

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 - The Phil Hogan Debâcle

The most representative Irish Government there has ever been has deprived the Irish state of the most influential position it has ever held in the European Union. The Taoiseach, Micheal Martin, has sacked EU Trade Commissioner, Phil Hogan.

The present Government is so representative that it is unable to govern. It is barely able to hold together.

The issue on which Hogan was sacked was attendance at a golf dinner, organised by the Golf Committee of the Dail, at which, it is suggested, Covid guidelines were broken.

Hogan denies that any laws were broken, or that any regulation was breached. The most that can be said is that a guideline which it was intended to make into a regulation was not observed.

Hogan had nothing whatever to do with the organising of the dinner, or the making of laws and regulations about Covid social distancing, but the dinner was attended by people who were involved in the governing of the state, including a Supreme Court Judge, who remains on the bench.

It was not the Government's business to monitor the doings of the Commissioner it had nominated. A Commissioner, once appointed, ceases to be a functionary of the Government which nominated him. The Commission is an EU authority, whose personnel are drawn from the states of which the EU is made up. It is the core institution of the European Union. Without it, the Union would be a mere alliance of convenience between the various states.

But now a component state of the Union has usurped the authority of the Union by (effectively) sacking a Commissioner over whom it assumed it had continuing authority because it had nominated him.

If this action, driven by nationalist populism, is allowed to stand as a precedent, then the end of the EU is nigh.

This is not the first time an EU Commissioner has been sacked in response to populist rabble-rousing, but it is the first time it has been done through the action of the Government which nominated him. There was no demand anywhere but in Ireland that he should be sacked.

The previous sacking was of a French Commissioner, Edith Cresson, but that was not done in response to a French clamour. It was done in response to a populist clamour led by Pat Cox and the European Liberals and was part of a campaign to weaken the central institutions of the EU by establishing a spurious democracy where there were no grounds for a genuine democracy.

The sacking of Mme. Cresson was followed by a sacking of the entire Commission. The populist phrasemongers held that she could not simply be replaced by another nominee because the Commission was an integral whole and it either stood or fell together. It remains to be seen whether that will be done in the present instance.

A second ground for the clamour against Hogan is that he was on a visit to Ireland, and should therefore have subjected

himself to strict quarantine for a fortnight. He said that, while in Ireland, he had occasion to visit a doctor, and the doctor had given him a Covid Test and found him to be free of it. But that was dismissed as being irrelevant. The regulation had to be applied mindlessly. Anything else would be elitism. So held the Editor of the *Irish* (formerly *Cork Examiner*), Daniel McConnell (who had led the clamour) in an interview with Pat Kenny on *Newstalk*.

Kenny raised the matter of Tanaiste, and former Taoiseach, Varadkar going in and out of the state without ever quarantining himself, and excusing himself on the ground that he was an important business. The Taoiseach did likewise.

What business could the Tanaiste in a makeshift Government have that was more important than the business of the EU Trade Commissioner?

But Hogan was only visiting on holiday? He was attending a holiday event of the elite of a society which, for better or worse, has decided to be bourgeois-capitalist and to make itself a central point in the transactions of international finance-capitalism. Is important business in that sphere dealt with only in an office and during office hours?

The Government that made the disciplining of an EU Trade Commissioner a matter of domestic Irish politics is a Coalition of three parties plus some Independents. It is at the mercy of every change in the breeze of public opinion.

What is called *democratic government* is representative government by political parties which are always trying to unseat one another. Nothing else is now recognised as democratic. In representative government there is a tension between being representative and governing. The tendency in recent times in Ireland and in Europe has been to give priority to representativeness over the function of governing.

The establishment of representative government was pioneered by the British State, and it has been maintained there during a long period when it was breaking down in other states, because in Britain priority has always been given to government over representativeness.

Proportional representation in multi-member Constituencies, which encourages the representation through separate parties of various shades of opinion, has been warded off in Britain, despite a number of attempts to introduce it—but Britain introduced it in Ireland in 1920 for the purpose of weakening whatever government would replace the British administration.

Two months ago, the British Government had a much more difficult problem about a breach of Covid regulations, that was much more serious than the problem presented to Micheal Martin by Phil Hogan's attendance at a Dail golf dinner. Dominic Cummings drove from London to the North of England during Lockdown, to visit his parents. The visit was discovered and publicised by the media. A media and Opposition howl was raised, demanding that Cummings should be sacked. But the Prime Minister considered that Cummings' expertise was needed for the conduct of government, and he rode out the clamour.

Micheal Martin caved in.

The British mode of representative government has often been condemned as a form of elective dictatorship. But that is its virtue.

It was the French Revolution that proclaimed democracy to the world, but it was Britain that established a viable system of the democracy during the following century, while France was going through a series of popular revolutions and authoritarian counter-revolutions: Republics and Monarchies; democracies and charismatic authoritarianisms.

The political philosopher Edmund Burke, when the French Revolution was proclaiming general human rights, said that the basic human right was a right to be governed without continuous commotion.

And the way this was to be done by representation was through the bundling together of opinions in two parties, so that the electorate could actually make a choice about government.

In France each Revolution brought forth a great proliferation of parties, each expressing a particular shade of opinion. This made government impossible and led to forcible restoration of authority.

Ireland, despite the subversive influence of PR, had a viable party government for more than three-quarters of a century after the Free State obsession with denying legitimate expression to anti-Treaty opinions was overcome by the Fianna Fail victory of 1933.

The system depended on the effectiveness of a rural-based Fianna Fail in holding a wide range of opinion together as a functional Party, capable of winning elections. The present crisis is the result of its decline in the hands of Bertie Ahern and its collapse in the hands of Micheál Martin, the Smart-Alec, due in great part to its repudiation of its origins and its demonization of Charles Haughey who, through virtuoso statecraft, made Ireland a player in the world of Finance Capitalism, on which its present prosperity depends, and gave the major European states the impression that Ireland was not just a British hanger-on.

The Trade Commissioner—who has been sacked by a virtual political nonentity, Micheál Martin, for next-to-nothing (because, formalistic quibbles aside, that is what has happened)—two years ago, when he was EU Agricultural Commissioner, gave the Irish Government a severe talking-to, when it seemed to be in despair over Brexit, told it that there was a future for Ireland in Europe, even if Britain would not be there to look after it, and put some backbone into it. He changed the policy of the State with regard to Brexit from relying on an Irish deal with Britain, to relying on Europe to look after Irish interests in the face of British bullying. The policy was so successful that Britain has still not recovered from the shock!

And now Martin has thrown away the best card Ireland has in Europe!

And the Europeans must now be coming to think that the Irish are small-timers after all.

Advertisement

The Armenian Insurrection And The Great War Including two pamphlets by “Armen Garo”

By Pat Walsh

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The Great Calamity that engulfed the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire in 1915 has been narrowed down to a single question: Was the Young Turk Government in Istanbul guilty

of Genocide? But the tragedy of the deaths of great numbers of Armenians, Turks and Kurds is inexplicable if confined solely to this. And it obscures important historical questions around the issues of instigation and betrayal that should be raised around these events. So a context is required to explain what really happened to produce such a disaster.

That context is the Great War and the Armenian Insurrection. The Armenian Insurrection is described by a leading figure in it, the Dashnak revolutionary Dr. Pasdermajian (Armen Garo), in writings long since forgotten. These put a very different complexion on the events of 1915. They describe a great moment of decision when the very existence of a people was gambled in the struggle for a Great Armenia, carved out of Ottoman territories in which the Armenians constituted a small minority.

His two pamphlets reprinted here reveal that the 1914 Ottoman offer of an autonomous Armenian State was rejected by Armenians when they thought a better offer came from America, Britain and France. The price was that they fight the Ottomans. They gambled and lost, bringing disaster on the Armenian people. Also included is a commentary by Pat Walsh on the origin and development of 'the Armenian Question' and its culmination and final resolution in the catastrophic events in Anatolia brought about by the Great War.

This reveals the instrumental part played by the Liberal Anglosphere in foisting dangerous notions of historic destiny on the Armenians and then a fraudulent war that encouraged them to destruction. When remembering the Armenian Great Calamity what should be sought is not only the truth, but the whole truth.

Liberal Democracy and its Problems

Brendan Clifford

The Summer 2020 issue of the Jesuit Quarterly, *Studies*, is on the theme of *Remembering Peter Sutherland*. The leading article is by Lord Patten, who was the last Viceroy of Hong Kong.

Lord Patten is a Catholic. It is odd for a Catholic to be a Viceroy. The Viceroy stands in the place of the Monarch. The Monarch is Church of England Protestant. It is the law that the Monarch must be a Church of England Protestant. When this law was enacted it was for the purpose of ensuring that the Monarchy should not be a Roman Catholic. Roman Catholicism tended to run in the Monarchy. This law, therefore, is an anti-Catholic law.

Patten is not the first Catholic Viceroy. The first was appointed in 1920 to humour the Irish. He was appointed Viceroy of Ireland in connection with the passing of the *Government of Ireland Bill*. That Bill had been rejected in advance by the Dáil. Its enactment was a piece of funny business. It was a “*better government of Ireland Bill*”, which provided for particularly bad government in the only part of Ireland where it was likely to be implemented: the Six Counties. It established Home Rule Government in the Six Counties, even though the Ulster Unionist Party said it didn’t want it, and the Nationalists certainly did not want intimate regional government conducted by the Unionist Party.

