, historians like Dan van der Vat continue to give credence to the Admiralty’s claim for a low number of casualties. In what was a useful book in many respects van der Vat described the terrifying events following the actions of the British on discovering that the scuttling of the German boats had began:

“Meanwhile pandemonium with a strong dash of panic had broken out among the British guard-boats in the Flow when it dawned on them what was happening; the confusion was more than redoubled when the main force came back. There was indiscriminate shooting from small arms, machine-guns and the occasional shell from heavier guns aboard the destroyers.” (Van der Vat, p.175).

And further:

“As the two British destroyers, the Vegar and the Vesper, alerted by emergency signals from patrol drifters, steamed into the channel between Hoy and Fara, the first German ships they reached were the tail-end of the torpedo-boats which had been the last to get the order to scuttle because they were out of sight of the Emden. These were the ships of the Sixth Flotilla, anchored in an east-west line south of Lyness and separated from the rest by almost the entire length of the channel. This flotilla accounted for exactly half the casualties, four dead and eight wounded, incurred during the scuttling (the ninth death occurred after the crews had been rounded up and distributed among the British battleships: a German sailor failed to respond to a British order and was shot). The crews, having been the last to scuttle, were the last to abandon ship. The two British destroyers and four drifters closed in on the flotilla, opening fire with small arms. Lieutenant Zaeschmar of the V126 was in a lifeboat with thirteen men. Three of them were killed and four wounded. The rest were ordered back aboard and forced by threats of further shooting to turn off most of the valves that had been opened (the connecting rods which enabled this to be done from deck-level had not been broken). A stoker in the lifeboat of the V127 was shot in the stomach and died soon afterwards. The British managed to beach three ships of the flotilla, including the V126 and V127. Five others sank in shallow water and were not fully submerged. Circumstances conspired to ensure that the flotilla’s contribution to the scuttling was the least effective of the interned fleet. But Zaeschmar could still write from prison-camp: ‘It was a sublime and yet so deeply sad feeling to see virtually nothing left of our beautiful fleet.’

“A drifter put an armed boarding party aboard the battleship Markgraf. The captain, Lt.-Cdr. Walther Schumann, was helping to complete the last acts of destruction to ensure the ship sank, but he emerged waving a white flag. He was shot through the head. So was a chief petty officer. But Fleet Engineer Faustmann, senior engineer-officer of the Interned Formation, managed to stay below and complete the work, and the Markgraf eventually sank at 4.45p.m., the penultimate to go to the bottom (the very last, at 5 p.m., being the battle cruiser Hindenburg . . .“

“When Freemantle returned to the Flow some of the destroyers fired salvos, but apparently hit nothing. Their leader, Captain MacLean, is said by a number of German sources to have threatened any German commander whose ship sank with summary execution. A number of officers were lined up on the S132 of the Sixth Flotilla and a Royal Marine firing squad was drawn up. Nothing happened. A man described as ‘an English civilian’ (probably an officer who had rushed back from time ashore) boarded another destroyer, put a pistol to the head of Lieutenant Lampe, who had become separated from his men and was calling them, pulled the trigger – and missed. The muzzle slipped and the lieutenant escaped with a nasty gash, a burn and ringing in his ears which must have sounded like sweet music for a while.” (Ibid., pp.176-177).

Yet, despite these incidents and the admission that the British used an inordinate amount of ammunition during the hours of the attack on the German sailors he refuses to accept that what they represented was any systemic effort to exert lethal tactics in order to get the Germans to behave as the British demanded. He suggests “that most of it was prompted by feelings of

panic, anger and impotence” on the part of British sailors. His main rationale for acquitting the British from culpability in a systematic war crime was “The numbers involved were remarkably small (it is even more remarkable that not a single man drowned, and that must largely be due to prompt British action) – so small that they argue the absence of system.” In other words, he takes one Admiralty claim – the low number of casualties – in order to give credence to another Admiralty claim – that no war crime was committed!

In formulating this conclusion van der Vat fails to acknowledge the manner in which evidence of what took place was effectively managed by the British authorities. Almost immediately after the scuttling the British Admiralty placed the entire area of Scapa Flow under a press clamp-down. Marines were despatched to guard the beaches and any representative of the press barred from visiting. According to the Irish Independent of 24 June 1919, such was the determination of the Admiralty to keep what happened at Scapa Flow under wraps, “Although censorship is not now in operation in Britain, Pressmen have been forbidden to land in the Orkneys to gather the full facts of the case, this fact causing considerable indignation amongst the British Press.”

Then, on 30 July, in response to a question from Viscount Curzon if the Government was intending to hold a Court of Inquiry into the events he was told by Walter Long, the First Lord of the Admiralty that “it was not proposed to hold a Court of Inquiry”.

There were only two judicial procedures initiated in Britain associated with the deaths of German seamen who were involved in the scuttling at Scapa Flow. One was the trial of able seaman James Wooley, age 20, which began on 28 November 1919. He was charged with the murder by shooting of Kuno Eversburg, of the German battleship Frankfurt, on 23 June 1919, two days after the scuttling, while he was held on board H.M.S. Resolution as a prisoner of war. Wooley’s trial in Edinburgh began on 28 November 1919 and went on until 9 February 1920 when the verdict was “Not Proven” despite the fact that there were twenty witnesses for the prosecution (one of whom overheard him saying that he was going to kill a German prisoner in revenge for losing two brothers during the war) and Wooley had absconded after the shooting.

The other was an inquest in January 1920 into the death of Stoker Johann Beck who was a member of the crew of one of the ships scuttled at Scapa Flow. The inquest found that he had been depressed and felt dishonoured at being a prisoner of war and had taken his own life by deliberately overdosing on morphine at Park Hall Prisoner of War Camp, Oswesry.

There were no inquests into the officially acknowledged German deaths that occurred at Scapa Flow during the scuttling as these were deemed by the British to be casualties of the war and therefore not subject to the judicial process of an inquest. Thus, the absence of an official inquiry into the scuttling and its associated actions and the absence of any inquests into the officially acknowledged German deaths meant that all that was left by way of evidence was the testimony of those who witnessed these events either as victims, observer or perpetrators.

Although the suspicion that the British Admiralty suppressed evidence of what actually occurred at Scapa Flow on 21 June

1919 was hinted at by Dan van der Vat he could not bring himself to actually say it. This is what he says regarding the material held in the British archives and German archives on this event:

“The German material is raw and extremely comprehensive; the files in the British Public Record Office at Kew in Greater London, whose staff were no less helpful, were neat, rather thin and suspiciously sanitised. . . The sparseness of the British files attest to the official British attitude about the events in Scapa Flow in 1919: least said, soonest mended.” (The Grand Scuttle: the sinking of the German Fleet at Scapa Flow in 1919, by Dan van der Vat. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1982, preface, p.14).

Van der Vat’s acceptance of the Admiralty’s account of the number of casualties was dependent on also accepting a figure on the number of Germans who were alive on the German ships on the eve of 21 June. As already indicated he puts that figure at 1,700 (p.157) but provides no convincing reason why he rejected the implied much higher German figure which would have been in excess of 2,000. His figure for the number of 1,774 Germans taken into custody as prisoners of war in the aftermath of the scuttling (p.180) is also not consistent with the earlier figure he himself provided as those alive prior to the events of 21 June.

In the aftermath of the scuttling Admiral von Reuter and his men were taken into custody as a prisoner of war. Shortly afterwards he and some of his officers began collecting evidence from among his crews in order to make the case for a British war crime. Much of this material was later housed in the German archives and consisted of recollections of personal experience of German seamen. This remains the only actual evidence of the recipients of British actions on 21 June. Yet, van der vat dismisses it in one sentence: “A whole kaleidoscope of incidents is recorded in the German Archives, many of them uncorroborated or distorted by memory or time.” (Van der Vat, p.175). Again, no reasoning is provided to justify the implied conclusion that this evidence is unreliable. What more convincing evidence can he muster to underpin this conclusion? There was no official inquiry, reporters were barred from investigating the events in situ, and no inquests on the officially confirmed dead German sailors ever took place. All that is left from the British side are heavily censored reports in newspapers and eye-witness accounts that themselves are open to the very same charge of being “uncorroborated or distorted by memory or time.”

The Allies punished Germany for the scuttling of the German ships at Scapa Flow by adding further conditions to the peace which included the handing over of 300,000 tons of harbour material including the immediate handover of 192,000 tons of harbour materials including dock cranes etc. Until the Germans agreed to this additional penalty diplomatic relations with Germany would continue to be suspended and the final return of Scapa Flow German prisoners of war delayed.

On 10 January 1920, the Allies and Germany finally ratified the Treaty of Versailles which included the protocol including the latest demands on Germany. It was only then that the Scapa Flow prisoners were allowed home with Admiral von Reuter among the last. In the interim both he and his officers had been



held under the threat that they may be tried as war criminals by the Allies on account of their role in the scuttling of the German Fleet. This perverse threat was yet another pressure point applied to Germany only relieved by Germany finally agreeing the ratification of the treaty.

Regarding the distribution of what remained of the German Navy's surface ships. Some of these had not been part of the High Seas Fleet sent to Scapa on 21 November but had remained in German ports. A question was asked in the House of Commons on 5 May 1920 regarding these ships and was answered on behalf of the First Lord of the Admiralty by Sir James Craig, who was then Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty:

“All the ships will be broken up, with the exception of five light cruisers and ten destroyers, which will be incorporated in the French fleet, a similar number in the Italian fleet, and six torpedo-boats allocated to Poland and six to Brazil for police purposes.”

He further answered to a related question:

“As regards men-of-wars, Germany has already surrendered four battleships, four light cruisers, twenty-six destroyers, and all submarines. It was anticipated that a further two battleships would be surrendered in May. The above included the ships salvaged after having been sunk at Scapa Flow. As regards other naval material, the surrender was delayed pending a decision as to the armament of the German post-war fleet. This point was decided by the Conference of Ambassadors on 16<sup>th</sup> March last, but the Committee of Control in Berlin has not yet reported.”

As to the dead German sailors, although the German Government protested at the way in which the British had behaved they were somewhat cowed by an implied threat from the British that they would be held responsible for giving the orders for the scuttling. Had this been upheld by the British (something its power over events made possible even without evidence) it would have involved another round of penalties more severe than what was actually demanded in compensation. Given the state that Germany had been reduced to the Government was understandably eager to get on with the peace treaty and the highlighting of a British atrocity was not a priority. In this instance justice gave way to pragmatic politics and the rigorous presentation of the German case never really materialised.

Any understanding of what happened at Scapa Flow on 21 June 1919 requires an objective assessment of the surviving evidence on both sides and distilling what is credible from what is not. The sensibilities of British historians militated against establishing this basic requirement and the explanation handed to history by the British Admiralty remained to all intents and purpose unquestioned.

Then four years ago a document emerged from an unlikely source that would seem to confirm the German claim of it being a war crime. It consisted of a letter written the day after the scuttling by a British seaman who was witness to the events during that fateful afternoon. Of all the eye-witness accounts this must be seen as the most reliable. It was written by Edward Hugh Markham David (known as “Hugh” or “Ti”), at the time

an 18 year old sub-lieutenant serving on Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle's flagship the “Revenge”. The letter was written by him to his mother and resurfaced in 1999 when his daughter found it among her mother's possessions after she died. It was reproduced on 19 June 2015 in the BBC Online Magazine.

In the letter sub-lieut. David began by informing his mother that the Admiralty had told everyone involved that they were “going to publish nothing yet awhile” on what had happened at Scapa Flow and he warned that if she divulged anything of the contents “it will be my exit from the service if you do.” He went on to describe the events in question as follows:

“Yesterday at 9.45 the squadron, with all destroyers at Scapa Flow, put to sea for torpedo exercises – at 12.45 we received a wireless informing us that a German battleship was sinking – we turned and at full speed dashed back to Scapa – we got back at 3.30 and the sight that met our gaze as we rounded the Island of Flotta is absolutely indescribable. A good half of the German fleet had already disappeared, the water was a mass of wreckage of every description, boats, carley floats [a form of life-raft – ED], chairs, tables and human beings, and the “Bayern”, the largest German battleship, her bow reared vertically out of the water was in the act of crashing finally bottomwards, which she did a few seconds later in a cloud of smoke bursting her boilers as she went. As soon as we appeared we were besieged by trawlers and drifters of all descriptions loaded with dead and alive Germans all piled together – in the first a group of ragged desperadoes were clustered together in the bow, a little further aft sat the German Admiral Von Reuter and at his feet lay a German commander stretched across a hatchway with a bullet through his head, and so on, the same in them all. I have seen men killed for the first time in my life and at that without the crash of action to keep ones spirit up, and it has made me think, God, it has made me think.”

He was also present when Admiral Fremantle took the surrender from Admiral von Reuter on board the “Revenge” and being close to the two men on the deck he heard the conversation between them. After recounting this conversation he went on

“All this only took a few seconds during which time I strapped a revolver round my waist grabbed some ammunition and leapt into the drifter with an armed guard told off to save the “Hindenburg”. The Hindenburg went as we were getting alongside very nearly taking us with her. We then got alongside “Baden” who was going down fast and hurried below to see what we could do to save her – we closed watertight doors – which kept her up temporarily but she eventually had to be towed ashore. We found a little German sub lieut below, who was dragged onto the upper deck and the flag Captain told him he would be shot at sunset if he did not immediately take us below and show us how to shut off the valves – his only reply was – “You can shoot me now, I do not mind”.

“The terrible part of the whole show, to my mind, was that the Huns hadn't got a weapon between them and it was our bounden duty to fire on them to get them back to close their valves.

“You see the ships were sunk by opening up the sea cocks at the bottom of their ships and the only way we could save the ships was to force the men back onboard to shut them down – none of them would go back even after half their boat

crews had been butchered – they were brave men – but we were in an awful position as it was quite obvious that the Huns would die to a man rather than save their ships so that there was no point in going on firing – yet what could we do? The ships had to be saved – what the world will think I really don't know. We are now back at Scapa having taken the prisoners down to Cromarty and turned them over to the military. A proper description is infinitely difficult to give and this one is particularly poor, but I have written it as a letter more than an accurate chronicle of events. I will leave the many incidents to your imagination until I come home. We lost very few men, just one or two were knifed as they climbed aboard the German ships, by fanatics who had stayed behind. The whole thing has been a colossal disaster and we all await the criticism of the public on the British Navy with some misgiving. I am positive that we could never have saved the ships even if we had been in harbour at the start, but the world won't believe it, I know."

Sub-Lieutenant David left the Royal Navy a few months after he witnessed the events at Scapa Flow and joined the R.A.F. where he rose to the rank of Group Captain. He was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List in 1942 and died in August 1957 taking his knowledge, which he had put down on paper as a naïve 18 year old with him to the grave.

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## Corbyn And Anti-Semitism

by **Brendan Clifford**

**Dick Barry Editor**

**Bevin Books 2018**

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**Introduction by Brendan Clifford**  
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What is a Nation? by Ernest Renan The Nation, by Joseph Stalin Epilogue by Brendan Clifford Introduction drawing out the implications for the Two Nations Theory and other matters, by Brendan Clifford. A nation is a historically evolved mixture of things: race, religion, language, economic interest, geographical factors, dynastic influence. All of these things, or some of them, are blended, in various proportions, through historical events, to produce the sense of communal affinity between very large numbers of people that is called nationality. The blend is the nation. Its reality is in the blend. It is not reducible to any one of its components, though one or other of the components may be particularly emphasised in particular phases of national development. Ireland is a nation; so is Northern Ireland: when NI became systematically less British in its political life, it did not lose the collective sense of itself as a distinct social body with a will to survive, even in conflict with Britain. This is why in 1969 Brendan Clifford described the two nations as two Irish nations. At the time he published the two nations analysis of the Northern situation, together with extracts from the two classic works on nationality from opposite sides of the European political spectrum (Renan and Stalin) to show what he meant by a nation, This pamphlet reproduces these extracts, with a new introduction by Brendan Clifford and an epilogue discussing the relationship between class and nation, war in an imagined world, invented nations, the nation as historic territory, Charles O'Connor, and sectarianism.

# How and why did the British set the Greeks against the Turks?

## Introduction by Pat Walsh

This is the Centenary of the invasion of Ottoman Anatolia by the Greek Army acting as Lloyd George's cat's-paw to enforce a punitive settlement on the Ottoman Turks.

The political and military assault launched by Britain during the Great War on neutral Greece and the devastating effect this ultimately had on the Greek people across the Balkans and Asia Minor is almost completely forgotten about in Western Europe. The Greek King Constantine and his government tried to remain neutral in the War but Britain was determined to enlist as many neutrals as possible to help win it, no matter the consequences.

This was necessary for three main reasons:

Firstly, English Liberalism had to present the Great War as a great moral crusade of good versus evil in order that their M.P.s and base would support it. This meant that neutrality was almost impossible for others, as countries had to be either 'for' or 'against' the 'war for civilization' against 'barbarism.' This really was an innovation in the conduct of war and gave the Great War its catastrophic character because an accommodation or peace could hardly be made with evil, particularly for the Nonconformists, who made up a great deal of the Liberal rank and file. This thwarted all efforts at peace, particularly those of Pope Benedict XV, who tried to put a stop to Europe destroying itself in 1917.

Secondly, English Liberalism was opposed to military conscription. That made it necessary, once the Germans had not been defeated quickly, to get others to do the fighting for Britain – the fighting that the Liberal Party was reluctant to impose on its own citizens for fear of interfering in their freedoms. So, it became the norm to bully and bribe other nations to fight to avoid conscription at home, where liberal values mattered most.