The purpose of the Act was to bring about Partition by indirect means, so that the Government could disclaim responsibility for it. It was formally an all-Ireland Home Rule Act, but it included a right of secession from all-Ireland Home Rule by the Six Counties on the condition that they operated a little Home Rule system of their own.

The Six Counties seceded on the instant, as it was known that they would. But Westminster could still say to the United States that it was the Irish themselves who decided to divide the country.

It was certain that the 26 County Parliament provided for by the Act, if it met, would be attended only by a few Ascendancy Unionists representing the continuing Protestant Ascendancy of Trinity College.

The Government threatened that, if the representatives of the nationalist majority did not attend the Parliament of Southern Ireland, then Britain would govern the 26 Counties as a Crown Colony. It knew very well that it would not carry out this threat.

With the setting up of the Northern Ireland system, the realistic purpose of the Act was achieved. But it should be observed that the Six Counties would have been much better governed as a Crown Colony than as a pseudo-democracy.

The Catholic Viceroyalty of Hong Kong also had funny business to transact.

Hong Kong was a piece of China held by Britain under an Unequal Treaty. It had been directly governed by Britain and had no political life of its own. Britain decided to hand it back to China when the term of the Treaty ran out, but decided to alter it profoundly in the course of handing it back by ‘democratising’ it, which amounted to giving it a degree of local government with an elected assembly.

Hong Kong—as ‘democratised’ by Lord Patten—did not have the authority to decide what to do with itself—and therefore it was not a democracy. It remained a British Imperial

possession until Britain handed it back to China. It was a little capitalist Utopia within the British Empire, governed from outside itself. Towards the end it was subjected to a process of democratisation by the Imperial Power which was not a response to a demand for self-government, but was introduced entirely in the Imperialist interest. It was returned to China with an element of democratic decomposition built in which it was hoped would be contagious within the politics of mainland China.

It suited the Chinese Government at the time to maintain Hong Kong in the form that Lord Patten gave to it at the end. Sovereignty had been transferred back to China, and with sovereignty the right to bring Hong Kong to order if the interim arrangements became disorderly—as they did during the past year, with British and American encouragement.

Lord Patten now claims that the Treaty he signed when Hong Kong was being given back to China made Britain a guarantor of the interim arrangements and gives it a right of intervention to prevent Peking/Beijing from exercising its sovereignty to curb the disorder to which those arrangements have given rise under Westminster incitement.

If Beijing had decided to have Hong Kong back when the time ran out on Britain’s Unequal Treaty and had simply ordered the British to leave without further ado, and Britain had refused to leave, that would have been a very serious matter for Britain. It would not have been serious because of ‘Rights’. It would have been serious because of Power. Britain is in its element when it comes to casuistic debate about Rights, but it has frittered away the enormous Power which it held in the world a few short generations ago. Its loss of power in Asia came about as a consequence of ending its alliance with Japan under US pressure, and then, in 1941, backing a US ultimatum to neutral Japan which brought it into the World War. Japan responded by declaring war on the British Empire under the slogan, ‘*Asia for the Asians!*’ The Empire was swept away up to the borders of India, and a strong nationalist movement sprang up in India under Japanese influence. Japan was defeated and broken by American nuclear bombing but the Empire never recovered from the loss of the Japanese ally on which it had come to depend. And, in the course of those eventful 1940s, effective statehood was restored in China.

Britain, as a World Empire, had the power to involve the world in a War whose occasion was a local squabble in Europe, which was a matter of no concern to Asia, but the working-out of the War broke Britain’s world power and accelerated the growth of Asian power centred on China.

Japan had too little weight in itself to stand alone as an Asian Power against European intervention. It resorted to imperialistic militarism as a survival strategy when American warships ended its peaceful self-absorption. Its imperialistic alliance with Britain was mutually beneficial. When Britain ended it under American pressure, both Empires went into decline, and China restored itself as a vast self-sufficient state a little over a century after Britain made war on it to compel it to open up markets for British opium products produced by State direction in India.

Lord Patten now worries, in *Studies*, about *The Future Of Liberal Democracy*. He has good reason to worry about it.

It was the Liberal Democracy of Britain, when it was the greatest Empire the world had ever seen, that conducted the Opium Wars that set the old Chinese State on a process of disintegration. It was not by means of Liberal Democracy that China restored itself. The attempt at restoration by imitating the ideology of the force that was destroying China—the Kuomintang—came to nothing.

The Opium War was Liberal Democracy in action. The Great Reform (1832) had established the substance of democracy by enfranchising the commercial, industrial and professional middle classes, and the War Minister was the great Liberal ideologue, Macaulay.

The First Reform of 1832 was far from being a general enfranchisement of the adult population. But it was the enfranchisement of the social stratum identified with liberalism—middle class property ownership within the capitalist system, as distinct from ownership of large tracts of landed property by a traditional aristocracy.

The operative meaning of “*liberal*” was freedom from restraint. The Reform inaugurated the great era of free enterprise capitalism, accompanied by a great resurgence of fundamentalist Protestantism. Later enlargements of the franchise brought into play social strata whose requirement was the imposition of restraint, rather than even greater freedom from it. They brought Socialism into play.

The Reform was carried by the Whig/Liberal Party in Parliament, actively supported outside Parliament by middle class movements threatening rebellion. It was opposed by the Tories, and when it was enacted, the Tories began to construct a working class base on a programme of curbing capitalist freedom. Lord Patten is a Tory and his concern is with imposing constraints on mass democracy, rather than removing them, e.g.:

“The democracies that have helped to ensure that the second half of the 20th century was so much more peaceful and prosperous than the first half placed the ballot box within a framework of institutions, laws and political behaviour. It was not enough to depend on the vote. In the 1930s, tyrants had been elected, and would-be tyrants in the 1980s and after, for example on the smaller stage of the Balkans. Majoritarianism in these countries led to death under tyranny.

“In a liberal democracy, the responsible exercise of liberty is guaranteed first by the rule of law with independent courts and judges, working within a legal structure determined in a constitutional settlement. If politicians overstep their powers, they can be held to account by the courts. Sometimes when this has happened, even recently, the judges have been called ‘enemies of the people’. In fact they have been the guardians of arrangements which protect the people...

“While a democracy should also practise civic egalitarianism—all should be treated in the same way—there are limits to what the majority should be allowed to do. These decent limits can go beyond laws; they incorporate behaviour and a generous sense of how citizens should behave...” (p121).

Liberal democracy, then, is a restricted form of democracy. It is a means by which the people are saved from themselves in the making of decisions of state within a system of elected government based on universal adult franchise. They are required by the form of democracy to decide what the state should do, but within that form there must be a guiding force that over-rules them if they are in danger of making ‘*wrong*’ decisions.

Where does that over-ruling force come from? It might take the form of a written Constitution (adopted by a referendum of

the people?), which sets limits to what the people are entitled to do by voting. But Britain does not have a written Constitution. And so—

“Professor Peter Hennessy refers to the fact that we depend ultimately on what a civil servant friend of his used to call ‘the good chaps’ vision of government. People, left, right and in between, simply knew how to behave, even if the lines were not marked out in red, they just knew, understood that some things were (in a rather English phrase) ‘not on’. You didn’t need to go to an expensive school to know that” (p122).

Of course not! Children were not sent to Public Schools to be taught how to be governed. They were sent there from governing families to be trained in the attitudes by means of which a deferential populace was to be governed, and to become familiar with the sons of the other governing families and be given a strong sense of cultural affinity with them. The populace learned how to behave as a governed body by being governed over many generations by the social stratum whose acknowledged destiny was to rule. The popular franchise was introduced very gradually into this aristocratic system. There was never a moment when the populace undertook to govern itself without “*good chaps*” entrenched in influential positions to direct it.

The project of democracy was first raised in England in the 1640s. It was not until 1918 that the Parliamentary franchise was extended to a majority of the adult population.

In the first party-political Election held under the democratic franchise, the Liberal Party was destroyed. The Liberal Party had destroyed itself in 1916 as a consequence of having launched a World War in 1914 and having outrun its capacity to direct it. The newly-formed Labour Party took its place as the recognised Opposition in 1918. That was a moment when the populace, organised as a Socialist Party, might have shrugged off ruling class tutelage and asserted itself on the grounds of its own ideology. That possibility was averted when the ruling class elements left the wreckage of the Liberal Party, became Socialists, and joined the Labour Party, reinforcing its deferential reflexes.

Lord Haldane, who mobilised the Army for war in 1914, was Socialist Lord Chancellor a decade later.

The construction of a democratic system in England was very slow and controlled, and it was not implemented according to a plan but resulted from the working out of accommodations between conflicting social forces within a tightly controlled national consensus—which was an Imperialist consensus.

Britain then set out to impose democracy and nationalism on the world. That was the vision of “*the good chaps*” in 1919. The nation-states it set up in Eastern Europe when it decided to destroy the Hapsburg Empire, were not nationalistically developed, and those it set up in Africa half a century later were even less so.

Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were made up of peoples of many different kinds, accustomed to living with their differences in the loose structures of the Hapsburg Empire. These mixtures could have worked in the new states only if those states were miniature reproductions of the destroyed Empire, but they were formed according to the doctrine of nationalism proclaimed in the war-propaganda as the justification of the War—and, in any case, where was the influential stratum of “*good chaps*” to be got for them? (Their “*good chaps*” had been the rulers of the Empire that Britain destroyed.)

These states worked in the only way that they could work. They fell apart at the first opportunity twenty years later. They were reconstituted in 1945 and lasted for almost half a century

under the hegemonic influence of a stratum of “*good chaps*” that Lord Patten detests—the Communist movement which had a strong layer of support in each of them.

In 1990 the Communist system broke up. Those states were restored to the world of Liberal Democracy. And, under Liberal Democratic influence, they broke up again: being incited to do so, by means of very brutal wars, inspired by the European Union which de-legitimised the Yugoslav Constitution.

Liberal Democracy, insofar as Lord Patten describes it, is an evolved historical arrangement that works in states with long-established regimes in which fierce Party disputes are carried on in a medium of profound consensus in which hardly anything is at issue except which party will do what either of them would have done.

That is Britain, but it is not quite Ireland. Patten was Northern Ireland Secretary after being Viceroy of Hong Kong. He never seemed to notice that the Six Counties were excluded from the party-political system of the state. An article for *Studies* on Liberal Democracy should have centred on the North and explained how War was generated and sustained in this region of the premier Liberal Democracy. But all he says about it is a fatuous remark that Unionists should govern by day and Republicans by night.

A constant theme in British political stream of consciousness in recent times has been the “*rules based order which we all obey*”, except China and Russia! When did this rules-based order begin? Was it there when a Liberal War Minister made war on China to break it open as a market for British opium?

Perhaps it was made war upon in order to bring it within a rules-based order, instead of giving bad example in self-satisfied indolence in vast isolation from the European world which was the only worthwhile world? After all, as Lord Tennyson said,

“*Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay!*”

In 1914 Britain launched a World War against Germany, cutting it off from its foreign markets and seizing its handful of territories in Africa. The declared purpose of the War was to restore a European rules-based order which Germany was alleged to have broken. A few months later it declared war on Turkey which was alleged to have engaged in an act of war against Tsarist Russia (Britain’s ally). A couple of years later it invaded Greece, whose Government refused to declare war on Turkey, and installed a Government which was willing to make war, and encouraged it to embark on a conquest of Turkey—in which Greece unexpectedly suffered a massive defeat and was abandoned by Britain.

Britain itself conquered the Middle East from Turkey, set up the ‘nation-state’ of Iraq from bits and pieces and arranged for the election of a King. When a candidate not approved by Britain seemed certain to win, British diplomats kidnapped him and transported him.

Iraq became a state under a Treaty with Britain, as Ireland did. In 1939 it declared itself neutral in the Second World War, just as Ireland did. In 1941 it was invaded by Britain, which installed a puppet Government as an ally. At the same time it invaded neutral Iran and did likewise to ensure control of its oil.

After 1945 it made war on Malaya, where wartime anti-Fascist allies thought they were entitled—under the rules-based new order of the world proclaimed by the United Nations—to assert independence. Britain denied that the War was a war, calling it *The Emergency*.

When the rules-based order of the UN was being established, Britain, the USA and Russia exempted themselves from the rules, giving each other what in the old kingdom of Poland was known as “*the golden Veto*”—held by the major nobles—a vote which negated all other votes combined. Under that

system, international law can be no more than a matter of private opinion.

France and China were also given Vetoes. China was a client state of the USA in 1945, governed by the Liberal Democratic *Kuomintang*, and stagnating under it. Three years later the Kuomintang elite was brushed aside by the mass-based Communist Party. The Kuomintang retreated to the island of Formosa. It continued to hold the China seat in the UN until 1971, protected by the US Veto. A beaten Army in an offshore island was recognised by the UN as the sovereign authority over China until a reactionary US President—the Trump of his time, and equally hated—came along and permitted the Peking Government to take up the China seat at the UN. (Ostensibly this was done by a vote in the General Assembly!)

The Kuomintang rump in Formosa continued to assert that it was the legitimate Government of China, until its name was changed to Taiwan and it declared itself to be an independent sovereignty—which Peking does not recognise.

The old Chinese State was smashed by the militarism of British Liberal Democracy. The experience of the Kuomintang demonstrated that it could not be restored by means of Liberal Democracy—which Patten seems to regard as the only legitimate form of government anywhere under any circumstances.

General Colin Powell, within the democratic leadership of the world, came up with the maxim (with relation to Iraq): If you break it, you own it. Liberal democratic Britain broke the Chinese State, and it is finding it difficult to relinquish the sense of ownership. And Ireland seems to be re-discovering within itself traces of the Redmondite sense of ownership in the Liberal Democratic Empire which it lost for a while—an Empire which is abandoning Ireland, just when it was beginning to feel comfortable with it again.

Freedom is Capitalism. Capitalism is freedom. And, since Capitalism is inherently restless, and cannot rest easy if there is any substantial existence in the world that is not capitalist, so must it be with Freedom.

(A British Home Secretary had occasion to visit Dublin about fifty years ago. As he was getting on the plane to return to civilisation he is said to have thanked God that he was leaving that suffocating petty-bourgeois country). So there is Capitalism and Capitalism. From the vantage point of the game as played under Big Boys’ Rules, the Irish were seen as living in a rut of something that was little more than a general system of simple commodity production.

There used to be argument about whether, in the development of capitalism, there had ever been a phase of simple commodity production, and if there was, whether capitalism grew out of it. It seemed to me, insofar as I got involved in the argument, that there probably was, but that capitalism did not grow out of it, but that it was absorbed into capitalism when it came about through a different line of development.

The Irish economy after independence was close to being a system of simple commodity production, doing its best to mimic capitalism. One of the big standard items in Radio Éireann’s business reports was the price of *bonhams*, while all big projects were undertaken by the State. Usury was frowned upon—which nowadays is taken to be an expression of Anti-Semitism. A well-known book of the period was *Money Manipulation And The Social Order* by George O’Brien, Economics Professor at the National University, summed up Ricardo and Marx memorably as *two Jews tugging at the same rotten rope*. But today I doubt that the word ‘*usury*’ has any meaning at all for most people. Capitalism has arrived. Life depends on money lending.

Irish literature of the pre-capitalist, petty-bourgeois, era has been discarded—with Canon Sheehan being the first to be

dumped, by *Studies* in 1917. Dean Swift, the exiled English Tory of the Whig revolution, has been accepted as Irish because of his status in English literature, but is not taken seriously enough for it to be understood that his view of socio-economic affairs was very close to that of *Money Manipulation And The Social Order*.

Charles Moore (another right-wing English Catholic as far as I recall) writes in *The Daily Telegraph* (June 13) on the subject of the current craze for iconoclasm:

“Those statues (often remarkable works of art) were erected by not one omnipotent authority, but by all sorts. The choices often reflected the people’s preferences. Nelson’s column [in Trafalgar Square] for example, cost £50,000 (nearly 7 millions today), the bulk paid for by public subscription. What overall narrative can one see in this array [of statues, i.e. James II, Charles I, Cromwell etc.]? Certainly no single, official preaching of imperialism, racism, or any doctrine. You see the story of a free people, unfolding in the haphazard way in which freedom always works.

“What we have now, under the guise of Black Lives Matter, is an attempt to impose a single, organised, hostile narrative on this country. It wants literally to efface our rich national story...

“What ignorance, what cheek of the extremists to claim the British have spent 400 years without addressing the wrong of slavery. Christians have been taught that slavery was wrong since St. Paul subverted the Roman Empire by saying so 2000 years ago. Far too often, they failed to follow that teaching, but it never went away. In Britain’s case, the same nation—often the same families—which profited from the slave trade, came to repent and to act...”

Freedom is what a free people does. What is a free people? It is a people which does not act under external compulsion but under its own impulse.

It has been customary in England for three centuries to date the consolidation of freedom to the overthrowing of King James II in 1688. The external influence curbing its freedom up to that moment was the Roman Church. The subversion of the Roman Church in England began in the 1530s. It was destroyed utterly in 1688, when the legitimate monarch was overthrown and a regime of terror was directed against his adherents.

One of the first free actions of the new regime was to throw the Slave Trade open to free enterprise and free its conduct from the policing that the Monarchy had attempted to apply to it. Twenty years later, in war with France, England won a virtual monopoly of the Slave Trade to Latin America, and great English Slave Labour Camps were established on the Caribbean Islands. These were not punitive Camps. They were industrial Camps for the production of commodities by Slave Labour. England did not merely inherit some traditional form of slavery. It pioneered a new form of slavery and perfected it.

It benefitted greatly from its Slave system and, when it decided to abolish it and use wage-labour in the industrial process, it bought out the slaves from their owners: leaving the emancipated slaves to fend for themselves.