Thirdly, the Liberal Imperialists, like Churchill, favoured a policy of expansion of the War in a desperate attempt to win it. In France and Belgium the war had got bogged down into a static war of attrition where great casualties were being suffered. The thinking was that if the fringes of Europe, and even Asia, were set ablaze this would let others take the casualties and stretch the forces of the Central Powers wider and wider to weaken their lines.

So, England made offers to the Greek Prime Minister, Venizélos, of territory in Anatolia which he found too hard to resist. Metaxas, the Greek Chief of Staff, had opposed such an adventure as madness. The Greek King, under the Constitution, had the final say on matters of war and he attempted to defend his neutrality policy. This was unacceptable to Britain, and tantamount to the action of an enemy. The King was described as a German puppet. Constantine was then deposed by the actions of the British Army at Salonika, through a starvation blockade by the Royal Navy, and finally by a seizure of the harvest by Allied troops.

This had the result of a widespread famine in the neutral nation that forced the abdication of King Constantine.

These events led to the Greek tragedy in Anatolia because the puppet government under Venizélos, installed in Athens through Allied bayonets, was enlisted as a cat's-paw to bring the Turks to heel after the Armistice at Mudros. They were presented with the town of Izmir/Smyrna first and then the Greeks, encouraged by Lloyd George, advanced across Anatolia toward where the Turkish democracy had re-established, at Ankara, after it had been suppressed in Constantinople. Britain was using the Greeks and their desire for a new Byzantium in Anatolia to get Atatürk and the Turkish national forces to submit to the Treaty of Sèvres, and the destruction of not only the Ottoman State but Turkey itself.

The Greeks were a useful cat's-paw because after the War Britain was virtually bankrupt and the promise had been made by Lloyd George to demobilize the troops immediately in order to win a snap election he called just after the Armistices. So the Greek Army was needed to do the imposing of the Treaty of Sèvres which British Imperial forces were unable to undertake for lack of British treasure and a lack of will to shed further English blood.

The Greek Army, which initially advanced well, finally perished just short of Ankara, after being skilfully manoeuvred into a position by Atatürk, in which its lines were stretched. Atatürk concluded an alliance of convenience with the Bolsheviks to secure his Eastern flank against the Armenians, who the British were urging to link up with Greeks. This was advantageous for both Atatürk and Lenin. It helped the Bolsheviks to secure Transcaucasia and the oil of Baku.

If Lloyd George had made a speedy and honourable peace with Ottoman Turkey in 1919, as Churchill proposed, and allied with Istanbul against Bolshevism it is conceivable that the Caucasus would have been held against Lenin with dramatic results. The history of the world would have been different.

Because the British Prime Minister adopted the course he did and managed to secure his Hellenic ally by irredentist rewards the ancient Greek population of Asia Minor fled on boats from Smyrna, with the remnants of their army after Britain had withdrawn its support, because the Greek democracy had reasserted its will to have back its King.

In the following article Turan Cetiner presents material concerning the Greek invasion of Anatolia that is not generally available to a Western audience about an event that, despite its historical importance, has all but been forgotten, despite the phrases that decorate First World War "Remembrance" such as "Lest We Forget".

## One hundred years ago: The Greek invasion of “Smyrna” and the last crime of the Great War, May 15, 1919,

by Dr. Y. Turan Cetiner

One hundred years ago, fuelled by the post-WW I ambitions of the victorious powers, the Greek invasion of Izmir which then, they chose to refer to as “Smyrna” was a devastating episode in the unending Great War on the Ottoman Empire. On October 30, 1918, the Allies and the Ottoman Empire had signed the Armistice of Mudros to end hostilities between them. Shortly afterwards, on November 11, 1918, the Allies and Germany signed the Compiègne Armistice to end hostilities on the Western Front.

Two days later, on November 13, 1918, British and Allied troops occupied the Ottoman Capital, Istanbul - which they always choose to refer to as “Constantinople”. French, Italian and other Allied troops followed in like actions. In January 1919, the Allied Leaders, Prime Minister Lloyd George, Greece’s Premier Venizelos, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and France’s Georges Clemenceau et al, met in the Paris Peace Conference- for which the “Peace” label was a mere cover for victor’s justice over the defeated powers, with its punitive arrangements. Urged and sponsored by Lloyd George, the Allies’ Paris Conference decided that the Greek army should occupy “Smyrna”, Ottoman Empire’s Aegean port city.

### Paris Conference and its Decision on the Greek Invasion of Izmir

On May 15, 1919, Premier Venizelos’ Greek armies invaded and occupied Izmir, “assisted by the American, British, French, and Italian naval forces.”(The Report of the Inter-Allied Commission of Enquiry into the Greek Occupation of Smyrna and the Surrounding Districts (October 7, 1919), hereinafter referred to as The Report of Enquiry).

Venizelos had been engaged in a relentless effort to ensure Greece’s participation in the war. He recommended “the immediate participation of Greece in the Dardanelles Campaign of the Allies. Greece would get Smyrna as previously promised as compensation for such a brave move. Even Constantinople would be annexed to Greece” (A. Pallis, 1937: 17). King Constantine in his turn, was against participation in the war and was accused of being in sympathy with Germany by the British on the basis that he had his higher education in Germany and was awarded the title of Field Marshall by Wilhelm II. And, he was married to Wilhelm II’s sister.

Another perspective is needed here and this could be the importance of aristocracies’ “positive role” in maintaining the stability of Europe, if that was possible. However, such an attitude was generally not in place at all in the European ruling dynasties’ performing of policies to save their countries from the perils of the war. It is undeniable that King Constantine I of Greece, at least for some time, was exercising a cautious role through endorsing Greece’s policy of neutrality in a war ever encroaching on its territory, which in fact, had turned to be an imminent threat following the Anglo-French invasion of Thessalonika in September, 1915. Evidently, “through most of 1916 and 1917, the Allied commanders [in Salonika] had been more occupied with badgering the Greeks than with fighting the Bulgarians” (Stokesbury, 1981: 294). This being the case, Venizelos was considerably backed by the Allies in his efforts to force the King Constantine to abdicate and enter the war.

Venizelos’ insistence had initially cost him his premiership when Constantine and the Greek general staff opposed alliance with the Entente, and he was forced to resign on March 6, 1915. However, he assumed the premiership again in the same year after anti-Constantine factions gained power in the aftermath of the German-Austrian-Bulgarian advances towards Greece. The dispute brought about a constitutional crisis that came to be known as the *Ethnikos Dikhasmos*, the national schism. The ensuing political turmoil with serial changes of government ended in Venizelos’ favour as he once again assumed the premiership in June 1917 and had a free hand to send Constantine into exile to enthrone Constantine’s son, Alexander. As the time was finally ripe, he declared war on Central Powers.

The pressure of the Triple Entente, particularly British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, greatly facilitated Venizelos’ decision to enter the war. “His position was reinforced in January 1915 when Britain promised to award Asia Minor (including all of Modern Turkey) to Greece if Greece would lend military support to the Serbs and to the proposed British and French invasion of the Turkish mainland at Gallipoli.”(Curtis, 2013: 45).

No appraisal of the ambitions of Venizelos during these years should neglect the fact that a major part of the Great War strategy of the British Empire coincided with the Megali Idea. Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, in a dispatch to Washington on January 17, 1917 had stated that “evidently the interest of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall, if possible, be brought to an end.” (Temperley, 1969: 172). Orchestrating a large attack on Turkey wherever and whenever was possible, made the Greeks ideal candidates for fulfilling Britain’s objectives.

The Armistice of Mudros was not the end of the Great War on the Ottoman Empire. Following the Armistice, it was only a matter of finding the most appropriate option be it the Italians or the Greeks to perpetuate the unsatisfied war aims of the Allies. In the Paris Conference, the Allied leaders, having already partitioned among themselves the vast Ottoman Empire lands, including North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula then turned their minds to detaching and partitioning among themselves the other major parts of the Ottoman Empire, such as Izmir and Istanbul.

The relatively easy fall of “Constantinople” to the British caused Venizelos’ appetite to grow and demand Greece’s share of the spoils from the collapsed Ottoman Empire. Indeed, Venizelos’ aspirations to “recapture Constantinople” and the setback he faced require further research to understand the magnitude of the efforts directed at partitioning the Ottoman Empire. He would soon, however, have to “settle” for, not the main object of his heart’s desire, “Constantinople”, but the second Grand Prize of the Ottoman lands - the charming Aegean port city of Izmir.

Venizelos was experienced enough to see that to pursue his vicious objectives he had to overcome rival competitors. Therefore, pushing the Italians aside through exploiting the differences of Rome and London in the European post-war settlements negotiations was a task he set himself. Having claimed “belligerent status” he was backed by the Allied war

machine in invading Izmir on May 15, 1919, which he presented as the pinnacle of his personal success and judgment.

During the first week of May 1919, the Italian anger towards the unfulfilled promises of the treaty-breaking British increased. The British and French were uncomfortable about the increased Italian presence along the coast of Turkey. On May 2, when the Big Three met, more reports of Italian moves along the coast of Asia Minor were coming in. "Madness," said Lloyd George. Clemenceau was for a tough line: "If we don't take precautions, they will hold us by the throat." (MacMillan, 2003: 429). Another player likely to be much more cooperative with British interests than the embittered Italians soon emerged as perfect candidates to quell the Italian advance. Lloyd George announced that Venizelos had offered to send Greek warships.

Venizelos was stirring up feelings against the Italians and offering to help the Allies. He had been working hard from the start of the Paris Conference to press Greek claims, with limited success and the crisis with the Italians was, he recognized, Greece's great opportunity. "Although Venizelos tried to argue that the coast of Asia Minor was indisputably Greek in character, and the Turks in a minority, his statistics were highly dubious. For the inland territory he was claiming, where even he had to admit that the Turks were in a majority, Venizelos called in economic arguments.... To show how reasonable he was being, he renounced any claims to the ancient Greek settlements at Pontus on the eastern end of the Black Sea." (Ibid.: 430). He would not listen to petitions from the Pontine Greeks, he assured House's assistant (and the President Woodrow Wilson's private translator), Bonsal: "I have told them that I cannot claim the south shore of the Black Sea, as my hands are quite full with Thrace and Anatolia." (Ibid.).

### **Planning the Invasion and the Widening of Aggression**

Venizelos wrote in his diary that when they met, Lloyd George "started with a simple question":

"Lloyd George: Do you have troops available.

Venizelos: We do. For what purpose?

Lloyd George: President Wilson, M. Clemenceau and I decided today that you should occupy Smyrna.

Venizelos: We are ready. (Ibid.:432).

Acting euphorically, Venizelos met with the Big Three and their military advisers to conclude the invasion plan. He was confident of his military forces and the Greek inhabitants of Izmir would surely welcome them. The Turks, he thought, would not put up any resistance. "Lloyd George and Venizelos agreed that it would be best if French and English troops occupied the forts at the entrance to the harbour and then turned them over to the Greeks. . . . 'The whole thing,' wrote Henry Wilson, the British military expert, 'is mad and bad.'" (Ibid.)

Though, neither the Greeks, nor the Italians were ready to back down, especially on Izmir, Venizelos finally grasped a negotiating edge in sending the Greek occupation forces to Izmir. "When Venizelos reached out for Smyrna and its hinterland, he was going well beyond what could be justified in terms of self-determination. He was also putting Greece into a dangerous position. . . . From another perspective, though, it created a Greek province with a huge number of non-Greeks as well as a long line to defend against anyone who chose to attack from central Anatolia. His great rival General Ioannis Metaxas, later dictator of Greece, warned of this repeatedly: "The Greek state is not today ready for the government and exploitation of so extensive a territory" Metaxas was right." (Ibid.: 440-441).

The British were only interested in finding the most suitable pawn to further their war aims towards the ultimate dismantling of the Ottoman Empire. London was least of all concerned with rewarding Greece for its participation in the war, but primarily

focused on using Venizelos as its instrument. Venizelos thought that he would need to persuade the Allies that the majority of the population of the aforementioned region was Greek, in order to satisfy the requirements of "self-determination" that had infected the settlement with the appearance of US in the ranks of the Allies. However, the Ottoman Statistics of 1910 which has been widely accepted as a reliable source indicated that "the Greek population of the region was clearly fewer than the Turkish population. The total Greek population in the provinces of Aydin, Bursa and Biga was 511,544, while the Muslim (Turkish) population of the same provinces was 3,170,705." (Cited in, Erhan, 1999: 13).

Again, it was claimed that the Greek army would occupy the city and province of Izmir to stop the Turkish atrocities against the Greek population. "Venizelos reported to the Paris Conference on April 12, one month before the decision for occupation, "Some serious troubles had been occurring in Izmir and Aydin." He claimed, "Turks had committed some crimes against the Greeks in those regions" and emphasized his, "concern for the furtherance of such atrocities. Lloyd George and the French Premier Georges Clemenceau strongly supported these accusations, despite the lack of convincing evidence in order to justify occupation." (Ibid.:13, 14).

"On the morning of May 6, the Allies casually took the decision that set in train the events that destroyed, among many other things, Smyrna itself, Venizelos's great dream and Lloyd George's governing coalition." (MacMillan, 2003: 431).

The invasion started on May 15, 1919. Contrary to the scenario presented by Venizelos, the mood in the city was tense and tumultuous events occurred. The Turkish inhabitants of the city were deeply uneasy. Agents of the Greek government had been there since the end of the war, trying to stir up popular support for Greek rule. The British and French representatives viewed events sympathetically, the Italians with hostility. As the first Greek troops marched into city, excited Greek crowds cheered.

"It was like a holiday, until suddenly a shot was fired by somebody outside a Turkish barracks. Greek soldiers started firing wildly, and when Turkish soldiers stumbled out of the barracks in surrender, the Greeks beat them and prodded them along toward the waterfront with bayonets. The Greek onlookers went wild and joined in. Some thirty Turks died. All over Smyrna mobs sprang up, killing and looting. By the evening between 300 and 400 Turks and 100 Greeks were dead. The disorder spread out into the surrounding countryside and towns in the following days. It was a disaster for the Greeks and Greek claims, and a foretaste of what was to come.

Throughout Turkey the news of the landings was received with consternation. They seemed to many a first step to the partition of the Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire. . . . Atatürk had by now decided that the place to be was the interior, where there were troops and officers loyal to nationalist ideals. . . . The day after the Greeks landed in Smyrna, he left Constantinople with a visa from the British. Four days later, on May 19, he and his small party landed at the Black Sea port of Samsun. (Ibid., 432-433).

Supported by the Allied military supplies, the Greek army expanded their occupation, and penetrated the interior of Anatolia. These were by no means peaceful occupations. The Greek occupation of Izmir and the adjoining territories were catastrophic for any acceptable settlement and ultimately for Greek and British interests.

In the thirteen days between May 17 and May 29, 1919, the Greek army occupied Urla and Çeşme, and controlled the whole Izmir peninsula, including Menemen, Manisa, Aydin, Turgutlu, Bayindir and Tire. By the end of June, Odemis, Bergama (now Pergamon) and Kusadasi had been occupied as well. The

invasion of Aydin and smaller cities of Nazilli, Aydin, Odemis, Menemen, Manisa, Ayvalik and the villages between these were each scenes of indefinable violence and various atrocities.

### **The Greek Armies' Massacres and the Inter-Allied Commission of Enquiry**

The severity and enormity of the atrocities and massacres in the three-month Greek occupation of Turkish territory compelled the Allies to investigate the matter which resulted in a damning report of the invading Greek army almost seven months later. That said, the Paris Conference constituted its own Inter-Allied Commission of Enquiry into the Greek Occupation of Smyrna and Adjoining Territories. This Commission investigated the actions of the Greek troops during and in the aftermath of the occupation of Turkish territories. The Inter-Allied Commission of Enquiry was ordered to inquire into those responsible for the atrocities, and to submit their findings, conclusions and report urgently to the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers.

Despite Premier Venizelos' strong efforts to downplay the severity of Greek aggression, The Report of Enquiry provided an undeniable account of atrocities committed by the invading Greek troops. Importantly, Lausanne Treaty's underscoring of "the acts of the Greek Army or administration which were contrary to the laws of war (Article 59)" on July 24, 1923, were being documented as early as October 7, 1919, just six months after the start of Greek Armies' invasion of Izmir on May 15, 1919 and its continuing onslaught towards Anatolian cities.

The Greek Armies' massacres and atrocities against the Turkish population had prompted the ordering of this inquiry. The Commission held its first meeting in Istanbul on August 12, 1919. The Commission convened 46 times up until the end of the investigation on October 15. The first and last meetings were in Istanbul, but the Commission held all the others in the places where the incidents had occurred. The Commission visited Izmir, Menemen, Manisa, Aydin, Nazilli, Odemis, Ayvalik, Cine and the surroundings during the course of the inquiry and listened to 175 witnesses. There were Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Americans, British, French and Italians among the witnesses. (Cited in Erhan, 1999: 29)

Venizelos also tried to influence the Council through stating that the day before the occupation, the Turkish population had assembled and that protests against the occupation had taken stage. However, General Bunoust immediately refuted Venizelos's claims on the Turkish protests in Izmir. He explained, "These posters were not appeals for resistance and the Turkish population was only asked to assemble in order to prove that the Turkish element was in the majority. Moreover, the crowd of Turks was unarmed." (Ibid.: 38).

The spotlight must also be turned upon Venizelos' efforts to minimize the magnitude of mass slaughters by reducing these to isolated, individual crimes. He argued that whenever there had been complaints of excesses he had the culprits severely punished and that there had been two executions. Despite his claims, Venizelos was not successful in his efforts to persuade the Council that "the Greek government had taken all the necessary measures to prevent a recurrence of such incidents. At last he was forced to affirm that he did not wish to conceal anything and was ready to accept a commission of inquiry." (Ibid., 26). Yet, according to him, "some excesses had occurred in Anatolia" too. Constantly looking for excuses he put forward pretexts like "the Greek troops had been attacked in the streets by people firing at them out of windows and of roofs." Contrary to previous reports of the British officers from the field, Venizelos reduced all atrocities, even the massacre of prisoners, to, 'Rare and isolated instances.'" (Cited in, ibid.: 28).

Venizelos could not give a satisfactory explanation of any obvious massacres i.e. killing of 20 prisoners. "He only repeated, 'The Greek lieutenant commanding the escort of the prisoners was severely condemned after the incident.'" (Ibid.: 39).

The report provided the true account of events between May 15, 1919, the start of the Greek invasion of Izmir and October 15, 1919 when the investigation ended. Although later, Article 59 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty established the fact that "the acts of the Greek army or administration which were contrary to the laws of war" were both undeniable and dreadful, the background of these war crimes must be further elaborated. "W.L. Westermann, the American delegate to the Commission of Greek Claims at the Paris Peace Conference, recorded in a memorandum that, by the middle of June 1919.... the Greek army and Greek officials in Izmir had been acting in a manner of semi-barbarity." (Ibid, 22).

"The Report of Enquiry", under its "Account of Events that took place following the Occupation, which were established during the enquiry between 12 August and 6 October 1919," underscored that:

"No. 1. Since the armistice, Christians have not been in danger in the Turkish province of Aydin. The Greek population was unquestionably persecuted in 1914 and during the war, and treated unkindly in the months immediately after the armistice by the Vali Nouredin Pasha. However, since the rise to power of the current Vali Izzet Bey, all the inhabitants, regardless of race, have been treated impartially.

Despite the presence of several gangs of brigands in the region, we can confirm that peace has been restored. Fears of Christian massacres were unjustified. Investigations have shown that attempts to rally Muslims to a Greek massacre, which came to the attention of the Greek authorities a few weeks before the landing and which were forwarded to Athens, were not written by officers in the Turkish constabulary, whose signatures appeared on these documents. These documents are undoubtedly forgeries."

"The Report of Enquiry" was conclusive in its condemnation of the Greek High Command, which it held accountable for permitting grave atrocities during the Greek army's occupation of Izmir. It further stated that:

"No. 8. The Greek High Command took no preventive measures to maintain order whilst the Greek troops marched through the town [Smyrna]. It had only placed detachments of Greek sailors in the immediate vicinity of the two points chosen for the landing. In accordance with the orders of the representative of the Entente, the Turkish troops stayed in their barracks.

No. 9. The Greek, military, civil, and religious authorities did nothing to appease the crowd. The ceremony conducted by the Metropolitan to bless the troops on their landing only served to add fuel to the fire. The behaviour of the crowd, gathered along the route taken by the troops, incensed the Turkish inhabitants, and led to acts of violence being committed by zealous individuals."

The Metropolitan who blessed the Greek troops, as they marched through the streets of Izmir was Chrysostomos. More than three years later he would meet his fate when the Turks recaptured Izmir. Walder who in fact does not pay attention to this report concentrates on further details and describe the flow of events as "Monsignor Chrysostomos has another meeting with Nourredin Pasha, whom once he had said ought to be shot. Nourredin, now military governor, had not forgotten, and reminding the Archbishop of their last meeting, told him that he was to be hanged forthwith." (Walder, 1969: 176).

Turning back to the Report of Enquiry, it stated the terrible scene on the first days of the invasion as follows:

“No. 13 – Along the route taken from the Konaksquare to the ship *Patris*, where they were imprisoned, the first convoys of prisoners comprised of officers and soldiers, as well as the Vali [Governor] and civil servants, were tormented by the crowd which accompanied them and even by some of the Greek soldiers escorting them.

All the prisoners were robbed. They all had to shout ‘Zito Venizelos!’ (Long Live Venizelos), and walk with their hand raised. Some were massacred.....

No. 15 - On 15 and 16 May, countless acts of violence and looting targeted at the Turkish people and their homes took place in the town. Fezzes were stolen, preventing the Turks from leaving their homes. Many women were raped. Some people were murdered. The acts of violence and looting were committed for the most part by a mob of Greeks from the town, although it has been proven that soldiers also joined in and that the military authorities took no effective measures to stop the acts of violence and looting until it was too late.”

“The Report of Enquiry” also underscored that the Greek High Commissioner, who arrived in Izmir on May 21, acted against the prevailing orders communicated in the telegram of May 20. He authorised the Colonel in charge of the troops to issue orders for the following on May 23:

“No. 20 – ...

a) The occupation of Aydin;

b) Intervention in the regions of Magnesios [Manisa] and Kassaba [Turgutlu], without having first requested authorisation from the representative of the Entente. The Greek High Commissioner has acknowledged his responsibility in this matter before the Commission.”

The second part of the Report, “Establishment of Responsibilities” provided an undoubted account of how the war crimes of the invading Greek army started.

“No. 2. ...Far from being executed as a civilising mission, their occupation quickly turned into a kind of conquest and crusade.

No. 3. - Responsibility for events which took place in Smyrna on 15 and 16 May and in the immediate vicinity of the town in the first days following the landing lies with the Greek High Command and with certain officer who failed in their duty.

No. 4. – In the person of the civil Supreme Authority representing it in Smyrna, the Greek Government is responsible for the serious disturbances which led to bloodshed in the country while the Greek troops advanced...

a) ...Without requesting any authorisation from the representative of the Entente, it allowed the military Command to give the order on 10/23 May to send troops to Aydin-Magnesios and Kassaba outside the limits of the sanjak of Smyrna;

b) The same authority deliberately left the population in ignorance of the extent of the occupation, thus helping to increase the tension of the Muslim inhabitants and contributing to the ensuing chaos”. (The Report of Enquiry)

Report Section III, titled Conclusions put forward by the Commission, subsection I stated that:

“I.–The situation which has arisen in Smyrna and in the vilayet of Aydin following the Greek occupation is false because:

a) The occupation, which initially intended to maintain order, has all the appearances of an annexation. The only effective authority is in the hands of the Greek High Commissioner. The Turkish authorities which have remained in office no longer have any real power. They no longer receive orders from Constantinople, and in view of the near complete disappearance

of the Turkish police and constabulary no longer have the means necessary to execute their decisions;

b) The occupation is imposing considerable military sacrifice on Greece, a sacrifice which is out of proportion with the mission to be carried out if this mission is a temporary one and intended only to maintain order;

c) In its present form, it is incompatible with the restoration of order and peace, of which the population, threatened by famine, are in dire need”

Subsection III of the Conclusions put forward by the Commission, records the Commission’s recommendations were:

“III. Under these circumstances, the Commission suggests the following measures:

a) All or part of the Greek troops will be immediately relieved and replaced by proportionally smaller allied troops.

b) The Greek soldiers will be withdrawn from the occupied zone to avoid any contact with the Turkish national forces, but to rescue their self-esteem, they will continue to play a cooperative role in the occupation.

c) As soon as the Allied occupation takes place, the Turkish government will be required to reorganize the constabulary under the interallied officers’ direction and command.

This constabulary must be immediately reorganized to ensure order and security in the entire region, and replace the allied detachments to this end.

d) Simultaneously with the reorganization of the constabulary, the Turkish government must restore the civil administration.”

Having established Greek troops’ responsibility for their unwarranted violence towards the Turkish people, the “Report of Enquiry” also provided copious examples of Greek troops’ violations of many international rules. In fact, this senseless savagery and lengthy killing sprees in the following months of unexplainable kind were already published in detail and brought to the attention of international public opinion by the Permanent Bureau of the Turkish Congress at Lausanne (Greek Atrocities in the Vilayet of Smyrna, May to July 1919).

The massacres and summary executions carried out by the Greek army had clearly violated Article 50 of the Hague Peace Conference Regulations which stated that “principally, no general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, should be inflicted on the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly or severally responsible.” (Darcy, 2007: 17). Clearly, in view of the violations of the 1899 and 1907 Conventions, the Greek troops in Western Anatolia had not conducted their military operations under the principles of international law at all. Despite this fact and the Conclusions of the Report of Enquiry the only- futile - action that the Council actually took was “to send a letter to Venizelos to inform him that the Greeks were responsible for the atrocities and to warn him not to repeat the same mistake in the future.” (Erhan, 1999: 50)

While the partition and the invasions were continuing, the Sublime Porte succumbed to foreign pressure and signed the Treaty of Sèvres on August 10, 1920. Having seen the course of event moving from bad to worse, on May 19, 1919 Mustafa Kemal Pasha had landed in Samsun on the Black Sea, to lead the Turkish War of National Liberation. On 23 April 1920, Mustafa Kemal called the Grand National Assembly in Ankara and effectively formed a unified government. Therefore, May 19, 1919 marked the start of the Turkish War of Independence which was won, years later, on October 29, 1923, when the new independent Republic of Turkey was proclaimed.

Without a noteworthy condemnation from the Great Powers, the Greek army continued its operations and atrocities in Anatolia for over three more years. The Greek onslaught met the first resistance of the Grand National Assembly's army in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Inonu between 6 and 11 January 1921 which resulted in a stalemate. Greek army renewed its assault on March 23, 1921 and following a series of attacks and counter-attacks, the Greek III Army Corps retreated on March 31, yet still maintaining its order. The Greek army had also sustained its gradual advance on the line stretching from Izmir-Aydın to Kutahya and Eskisehir. Sakarya River became the last line of advancement where the Greek army was met with fierce resistance. On August 23, 1921, the people in Ankara heard the sound of Greek cannons fire when the assault started. (Gerede-Onal, 2003: 221). The Battle of Sakarya (August 23-September 13, 1921) culminated in the Turkish strategic victory at a huge cost particularly due to the high casualty rate among the officers.

The signing of the Treaty of Kars between the Ankara government, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the three Transcaucasian Soviet Republic on October 13, 1921 and the Treaty of Ankara with the French on October 20, 1921, helped to seal the fate of Venizelos' gamble. The decisive battle of the Great Offensive was won on August 30, 1922 and Izmir was liberated on September 9, 1922. The Greek army's onslaught that had started by the invasion of Izmir on May 15, 1919 and almost reached to the gates of Ankara, was pushed back to where it had started after three years and four months, in a matter of ten days.

The Greek army spent this interval in complete chaos to the extent that some units of the Turkish troops reached Izmir earlier than the withdrawing Greek troops did. Renowned Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet explained the bitterness of events to include the pity extended at the Greek soldiers in his famous "Epic of National Forces-Kuvayi Milliye Destanı". He wrote from the perspective of his real life inspired character, reserve officer Nureddin Esfak.

"Nureddin Esfak's leg was stumbled upon the gashed corpse of an enemy corpse. Nureddin said:

'Mikhail, the herdsman from Thessalia,'

Nureddin said:

'We did not kill you, but those who sent you here killed you...'"

(trans. by the author)

The Great Fire of Izmir which broke out on September 13 was found out to be the last crime of Armeno-Greek incendiaries. Commander of the French fleet in Izmir, French Admiral Charles Henri Dumesne reported to the Quai d'Orsay "a suspicion that our Consul General [Michel Grail let] is not far from sharing: on September 12, the Consul General of the United States, who remained very quiet, and kept in close contact with his colleagues, ordered suddenly the departure of all the American citizens [underlined by Dumesnil]." Dumesnil expressed the same suspicion toward the British Consul who evacuated his nationals as early as September 3 and pointed out that the information sources of American Consul who was an exponent of racist ideas, were Armenians, the ones of his British colleagues were Greeks, and as a result, wonders if the diplomats "knew in advance the danger to the city because of the Armenian or Greek arsonist organizations." (Report of Admiral Dumesnil, cited in, Gauin, 2017: 24)

## Venizelos in Retrospective

Greece tried to complete the reckoning with its past quickly and before the Lausanne Peace Treaty, on November 13, 1922, the trial by court martial had begun of Gounaris, the former Premier, Protopopadakis, the former Finance Minister, Theotokis, War Minister, Baltazzis, who had been Foreign

Minister, Stratos, the Minister of the Interior and General Hatzianestis, Admiral Goudas and General Strategos. Six out of nine defendants were sentenced to death whose executions were carried out four hours after the verdict. Goudas and Strategos received life imprisonment sentence.

They were found guilty of High Treason, which, in a sense, defined attacking the coastal cities of Turkey and beyond, in the guise of recapturing ancient Greek lands, as an act equal to treason. Metaphorically the unsuccessful campaign had betrayed both Greece and its "ancient" legacy. Venizelos' miscalculations and misrepresentation were indeed numerous. Not surprisingly, London was furious over the executions and the British Ambassador was withdrawn from Athens.

Prince Andreas (Andrew) who was the commander of the Greek Second Army Corps at the critical Battle of Sakarya and who had refused to obey the orders on September 19, 1921 to follow plans, which resulted in a bitter defeat, was also sentenced to death. He was then banished from Greece for life and following his release on December 3, 1922 was transported with his family by HMS Calypso, including the infant Prince Philip (later Windsor), was reputedly carried out to the vessel in an orange crate (Rocco:1992).

Gounaris, paid a heavy price for his two premierships terms between March 10 to August 23, 1915 and from April 8, 1921 to May 16, 1922. The Invasion of Izmir was commanded by him, and following his assumption of the premierships for the second time, he had failed to fulfil his pre-electoral promise of ending the war in Asia Minor. In fact, before and after his terms of office, the spiralling effects of Venizelos' war designs were completely in play regardless of changes in the Greek premierships which saw less influential political figures acquiring transient roles: "The new Plasters regime was seemingly determined to place all the blame for the Anatolian disaster on the previous government. Presumably Venizelos agreed with this policy, for without any apparent twinges of conscience over the part he had played himself, he sat contentedly at Lausanne negotiating with the Turks." (Walder, 1969: 340). Difficult decisions were made at Lausanne, to include the drawing of the frontier of eastern Thrace and Adrianople and the exchange of population. Undoubtedly, the Article 59 provided the final verdict on all these disasters and the war crimes committed by stating "the Greek army or administration "as the responsible of these grave atrocities and the outcomes of the war. Greece suffered another blow, which was unjust this time, as the Allies managed to escape from assuming their considerable share in the last crime of the Great War, although they had armed and instigated Athens and taken on an active role in enthusing the Greeks to their doom.

Right after Gounaris died on the scaffold, Venizelos, rather pathetically went to Lausanne in a last attempt to win the war at the conference table that he had lost in the field of battle. He was both the agitator and the agitated in the campaign against the Turks and that said, the fact should not be forgotten that as early as 1915, praising biographies had hit the shelves of the bookstores in London to promote him as a visionary statesman on a just cause. Writing the biography of a living person was not found contradictory when it came to him as the stakes were high and the reward substantial.

As soon as the Allied attack on Gallipoli began, on February 16, 1915, Venizelos had offered an army corps and the entire Greek fleet to commit in campaign. With a view to King Constantine's resistance to join the war, he prepared his third memorandum on the issue and insisted upon discussing it privately. He was adamant in his stance.

Greece would not need to fear becoming embroiled in Asia Minor with any of the Great Powers, because she could take advantage of their distrust of each other, not only to protect



her own portion of the Sultan's inheritance, but also to expand at the expense of all the Powers until the unity of Hellas was achieved. Thus Venizelos took Constantine on the mountain-top and showed him how the prophecy concerning the reign of the namesake of the founder and of the last sovereign of the Byzantine empire might be fulfilled. The role was Constantine XII's, if he were willing to play it. Speaking later of this interview, Venizelos said: "The King read the memorandum, and was visibly disturbed...the King, who quite evidently, as is clearly proved by subsequent events, had from the very beginning promised the Emperor of Germany that he would never be found in the Entente camp unless one of the Balkan States directly attacked him – the King said to me with great emotion, I remember the very words: 'Very well, then, in God's name.' That is to say, he consented. (Gibbons, 1920: 220-221).

A day later, when Colonel Metaxas, Chief of the General Staff presented his resignation underscoring that he could not remain in this position if a policy of which he did not personally approve was decided upon, Venizelos' dreams to join in the Dardanelles campaign were literally over. Metaxas was a prudent adviser. Venizelos' offer of a single army corps was not likely to make a difference in the balance of forces. The Dardanelles campaign had been mishandled and the element of surprise was lost. The campaign proved disastrous.

Writing in 1920, Gibbons argued that "neither the King nor the General Staff, both under German influence, sympathized with pan-Hellenic vision of the Premier." (Ibid. 218) In a strongly hostile attitude, he added that:

"They recognized no obligations to the Greeks outside of Greece. They repudiated the obligation to aid Serbia. They had no sense of gratitude to Great Britain for having declared, even before Turkey participated in the war, that the Turkish fleet, which had become formidable because of the acquisition of the Goeben and Breslau, would not be allowed to leave the Dardanelles to attack Greece. They showed no interest in the tentative offer of Cyprus and the promise of a share in the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire that included Smyrna." (Ibid.)

Inconsistencies of Gibbons as he conveyed his views to the British audience in 1920 were numerous in the above paragraph only. There was no sense in his blaming of the King and Metaxas who did not favour the war as he both forcefully and vaguely interpreted Greece's obligations to Greeks outside of Greece. No rationale could be found in extending an aid to Serbia. The German vessels Goeben and Breslau, which were added to the Ottoman Navy as a result of a series of events, by no means could be presented as an instrument to attack Greece. "An Offer of Cyprus" and the "promise of a share in the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire that included Smyrna" were nothing but vague promises for a war of aggression on the Ottomans. Yet, he also interpreted the resignation of Metaxas as a situation where "political opinions were affecting military judgment" and German propaganda "getting in its good work". (Ibid. 221).