John Locke’s *2nd Treatise* might be called the Constitution of Liberty. It has a Chapter on Slavery, but it says nothing about the Slave Trade. The slavery that concerned him was the rule of a Roman Catholic King who tried to govern England as a state in which there was freedom of religion. (English freedom was possible only under the exclusive rule of the state religion invented by Henry VIII.

Locke was an investor in the Slave Trade, which was the safest and most profitable place to keep your money.

There is a lot to be said for the view that freedom is national—that it is what a people that is free to do what it pleases chooses to do. But Moore causes problems by spinning a transcendental idea in the middle of it—that there is Right and Wrong independent of circumstances, and that it was wrong of the English people to liberalise the Slave Trade and run productive Slave Labour Camps.

A free people has the right to do what it pleases, guided by the thoughtful element within it, whose influence ensures that it chooses wisely when deciding what to do. Freedom is what a free people does: That is the practical definition of freedom that one gets from the British example of it.

William King, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin at the time of the Glorious Revolution, whose thoughts had some influence in the working out of the Revolution, published a book about the vital question of the origin of Evil. He concluded that Evil was what obstructed the Will. It was a brilliant conclusion, borne out over subsequent centuries by English experience. It summed up the empirical morality of a free people which had overthrown all authority except that which came from its own will to act. At every turn one finds that what England experienced as *Evil* was what was obstructing its will.

Moore is right when he says that England in its freedom did not act towards the realisation of some general scheme of things, just acted from impulse as the notion took it. But where then does he get the idea that it was wrong when it made itself the greatest slave state in the world? From St. Paul, he says. But, when the Revolution opened the slave trade to private enterprise in 1690, the Biblicalist middle class threw themselves into it with gusto. Did they not notice that St. Paul, who they took for their Apostle, had condemned it?

George Moore, the novelist, describes how his father, a gentleman of Connacht, and a friend of Archbishop McHale, used to argue with McHale about the origins of Christianity, Moore claiming that it was founded by St. Paul. That Moore family had survived as gentry in Ireland by becoming Protestant, while still remaining Irish in some degree.

Mass Biblicalist indoctrination, particularly as connected with the Epistles of St. Paul, seems to have had very much to do with the kind of freedom with which England acted on the world. I got to know that much through living in Belfast and working out its history. But I did not gather that the freedom which Paul, as an enthusiastic outsider from the world of Roman citizenship, injected into the Christianity of the Apostles, was abolitionist with relation to the slavery that was prevalent in the Empire.

In my teens, in rural, Catholic Ireland, I got a Bible and read it as an act of bravado. It happened to be a Protestant Bible. People just thought it was a very peculiar thing to do. So it was. But, through reading it, I got to understand why the Vatican did not distribute Bibles and encourage the faithful to read them. Rome stood for civilisation. The Bible was an encouragement to something entirely different.

I could recall no Biblical prohibition on slavery, but I could not face reading the book again to make sure, so I looked up Slavery in the Bible Dictionary and found the following:

“Allusions to slavery in the Gospels are casual and describe the inferior position of slaves and their services. Jesus demands that one who would be first among his disciples should be the slave of all; from this passage comes the designation of the Roman Pontiff as “Slave of the slaves of God”. The religious use of the term is not common in the New Testament. The apostles are called slaves of the Lord, echoing the use of slave to signify the royal officer.

“It is often a source of wonder and even of scandal that the New Testament seems to take a neutral attitude towards slavery, accepting it as a social fact. The epistles contain recommendations to slaves to be obedient and their masters to be kindly” (A Dictionary Of The Bible by John L. McKenzie SJ, 1966).

“Peter explained the philosophical underpinnings of the EU: “The founding founders [sic] of the EU were explicitly philosophical in their approach. The philosopher who influenced the EU’s chief architect, Robert Schuman in particular, was Jacques Maritain, with his concept of forgiveness and his idea of personalism, of the dignity of man

“Tell slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Saviour.” Epistle of St. Paul to Titus, 2:9 – 2:10
(Editor’s note)

So it seems that the Biblicalist entrepreneurs, who became active in the Slave Trade when it was freed from the restrictions of Catholic monarchy, were not betraying any policy laid down for them by St. Paul.

The Biblicalist case against the Roman Church, as far as I picked it up from going through the history of Belfast, was that it connected up the early Christian movement with the affairs of the World State of the time, and ended its freedom (autonomy), while broadening its scope and enlisting the artistic idolatry of paganism in its service. The Reformation was a retrieval of Christianity from its Roman bondage and a restoration of its primeval freedom. But it did not seem to be noticed that in England—which is what counted in the world—the primeval freedom of Christianity was restored as an incident in the formation of a new Empire. It was in the course of breaking with Rome that England declared itself an Empire, and it was in the service of the Empire that Protestantism took shape—whether it was in the form of the Episcopal State Church or in the form of free-ranging Biblicalism.

England was Imperial and Providential. It was the force of Providence in the world, and therefore it was Imperial. What it did in the world was right because it was *it* that did it. The notion that what it did might be wrong appeared to it as merely paradoxical. It was itself the standard by which it judged itself, so how could it be that what it did out of impulse in its freedom be wrong? It did not strive to be good by doing good works—that was the Catholic way. Protestant England was *good* prior to its *works*, and its works were good because it did them. There was nothing beyond itself by which it could judge itself to be wrong. It sealed itself up in itself, and whatever was at variance with it was evil. And that was the case, whether it was constructing a slave system for a purpose, or abolishing slavery in the world once it had served its purpose—and whether it was joining the European Union or leaving it.

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Studies also includes a long article on *Peter Sutherland and the European Project* by Paul Gallagher, a barrister, and a former/current Attorney General. Gallagher writes that Sutherland’s European career:

“was rooted in a visceral and intellectual belief in the ideals and values that underpinned first the European Community and then the European Union... Peter fervently believed in Jean Monnet’s vision of Europe. Monnet declared that Europe’s future social development and prosperity needed a Europe united by free trade. In 1944 Monnet spoke of the need to re-build post-war Europe through a ‘true yielding of sovereignty’ to some kind of ‘central union and a European market without customs or barriers to prevent any resurgence of nationalism’...”

Gallagher then quoted an interview with the Financial Times in which—

not being linked to race. Forgiveness—after the bloodiest war in history—was the key to it, the essence of the argument. And

[the project] proceeded as an attack on nationalism, which led to the wars of national sovereignty, through a pincer movement of creating the supranational entity above and the 1931 doctrine of subsidiarity below’...” (p152).

Forgiveness after the bloodiest war in history, and the burying of national hatchets, came about by very roundabout means. It depended on relations between France and Germany.

France co-operated with Britain in launching the War on the spurious issue of Danzig. It joined Britain in encouraging the Polish Government—by making a paper military alliance with it—to refuse to settle the outstanding Versailles anomaly by transferring the German city of Danzig, which was never under actual Polish government, from nominally Polish territory, to the adjacent German region of East Prussia. The Franco-British military alliance with Poland established a military encirclement of Germany, which was a weakly-armed state emerging from Versailles disarmament conditions.

Martin Mansergh some years ago took issue with my statement of the plain fact that the Polish Guarantees by Britain and France constituted a military encirclement of Germany. In view of what it led to, Britain does not care to have the obvious stated, but at the time it was seen as an encirclement—and a good thing too!

In the Summer of 1939, possibly July, an Oxford War Pamphlet with the title *Encirclement* was published. The author was Professor J.L. Brierly, Fellow of All Souls and Chichele Professor of International Law in the University. Brierly denied that there had been an encirclement of Germany in 1914. It was only a German “myth” that there had been. And certainly there had been no overt military alliance with either France or Russia against Germany, only “understandings” between the “good chaps” of those times. But in 1939 there was a clear military encirclement. And—

“the object of these preparations is, firstly to deter Germany from going to war, and secondly, if we fail in that part of our purpose, to ensure that she shall be defeated. ‘Encirclement’, therefore, if this is what the Germans mean by the term, and we know that it is, is certainly no ‘myth’ to-day” (p13).

Brierly continues:

“Europe to-day contains two groups of Powers, of which it is unfortunately only too true to say, in the words of the 17th century philosopher Hobbes, that they are ‘in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators, having

their weapons and their eyes fixed on one another', and this, as Hobbes goes on to say, is a 'posture of war'..." (p15).

The Polish Government took up the offers of military alliance with the two great Empires, thereby ending its 1934 Treaty with Germany. Germany could not ignore the fact of encirclement. Poland could never hope to govern Danzig without conquering it, so its purpose was presumably to gain Danzig, and more than Danzig, in war with Germany, in alliance with Britain and France.

If the purpose of Britain and France had been to preserve the *status quo* in Poland, with relation to Danzig, they would have shown themselves to be making active preparation for war in co-operation with the Poles. That would have been deterrence. But their actions in the months following the Polish Guarantee gave Hitler grounds for gambling that they would stand idly by if he acted against Poland. And that is what they did. In effect they gave Poland to Hitler and then declared war on him, which they proceeded to wage in a most leisurely manner after Poland was gone.

France gave a military guarantee to Poland, which it did not honour. Why did it then declare war on Germany?

In 1914 it had gone to war on Germany to gain the territory of Alsace-Lorraine, which it had lost in its war on Prussia in 1870. Alsace-Lorraine was securely in its possession in 1939, so what was its war aim?