Greece's and Venizelos' pivotal role was evident in these turning points. Not to mention the lengthy negotiations in Lausanne, two Conferences of London took place with an interval of nine years, to provide a revealing picture of Greek importance in events. The first Conference of London which had started in September 1912 and the further sessions of which had started on December 16, 1912 following the armistice to end the First Balkan War were the background to the ambitions of Venizelos. When the sitting had been suspended Venizelos said to the Ottoman delegates:

"You forget that we are at the close of a war, and that the whole of Turkey in Europe is occupied by the armies of the Allies. We ask you for a cession of territory; you reply by

talking about reforms. Reforms and territorial concession have no common factor; all discussion is impossible'.

'But you asked for reforms' said Rechid Pasha. 'Now we are offering them to you.'

'Reforms', retorted M. Venizelos 'were all very well before the war. Now that war is over they are quite inadequate. Is your answer final?'" (Kerofilas: 1915: 96)

Almost nine years later when the Conference of London was convened between February 21 – March 12, 1921 again, Venizelos had lost the premiership as a result of November 1, 1920 general elections. The elections were not held for the last five years because of the national schism between the King and Venizelos. Dimitrios Rallis of People's Party served as the premier between November 17, 1920 to February 6, 1921 and left his seat to Nikolaos Kalogeropoulos, who remained in this seat until April 8, 1921. Gounaris, the leader of People's Party, despite winning elections, would wait for his turn to assume the premiership until this date.

Despite his anti-Venizelist stance, Kalogeropoulos became the first to succumb to pressure and he decided to step up the Greek armies' operations in Anatolia. He, in fact, acted quickly to disperse any clouds of doubt, following the departure of Venizelos, that the Greek army would end its onslaught. On the contrary he said, "Greek army, facing Mustafa Kemal, consists of 121.000 soldiers, combatants and non-combatants, and was confident that it would be able to annihilate Kemal's forces within three months...He unhesitatingly affirmed that the Kemalists were in fact 'not regular soldiers; they merely constituted a rabble worthy of little or no consideration.' His confidence in the Greek troops was 'absolute, and their courage was undoubted.'" (Friedman, 2016: 238).

Kalogeropoulos and Gounaris represented the transformation of People's Party and the anti-Venizelists. Greece was on its course to continue the war in Anatolia and even the most obvious changes in the politico-military situation in the Turkish front could not be perceived in changing that. The Government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly was also present at the London Conference in equal terms, symbolizing the rise of a new power centre with full legitimacy. Athens' failure to see the new reality and its insistence on false assumptions were truly disastrous for Greece and the Greek community of Anatolia which were subjected to exchange of population as was long advocated by Venizelos.

Meanwhile, a plebiscite was held in Greece on December 5, 1920 which allowed the return of King Constantine I to reassume the throne following the death of his son, Alexander by a bizarre incident. "Pro-German "King Constantine I's return had no effect on the new government's decision to continue the war in Anatolia. Times had changed, Constantine, whose younger brother Prince Andreas was already the commander of the Greek Second Army Corps in Anatolia, was silenced.

## Conclusion

The Greek invasion of Izmir and other Turkish cities was part of Venizelos' irredentist war designs to re-establish the ancient Greek Empire Hellas. Forces of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, led by Mustafa Kemal, fought and won their political independence in this warring atmosphere which lasted more than four years from May 15, 1919, to July 24, 1923, the day that the Peace Treaty of Lausanne was signed, after lengthy and successful negotiations between Mustafa Kemal's comrade in arms Ismet Pasha and Lord Curzon, Britain's Foreign Minister under Lloyd George's successor, British Prime Minister Andrew Bonar Law.

Turco-Greek peace was completely restored during the time of Atatürk, who was actually nominated for the Nobel Peace

Prize by Venizelos in 1934 (Nobel Prize, (1934), Nomination Database, Mustafa Pascha Kemal). There have been decades long cordial relations between Turkey and Greece from 1930s to 1952 and a period of détente and cooperation. Following Turkey's rightful and yet, inevitable intervention in Cyprus as a guarantor power when the atrocities of Nikos Sampson's ethnic terror of ENOSIS had reached at its peak in 1974 and in an atmosphere of ensuing low-level tensions, a few bitter decades resulted.

Despite ever present ups and downs, many intellectuals of the two countries' common geography consider the Turco-Greek rapprochement as something worthwhile and worth pursuing. Former PM Bulent Ecevit's – who had also decided on the Turkish Peace Operation to Cyprus – poem bears a testimony to that; “You become aware when you feel homesick; That you are brothers with the Greek; Just look at a child of Istanbul; Listening to a Greek epic . . . What if in our veins; It were the same blood that flows?; From the same air in our hearts; A crazy wind blows.” There are indeed two great nations flourishing on the two sides of the Aegean that are much closer than they assume to each other. Disregarding of this truth through unconstructive gestures and revisionist interpretations of history, i.e. fabricating a “Pontus genocide” that is not only imaginary, but also contrary to what was documented in history may only lead to a failure to address the contemporary needs of the two Nations.

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## Battle for the Caucasus: Britain Versus Russia (Part 2)

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### By Pat Walsh

The struggle for the Caucasus began after the collapse of the Tsarist state in 1917 and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire the following year, opening up a large vacuum for someone to fill. Britain found itself in an unanticipated situation of gaining a large region it had not thought possible of taking. It was, of course, unthinkable for Britain to let the region be, as it was always thought that any region left to its own devices was an open invitation for a rival to step in.

Not only that. With Germany and the Ottomans defeated the Balance of Power policy – the great constant of British Foreign Policy – demanded that England return to its main rivalry with France and Russia, the two allies that it had procured for its Great War on Germany. The War on Germany, although Great, was a transient affair to see off a young upstart Power. Normal business should resume with the traditional enemy! The Caucasus should not be easily surrendered in the resumption of the Great Game with Russia, when it inevitably recovered from its temporary disablement. An opportunity presented itself and Britain did not get where it was in the World – on top of it – by not taking its opportunities.

In November 1918 General Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, outlined three possible lines of policy Britain could adopt to Russia (and the Caucasus), in a Memorandum presented to the War Cabinet.

The first option Wilson outlined was to withdraw all Allied forces from Russia, leaving the country surrounded by a belt of buffer states in a “*cordon sanitaire*”. This, however, would surrender the military initiative to the Bolsheviks and leave the buffer states under threat and probably unable to counter the Bolsheviks without considerable assistance from Allied forces. The British Army, about to be demobilised by Prime Minister Lloyd George, would not have the soldiers available for such an eventuality, and General Wilson did not believe that the other Allies could help.

The second option Wilson presented was the option of defeating the Bolsheviks through large-scale military intervention. This would cut off the Bolshevik threat at source. However, the lack of available forces and the financial constraints on Britain meant that Wilson felt this option to be unrealistic.

General Wilson suggested, therefore, the War Cabinet follow a third line of policy in which Britain would continue to support anti-Bolshevik forces with military material so that Allied forces could be withdrawn from Russia, when local anti-Bolshevik forces were in a position to take over. Wilson finished his Memorandum by arguing that it should be a Russian task, rather than an Allied one, to overthrow the Bolsheviks (*Memorandum*

on *Our Present and Future Military Policy in Russia*, CAB 24/70, 13.11.1918).

Sir Henry Wilson's 3 options were very similar to the ones suggested by Britain's agent among the Bolsheviks, Bruce Lockhart, who had returned to London in the same month. He gave a presentation to Balfour in the Foreign Office entitled *Memorandum on the Internal Situation in Russia*.

The difference between the 2 presentations was that Lockhart favoured massive Allied military intervention as the only means of seeing off the Bolsheviks. He believed that the middle course, favoured by Wilson, would only end in defeat and disaster for Britain. Any states established in a *cordon sanitaire*, to ring the Bolshevik state would probably eventually be absorbed by the Bolsheviks, according to Lockhart (Richard H. Ullman, *Intervention and the War, Anglo-Soviet Relations 1917-1921*, Vol. I, pp. 296-300). That would be a disaster for the prestige of the British Empire and the new order it was seeking to establish in the World in which it now predominated.

The British Cabinet meetings of 13 and 14 November 1918 decided on a policy of establishing contact with General A.I. Denikin who commanded the anti-Bolshevik forces in Southern Russia and the Don country and to provide him with all possible military assistance.

### **Britain – Master of Transcaucasia**

Britain re-occupied Baku after the Ottomans were forced out by Articles 11 and 15 of the Mudros Armistice (October 30, 1918).

Two full divisions were ordered to Transcaucasia immediately after the Armistice. On 17 November 1918 a British force from Persia accompanied by a remnant of the Russian army occupied Baku. The Dunsterforce (of Major General Dunsterville), which had been driven out of Baku by the Turks and Azerbaijani national forces in mid-1918, had regrouped near Teheran in the old Russian zone of Persia and was reinforced from British-occupied Baghdad, to form the North Persia Force.

Major-General Thompson's force occupied the Baku oilfields on 17 November 1918 and control over oil production was instituted. General Forestier-Walker's forces from the Salonika Army, landed at the Black Sea port of Batum, setting up their HQ in Tiflis, and occupied strategic points along the Transcaucasian Railway. Military Governorships were established in troublesome areas. Two Divisions of 40,000 men, the largest of all British Army contingents in Russia, placed both Azerbaijan and Georgia firmly under British control.

This large British show of force and occupation had the immediate impact of undermining the morale of Bolshevik soldiers in the North Caucasus, which had the effect of disintegrating the 11th and 12th Red Armies.

The British intervention in South Russia was conducted in accordance with the *Anglo-French Convention* on the spheres of influence that had been drawn up the previous year. The military mission to General Denikin's Army in late November and started to investigate the general situation.

Thompson took control of the Russian Caspian fleet, moving it south from Baku to Enzeli in Persia. This gave Britain, for the first time control of the Caspian and its shipping, along with the Black Sea, which it could enter at will from occupied Istanbul.

To the South, England also controlled Persia in its entirety as well as holding all the approaches from North, South, East and West. Sir Percy Cox, the Chief Political Officer of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, was dispatched to Teheran to impose a new treaty on the Iranians. Persia had been devastated by a British induced famine, brought about by the removal of the food supply to feed British and Armenian forces in the area, and its population had been decimated (see

Mohammad Gholi Majd, *The Great Famine and Genocide in Persia, 1917-19*)

A 2 million pound loan was provided to the desperate Persian government and British advisers were appointed to the key Ministries in the government. The Treaty was drawn up in secret, approved by Lord Curzon, now Foreign Secretary, and signed by the Persians in August 1919. The young and inexperienced Shah was then sent to Europe on holiday to await its ratification by the Persian parliament. Persia, which had been a country increasingly under Russian influence and military occupation only a few years earlier, was now in England's pocket as a virtual protectorate. Or so it seemed in 1919.

A British force had sailed out from Istanbul across the Black Sea to occupy the Eastern end of the Caucasus. General Milne controlled the strategically important port of Batum on the coast of the Black Sea and the railway connecting it to Baku. This meant that Britain held all the land between the Black Sea to the Caspian in a single front to General Denikin's rear. This entire area which fell into Britain's lap had been entirely held by Russia only a year before.

Plans began to be made for the development of extensive railway projects to bolster this newly gained territory and link it to British Arabia, Persia, Transcaucasia and eastwards across central Asia to Afghanistan and the Indian Empire. The *glacis* of India had been moved north to Bokhara, which now came within the expanded British orbit. The Russian Transcaucasian and Transcaspian Railways had been neutralised as threats to British India and the Moscow-Tashkent Railway blocked off at Samarkand and its spurs to Termez and Kushklinsky on the northern frontier of Afghanistan rendered obsolete.

The decision to occupy the Caucasus was taken by the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet, under the Chairmanship of Lord Curzon. Curzon was prominent in the small War Cabinet that was directing the War. He was just about to be given the job of running the Foreign Office by Prime Minister Lloyd George, as Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, was due to go to Paris for the Peace Conference. Curzon was to replace Balfour later in 1919 as Foreign Secretary. Balfour, when Foreign Secretary, was opposed to British intervention and was not consulted about the decision to occupy the Caucasus.

The meetings held by the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet in December 1918 show that the British decision to occupy the Caucasus was primarily motivated by the defence of India argument i.e. The Great Game and Curzon's "*Glacis of India*" position. Added to this was the desire to keep Bolshevism out of the region.

After the Ottoman/Azerbaijani captured Baku in September 1918 *The Times* noted the importance of possession of the city and the Caspian Sea, presuming that the Ottoman presence would only be temporary and noting that Britain's interest had been reawakened:

*"The Caspian is a hub traversed by all significant trade routes, and if we are now just beginning to heed attention to this inland basin, it does not mean that we were previously absolutely unaware of its political and commercial value. We have been aware of this for a long time. The Caspian is one of the old British interests."* (29/9/1918)

Another reason concerned the opportunity for commercially exploiting the area, including the great oil fields of Baku, which Britain proceeded to extract great quantities of oil from over the following 9 months. Occupying the Caucasus also meant controlling the Baku-Batum pipeline and Railway. The British proceeded to defraud the Azerbaijanis of the income from the oil by taking it for lower than market prices and selling it on the international market for a higher price. It also taxed the export of the oil at Batum to pay for its occupation of the city. The

British Treasury then obstructed the payments for the oil by various devices, ensuring that the Azerbaijanis never got the payments.

It gave the chance to the Royal Navy of controlling the Caspian Sea for the first time and supporting General Malleson to the East, who was propping up a Transcaspien government against Russia.

A Caucasus Wall was established by Britain in late 1918, which checked Bolshevik Russia and sealed it off from its main energy supplies. The British Indian Empire looked forward with great expectation from its new position of strength in the renewal of the Great Game.

### **British support for Anti-Bolshevik Forces**

The major question that faced the British occupiers of Transcaucasia was: which Russia would re-emerge to face the British Empire when the internal conflict between Whites and Reds, it was facilitating, reached a conclusion. This was a problem because the Allied Statesmen, in order to come to terms with Russia, in the Peace Conference, needed a government to come to terms with, to settle affairs in the East. But at the same time the Allied Governments were actively fuelling the instability that led to the situation in which there was no government with which to treat, or at least one which they were willing with which to treat.

British forces had originally intervened in Russia to bolster the pro-*Entente* forces rather than fight the Bolsheviks. As late as September 1918 it was believed in Britain that the Great War would last for 2 more years. So it was a high priority to reconstitute the Eastern Front to divert German forces from the West. The *Entente* sent forces to Murmansk, Archangel and Vladivostok, placed the Czech Legion under Allied command and authorised Japanese landings in the Far East. But with no Allied troops to spare the main hope of reforming an Eastern front lay with raising a new Russian army, under *Entente* control from Siberia. To do this the Allies pressurised the 13 or so various governments that had sprung up East of the Volga into uniting and merging their armies. 3 conferences of anti-Bolsheviks – Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, Cossacks and Tsarists – were held in the Summer of 1918 with this objective in mind.

Out of these came an All-Russian Provisional Government under a Directory at Omsk, whose programme was a restoration of Russia's territorial integrity, war against Germany and the overthrow of the defeatist Bolsheviks.

The unexpected collapse of Germany and the sudden victory in the Great War changed the fundamental basis of policy toward Russia.

Most importantly it was decided that British and other *Entente* armies should remain on Russian territory as the Great War ended and join with local pro-*Entente* forces to take on the Bolsheviks afterwards. Britain's intervention undoubtedly had a significant effect on the course of the Civil War in Russia. Without it the White side would have been overwhelmed by the Bolsheviks, who enjoyed superiority in popular support, numbers and weaponry.

The continuation of foreign intervention meant that, despite official denials, a specifically anti-Bolshevik policy was emerging on Britain's part. It was not a left-over from the Great War. The connection it had with the War was that Russia was paying the price for failing to see the Great War through to the bitter end, as Britain required. Its territory, despite its service in blood to the Allied cause, was therefore up for grabs to those who had lasted the course.

In December 1917, a *Convention between France and England on the subject of activity in Southern Russia* was signed. This agreement reaffirmed a War Convention of 23

December 1917 which, after the Bolshevik *putsch*, had divided the southern part of their former ally Russia's territory into zones of British and French influence. Bessarabia, the Ukraine and the Crimea were assigned to France. The British zone was agreed to be the Cossack Territories and Transcaucasia.

The region that Britain now assumed responsibility for, the Russia counter-revolutionary Vendee – between the Don and the Volga – had never been an area occupied by Germany or the Ottomans. It was an area controlled by the anti-Bolshevik forces of General Denikin (who had taken over from the charismatic General Kornilov, who was killed by a Bolshevik shell in Ekaterinodar in April 1918) and General P.N. Krasnov, leader of the Cossacks (who had taken over from General Kaledin, who committed suicide in February 1918).

Denikin had resisted calls in the Spring of 1918 to attempt an offensive on Tsaritsyn (later Stalingrad/Volgograd) which would have resulted in a single anti-Bolshevik front from the Urals to the Black Sea being formed. This, if successful, would have also cut off Baku and its oil from the Bolsheviks and disrupted their communications along the Volga River. But Denikin hesitated and then the Cossacks, who comprised the bulk of his army, did a side-deal with Germany, which frightened Denikin and motivated him to turn South to secure his rear. The Cossacks, under Krasnov, besieged Tsaritsyn for 2 months on their own at the time of the Armistice before retreating.

The British Government sent a military mission to the White General Denikin immediately after the Armistice as the route from the Dardanelles to the Black Sea opened up with the Ottoman defeat. General Poole headed the British Military Mission to General Denikin's 50,000 strong Volunteer army, which reached Southern Russia in late November. Whilst the British Government began to generously supply Denikin's forces with war *material* it refused Poole's request for British forces.

The presence of British troops in North Russia – and Siberia – and the support offered to various White groups in other parts of the country could no longer be explained away to the Bolsheviks as a mere adjunct of the War on Germany. The unofficial diplomatic relations Britain had maintained with Lenin's government had broken down after the 'Lockhart plot' (when British agents were suspected of planning to assassinate Lenin). It was clear to the Bolsheviks that the British were in a *de facto* state of war with Russia.

The Russian Civil War was fought on 3 main fronts – Southern, Eastern and North-western. It went through 3 main phases. The first lasted from the Bolshevik coup up to the Great War Armistice in November 1918. It was mainly concerned with foreign intervention to keep the Russians fighting in the Great War against Germany and led to the formation of the Red Army in the fall of 1918. The second phase, extending over most of 1919, was fought between the Anti-Bolshevik forces of Admiral Kolchak in the East, General Denikin in the South and General Yudenich in the Northwest against the Red Army from the Russian Heartland. It involved limited foreign intervention to sustain the White forces in the struggle. The final phase was fought from November 1919-November 1920. It involved the retreat of the White force and their abandonment by the foreign forces, resulting in Bolshevik victory.

### **Which British Policy?**

The Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet had been established in March 1918 under the Chairmanship of Lord Curzon with responsibility for "*the multifarious problems that arose between the eastern shores of the Mediterranean and the frontiers of India*" (The War Cabinet: Report for the Year 1917, Cmd 325. p.3)

It was a War Cabinet committee that lasted until January 1919 when it was absorbed into the Foreign Office. On 2 December

1918 Lord Curzon – future Foreign Secretary – in the absence of the sitting Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, made the case for British control of Transcaucasia to the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet. He pointed out the importance of the port of Batum and the oil of Baku for the British interest.

Curzon said: “*The idea that the Tatars, the Armenians, or the Bolsheviks, or any other party could permanently hold Baku and control the vast resources there... is one that cannot be entertained for a moment.*” (CAB 27/24, EC 2.12.18)

Curzon had visited the Caucasus in 1888 and 1889 and had written several books about Persia. He believed himself to be much more knowledgeable than anyone else in British ruling circles about the region and to know best what to do with it.

At the following meeting, however, the actual Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, insisted that Britain should not take over the Caucasus, but exercise through the League of Nations a controlling influence. Curzon asked Balfour how he would prevent the Russians crushing the Caucasus states in the absence of a British military force. The Foreign Secretary revealingly replied that “*If Russia is in a position to crush them, why not? We should not go there to protect them from the Russians. It would be folly from a purely military point of view, for us to keep a military force there.*”

Balfour advised temporising if Britain was called upon to assist the Caucasian Republics and playing for time. He chastised Curzon with the following remark, aimed at the glaxis of India thesis:

“*I find there is a new sphere which we have got to guard, which is supposed to protect the gateways of India. Those gateways are getting further and further from India... Remember before the War there was a great military power in occupation of these places... which we could not hit, which we of all people were helpless against. They had it and we did not tremble.*” (CAB 27/24, EC 9/12/1918)

Balfour asked why it was that Curzon thought the Caucasian Republics should be given “*a chance to stand on their own feet*”? Curzon replied with irony that the only alternative was “*to let them cut each other’s throats*”. To which the Foreign Secretary replied: “*I am all in favour of that... if they want to cut their own throats why do we not let them do it?... I shall say that we are not going to spend all our money and men civilising a few people who do not want to be civilised.*” (CAB 27/24, EC 9/12/1918)

Balfour at a subsequent Eastern Committee meeting accused some of his colleagues of wanting to gather “*as many colonies as they could get*” and “*huge protectorates all over the place*” but “*where were they going to find the men or monies for these things?*” These were “*the governing considerations*” of British policy according to Balfour. (CAB 27/24, EC 16/12/1918)

The reticence of Arthur Balfour was all very different from the Britain that existed before the Great War. Continual expansion had become part of the national habit of England. Britain’s island character had made it uneasy with the idea of land frontiers, especially those shared with formidable Powers. The practice of projecting “*Protectorates*” beyond British administrative frontiers had developed to overcome the fear of coming up against the territory of other Powers. Britain projected itself across these “*Protectorates*” to warn off rivals without an official presence. But the “*Protectorates*” had the habit of becoming formal parts of the Empire given time – annexations.

Why not a British Protectorate in 1919 over the Caucasus that would gradually develop into more than that?

There was a strange reluctance within the British ruling elite to pursue the habits of the recent past. It seems that the fighting of the Great War had knocked the stuffing out of those who

had previously presided over an unstoppable force of nature. Demoralisation had come to exist within triumph.

The argument between Balfour and Curzon could be seen as the gulf between post-Great War British dissipation of will and the pre-Great War Imperial confidence.

Churchill wrote in *The Sunday Herald* of 30th May 1920:

“*The British nation is now in the very forefront of mankind. Never was its power so great, its name so honoured, its rivals so few.*”

After the Great War of 1914 was won Great Britain was the World’s sole super-power. However, appearances were deceptive. Britain’s will to power and its consequent actual loss of power in 1918-20 was disguised by the massive extension of its Empire as a result of the Great War. It was the very effort that Britain had to make to win its War for World primacy and expand its Empire that seems to have subverted its ability to act purposefully after the event.

At the Imperial War Cabinet meeting of 12 December the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, upheld the Foreign Secretary’s point that the Caucasus would *not* be defended by Britain from a future Russian attack. He further stated that, in his opinion, Bolshevik Russia was not “*by any means such a danger as the old Russian Empire was, with all its aggressive officials and millions of troops.*” (CAB 23/42, 12.12.1918)

This was an early sign that the British Prime Minister underestimated the Bolsheviks and the future resurgence of Russia under Soviet management.

Lloyd George’s estimation of the lack of a Russian threat was based on the fact that the Tsarist state had collapsed. The Provisional Government had done little or nothing to replace the Tsarist state with an alternative, bourgeois democratic, state structure. The Bolsheviks had taken power and had begun to apply themselves purposefully to the construction of an alternative state. However, in late 1918 there was no national economy to support a state and Russia was beset by a Civil War that Britain was fuelling. It was this Civil War, and the interventions by Britain and France, which drew the purposeful and vigorous social elements in Russia to the Bolsheviks which brought about the revival Lloyd George failed to anticipate.

So, it was understandable that the British Prime Minister should underestimate the prospects of a Russian resurgence under the Bolsheviks at this point.

Sir Eyre Crowe at the Foreign Office suggested that Britain recognise the Caucasian Republics in a form that would suit all eventualities – that would satisfy the Republics but would not lead the Russians to believe that her temporary disadvantage had been taken advantage of, if Russia were able to return and reintegrate them into a Russian state. Curzon agreed but was inclined to only accept this position if applied to a White Russia and not a Red one.

Lord Curzon also agreed with the analysis of Sir Halford Mackinder, famous Professor at the London School of Economics and father of Geopolitics, that a series of buffer states in the Heartland was required to deny any Power or combination of Powers control of it. This included the Russians, French or a resurgent Turkey. It was generally agreed that it was necessary to foster nationhood in the peoples of the Caucasus to make them “*resolved to bar to the utmost the advance of Bolshevism.*” (CAB 27/38, EC 43, 5/12/1918 and FO 371/7729/E8378)

The Eastern Committee finally formulated a position of desiring to see strong independent states in the area – but without prejudice to their future relationship to Russia, which was a matter for themselves! (CAB 27/24, EC 43, 16/12/1918)

This position was a fudge and it never answered the question whether Britain was prepared to develop and support independent states in the Caucasus or was simply taking care of them for Russia in the interim. The answer would only be revealed later, in practice.

## **Plus ça change,..... French President Charles DeGaulle's Veto on British Membership of the EEC, 14 January 1963**

[Brexit has brought out clearly some issues that lie at the heart of the UK's relationship with Europe. Issues that have always made the relationship problematic – to put it as euphemistically as possible. None of the issues are new to anybody with a smattering of knowledge about the history of the past three centuries. Many, but not all of them, were pointed out by de Gaulle over 60 year ago when the UK considered joining the then Common Market. If de Gaulle's advice had been heeded and acted on by his successors the history of the European project would be strikingly different and it would undoubtedly be in a more positive position today.

His analyses are a most useful starting point for an understanding of the current debate and below are reprints of two of them.]

### **French President Charles DeGaulle's Veto on British Membership of the EEC, 14 January 1963**

I believe that when you talk about economics — and much more so when you practise them — what you say and what you do must conform to realities, because without that you can get into impasses and, sometimes, you even head for ruin. In this very great affair of the European Economic Community and also in that of eventual adhesion of Great Britain, it is the facts that must first be considered. Feelings, favourable though they might be and are, these feelings cannot be invoked against the real facts of the problem.

What are these facts? The Treaty of Rome was concluded between six continental States, States which are, economically speaking, one may say, of the same nature. Indeed, whether it be a matter of their industrial or agricultural production, their external exchanges, their habits or their commercial clientele, their living or working conditions, there is between them much more resemblance than difference. Moreover, they are adjacent, they inter-penetrate, they prolong each other through their communications. It is therefore a fact to group them and to link them in such a way that what they have to produce, to buy, to sell, to consume — well, they do produce, buy, sell, consume, in preference in their own ensemble. Doing that is conforming to realities. Moreover, it must be added that, from the point of view of their economic development, their social progress, their technical capacity, they are, in short, keeping pace. They are marching in similar fashion. It so happens, too, that there is between them no kind of political grievance, no frontier question, no rivalry in domination or power. On the contrary, they are joined in solidarity, especially and primarily, from the aspect of the consciousness they have of defining together an important part of the sources of our civilisation; and also as concerns their security, because they are continentals and have before them one and the same menace from one extremity to the other of their territorial ensemble. Then, finally, they are in solidarity through the fact that not one among them is bound abroad by any particular political or military accord. Thus it was psychologically and materially possible to make an economic community of the Six, though not without difficulties.

When the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, it was after long discussions; and when it was concluded, it was necessary — in order to achieve something — that we French put in order our economic, financial, and monetary affairs ... and that was done in 1959. From that moment the community was in principle viable, but then the treaty had to be applied.

However, this treaty, which was precise and complete enough concerning industry, was not at all so on the subject of agriculture. However, for our country this had to be settled.

Indeed, it is obvious that agriculture is an essential element in the whole of our national activity. We cannot conceive, and will not conceive, of a Common Market in which French agriculture would not find outlets in keeping with its production. And we agree, further, that of the Six we are the country on which this necessity is imposed in the most imperative manner. This is why when, last January, thought was given to the setting in motion of the second phase of the treaty — in other words a practical start in application — we were led to pose the entry of agriculture into the Common Market as a formal condition. This was finally accepted by our partners but very difficult and very complex arrangements were needed — and some rulings are still outstanding. I note in passing that in this vast undertaking it was the governments that took all the decisions, because authority and responsibility are not to be found elsewhere. But I must say that in preparing and untangling these matters, the Commission in Brussels did some very objective and fitting work.

Thereupon Great Britain posed her candidature to the Common Market. She did it after having earlier refused to participate in the communities we are now building, as well as after creating a free trade area with six other States, and, finally, after having — I may well say it (the negotiations held at such length on this subject will be recalled) — after having put some pressure on the Six to prevent a real beginning being made in the application of the Common Market.

If England asks in turn to enter, but on her own conditions, this poses without doubt to each of the six States, and poses to England, problems of a very great dimension. England in effect is insular, she is maritime, she is linked through her exchanges, her markets, her supply lines to the most diverse and often the most distant countries; she pursues essentially industrial and commercial activities, and only slight agricultural ones. She has in all her doings very marked and very original habits and traditions. In short, the nature, the structure, the very situation (conjuncture) that are Englands differ profoundly from those of the continentals.

What is to be done in order that England, as she lives, produces and trades, can be incorporated into the Common Market, as it has been conceived and as it functions? For example, the means by which the people of Great Britain are fed and which are in fact the importation of foodstuffs bought cheaply in the two Americas and in the former dominions, at the same time giving, granting considerable subsidies to English farmers? These means are obviously incompatible with the system which the Six have established quite naturally for themselves. The system of the Six — this constitutes making a whole of the agricultural produce of the whole Community, in strictly fixing their prices, in prohibiting subsidies, in organising their consumption between all the participants, and in imposing on each of its participants payment to the Community of any saving they would achieve in fetching their food from outside instead of eating what the Common Market has to offer.

Once again, what is to be done to bring England, as she is, into this system? One might sometimes have believed that our English friends, in posing their candidature to the Common Market, were agreeing to transform themselves to the point of applying all the conditions which are accepted and practised by the Six. But the question, to know whether Great Britain can now place herself like the Continent and with it inside a tariff which is genuinely common, to renounce all Commonwealth preferences, to cease any pretence that her agriculture be

privileged, and, more than that, to treat her engagements with other countries of the free trade area as null and void — that question is the whole question. It cannot be said that it is yet resolved. Will it be so one day? Obviously only England can answer.

The question is even further posed since after England other States which are, I repeat, linked to her through the free trade area, for the same reasons as Britain, would like or wish to enter the Common Market. It must be agreed that first the entry of Great Britain, and then these States, will completely change the whole of the actions, the agreements, the compensation, the rules which have already been established between the Six, because all these States, like Britain, have very important peculiarities. Then it will be another Common Market whose construction ought to be envisaged; but one which would be taken to 11 and then 13 and then perhaps 18 would no longer resemble, without any doubt, the one which the Six built.

Further, this community, increasing in such fashion, would see itself faced with problems of economic relations with all kinds of other States, and first with the United States. It is to be foreseen that the cohesion of its members, who would be very numerous and diverse, would not endure for long, and that ultimately it would appear as a colossal Atlantic community under American dependence and direction, and which would quickly have absorbed the community of Europe. It is a hypothesis which in the eyes of some can be perfectly justified, but it is not at all what France is doing or wanted to do — and which is a properly European construction.

Yet it is possible that one day England might manage to transform herself sufficiently to become part of the European community, without restriction, without reserve and preference for anything whatsoever; and in this case the Six would open the door to her and France would raise no obstacle, although obviously England's simple participation in the community would considerably change its nature and its volume. It is possible, too, that England might not yet be so disposed, and it is that which seems to result from the long, long, so long, so long Brussels conversations. But if that is the case, there is nothing there that could be dramatic. First, whatever decision England takes in this matter there is no reason, as far as we are concerned, for the relations we have with her to be changed, and the consideration, the respect which are due to this great State, this great people, will not thereby be in the slightest impaired.

What England has done across the centuries and in the world is recognised as immense. Although there have often been conflicts with France, Britain's glorious participation in the victory which crowned the first world war — we French, we shall always admire it. As for the role England played in the most dramatic and decisive moments of the second world war, no one has the right to forget it. In truth, the destiny of the free world, and first of all ours and even that of the United States and Russia, depended in a large measure on the resolution, the solidity and the courage of the English people, as Churchill was able to harness them. Even at the present moment no one can contest British capacity and worth.

Moreover, I repeat, if the Brussels negotiations were shortly not to succeed, nothing would prevent the conclusion between the Common Market and Great Britain of an accord of association designed to safeguard exchanges, and nothing would prevent close relations between England and France from being maintained, nor the pursuit and development of their direct cooperation in all kinds of fields, and notably the scientific, technical and industrial — as the two countries have just proved by deciding to build together the supersonic aircraft Concorde.

Lastly, it is very possible that Britain's own evolution, and the evolution of the universe, might bring the English little by

little towards the Continent, whatever delays the achievement might demand, and for my part, that is what I readily believe, and that is why, in my opinion, it will in any case have been a great honour for the British Prime Minister, for my friend Harold Macmillan, and for his Government, to have discerned in good time, to have had enough political courage to have proclaimed it, and to have led their country the first steps down the path which one day, perhaps, will lead it to moor alongside the Continent.

### **Press conference held by General de Gaulle at the Elysée (27 November 1967)**

General de Gaulle holds a press conference at the Élysée Palace during which he restates and explains his opposition to the United Kingdom's accession to the European Common Market. Source: Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee: A retrospective view of the political year in Europe 1967. March 1968. Paris: Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee. "Press conference by President de Gaulle (27th November 1967)", p. 152-154. Copyright: (c) WEU Secretariat General - Secrétariat Général UEO URL: [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/press\\_conference\\_held\\_by\\_general\\_de\\_gaulle\\_at\\_the\\_elyse\\_e\\_27\\_novembre\\_1967-en-fe79955c-ef62-4b76-9677-dce44151be53.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/press_conference_held_by_general_de_gaulle_at_the_elyse_e_27_novembre_1967-en-fe79955c-ef62-4b76-9677-dce44151be53.html) Last updated: 01/03/2017 2/4

Question: I wanted to ask you if, after the recent devaluation of the pound sterling, you think that Britain is now more in a position to enter into the Common Market than six months ago, when you held your last press conference?

Answer: Ever since there have been men and ever since there have been States, any great international project has been imbued with seductive myths. That is quite natural, because at the origin of the action there is always inspiration, and that was true for the unity of Europe. Ah, how fine and how good it would be should Europe be able to become a fraternal and organised entity in which each people would find its prosperity and its security. This also holds true for the world. How marvellous it would be to see disappear all the differences of race, language, ideology and wealth, all the rivalries, all the frontiers that have always divided the world.

But, however sweet dreams may be, the realities are there and, on the basis of whether or not one takes them into account, policy can be a rather fruitful art or a vain utopia. It is thus that the idea of joining the British Isles to the economic Community formed by the six continental States arouses wishes everywhere that are quite justified ideally, but it is a matter of knowing if that could be done today without rending, without breaking what exists.

Now, it happens that Great Britain, with truly extraordinary insistence and haste — certain reasons for which the recent monetary events perhaps cast some light on — had proposed the opening, without delay, of negotiations in view of her entry into the Common Market.