Whatever it was, it did nothing much towards achieving it. A few months after declaring war on Germany it tried, along with Britain, to engage itself in war against Russia in the Russian/Finnish War, but the Finns settled before they could get there.

Britain then tried to over-ride Scandinavian neutrality, in order to prevent trade in raw materials with Germany, but an extemporised German force got in first to Norway. France waited while this was going on.

And Germany responded to the declaration of war on it by striking at France while Britain was withdrawing from Norway.

Germany gambled on a novel military tactic with tanks. The gamble paid off. The Anglo-French Front was disrupted. Britain took its Army home. The French Parliament decided to negotiate terms with Germany, as it could no longer wage regular warfare. The Agreement was provisional, pending a calling-off of the War by Britain. Britain, though it had retreated from the battlefield, still dominated the seas and did not need to make a settlement.

Germany remained in occupation of Northern France as it was still at war with England, and the French Government moved to Vichy. Charles de Gaulle deserted from the Army, moved to England and set about raising a Rebel Army, declaring himself to be France.

Britain denounced the French democracy for betrayal, on the grounds that it had committed itself not to make a separate agreement regardless of the circumstances, and it made war on France by destroying its Fleet in the Mediterranean.

The Vichy regime governed most of France and the Empire. A Resistance movement was fostered by the British SOE in France but, after June 1941 (when Germany attacked the Soviet Union), the Resistance became predominantly Communist. De Gaulle's movement acquired a base in North Africa.

Ireland recognised the Vichy regime as the legitimate Government of France, as did the United States for most of the period.

A conquest of France from the South was launched in August 1944 by the American and British forces. The elected Vichy Government, which had negotiated terms with Germany following military defeat in the War it had declared, was

treated by the Resistance—which came into the open behind the advancing American and British forces—as a Fascist usurpation and subjected to a reign of terror.

The new French Government, set up in 1945 was a Resistance Government. It consisted of De Gaulle's following, not organised as a Party; the Communist Party, and a kind of Christian Social Party, the MRP.

Though France had contributed little to the defeat of Germany, it was given an Occupation Zone in Germany, as if it was a Victor Power. There was nothing remotely European in its Occupation policy. Its major objective was to incorporate as much as possible of the German Rhineland into the French state, and to break up the German state into the petty kingdoms which had existed before 1870.

France had hoped in 1918 to get part of Germany across the Rhine, but Britain would not allow it. It got Alsace-Lorraine, but nothing across the Rhine. Its chance of extending the French state into Germany seemed much better in 1945. The British Empire was a spent force, waiting to crumble; and the United States had a policy of punishing Germany by destroying the industry and breaking up the state.

So the Resistance Government in France, which was thoroughly nationalist and Imperialist, set about constructing a German State in its Occupation Zone to function as a French Protectorate. It took up the propaganda notion that the German petty kingdoms, which had been united into a State in response to the French invasion of Prussia in 1870, had been poisoned by a disease called Prussianism, and it undertook to *De-Prussianise* the Germans of the Saar region and set up the purified Good Germans in a petty state within its sphere of influence.

But the Prussian bogey was a piece of propaganda nonsense. De-Prussianising was De-Germanising and was seen by the Saarlanders as French colonialism.

It was expected that Germany would be demoralised by news about the Camps, but that did not happen. It had been demoralised 26 years earlier by the Armistice swindle and the fake revolution, but had been pulled together by Hitler, and in 1945 it stayed together.

And, as to the Camps, the atrocity propaganda of the Great War, which included such things as the German Corpse Factory, had been demonstrated to be a swindle, as the swindlers boasted about it in the 1920s.

Germany in 1945 was beaten but not demoralised. France itself, with Vichy in the undergrowth, an abysmal war record, and an incoherent Resistance Government of Gaullists, Communists and Christian Socials—and no solid party structure except the Communist Party—came much closer to being demoralised.

And then the United States changed its mind about Germany.

The great change in its attitude seems to have been connected with the death of Roosevelt, who was in his fourth term of office as President. The Roosevelt regime was as close to aristocratic government as the United States ever got. Roosevelt was a world figure. He recognised Stalin as the other world figure.

The War declared by Britain and France on Germany led, in its bungled prosecution, to a World War. It was Russia that had broken the German power that Britain, in one way and another, had brought to dominance in Europe. And the United States had hustled Britain back into the war in Europe after a three-year absence.

As a result of that war, Europe was divided into two, as was the world. It appears that Roosevelt hoped to base a settlement on that division, accepting the outcome of the War as setting the scene for the next act, and not questioning the right of the Soviet Union to determine how the territory it occupied in the course of defeating Nazi Germany should be governed.

But the aristocrat died, and was succeeded by the ultimate petty-bourgeois, Truman, who—partly under Churchill's influence—took the Soviet defeat of Nazism, and its consequent presence in Central Europe, to be a barbaric conquest which must be rolled back.

It followed from this view that the Western Occupation Zones of Germany must be brought outside for the conflict with Communism. German Government must be restored quickly. Germany must be re-armed, and must again become a base for operations against Russia. And, in order to undermine the status which Communist Parties held in the various countries because of the War, Capitalism must be made functional again. This was done with lavish expenditure of the enormous wealth accumulated in the US during the War.

The context of French expansionist activity in the German Rhineland changed drastically in the course of a few years. Germany restored itself in alliance with the US. Token de-Nazification was rushed through. France might carry on with its foible of De-Prussianisation if it chose—but, if it did, it would be out of the game.

The lure of Marshall Aid was irresistible. France gave up on the Saar in the mid-1950s. The Saarlanders said, in a plebiscite, that, good or bad, they were Germans.

What came of it all was the *Coal and Steel Community* to deal with overlap of industrial development between Alsace-Lorraine and the Ruhr, which had developed while the region was part of Germany, and without which the value of Alsace-Lorraine to France was greatly reduced.

It was when France failed again to get its Rhineland Protectorate that European idealism took root.

This idealism was in many respects an American Cold War programme for Europe. It was made possible by American money—which still has it in its grip. And Peter Sutherland was, of course, an American banker.

(To be continued)

Britain versus Russia in the Caucasus (Part 7)

Pat Walsh

Aside from the policy of the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, there were two other factors that led to the loss of the Caucasus to the Bolsheviks. The first of these was that special and discordant element in the region, the Armenians – who immensely complicated matters. The second was Britain's continuing and purposeless hostile relations with Ottoman Turkey. These two factors were inter-related but not always dependent upon one another.

The thing that these two factors shared was that they made the defence of the Caucasus much more difficult and ultimately unsuccessful. Combined with the policy of the Lloyd George government they led to the victory of the Bolsheviks and finally, the fall of Daghestan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia to the Red Army.

The Armenian Complication

An Armenian state in the Caucasus was not a natural development in 1919-20. It only became possible because of three factors:

Firstly, the temporary absence of Russia: A victorious Tsarist Russia, although historically employing the Christian Armenians as a colonising element in the Russian Caucasus, and a destabilising element in the Ottoman territories, would probably never have tolerated such an Armenian state. The maximum offer made by Tsarist Russia to the Armenians—and this is even shrouded in doubt—was one of vague autonomy. Tsarist Russia was a centralised state that did not do nation-building. It had no intention of establishing an independent Armenia on its land route to Constantinople. Tsarist Russia made an offer no better than the Ottoman offer to the Dashnaks in mid-1914. And we know from a reading of Dr. Pasdermadjian and others that the Russians were trusted by the Dashnaks as little as they trusted the Ottomans. As Pasdermadjian described the Tsar's attitude: "*We need Armenia, but without the Armenians*" (*Why Armenia Should be Free*, p.29)

Secondly, there was British Imperialism's occupation of the Caucasus and its geopolitical desire to establish an Armenian buffer between Moslem Anatolia and Russia – Lord Curzon's "*tampon state*".

Thirdly, there was the generosity of the Azerbaijanis, themselves, who decided to allow Erivan province to become the nucleus of an Armenian state, after the Dashnaks had made a Turkish Armenia impossible. Armenians had only been recent inhabitants of the Erivan area and had become a majority there with Tsarist colonisation in the previous century. However, the Armenians still found it necessary to ethnically cleanse the Moslem population of Erivan, which amounted to hundreds of thousands, between 1918 and 1920 to build a more homogeneous entity, that they felt comfortable in.

Another fact that should be mentioned in this context is that the Armenian Erivan Republic was originally established under Ottoman protection in June 1918, resulting in its first Prime Minister, Hovhannes Katchaznoui sending a delegation to Istanbul to thank the Sultan. Unfortunately, a month after the Mudros Armistice the Armenians broke the Batum Treaty, which they had signed along with Georgia and Azerbaijan, and occupied Oltu and Kars.

The Armenian Dashnaks, after rejecting the generous pre-Great War offer made to them by the Ottomans at Erzurum, made themselves dependent on British and French Imperialism for gaining more than the Ottoman offer. They then relied on President Wilson to carry through the schemes that the Imperialists drew up on their maps. That, of course, was a stroke of good fortune and nothing at all to do with Dashnak calculations. U.S. influence would have been an unanticipated event in 1914, when the Ottoman offer was declined.