At the same time, Britain stated that she accepted without restriction all the provisions that rule the Community of the Six, which seemed somewhat to contradict the request for negotiations, for why would one negotiate on clauses that one would have entirely accepted in advance? Actually, we are viewing here the fifth act of a play during which Britain's very diverse behaviours with regard to the Common Market have succeeded one another without seeming to be alike.

The first act had been London's refusal to participate in drafting the Rome Treaty, which it was thought, across the Channel, would never come to anything.

The second act brought out Britain's deep-seated hostility toward European construction, once that construction started to take shape. And I still hear the summons which in Paris, as early

as June 1958, my friend Macmillan — then Prime Minister — addressed to me, who compared the Common Market to the continental blockade and who threatened to declare it at least a tariff war.

The third act was the negotiations conducted in Brussels by Mr. Maudling for a year and a half, negotiations designed to make the Community bow to Britain's conditions and halted when France made her partners note that the issue was not that, but precisely the opposite.

The fourth act, at the start of Mr. Wilson's Government, was marked by London's lack of interest in the Common Market, the maintenance around Great Britain of the six other European States forming the free-trade area, and a great effort exerted to strengthen the Commonwealth's internal ties.

And now the fifth act is being played, for which Great Britain, this time, has declared her candidacy, and, in order for it to be adopted, has set out on the path of all the promises and all the pressures imaginable.

To tell the truth, this attitude is rather easy to explain. The British people doubtless discern more and more clearly that in the great movement that is sweeping the world, in the face of the enormous power of the United States, the growing power of the Soviet Union, the reborn power of the continental States, the new power of China, and taking into account the increasingly centrifugal orientations that are dawning in the Commonwealth, the structure and customs of its activity, and even its national personality, are henceforth at stake.

And, moreover, the great economic, financial, monetary and social difficulties with which Britain is at grips make her aware of it day after day. Hence, to her very depths, a tendency to seek a framework, be it European, that would help her to save, to safeguard her own substance, that would permit her still to play a leading rôle and that would lighten a part of her burden. And this could, in principle, only be beneficial to her, and could over the short term only be satisfactory to 3/4 Europe. But, on condition that the British people, like those with whom it wishes to join, wishes and knows how to compel itself to make the fundamental changes that would be necessary in order for it to be established in its own equilibrium; for it is a modification, a radical transformation of Great Britain that is necessary in order for her to be able to join the continental States. This is obvious from the political viewpoint.

But today, to speak only of the economic domain, the report that was addressed on 29th September by the Commission in Brussels to the six governments shows with the greatest clarity that the present Common Market is incompatible with the economy, as it now stands, of Britain, whose chronic balance-of-payments deficit is proof of permanent disequilibrium, and which involves — as to production, to food supply sources, to credit practices, to working conditions — factors which that country could not change without modifying its own nature.

A Common Market also incompatible with the way in which the British obtain their food, as much by the products of their agriculture, subsidised to the highest level, as by the goods purchased cheaply everywhere in the world, particularly in the Commonwealth, which makes it impossible for London ever really to accept the levies laid down by the financial regulation, which would be crushing to it.

A Common Market also incompatible with the restrictions Britain imposes on the exporting of capital, which, to the contrary, circulates freely among the Six.

A Common Market incompatible, lastly, with the state of the pound sterling as it has once again been brought to light by the devaluation, as well as by the loans that preceded and accompany it; the state of the pound sterling, also, that, combined with the character of an international currency which is that of the

pound, and the enormous external liabilities weighing on it, would not permit Britain to belong, at this time, to the solid and solidary [sic] and guaranteed society in which are joined the franc, the mark, the lira, the Belgian franc and the florin.

In these conditions, what could be the outcome of what is called Britain's entry into the Common Market? And if one wanted, despite everything, to impose it, it would obviously be the breaking up of a Community that has been built and that functions according to rules that do not tolerate such a monumental exception. Nor would it tolerate the introduction among its main members of a State who, precisely owing to its currency, its economy and its policy, does not at present belong to Europe as we have started to build it. To have Britain enter and, consequently, to be committed now to negotiations to that end, that would be for the Six — everybody knows what this turns on — that would be for the Six to give their consent in advance to all the expedients, delays and façades that would be aimed at masking the destruction of an edifice that has been built at the cost of so much hardship and in the midst of so much hope.

It is true that, while recognising the impossibility of having Britain enter today into the Common Market as it exists, one can wish all the same to sacrifice the latter to an agreement with the former. For theoretically, the economic system currently practised by the Six is not necessarily the only one that Europe could practise. One can imagine, for example, a free-trade area extending all over the West of our continent. One can also imagine a type of multilateral treaty like that which will emerge from the Kennedy round and regulating, among 10, 12 or 15 European States, their reciprocal tariffs and their respective quotas. But in one case as in the other, it would first be necessary to abolish the Community and to disperse its institutions. And I say that France will certainly not ask that. However, if one or another of her partners, as is after all their right, were to propose this, she would examine it with the other signatories of the Rome Treaty.

But what France cannot do is to enter now, with the British and their associates, into negotiations that would lead to destroying the European construction to which she belongs. And then, that would in no way be the path that could lead to allowing Europe to construct itself by itself and for itself, in such a way as not to be under the dependence of an economic, monetary and political system that is foreign to it.

For Europe to be able to counterbalance the immense power of the United States, it is necessary not at all to weaken, but to the contrary to strengthen the Community's ties and rules. Certainly, those who, like me, have proved by their acts the exceptional esteem, attachment and respect that they hold for Britain, firmly desire to see her one day decide on and accomplish the immense effort that would transform her. Indeed, in order to facilitate things for her, France is quite ready to enter into some arrangement that, under the name of association, or under another name, would foster, starting right away, trade between the continental States on the one hand and the British, Scandinavians and Irish on the other.

Indeed, it is not in Paris that one fails to recognise the psychological evolution that seems to be taking shape among our friends across the Channel, or that one does not fully appreciate the merit of certain steps that they had already taken, and others that they plan to take, toward re-establishing their balance within and their independence without. But for the British Isles really to be able to moor fast to the continent, a very vast and very far-reaching mutation is still involved.

Everything depends, therefore, not at all on negotiations — which would be for the Six a march toward abandon sounding the knell of their Community — but rather on the determination and action of the great British people, which would make it one of the pillars of the European Europe.

Source: French Embassy, New York.



# The Tipperary British Mercenary and the Death of Yakov Stalin

By Manus O’Riordan

‘The Unbearable Lightness of Being’ is the title of the 1984 novel by the Czech émigré writer Milan Kundera. Part Six - “The Great March” - opens with the following narrative, mixing a few facts - and the suppression of more - with foulmouthed falsehoods and fictional fantasies:

“Not until 1980 were we able to read in the ‘Sunday Times’ how Stalin’s son, Yakov, died. Captured by the Germans during the Second World War, he was placed in a camp together with a group of British officers. They shared a latrine. Stalin’s son habitually left a foul mess. The British officers resented having their latrine smeared with shit, even if it was the shit of the son of the most powerful man in the world. They brought the matter to his attention. He took offence. They brought it to his attention again and again, and tried to make him clean the latrine. He raged, argued, and fought. Finally, he demanded a hearing with the camp commander. He wanted the commander to act as arbiter. But the arrogant German refused to talk about shit. Stalin’s son could not stand the humiliation. Crying out to heaven in the most terrifying of Russian curses, he took a running jump into the electrified barbed-wire fence that surrounded the camp. He hit the target. His body, which would never again make a mess of the Britishers’ latrine, was pinned to the wire...”

“Young Stalin was both the Son of God (because his father was revered like God) and His cast-off... Rejection and privilege, happiness and woe - no one felt more concretely than Yakov how interchangeable opposites are, how short one pole of human existence is to the other. Then, at the very outset of the war, he fell prisoner to the Germans, and other prisoners, belonging to an incomprehensible, stand-offish nation that had always been intrinsically repulsive to him, accused him of being dirty. Was he, who bore on his shoulders a drama of the highest order (as fallen angel and Son of God), to undergo judgment not for something sublime (in the realm of God and the angels) but for shit? ... If rejection and privilege are one and the same, if there is no difference between the sublime and the paltry, if the Son of God can undergo judgment for shit, then human existence loses its dimensions and becomes unbearably light... Stalin’s son laid down his life for shit. But a death for shit is not a senseless death. The Germans who sacrificed their lives to expand their country’s territory to the east, the Russians who died to expand their country’s power to the west - yes, they died for something idiotic, and their deaths have no meaning or general validity. Amid the general idiocy of the war, the death of Stalin’s son stands out as the sole metaphysical death.”

The author’s nauseating narrative, delivered with such sordid, squalid “dialectical” delight, saw Kundera himself behaving like a pig in shite, as he revelled and wallowed in the excremental expressionism of his own existential crisis. In “Yakov Stalin - a brief biography”, a British writer of historical fiction, Rupert Colley, was more refined with his language in a March 2005 history blog, which began:

“Born 18 March 1907, Yakov Stalin (or Dzhugashvili) was the son of Joseph Stalin and Stalin’s first wife, Ekaterina Svanidze. Stalin certainly didn’t harbour particularly warm feelings for his son. Deprived of his father’s affections and upset by a failed romance, Yakov, or Yasha as Stalin called him, once tried to shoot himself. As he lay bleeding, his father scathingly remarked, ‘He can’t even shoot straight.’” That attempted suicide occurred in 1925, and the source for Colley’s account

was Stalin’s daughter Svetlana, following her defection to the USA in 1967, and as published in her memoirs, ‘Twenty Letters to a Friend’. See [www.quora.com/I-heard-Stalins-son-tried-to-kill-himself-with-a-gun-but-he-survived-How-where-former-Red-Army-Colonel-Vladimir-Andreev-provided-more-details-of-the-context-Stalin-had-forbidden-the-marriage-of-18-year-old-Yakov-to-the-16-year-old-daughter-of-a-priest-Colley-went-on-to-write-of-Yakov’s-war](http://www.quora.com/I-heard-Stalins-son-tried-to-kill-himself-with-a-gun-but-he-survived-How-where-former-Red-Army-Colonel-Vladimir-Andreev-provided-more-details-of-the-context-Stalin-had-forbidden-the-marriage-of-18-year-old-Yakov-to-the-16-year-old-daughter-of-a-priest-Colley-went-on-to-write-of-Yakov’s-war)

“Yakov Stalin joined the Red Army at the outbreak of war in the East in June 1941, serving as a lieutenant in the artillery. On the first day of the war, his father told him to ‘Go and fight’. His half-sister, Svetlana Alliluyeva, the daughter of Stalin and his second wife, Nadezhda, claimed in her book, ‘Twenty Letters to a Friend’, that Yakov never ‘took any advantage [as a soldier]; never made even the slightest attempt to avoid danger... Since my father, moreover, hadn’t any use for him and everybody knew it, no one in the higher echelons of the army gave him special treatment.’ Yakov, according to Svetlana, was ‘peace-loving, gentle and extremely quiet.’ ... On 16 July, within a month of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Yakov was captured and taken prisoner... The Germans attempted to win over Yakov, offering to introduce him to Hermann Goring – but he remained steadfast and refused to co-operate. But although the Germans were unable to recruit Stalin’s son they still made propaganda capital out of him, dropping leaflets in the Soviet Union that claimed that the Great Leader’s son had surrendered and was feeling ‘alive and well’. ‘Follow the example of Stalin’s son’, the Germans urged Soviet soldiers, ‘stick your bayonets in the earth’.”

“Yakov was placed in a more spacious hut than others within the camp and shared a bedroom with the nephew of Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister. In the adjoining bedroom were four British POWs, and the atmosphere between them all was strained. Yakov taunted the Brits for standing to attention when spoken to by the German officers, implying that they were cowards, and calling the British people as a whole ‘Hitler’s puppets’. One of the British prisoners was an Irishman, Red Cushing, who described his time as a POW with Yakov Stalin in an interview with the ‘Sunday Times’ in 1980. In 1943, Stalin was offered the chance to have his son back. The Germans had been defeated at Stalingrad and their Field Marshal, Friedrich Paulus, was taken prisoner by the Soviets, their highest-ranking capture of the war. The Germans offered a swap – Paulus for Yakov. Stalin refused, saying, ‘I will not trade a marshal for a lieutenant’. As harsh it may seem, Stalin’s reasoning did contain a logic – why should his son be freed when the sons of other Soviet families suffered – ‘what would other fathers say?’ asked Stalin.”

“On 14 April 1943, the 36-year-old Yakov Stalin died. The Germans maintained they shot him while he was trying to escape. They released a photograph showing his bullet-riddled body caught in barbed wire. But it is more likely that Yakov committed suicide by throwing himself onto the electric fence... It was an argument over toilets, according to Red Cushing, that was the final straw. Insults and fists were thrown. Then, said Cushing, ‘I saw Yakov running about as if he were insane. He just ran straight onto the wire. There was a huge flash and all the searchlights suddenly went on. I knew that was the end of him.’” See <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-CushingStalin.htm> for the full text of that 1980 ‘Sunday Times’ article. This article

had been placed by Ciaran Crossey on his 'Ireland and the Spanish Civil War' website in 2006, arising from the fact that in his 1962 book, 'Soldier For Hire', Cushing had claimed to have been a Lincoln Battalion platoon leader, serving in Spain from 1936 to November 1938. See <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-Cushing.htm> for that "Spanish" chapter, entitled "Castles in Spain".

See also <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-CushingTime.htm> and <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-CushingMem.htm> for Crossey's investigation as to whether Cushing's claim to have been an International Brigader might have been fictitious.

Quite apart from Cushing's own implausible narrative, the now extensively available International Brigade records do not list any Thomas Cushing. Moreover, in his story, Cushing had carefully avoided naming any known Veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Nor do the only two names he claimed to have been fellow Lincolns Brigaders - a Rudi Rudovsky and another one only given the surname of McClusky - appear on the Lincoln Brigade records. We can definitely conclude that this Tipperary mercenary's claim to have been an International Brigader was a downright lie.

On February 13, 2013, the German magazine 'Der Spiegel' published an article by its correspondent Christian Neef, which fuelled further speculation about Yakov, with its sensationalist sub-heading: "For decades, some have suspected that Yakov Dzhugashvili, the oldest son of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, surrendered to invading German forces instead of being captured. Files in a Russian archive now suggest that the suspicions might be warranted."

Nonetheless, see [www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/archive-files-suggest-son-of-stalin-surrendered-to-invading-germans-a-883119.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/archive-files-suggest-son-of-stalin-surrendered-to-invading-germans-a-883119.html) for the article itself, where the only indisputable evidence is of Yakov's fearless courage in battle:

"The Russians launched a counteroffensive at 4 a.m. on July 7, 1941, but the Germans destroyed half of their tanks, and 200 soldiers died in the flames. Yakov's battery fired at the Germans from a knoll near the edge of the forest, but it soon fell silent as well. In the evening, regiment commander Abalashov was reported missing. Four days after surviving the firestorm, Yakov and what was left of his unit turned up again. In a note to the division chief, written in pencil, his commanding officer said that Dzhugashvili was 'especially brave', recommending him and 50 other men in the division for a medal. When the Germans captured Vitebsk, in modern-day Belarus, on July 9, the Soviet army corps began to retreat. Yakov and his unit were given the task of covering the withdrawal. The morning of July 14 must have been pure hell for Yakov and his men. The Germans were attacking the town of Yartsevo with 30 aircraft. Russian tanks were exploding, and so were the tanker trucks behind them. According to the staff reports from that evening, there was no information about the whereabouts of the 14th Howitzer Regiment. Yakov Dzhugashvili, Stalin's son, had also disappeared... On July 26, brigade commissar Alexei Rumyanzev typed a three-page letter to the political director of the Red Army... The letter describes Yakov's behaviour at the front as 'impeccable and fearless'. When his unit came under bombardment from the fascists, Rumyanzev wrote, the head of the operations division had offered to drive him to a safer area. But Comrade Dzhugashvili reportedly replied: 'I will only return with my battery'."

The precise circumstances of Yakov's capture remain pure speculation. And, without doubt, his Nazi captors would have tortured Yakov before they interrogated him on July 18. See <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/stalins-eldest-son-yakov-dzhugashvili-1941/> for Nazi photographs of the captured Yakov. The accompanying narrative is, however, weighed down by a number of fictitious inventions and unattributed gossip.

Yakov had shared his Sachsenhausen cell with his friend Vassily Kokorin, a nephew of Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, and four Irish members of the British Army. In his 2003 book, 'Irish Secrets: German Espionage in Ireland', US author Mark M. Hull introduced that quartet as follows:

"Private William Murphy: Enniscorthy, County Wexford. According to a fellow Friesack (POW camp) prisoner Timothy Ronan, Murphy 'went off his head and became dangerous', and was, in the post-war period, confined to Nutley, the asylum for servicemen. Murphy reportedly died there a year later... Private Patrick O'Brien: Nenagh, County Tipperary. He had a juvenile record, breaking into the Nenagh Co-Operative Creamery... He joined the British Army and was assigned to the First Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment, and was captured at Dunkirk. He was vetted for espionage and taken to Berlin, but was arrested on a rape charge in May 1942... Private Thomas J. Cushing: Tipperary Town, County Tipperary. Private Andrew Walsh: Fethard, County Tipperary."

They all reappear in a book by Irish author Tom Wall, published this March and entitled 'Dachau to the Dolomites - The Untold Story of the Irishmen, Himmler's Special Prisoners, and the End of WWII'. Wall introduces that Tipperary British mercenary trio as follows:

"Sergeant Thomas Cushing liked to be known as 'Red' - due to the colour of his hair, not his politics. As with all members of the Irish group, he was captured after Dunkirk in 1940. He was among a small group detained in a special Irish camp (Friesack) who volunteered for training by the Germans for sabotage missions. He had previously been in the US army... Private Patrick O'Brien volunteered or pretended to work for the Germans while in the Irish camp... Corporal Andrew Walsh was trained by the Germans, like Cushing and O'Brien, to undertake sabotage missions until it became clear that he planned to double-cross them."

Wall's book is a meticulously researched work, dealing with such notable and internationally known prisoners of the Nazis as Léon Blum, the former Popular Front Prime Minister of France, Kurt von Schuschnigg, Chancellor of Austria until the Anschluss, German Lutheran Pastor Martin Niemöller, and Josef Müller, German politician and a member of the Catholic resistance to Hitler, and afterwards one of the founders of Bavaria's Christian Social Union. Not surprisingly, Wall readily found outlets for several newspaper articles within the month - see [www.independent.ie/world-news/europe/pope-pius-xii-was-never-nazi-sympathiser-he-hated-hitler-37921816.html](http://www.independent.ie/world-news/europe/pope-pius-xii-was-never-nazi-sympathiser-he-hated-hitler-37921816.html) and [www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/the-manager-of-dublin-s-theatre-royal-held-hostage-by-himmler-1.3840596#XJ03KtgKdjo.mailto](http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/the-manager-of-dublin-s-theatre-royal-held-hostage-by-himmler-1.3840596#XJ03KtgKdjo.mailto) for two of them. The latter article was illustrated, as is the front cover of the book itself, with a photo of Niemöller holding Schuschnigg's infant daughter in his arms, and standing alongside British Army Major John McGrath, whose story Wall had previously published - see <https://www.drb.ie/essays/the-truth-and-colonel-mcgrath> - and whose book now introduces him as follows:

"Lieutenant Colonel John McGrath was an Irish First World Veteran, recalled to the colours in 1939. Up until then he had been manager of the Theatre Royal in Dublin. After a period in an officers' POW camp, he acted as senior officer (SBO, Senior British Officer - MO'R) in a camp (Friesack) established by the Abwehr (German intelligence) in the hope of winning Irish recruits for anti-British espionage and sabotage. McGrath secretly set about sabotaging the project." Other British Army officers - relevant to the story of the Irish quartet and the death of Yakov - are also introduced by Wall as follows:

"Captain Peter Churchill was an intelligence officer with the SOE (Special Operations Executive) who was captured in France while assisting the French Resistance. He had fallen

in love with his courier, Odette Sansom, who was arrested alongside him. In the hope of saving both of their lives he pretended to be a relative of Winston Churchill, and that he and Odette were married... Major Johnnie Dodge was an American-born officer of the British army who was related, through his mother's second marriage, to Churchill."

But what to make of Cushing? In his 2008 book, 'Hitler's Irishmen', Terence O'Reilly related how, according to the post-War British interrogations of Abwehr officers Kurt Haller and Jupp Hoven, a Lieutenant Bissell, McGrath's predecessor as Senior British Officer (SBO) among the POWs at Friesack, had been betrayed by Cushing:

"According to Haller, 'Hoven had Bissell removed from the camp because Cushing informed him that he was leader of an escape party'. It would not be the last apparent act of treachery by Cushing... (After the War) Cushing's group were transported back to London where they were interrogated. While Cushing admitted to the betrayal of Lieutenant Bissell in Friesack in 1941, there may have been more to this than met the eye. Far from being punished, Cushing continued to serve in the British Army for nearly twenty more years, retiring as a senior NCO." Hull further wrote of how Cushing had informed on Walsh:

"Walsh (about to be sent to Britain on a sabotage mission) confided to fellow Irish POW Thomas Cushing that he was planning to turn himself into the police on landing in England, after hiding his German espionage money. Cushing, now a devoted German stooge, reported his fellow Irishman's comments and the two found themselves in the 'protective custody' of the Gestapo... Cushing was sent to Sachsenhausen where he was interned along with captured Russian Jacob Dzhughashvili and Vassily Kokorin, Stalin's son and Molotov's nephew respectively. In a post-war article, Cushing stated that three other Irish were likewise interned there, and that he himself was then (1968) an employee of the British Ministry of Defence ('Stalins Sohn fühlte sich verstossen', 'Der Spiegel', 15 March 1968). If accurate, it suggests that Cushing was an Allied plant." See [www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-46093887.html](http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-46093887.html) for this 1968 article by Cushing, in German. I am grateful to Philip O'Connor for translating it, and for drawing my attention to, and translating, the earlier report to which Cushing was replying. On February 26, 1968, 'Der Spiegel' had reported: "Journalists of the Washington 'Sunday Star' have unearthed the entire Jascha file, including an 'official Nazi photo' showing Stalin's son on the barbed wire fence of Sachsenhausen camp. From these documents, which had been held in the US State Department since the war, it appears that Jakob had become the victim of a psychiatric disorder and, with suicidal intent, had climbed into the barbed wire ..."

"From the officers' camps in Hammelburg (Franconia) and Lübeck-Vorwerk, Jakob came to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where a special barracks had been established for prominent inmates. Dzhughashvili was imprisoned there along with a nephew of Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, Lieutenant Vasily Kokorin, and four Englishmen (sic) - Thomas Cushing, William Murphy, Patrick O'Brien and Andrew Walsh. (They were, of course, not Englishmen, but four Irish soldiers for hire in the British army. If too long an explanation, they could, however, have been summed up as 'four Britishers' - MO'R). Cushing later reported that Stalin's son had refused to be put in civilian clothes by the Germans and brought to Berlin to visit the theatre. Instead, he had threatened that after the war all able-bodied Germans would be made rebuild everything in Russia 'stone by stone' which they had destroyed."

"However, the Washington documents also reveal that there were frequent fights between the two Russians and the four

Englishmen in Sachsenhausen ... A real brawl started when the Englishmen reproached the Russians for soiling the toilet. That evening, Stalin's son refused to return to the barracks. SS Guard Karl Jüngling stated that he had asked the 'Lieutenant, Sir' to go away, but Dzhughashvili insisted that he wanted to speak to the camp commandant, declaring 'in broken German': 'I will not go to my hut, and you can do whatever you want.' When Jüngling responded that he could not meet the commander until tomorrow, Stalin's son grumbled that this was an insult, and then suddenly cried out, 'Sergeant, you are a soldier. Don't be a coward: shoot!' While Jüngling made off to fetch his superior, SS Lieutenant Petri, Dzhughashvili stomped around the camp grounds until he met another guard, the SS Corporal Konrad Harfich, who was then 41. Jakob pleaded with him: 'Guard, shoot me!' Stalin's son then marched towards the barbed wire fence, climbed over the first one, crossed the 'neutral zone' and went to grab the insulators on the electric fence. Harfich: 'But nothing happened to him. I fired a warning shot, but he shouted, "Shoot, go on, shoot!" I shouted to him to stay back, but he replied, "Guard, don't be a coward". Then I fired, in line with orders.' The camp doctor certified the death. The bullet had penetrated his head four centimetres from the right ear and smashed Jasha's skull."

Fluent in German, Cushing was quick off the mark, with his lengthy, self-serving feature article - entitled 'Stalin's son felt rejected' - which was published by 'Der Spiegel' that March 15, and which introduced him thus: "On April 14, 1943, Jakob Dzhughashvili, Stalin's eldest son, died on the electrical fence of Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Dzhughashvili had been a prisoner in a 'Celebrity Barracks' of the camp, together with a nephew of the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, Vasily Kokorin, and four Irish soldiers. Documents on the demise of Stalin's son had been recently released by the US State Department (SPIEGEL, February 26). The picture that emerged from these papers is now complemented and corrected here in a witness statement for SPIEGEL by Irishman Thomas Joseph Cushing, at that time - although not a celebrity - held as a prisoner with Jakob Dzhughashvili, and now a clerk in the communications section of the British Ministry of Defence".

Cushing maintained that his brawl with Yakov had nothing to do with the latter's death, which he had not even witnessed, but had been prompted by what had been claimed by the Nazis to have been his father's denial of him:

"It was early February 1943. There was snow on the camp grounds. I was a prisoner in the celebrity barracks for about a week when the guard brought in two more men. In the washhouse, I met one of the two men. Between four sinks, two toilets, two urinals and two cold showers, I introduced myself: 'Sergeant Cushing'. He replied in Russian: 'Dzhughashvili, Jakob, First Lieutenant'. Then we shook hands... Stalin's son washed and shaved regularly. He wore Russian soldier's boots, riding breeches, and alternately a khaki or a bluish worker's shirt and sweater... Young Stalin was often moody and reclusive. He typically often ran his fingers through his hair, then looked at his hand and wiped it on his trousers. He would do that every five minutes. He looked like he was worried about losing his hair. Dzhughashvili was obviously perturbed that as the son of the great Stalin he could not speak a single foreign language or show he knew anything of the world. He was a product of one of Russia's technical colleges, which are like factories, where you learn your specialty and nothing else. Young Stalin knew nothing of literature, music or theatre, but would sometimes hold forth on details of technical matters. He surprised me once by saying he was absolutely convinced that the barbed wire around our camp was not electrically

charged at all, as that would be a simple waste of electricity. Jakob had studied electrical engineering, but apparently didn't even know that the current just circulated in the wire and was therefore not consumed at all. His favourite discussion topic was politics, and he sometimes even tried to convert me to communism. He would speak at length about education and explain the communist economic system to me. His reasoning in such conversations, however, usually amounted to mere self-righteous assertions: 'I must know, I'm Stalin's son after all.' Dzhugashvili was also liable to wander off into visionary descriptions of the future, that would go something like: 'This is the last war we will have to fight for Communism. After the war we'll produce everything so cheaply that we'll flood the world with our goods; not only basic products but also cars and other luxury items.' ..."

"The Gestapo version of the toilet affair is not quite correct. The incident did not happen the day Dzhugashvili died, as the Gestapo Commission seemed to claim, but the day before. Stalin had left the toilet without flushing it. 'You're not in the steppes here', I said to him, 'pull the chain!' That angered him and he became aggressive. But I grabbed hold of him and yelled at him, 'Pull it, please!' Which he then did. This incident had nothing to do with his death. What prompted Stalin's son to seek his own death was probably an entirely different incident. The Germans had erected a loudspeaker in the barracks corridor through which they broadcast English and Russian-language news from the Ministry of Propaganda at regular intervals. One day I saw Dzhugashvili leaning against the wall under the loudspeaker, very pale and visibly upset. I greeted him, but he didn't respond. He hadn't washed or shaved that day, and had left his lunch untouched on the metal plate at his door. Kokorin tried in his miserable German to explain to me why Jakob was so distraught. The propaganda news had mentioned six million Russian prisoners, and accompanied this with an alleged quote from Stalin himself: 'Hitler has no Russian prisoners, only Russian traitors, and we'll deal with them when the war is over.' The same news report had also claimed that Stalin had denied that his son Jakob had been made a prisoner of war, claiming: 'I don't have any son Jakob.' Following this propaganda broadcast from Berlin, Stalin's son must have felt pilloried and rejected as a traitor. As he naturally suffered from depression anyway, which had only got worse during his imprisonment, I believe that he decided that day to voluntarily end his life."

"I didn't myself witness the incident at the camp fence. I was sitting in the barracks when I heard a shot fired outside. I ran out and saw Dzhugashvili hanging dead on the wire. His skin was burned and blackened in many places. The Germans left him hanging there for about forty-five minutes, while the commandant, his adjutant and a few others inspected and photographed the scene. They were all pretty agitated. The body was then wrapped in a blanket and carried away. I was later warned not to talk about the incident - otherwise, bad things would happen to me. I do not believe that Stalin's son was shot dead by a guard, but probably died as a result of contact with the electrified fence. The Washington documents indicate that the guards testified untruthfully about this to save themselves. The German orders stipulated that they should have shot him long before he reached the electrified fence. They probably hadn't been paying attention, or hesitated too long, and only shot the dead man in the head afterwards."

Twelve years later, however, in his 1980 'Sunday Times' interview, Cushing himself contradicted some key elements of the above account. Now Cushing accepted that Yakov's death occurred on the same day of their fight, and moreover stated that he had indeed witnessed that death:

"The truth about Jakob's fate had in fact been known to the British for eight years before Joe Stalin died. But they had

deliberately suppressed it. 'The evidence makes unsavoury reading' notes a Foreign Office official after studying the details in 1945. 'We do not think it would give Marshal Stalin any comfort.' The full facts are contained in German documents, withheld by the Cabinet Office until now, although a bald summary was released in 1968. 'The Sunday Times' has been allowed access to the documents. We have also managed to trace one survivor from the prisoner of war camp where Jakob was held... The only surviving witness to the incident Thomas 'Red' Cushing, still talks of the extraordinary pressures which drove Stalin to his death. He was watching through the window of a prison hut when Jakob finally met his end. 'I remember it as if it were yesterday,' said Cushing last week. 'It was one of the saddest events of my life.' ... On the afternoon of Wednesday, April 14, 1943, in a particularly heated exchange, Cushing accused Stalin's son of refusing to flush the lavatory and of deliberately fouling the wooden seat. If true, it was an offence calculated to enrage Cushing, who, as a British POW did not have to work, and saw himself as the hut 'housekeeper' keeping the quarters clean... The precise role played in these exchanges by Jakob Stalin, and indeed his responsibility for them, remains unclear. What does seem certain, however, is that the accumulated effect of constant bickering, rows, accusations - and finally the fight - broke the spirit of a man already suffering from confused emotions about his loyalties, his background and his future. That evening, at curfew, Jakob refused to go back into the hut. He demanded to see the camp commandant, claiming he was being insulted by the British prisoners, and when his request was turned down, he appears to have gone berserk... Cushing himself saw what happened. He had placed the blackout sheeting on the eight windows of Hut A a few minutes earlier, when he heard the commotion in the yard and peered out. Talking to the 'Sunday Times' at his home in County Cork last week, he described what followed: 'I saw Jakob running about as if he were insane. He just ran straight onto the wire. There was a huge flash and all the searchlights suddenly went on. I knew that was the end of him.' ... Early in July 1945 an Anglo-American team sifting through German archives in Berlin unearthed the full details of the story. Realising the implications the British Foreign Office reacted quickly, and on July 27, 1945, Michael Vyvan, a senior Foreign Office official, wrote to his opposite number in the American State Department. 'Our own inclination here is to recommend that the idea of communicating to Marshal Stalin should be dropped... It would naturally be distasteful to draw attention to the Anglo-Russian quarrels which preceded the death of his son.' The Americans agreed and the documents disappeared into the Foreign Office archives. In 1975, when under the 30-year-rule they were due to be released to the Public Record Office, the original documents were baldly summarised, while the originals went to the Cabinet Office."

Tom Wall was quite right to be wary of Cushing and, in his book, he has valiantly tries to separate truth from falsehood from the outset, making all possible use of what further light can be shone from reports contained in the UK National Archives (UKNA): "Among the prisoners spoken to by McGrath were 'Sergeant' Thomas Cushing; Lance Corporal Andrew Walsh and Private Patrick O'Brien all from Tipperary. All three had joined the British Army before the war and, after being placed in Friesack, volunteered for training by the Germans... Cushing was the dominant personality among the three... One of the Abwehr officers in the camp (Haller) painted a disparaging picture of Cushing during post-war interrogation, where he described him as a stool pigeon who had informed the Germans of McGrath's predecessor's escape plans. (UKNA)..."

"When captured in Normandy (1940), he and a few colleagues were found to be inebriated, having earlier taken shelter in a well-stocked wine cellar. He was, as he later defined himself, a

'soldier for hire', and a feckless one at that. ('Soldier for Hire', 1962). He claims to have been involved with the IRA during the Irish War of Independence and Civil War, but this is highly unlikely as he would have been only about ten years old in 1921. (Although he claims to have been twelve years old, there is no record of Thomas Cushing in the Irish census returns for 1911, so he must have been at least two years younger). He was sent to live with a relative in America at the age of fifteen where he subsequently enlisted in the US Army. There he was regularly in trouble for being drunk and brawling. Soon after his return to civilian life, he claims he enlisted in the Lincoln Brigade to fight on the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War. He liked to be known as 'Red' Cushing, but that was in reference to his hair colour, not his politics. In fact, he often boasted about his anti-Communism, something that would have placed him at some risk within the International Brigade. The problem with Cushing as a source is that he is entirely unreliable. Barry McLoughlin, who has researched Irish participation in the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War, is doubtful that he was ever in Spain, or at least not on the Republican side. "

"Although he spent his time in captivity known as 'Sergeant Cushing' he wasn't a sergeant. In the chaos that was Friesack, he had convinced the Germans and his fellow prisoners that he held that rank, most likely to avoid manual work, as under the Geneva Convention NCOs were only required to do supervisory work... (Abwehr officer) Haller considered him to be 'a rank opportunist, without backbone or moral fibre, a loud mouthed braggart, whose reliability was highly doubtful'. He may well have been a braggart, but he was also clever, if irresponsible... (In Berlin for training, his drunken) skirmishes may well have troubled the Abwehr, but of greater concern was the fact that the Irishmen might be defying strict orders not to fraternise together, for the Germans didn't want them disclosing their respective assignments to each other. In fact, Cushing was meeting regularly with Andy Walsh... Already under suspicion, Cushing was being followed and he and Walsh had been seen to be 'behaving very furtively' and exchanging notes. (UKNA, Haller)... After their arrest, Cushing and Walsh were faced with a classic 'prisoners' dilemma': whether to deny everything in the hope that the other would do the same, or accuse the other before being betrayed by him. Both chose the latter course, fiercely accusing each other of planning to double-cross the Germans, and implicating John McGrath into the bargain. Another Irish 'trainee' Private William Murphy was also arrested at this time. Their confessions were likely to have been extracted after fairly rough treatment by the Gestapo... The other Tipperary man, Patrick O'Brien, was also undergoing training in Berlin at that time... He was arrested by the criminal police for molesting a child living in his lodgings in Berlin. The Abwehr convinced the enraged parents to withdraw the charges, presumably to avoid any disclosures about the nature of his assignment. (UKNA, Haller)."