As subsequent events revealed, both Britain and Russia were unreliable allies for the Dashnaks. Despite the existence of a strong Armenian lobby in Liberal England there was an understanding in Britain that the Armenians were always a Russian instrument in the Caucasus rather than a potential British one, and the Armenians were, therefore, part of the Great Game enemy's armoury.

George Dobson of *The Times*, for example, wrote in 1890:

“... as Russia has on her side the Armenian Catholicos and thus holds the keys of the Armenian Church, she is much more powerful among the Turkish Armenians, when she chooses, than we can ever hope to be. We listen to their complaints, but get nothing done for them, in spite of our protectorate over Asia Minor. The religious element has always been Russia’s strongest lever for either aggressive or defensive purposes. Without its help, the Caucasus would hardly have been conquered so soon and so completely as it was... it would probably have made all the difference in Russia’s subsequent operations. A strict attention to this matter gave Russia her first foothold in the country.” (George Dobson, *Russia’s Railway Advance into Central Asia*, pp.90-1)

Of course, the 1907 agreement between Britain and Russia changed that situation as the Armenians suddenly became more than the pets of the Nonconformist moralists in England and emerged as allies of an ally waging War on Britain’s enemies. However, the British War Office was still reluctant to independently arm Armenians who volunteered for service prior to the events of 1917 in Russia, when everything changed.

The Armenians turned out to be the sole ally of the British in the Caucasus during the Great War. While the Georgians and Azerbaijanis had remained loyal to the Tsar during the War (unlike the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire) both had, later in the conflict, gone over to the enemies of England, when the Russian state collapsed. The Georgians had looked to the Germans for protection whilst the Azerbaijanis had joined with the Turks for protection against the Armenian Dashnaks, and in struggling for their freedom.

The aggressive nature of Armenian nationalism and the ethnic cleansing activities of the Dashnaks had much to do with the necessity of seeking protection from bigger Powers in both cases. The Georgians – as Christians – were concerned about the Ottoman/Islam advance into the Caucasus in mid-1918 but they quickly found that the Armenians were a much greater threat to the integrity of their state and the Ottomans became their protectors, guaranteeing the existence of a Georgian state in the Batum Treaty of 1918.

So, Britain certainly owed the Armenians. They had gone into Insurrection in 1914, despite generous offers from the Ottomans, who had tried to keep them loyal to the state they were citizens of. They joined the Tsarist armies in large numbers, taking their place among the Russian invasion forces and aiding significantly in the defeat on Enver’s army in the Caucasus at Sarakamis, the capture of Van and in the disruption of the Ottoman forces behind the lines.

When the Tsarist armies began to melt away in late 1917 only the Armenians remained to man the Caucasian front for the Allies for 7 months. Britain armed and trained the Armenian forces during early 1918 to halt the Ottoman counter-attack into the Caucasus. An Armenian force stood with Major General Dunsterville, unsuccessfully, in the defence of Baku against the Ottomans and Azerbaijani national forces in September 1918.

And, of course, the Armenians suffered terrible casualties arising from the decision of the Dashnaks to aid the destruction of the Ottoman State. Along with that their activities made the continued existence of an Armenian community among the majority communities of Turks and Kurds very problematic indeed.

Part of the Moral War

For decades before the Great War a segment of Liberal England, which supported the Armenian cause, had publicised and hugely inflated any casualties the Armenian community had suffered in risings designed to provoke foreign intervention in Ottoman territory. They created hysteria in the Anglosphere about the “*Terrible Turk*” and their “*Armenian massacres*”.

When the Great War came to the Ottoman Empire dire predictions of massacres were made and the Turks duly obliged when, invaded from all sides, they had to fight for their survival as a people by taking extraordinary measures against the Armenian community.

The propaganda produced by Arnold Toynbee, James Bryce, Wellington House under Charles Masterman and John Buchan, and a host of English *literati*, fed into the moral case for the Great War in Britain. As well as being told they were fighting against the “*Barbarian Hun*” in the West the British public were whipped up by tales of the Terrible Turk “*ravishing*” Christian Armenia (titillating the repressed sexuality of the English Puritan middle classes).

During the Great War the British stated on occasion that the Armenians would no longer have to tolerate Ottoman rule. Lloyd George famously promised them that “*Britain is resolved to liberate the Armenians from the Turkish yoke*” at the Guildhall in November 1916. However, these statements were always vague and had more the appearance of moral exhortations than formal declarations. The British were careful in their words, raising Armenian expectations and encouraging them to be a destabilising element in the Ottoman State which Britain now sought to dismantle, but promising them nothing concrete. Whilst making numerous offers and promises to various states and peoples, in secret or public, there were no formal promises made of a separate, independent Armenian state.

The Mudros Armistice, concluding the British War on the Ottoman Empire, had nothing to say on ‘Armenia’. The Eastern Committee of the British War Cabinet suggested “*a national home for the scattered people of the Armenian race*” akin to the promise made to the Zionists. But there was no equivalent of the Balfour Declaration.

The British Foreign Minister, apparently said to the head of the Armenian national delegation, Boghos Nubar, in October 1918, that the creation of an Armenian state was one of the goals of the *Entente* but Balfour himself, proved more in favour of the people of the Caucasus “*cutting each other’s throats*” than establishing states with help from the British Empire (see FO 371/3404/16745, 12.10.1918 and Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question, 1915-1923*, p.141).

The Armenians were not mentioned in the official announcement of the countries participating in the Peace Conference. President Wilson explained to Boghos Nubar that Armenia had not been “*welcomed into the family of nations*” as yet and not to take offence (The newly constructed/invented “Czechoslovakia” was invited and joined the founders of the League of Nations in 1920).

An Armenian State?

The support for a Great Armenia after 1918 had nothing to do with the events of 1915. If the casualty levels suffered by the Armenian populace of the Ottoman territories that were reported in the West were accurate Magna Armenia was impossibility. No “Armenia” had appeared in the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 when Tsarist Russia had taken part in negotiations with the British and French over the division of Great War spoils. (Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question, 1915-1923*, p.127)

The only conclusion that can be reached is that Great Armenia was all about what happened in Russia in 1917.

Whilst there was support for a mandate being conferred over an undefined “Armenia” there was, from the time of the Armistices, extreme reluctance for Britain to take it up itself. Arnold Toynbee, one of the strongest propagandists of Armenian massacres, argued that on no account should England take up responsibility for them, in case Russia, whatever it might become, was offended. Eyre Crowe agreed for similar

reasons. The British Foreign Office suggested that the French might be persuaded to take up a mandate for Armenia, in exchange for concessions to Britain in Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia. (CAB 27/36, EC 7.11.1918)

The Armenian issue was discussed by the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet at a number of meetings in the aftermath of the Armistice. Lord Curzon, the Chairman, declared that Britain had had a special interest in the Armenians since the 1870s and desired a self-governing Armenia at some time in the future. He then outlined the reasons for setting up an Armenian state:

“... to provide a national home for the scattered peoples of the Armenian race. As long as they are diffused in helpless and hopeless minorities... any chance of settled life or autonomous existence cannot be said to exist. Secondly, we want to set up an Armenian State as a palisade... against the pan-Turanian ambitions of the Turks, which may overflow the Caucasian regions and carry great peril to the countries of the Middle East and East. Thirdly, we want to constitute something like an effective barrier against... any foreign Powers, impelled by ambition or by other motives to press forward in that direction.” (CAB 27/24, EC. 40, 2/12/1918)

So what Curzon had in mind in theory was a colonial project that would plant a large numbers of Armenians from different regions to produce something that would either construct a majority, or close to it, within a distinct territory, to make a viable Armenian state. This state would act as a buffer against the Ottoman Turks joining up with the Azerbaijani Turks and any other Turkic people to the East of the Caucasus, as well as Russia.

Whilst outlining this strategic objective, Lord Curzon stated at an Eastern Committee meeting that the Armenian state-building project was not straightforward for Britain:

“We want the establishment of an Armenian state as a barrier against the aspirations of Turkish Pan-Turanism. However, there are two worries ahead related to the matter. Firstly, this is about the borders of the established Armenian state. Secondly, it is about a huge mandate-power that is crucial for the establishment of this state. We are not interested in the responsibility concerning the future of Armenia. In any case, we have lots of things to do.” (CAB 27/34, 2.12.1918)

Lord Curzon tended to oppose the Foreign Office preference for a large Armenian state of 6 Ottoman vilayets, plus Cilicia, plus Erivan (Magna Armenia) which he saw as an unviable project. And the British Foreign Office proposal, suggested in a Memorandum by Sir Eyre Crow, that Magna Armenia, once established, should be placed under a French Mandate, ran into immediate opposition in the War Cabinet and its adjuncts.

Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, warned in a General Staff Memorandum that it would be *“most undesirable”* for such an important strategic region, that linked Southern Russia to the approaches to India, at Baku, should be handed over to Britain’s *“historic world rival”* – France. Chief among the fears was that France might join up with a revived Russia to threaten British interest in the geopolitical Heartland of the World.

The British General Staff also made their belief clear that if an Armenian entity came into existence Turkish Armenia must be separated from Caucasian Armenia. That was the main reason why Britain decided to jump in and solely occupy and control the Caucasus in November 1918 – to keep anyone else out. (CAB 27/36, EC 5/12/1918)

It was decided by the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet, therefore, that France should be excluded from the area and suggested that in the absence of Britain, the United States should be invited to take up a Mandate, on Britain’s behalf.

Because of issues regarding expenditure, only in the last resort should Britain take it up. (CAB 27/24, EC, 16/12/1918)

Lord Curzon wanted to include Erzurum in an Armenian state as its future capital. At San Remo, in April 1920, he explained the reasons for this which *“were essentially strategical rather than moral”* (i.e. not about self-determination) and which he said had influenced the London Conference, whose decisions had informed the future Treaty of Sevres to be imposed on the region:

“He wished the Supreme Council to envisage the future possibilities in this connection. There might be a great pan-Moslem or pan-Turanian movement, and faced with this, the London Conference had felt that it was desirable... to place a wedge between the Moslems of Turkey and of the further East in the form of a Christian Community, which could be a new Armenian state... The London Conference had perceived the difficulties in the way of constituting a greater Armenia, but they felt that her case, historically, was analogous to that of the Zionists. The case for the Zionists was not based upon the numbers of this people actually inhabiting Palestine.” (DBFPC, VIII, No.11, p.108)

Curzon described Armenia as a *“tampon state”* in its strategic purpose for Britain.

The original Erivan Republic established under Ottoman protection in May 1918 had been 9,000 sq. kms. Britain expanded its *de facto* territory in November, before the final instalment of Greater Armenia, to 50,000 sq. kms, and including Kars, Ardahan, Sourmalou and Nakhchivan. Dashnak forces invaded Kars Province, an overwhelmingly Moslem area of 1.7 million people, in April 1919 with British support (After Mudros and the forced withdrawal of the Ottoman Army, small states had been established in the Caucasus for self-protection including Meshketia, the Araz-Turk Republic of Nakhchivan, the South-West Caucasus Democratic Republic and the Kars Democratic Republic.)

The *Statement of British Policy in the Middle East for Submission to the Peace Conference* which emerged from all these deliberations, prepared for the British Delegation to the Peace Conference, however, decided upon the *Magna Armenia* option. This supported an Armenian state stretching from the Mediterranean Sea in the West up to the Black Sea in the North and right into the Caucasus, within 200 miles of the Caspian. The document stated that: *“the Armenians are at present the most progressive and prolific element in the population; there will be an immigration of Armenians from abroad and they are likely to play the leading part in the future.”* (FO 608/83/7442, 18/2/1918)

It was realised that because the Armenians could not possibly constitute a majority in this gigantic ‘Armenia’ (they would have made up a very small minority) the Peace Conference could not leave the Armenians in control of ‘Armenia’. It would collapse in bloodshed. Control and ‘keeping the peace’ should, therefore, be awarded as part of the Mandate to one of the Peace Conference members.

The effect of the British takeover of Transcaucasia was to isolate the Armenians from their traditional sponsors and allies, the Russians. The Armenians were now wholly dependent on the British for their future. However, in early 1919, when the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson, approached the government to ask for support in strengthening the Batum-Baku line the British occupation had created, he found that both Lloyd George and Balfour were in favour of clearing out of the Caucasus altogether.

The Armenians at Paris

In February 1919 the British Delegation at Paris informed the Peace Conference that it was *“in favour”* of a great

Armenian state comprising six Ottoman *vilayets* plus Cilicia and “*Russian Armenia*”. However, it had already been decided at that point that not only was Britain not prepared to use its power to establish this state it was proposing, it also intended to evacuate its military forces from the area, and attempt to pass on responsibility for Armenia to the U.S.

Since by then the Armenians had made enemies of all their neighbours – Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Persia and Bolshevik Russia – with extravagant territorial demands and armed aggressions against them – this was like a mother abandoning her child to a stranger.

Firuz Kamemzadeh, the Iranian/Russian historian, says the following about the Armenian demands at Paris:

“The Armenian leaders were drunk with victory and power. Their demands for an Armenia on three seas and for exorbitant indemnities were bound to antagonise those whom it was their purpose to win over. Among the Armenians only a few voices were heard protesting against the dangerous course adopted by the Dashnaktsutun... (The two Armenian delegations...) held conferences and meetings at which hundreds of journalists, writers, singers, and ex-ministers, made long speeches in support of the Armenian cause. The Armenian delegates followed Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau, reminding them every minute of the “debt they owed Armenia”. Their importunity annoyed everyone, and they began to lose friends... The excessive demands and the tone in which they were made finally drove most people to dislike them.” (The Struggle for Transcaucasia, p.257)

The Armenians sent two delegations to the Peace Conference. One was led by Boghos Nubar, an *emigre* who had been working for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire for many years. The other came from the Erivan Republic of Armenia. They began out-bidding each other with more and more extravagant demands on the Allied Powers. The two delegations immediately began “auctioning” or outbidding each other in demands for territory.

Having already begun to wash their hands of “Armenia” the British and the other Imperialist powers now had the excuse to begin to abandon the Armenians as an impossible people with impossible demands.

At the Paris Conference the Armenians denied the existence of an Azerbaijani nation and deluged other delegations with anti-Moslem and anti-Georgian propaganda. Whilst the other Caucasian states went with an understanding that collaboration was necessary, the Armenians were totally orientated toward securing everything for themselves, at the expense of the other peoples of the region (Anar Isgenderli, *Realities of Azerbaijan: 1917-1920*, pp.189-192 and pp.206-7).

Britain, Armenia and the U.S.

Because Britain did not want the responsibility of the Armenian Mandate herself – or for France to take it – she decided to lure the United States into the region, to manage a great and unstable buffer state in the British interest. And so the Armenians were being led to believe that they would get something that just couldn’t even begin to exist.

After Armenia was recognised as a *de facto state* by the League of Nations Arthur Balfour wrote to his brother, Gerard: “*Great Britain has no interest whatever in Armenia except the interest of humanity which she shares to the full with the United States.*” (Balfour Papers, MS 49749, ff. 186-91, 16.2.1920)

Armenia had been trumpeted as the great cause of “*Humanity*” and Sir Edward Grey, as Foreign Secretary, had accused the Ottomans of “*Crimes Against Humanity*” in killing Armenians. Why Armenian lives were seen to be of greater concern for “*the interests of humanity*” was never explained and it is rarely questioned. It was just taken for granted that the

lives of Christian Armenians were worth more than the lives and existences of the general mass of non-Armenian humanity. And England and its Anglo-Saxon cousin (the Anglosphere) represented “*the interests of humanity*” being, of course, the highest form of “*Humanity*” that existed in the world.

Forgetting, for a moment, the racial hierarchy of the world that existed, what Balfour actually meant, when he said that Britain shared the Armenian burden in “*the interests of humanity*”, was that they wished to off-load the Armenian section of Humanity to the protection of the United States. Sharing was, in fact, giving.

When the issue of “Armenia” came up at the Paris Conference, Lloyd George was very happy when President Wilson stated that the U.S. would accept a mandate for “Armenia” upon the consent of the Senate. Britain was most pleased that America would take on such an unselfish and “*noble mission*” in “*the interests of humanity*”.

A U.S. Mandate for Armenia would not only have served the cause of “*Humanity*” it would also have been very useful for British geopolitical purposes in the region. It would have created an American buffer against a Russian return to the region (or the Pan-Turanian fantasy). The Armenians had constituted the major Russian claim to intervention in the Eastern Provinces of the Ottoman Empire – which was the one saving grace for the Liberal Anglosphere in the despised Tsarist Autocracy. The English Liberals had a toleration of Russian expansionist autocracy if it involved dealing with the Moslem Turk on behalf of the Christian Armenian.

A U.S. Mandate, bolstering a substantial Armenia would also have immediate benefits in putting the Ottoman Turks down. It would seal the Turks up, to be dealt with by the Greeks on Britain’s behalf, cutting them off from the rest of Islam (and possibly the Bolsheviks in the eventuality of them winning the Civil War in Russia).

However, by the Summer of 1919 it was clear that despite President Wilson’s sympathy for the Armenians the American democracy was very reluctant to become entangled in foreign adventures on Britain’s behalf, as a form of scaffolding for the expanded, but creaking, British Empire. General Harbord was sent on a fact finding mission and he recommended to the Senate in April 1920, wisely, that the U.S. stay out of such an undertaking.

Others were also offered the Armenian problem. When the weakest link in the Imperialist chain, Italy, refused Britain’s poisoned chalice Lloyd George began peddling the “*cause of humanity*” all over Europe, offering the Armenians to everyone and anyone – Holland, Sweden, Romania, Canada, New Zealand and to the League of Nations itself.

But there were no takers for Armenia – except of course, the Bolsheviks.

Whither Armenia?