"Despite McGrath being fingered by Walsh and Cushing, no immediate action was taken against him and he remained at Friesack for another few months. Perhaps, the authorities felt they couldn't believe anything Cushing and Walsh told them, but later they discovered more compelling evidence of McGrath's attempts to undermine their project... John McGrath spent ten months in solitary confinement in the Sachsenhausen bunker before being taken to Dachau... His former charges in Friesack - Cushing, Walsh, Murphy and O'Brien - were located in a special section of Sachsenhausen, sharing accommodation with two notable Soviet prisoners."

See [www.independent.ie/irish-news/from-the-theatre-royal-to-dachau-himmlers-special-irish-prisoners-37866592.html](http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/from-the-theatre-royal-to-dachau-himmlers-special-irish-prisoners-37866592.html) for the third of Tom Wall's newspaper articles, published

this March, shining new light, based on his research in the UK National Archives, on the circumstances of Yakov's death: "One version of the incident has Stalin's son being chased by a knife-wielding Cushing, before jumping out of a window of their hut." Wall's book in its entirety is a fascinating read, based on scrupulous research, which I have avidly read from beginning to end. The strength of Wall's account of Yakov's death, and his integrity in weighing up all possible evidence, is such that it merits this more detailed presentation hereunder.

THE DEATH OF STALIN'S SON by Tom Wall (excerpts): Meeting with Stalin in his dacha (near Moscow, March 1945), Marshal Zhukov asked the General Secretary if anything had been heard of his son Yakov... Stalin remained silent... Stalin eventually replied, saying 'Yakov is never going to get out of prison alive. The murderers will shoot him.'

Sonderlager 'A', Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, 14 April 1943: Almost two years prior to this conversation (with Zhukov), Yakov Dzhugashvili stood alone outside his prison hut in despair, hurting physically and mentally. A short time earlier he had been in a brawl with some Irish prisoners who were billeted with him. He asked to see the Camp Commander, probably to request a transfer, but the request was denied...

When the Germans invaded on 22 June 1941, Dzhugashvili was ordered to the front in charge of an artillery unit. Before leaving, he telephoned his father who urged him to 'Go and fight!' (A. N. Kolesnik, "Prisoner of War, Sr. Lt. Yakov Dzhugashvili", 'Soviet Military History Journal', December 1988). His unit entered combat on 27 June, but they were soon encircled by the Germans and he was captured when attempting to make his way back to Red Army lines. Although not wounded, he claimed to have been stunned by heavy bombing 'otherwise I would have shot myself', he told his German interrogators. (Kolesnik)... A leaflet containing a photograph of him looking somewhat dazed and dishevelled in the presence of two German officers was dropped over the Russian front. The accompanying text read: "Stalin's son, Yakov Dzhugashvili, full Lieutenant, battery commander, has surrendered. That such an important Soviet officer has surrendered proves beyond doubt that all resistance to the German army is pointless. So stop fighting and come over to us."

This was the only propaganda the Germans extracted from him. He steadfastly refused to collaborate with the Nazis who wanted him to make propaganda broadcasts. His treatment in captivity alternated from being cosseted in a fashionable hotel to being ill-treated and half-starved in prison camps. The Nazis continued to pressurise him to work for them. They wanted him to act as nominal head of Vlassov's renegade Russian army, but he steadfastly refused to be linked to the turncoat general. He even refused to address SS guards by their military title, using only their surname; an unnecessary act of defiance that led to retaliatory punishments...

Stalin's son was, potentially at least, the most valuable prisoner held by the Nazis. His friend and cell mate, Vassily Kokorin, was another prize captive... Kokorin, Molotov's sister's son, was a Soviet Air Force officer who had been wounded before being captured, by which time his feet had been severely frostbitten with the result that most of his toes had to be amputated. The Irishmen with whom Dzhugashvili had brawled were none other than the Friesack 'collaborators' who had been arrested by the Germans when they realised they were likely to be double-crossed. Thomas Cushing, while charming and entertaining at times, could be short-tempered and quick to use his fists. O'Brien was even more disreputable; as we have learned, he was suspected of child molestation and had himself boasted of picking fights with co-workers on work details, especially foreigners. (O'Reilly, 'Hitler's Irishmen'). Walsh was the only one others regarded as normal; a fourth

Irishman present, Private William Murphy, was mentally unstable.

The four Irishmen and the two Soviet prisoners were billeted in the same hut. This was within a newly built compound, known as Sonderlager 'A', located on the north-eastern perimeter of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. It was built to house special prisoners whom the SS wished to keep segregated from the general camp population. Why the Irish group were housed there is unclear; it may have been because they were still considered to warrant equivalent POW status, but, because they knew so much about secret missions they could not be sent back to normal POW camps. Walsh and Cushing shared accommodation and appear to have overcome their differences arising from their mutual accusations in Berlin, although, perhaps not entirely, for the sound of raised voices was regularly heard from their quarters.

Originally housing political prisoners, Sachsenhausen and its satellite camps contained over 30,000 prisoners by early 1943... it also housed thousands of Soviet captives along with political and military prisoners from other occupied countries. Although gas chambers had only just been installed, its reputation as a death camp had already been well established. Thousands of prisoners had already been executed. Jewish prisoners had been transported to Auschwitz for extermination in 1942. However, its primary function by 1943 was to supply slave labour to local industries. Thousands worked in factories in nearby Oranienburg where they laboured for up to twelve hours a day, nourished by only small amounts of bread and watery soup.

Cushing and the other Irish inmates did not have to endure these conditions. During daylight hours, they could roam freely within their small compound. The civilian clothes they had been wearing during training were taken from them and they were re-supplied with military attire. They weren't assigned work and occasional Red Cross parcels provided them with much needed extra food and cigarettes. It had been some months after their arrival in Sachsenhausen when they were joined by Dzhugashvili and Kokorin who shared with them a washroom and toilet. They, as special prisoners, enjoyed better conditions than their Soviet compatriots in the main camp, who were treated appallingly. However, their treatment was harsher than that of the Irish. Despite being officers, the two were required to work and, like all Russian prisoners, they had no access to Red Cross parcels.

At first, relations between the Russians and the Irishmen appear to have been good, but soon the mood changed. Despite his difficulties with his father, Yakov was proud to be Stalin's son and he remained a committed Communist. This led to arguments with Cushing who was a staunch anti-Communist... On the fateful day, an argument arose about the state of their shared toilet. Cushing, who had assumed the role of hut superintendent, accused Dzhugashvili of fouling the toilet seat. Murphy, unstable at the best of times, joined in the attack. O'Brien, likewise, needed no urging to get involved. He called Kokorin 'a Bolshevik shit'. Kokorin replied in kind and blows were exchanged. (C. Simpson and J. Shirley, 'The Sunday Times', 24 February 1980. The journalists based their piece on an interview with Cushing, which is likely to be partisan at best). It was hardly an even contest, for it was three, if not four, against two: it's not clear if Walsh joined the affray, for he subsequently claimed to have liked Dzhugashvili and to have been traumatised about what happened. Moreover, the two Russians were smaller men, weakened by inadequate diet, and Kokorin would have been unsteady on his near toeless feet, while the tall Cushing had been a boxer during his time in the US Army. At some point during the fracas, Cushing is alleged to have produced a knife and chased Dzhugashvili down a corridor. To save himself, the Georgian jumped through an

open window, which led to him standing outside after curfew time. (UKNA. This aspect of the affray was related by John Dodge, who claims to have heard it from Peter Churchill - the SOE intelligence officer. Churchill was not a witness and could only have heard it from one of the Irishmen or from Kokorin. Churchill does not recount this in his book. However, he was alone among the British officers in Sachsenhausen, who seem to have liked Cushing).

Cushing afterwards described what happened as he watched from a window of their shared hut. ('The Sunday Times', 24 February 1980). He said that Yakov 'suddenly rushed outside, sprinted across the compound, scrambled up the wall and attempted to crawl through the perimeter wire'. The Georgian called out to the guard, 'Don't be a coward, shoot me!' Cushing continued, 'A shot rang out followed by a blinding flash, and poor Jakob hung there, his body horribly burnt and twisted.' This account of Yakov's end is broadly in line with the statement of Konrad Harfich, the SS guard who shot him, during his post-war trial: "He put one leg through the trip-wire, crossed over the neutral zone and put one foot into the barbed wire entanglement. At the same time he grabbed an insular with his left hand. Then he got out of it and grabbed the electrified fence. He stood for a moment with his right leg back and his chest pushed out and shouted at me 'Guard, don't be a coward, shoot me!'" (UKNA).

The guard fired a single shot with the bullet entering just in front of his right ear. Cushing later remarked that 'it was the first time I felt sorry for the poor bastard'. Not the most worthy of tributes, although he went on to say 'it was one of the saddest events of my life'. Yet, while expressing sorrow, he avoided any suggestion of culpability.

It was a sad end for a young man whose dream of reconciliation with his father was only to be realised posthumously. The 'murderers' did shoot him as Stalin predicted, although he did not have confirmation of this until after war. Anton Keindl, the camp commandant, was potentially at risk of being disciplined, or worse, for allowing the loss of such a valuable hostage. To minimise blame, it is believed that he conspired with all concerned, including the Irish prisoners, to have the matter portrayed as a straightforward suicide; there was no mention of Stalin's son being chased by a knife-wielding Irishman. (UKNA)...

Soon after the end of the war, the Americans uncovered an SS report about Yakov Dzhugashvili's death which they passed on to the British. The contents created a dilemma for the British Foreign Office. It was initially thought that they might present Stalin with a copy of the file at the upcoming Potsdam Conference in July 1945, presumably while tendering their condolences. However, when the contents were perused, the 'unpleasant' and embarrassing fact that Yakov Dzhugashvili's suicidal action was preceded by an argument with a British fellow prisoner- Cushing - was discovered. The mandarins therefore advised that it would be distasteful 'to draw attention to an Anglo-Russian quarrel' in connection with Stalin's son's death. Consequently, Stalin was not told of the discovery.

#### **A POSTSCRIPT: THE TESTIMONY OF MARSHAL GEORGI ZHUKOV**

Tom Wall's account had opened his chapter on Yakov with remarks attributed to Stalin in the memoirs of Marshal Zhukov. Wall had not, however, quoted Zhukov as a primary source. His quote was from a secondary source, the opening paragraph of the "Objective Berlin" chapter in 'Berlin - The Downfall: 1945', the 2002 book by Antony Beevor, who had continued:

"The most recent news of Yakov had come from General Stepanovic, a commander of the Yugoslav gendarmerie. Stepanovic had been released (from Nazi captivity) by Zhukov's own troops at the end of January (1945), but then grabbed

by SMERSH (Soviet counter-intelligence) for interrogation. Stepanovic had earlier been in (a camp near) Lübeck with Senior Lieutenant Djughashvili (in 1942). According to Stepanovic, Yakov had conducted himself 'independently and proudly'. He refused to stand up if a German officer entered his room and turned his back if they spoke to him. The Germans had put him in a punishment cell. Despite an interview printed in the German press, Yakov Djughashvili insisted that he had never replied to any question from anyone. After an escape from the camp, he was taken away and flown to an unknown destination. To this day, the manner of his death is not clear, although the most common story is that he threw himself at the perimeter fence to force the guards to shoot him. Stalin may have changed his attitude towards his own son, but he remained pitiless towards the hundreds of thousands of other Soviet prisoners of war who had in most cases suffered an even worse fate than Yakov."

Tom Wall's thoroughgoing research, particularly in the far and dark corners of the UK National Archives, has surely resolved what Beevor deemed to be - and designated as - "unknown". Wall has produced as close to a definitive account of Yakov's death as is ever likely to be found. In conclusion, it is here appropriate to once again refer back to Marshal Zhukov. Hereunder is the full account given by Zhukov himself of his March 1945 conversation with Stalin concerning Yakov:

"In the course of the East Pomeranian operation, I think it was on March 7 or 8, I had to make an urgent flight to the General Headquarters on order from the Supreme Commander. Straight from the airfield I went to Stalin's country house where he was staying. He was not quite well. Stalin asked me a few questions about the situation in Pomerania and on the Oder, heard out my answers, then said: 'Let's stretch our legs a little, I feel sort of limp.' ... We spent at least an hour walking and talking... On our way back I said: 'I've been meaning to ask you for a long time about your son Yakov, have you heard anything about his fate?' Stalin did not answer at once. We had made a good hundred steps before he said in a kind of subdued voice: 'Yakov won't be able to get out of captivity. They'll shoot him, the killers. From what we know, they are keeping him separately from the other POWs and are persuading him to betray his country.' Stalin was silent for a minute, then said firmly: 'No, Yakov will prefer any kind of death to betrayal.' It was obvious that he was worrying about his son. At the table, Stalin sat silent for a long time, not touching food." ('The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov', 1971 edition).

See [www.thoughtco.com/world-war-ii-marshal-georgy-zhukov-2360175](http://www.thoughtco.com/world-war-ii-marshal-georgy-zhukov-2360175) and <https://youtu.be/eTFxMGM3-Uc> for more on Marshal Zhukov.

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## Were the Germans Mollycoddled at Versailles? A "Times" complaint

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by Manus O'Riordan.

This, of course, is my own tongue-in-cheek heading, but what follows provides an insight into the British imperialist mindset that produced such a vicious Versailles Treaty. This May 4, in its "Britain at War" series, 'The Times' (UK) has reprinted the following 100 year old complaint:-

### The Germans At Versailles

The German Peace delegates at Versailles are lodged in the annex to the Hotel des Reservoirs. The Hotel is a historic hostelry, because it was the residence of La Pompadour and because in it M Clemenceau and others have plotted for and against Presidential candidates since the beginning of the Third Republic. It shows its back to the great and now truly springlike Park of Versailles, and through the back entrance the German delegates can reach a wide stretch of the Park railed off for their enjoyment. The Germans enjoy sole possession of the loveliest corner of the Park, that somewhat wild stretch which includes the hamlet where Marie Antoinette played at dairymaid simplicity in silks and satins. They also have the Grand and the Petit Trianon to themselves, and thus the British members of the Supreme Council of War, who are housed in the Trianon Palace Hotel, have been deprived of their favourite walks and are able from the windows to see the German in possession.

The Trianon Palace Hotel, though a modern building, has already a varied history. When war broke out its white corridors and somewhat "Ritzified" salons became filled with wounded German prisoners. Then it became a British hospital, and after that was used as the headquarters of the Supreme Council of War. In a few days' time the peace terms of the Allies will be handed to the German delegates in its main dining room. The setting is not, perhaps, entirely adequate to the occasion. The room is lofty, it is white, it has electric light, and is filled with long tables covered with red and green baize. There is not a picture, a clock, or even an allegorical figure to give a note of character.

It is the present intention to refuse admission to the Press to witness the handing over of the Peace Terms, but more than one titled lady is arousing the envy of her friends by saying that she is going to get a seat. The Press are to be penned up outside the entrance to the hotel. The German Journalists live with their Delegates and are constantly in touch with them. They enjoy unfettered telegraphic, telephonic, and Wireless communication with Germany, and as arrangements stand, those who wish to know what is happening will probably do well to read the German Press.

- Editorial, 'The Times', May 4, 1919.

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## Was Lloyd George Too Soft On Ireland? Another "Times" Complaint

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by Manus O'Riordan.

This May 6, in its "Britain at War" series, 'The Times' (UK) has also reprinted the following another 100 year old complaint:

### Mr Lloyd George And Ireland

The sooner the Prime Minister explains to the nation his intentions about Ireland the better. Three Irish-American delegates have been to Paris, bearing claims for recognition of the Sinn Fein "Government", together with a demand that English and Scottish taxpayers should pay to Ireland a sum of £500,000,000 by way of "partial restitution and reparation". They have since been to Ireland, stating that their object is "to confer with 'President' de Valera upon the question of securing recognition of the Irish 'Republic' at the Peace Conference". They allege that the Prime Minister has agreed to discuss with them a Republican status for Ireland. We decline to credit this fantastic allegation.

At Belfast one of the delegates, Mr Ryan, said they were "out to get an Irish Republic" and would not "compromise". Though

we may dismiss these sentiments for what they are worth, it is clear that so long as Mr Lloyd George remains silent he is liable to become gravely compromised. There seems no doubt that he assented to the visit of these delegates to Ireland, and thereby has been instrumental in causing an amount of mischief the extent of which cannot yet be fully estimated.

It is imperative that the head of the King's Government should disclose both to Great Britain and Ireland his relations, if any, with these persons. No graver constitutional issue has arisen in our time and no Prime Minister has ever been placed in such an equivocal position. In Ireland Mr MacPherson quite rightly denounces Sinn Fein's "open defiance of the decrees

of the lawful Government of the country". In Paris the Prime Minister lightly permits Irish-Americans to travel to Ireland with the King's authority, although he knows that they will advocate hostility to the Crown when they get there. Can we wonder that the internal condition of Ireland passes from bad to worse? Mr Lloyd George has no policy for Ireland, and has stated that he has no intention of framing one. Sinn Fein has no policy either. The moment Sinn Fein is confronted with the necessity of placing a constructive policy before the Irish people, the hollowness of the movement will be exposed. Its chief strength lies in the absence of a clear policy upon the part of the British Government.

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## **Blockading The Germans! With an Overview of 19th century Maritime Law**

### **The Evolution of Britain's Strategy during the First World War, Volume 1**

**By Eamon Dyas**

Belfast Historical and Educational Society 2018

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 Department of the British Library for many years.