The British estimated the Armenian Erivan Republic as having a population of around 1.3 million at the end of 1919 with around 300,000 non-Armenians. It saw little chance of Armenia ever functioning as a democracy, like Azerbaijan, with its democratic constitution and structures:

“The politics of the Erivan Republic are dominated by notorious Armenian secret society known as ‘Dashnaktsutun’... Its present policy in the Caucasus is centred on 1. The acquisition of territory for the Erivan Republic. 2. The extension and equipment of the Armenian armed forces; and 3. The propagation the doctrine of the Tashnaks... It seems impossible that sound democratic government will be attained in the Erivan Republic until the activities of this society have been ended. The society by its methods of terrorism prevent the better and broader-minded elements of Armenian society

from taking up official positions.” (FO S81, to Wardroff, representative in Tiflis, 24.12.1919)

As Lord Curzon had said, Britain had “*lots of things to do*” in the world and if it was ever serious about providing the Armenians with anything, it was now having serious doubts, with the knowledge of what a difficult task such a project would prove, about seeing an enhanced Armenian state through to fruition, given the existing character of the Erivan Republic. Or perhaps it was just looking for excuses for abandoning the Armenians and ridding itself of the problem it had brought about, to someone else.

Straight after Curzon’s statement at San Remo likening Armenia to a second Israel the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, had made a short and deliberate interjection against his Foreign Secretary, which boded ill for the Armenians:

“Mr. Lloyd George thought that the Armenians had really no right to indulge in unjustifiable hopes.” (DBFPC, VIII, No.11, p.108).

Anyone who has studied the career of Lloyd George will know what he was signalling here.

The size and territory of an Armenian state was kept in the balance by Britain all through 1918-1920. It was actually only defined to any degree when it became impossible to establish. The effect, however, was to make collaboration impossible in the Caucasus between the Georgians, Azerbaijanis and Armenians, when the former two states were always likely to lose substantial parts of their territories to a new, territorially undisclosed Armenian state, defined by British Imperialism, or President Wilson, a man very sympathetic to Armenian claims.

Not only that. The Armenians were attempting to seize parts of Georgia between 1918 and 1919. They even claimed the Georgian capital, Tiflis. In December 1918, with the evacuation of the Ottoman army from the Caucasus, the Armenians advanced all the way to the Iori region in Georgia. This advance seriously threatened the very existence of Georgia since the Georgian capital would have been completely surrounded by newly-acquired Armenian territory. The Armenian army under General Dro advanced to the hinterland of Tiflis before the Georgians finally repelled the Armenian invasion and the British, concerned at the instability in their domain, stopped the fighting.

During 1918-20 the Dashnaks were responsible for substantial massacres and ethnic cleansing not only in Erivan province but in the Azerbaijani territories of Baku, Shamakhi, Quba, Nakhchivan, Zangezur, and Karabakh. Whenever there was an opportunity, as in the Russian collapse in 1917-18, the Ottoman evacuation at the end of 1918, or the British evacuation in mid-1919 there were attempts to expand Armenian territory into areas with predominantly Moslem populations.

Andranik – Armenian Hero, an Armenian account, is quite frank about the activities this involved after the Armistices of 1918:

“Andranik’s irregulars remained in Zangezur surrounded by Muslim villages that controlled the key routes connecting the different parts of Zangezur. According to David Bloxham, Andranik initiated the change of Zangezur into a solidly Armenian land by destroying Muslim villages and trying to homogenize key areas of the Armenian state. In late 1918 Azerbaijan accused Andranik of killing innocent Azerbaijani peasants in Zangezur and demanded that he withdraw Armenian units from the area. Antranig Chalabian wrote that, “without the presence of General Andranik and his Special Striking Division, what is now the Zangezur district of Armenia would be part of Azerbaijan today...” Andranik’s activities in Zangezur were protested by Ottoman General Halil Pasha, who threatened the Dashnak government with retaliation for

Andranik’s actions. Armenia’s Prime Minister Hovhannes said he had no control over Andranik and his forces.”

When the decision was taken by the British Cabinet to withdraw its military forces there was little interest in England about what might happen to the Georgians, Azerbaijanis or Mountaineers (Daghestanis). The voices of concern in England all said one thing: “*Will the Armenians be massacred?*”

It is unclear why it was thought the Armenians might be massacred by those who lived around them. In fact, there are two possible reasons that may have existed in the minds of those who warned about such an eventuality. Firstly, the one which was based on the propagandist understanding of the situation – that Turks, Kurds and Tatars (Moslems) always had a tendency to do such things when the Christian Armenians were left unprotected by the great Western Christian Powers. Of course, the British ruling class was too worldly-wise to really believe such a thing.

Lord Esher was the most influential member of it during the Great War, without formal position. He had turned down most of the great offices of State to preserve an independence of mind useful to High Politics and Imperial Statecraft. After the publication of the Bryce Report on the “*Armenian massacres*” he wrote to General Macdonogh explaining why propaganda should always be kept separate from factual information by a state that wished to base its policy on what actually happened and existed in the world. When one took to believing one’s own propaganda, which was essentially “*a system of falsehood*” one was corrupted by lies that began to be believed and policy became dysfunctional:

“The more I hear and see of propaganda, the more chaotic it appears. I quite agree that if you could begin afresh it could be united under one supreme head in London. This is now impossible owing to the position occupied by Mr. Masterman. The cardinal principle that underlies the whole subject is the clear separation of propaganda and intelligence. The one is mainly a system of falsehood, while the other aims at the exact truth. It is corrupting for the furnishers of truth that they should be engaged in manufacturing lies. Both Napoleon and Bismarck understood this division of labour. They each of them had a cabinet for the Collection of Information, and another Cabinet for the Promulgation of Falsehood. Roughly, the one is eminently the function of soldiers, while the second can be left to the Foreign Office.” (*Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Esher, Vol IV, 1915-1930*, p. 58, 17.10.1916)

It is noticeable that whilst propagandists in London were infatuated with the Armenians, British soldiers and administrators on the ground in the Caucasus, who experienced the realities of the situation, had a much lower opinion of them and developed a much greater respect for the honest and straightforward “*Tartars*”.

For instance the British correspondent, Robert Scotland Liddell, who saw extensive service on the Russian front during the Great War and wrote three books about his experiences there wrote in *The Morning Star* during September 1919:

“Armenians are known as the best propagandists in the world. Their propaganda does not date back to recent years; on the contrary, it has been carried out systematically for years. You cannot find a person who can put a good word in for Armenians both in Russia and in the Caucasus. Russians, Tatars, and Georgians doubt and hate them. I cannot say whether it is right or wrong; but the fact is that Armenians deserve hatred. However, they are propagandized abroad in such a way that Europe and the whole world sides with them. Indeed, they have suffered a lot, however, thousands of Muslim men, women, and children have been oppressed by them. Armenians have, certainly, been subjected to ferocity, however, they themselves committed the same or even more enormous atrocities in the

Muslim villages which Turks have never perpetrated against them. Armenians have committed violence against Tatars and they were hurt by them in due course. Tatars stood against Armenians in this respect. Generally speaking, Tatars are superior to Armenians in many respects and, indeed, more courageous than them." (cited in Musa Gasimli, *From the 'Armenian Issue' to the 'Armenian Genocide': In search of Historical Truth*, pp.453-4)

The old phrase "*The Turk is a gentleman*" began to be uttered again in England, after it had been discarded during the War, in the interests of propaganda.

One of the main reasons for the dire warnings of "Armenian massacres" in 1919 was the cynical attempt to get the United States, which was known to have a strong and influential Protestant Missionary lobby constantly running pro-Armenian propaganda, to put pressure on Congress to secure Britain's objective of an American mandate.

The other reason why the Armenians might be massacred – which could not be said publicly but which accorded much more closely with the truth – was that they, in search of Magna Armenia, had done much massacring and ethnic cleansing, themselves, against all the other peoples in the Caucasus (Georgians, Kurds, Turks, Azerbaijanis, Jews etc.). They were in a small minority in the area and although the most militarised people in the region, without the support of an Imperial Power there was a strong chance of them driving themselves toward destruction when confronted by the demographic substance around them that they had antagonised greatly.

After the British Withdrawal

The withdrawal of Allied forces from the Caucasus in August 1919 led immediately to further acts of Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan. The lands claimed by the Armenians included not only Turkish territory to the West, and areas with largely Moslem populations, but also Azerbaijani land, with long-standing settlement as well as the pasture/grazing lands of nomadic Tatars. Nakhichevan and the mountains and valleys of Karabakh soon became the object of Armenian attention, concentrated military activity and resistance to the Dashnaks. And some British forces collaborated in such activity: British General Devy attempted to assist the Armenians in conquering Kars and Nakhchivan from the local populace but his superior in Baku, General Thomson opposed such an inflammatory policy.

There is an eye-witness account from the autobiography of an American Navy Lieutenant, Robert Steed Dunn (who acted as US High Commissioner Admiral Mark Bristol's eyes and ears in the Caucasus) of the type of activity the Dashnaks were engaged in. The information must have led to Admiral Bristol forming his negative opinion about American intervention and the U.S. having serious doubts about what the Armenian cause actually represented, along with the decision not to have anything further to do with them.

Sometime in mid-1920 Lieutenant Dunn got the chance to observe at first hand one of General Dro's military activities in the Nakhchivan/Karabakh regions. It should be noted that Lieutenant Dunn was scrupulously objective between the different peoples and rival territorial claims in the Caucasus and actually admired Dro's military prowess. The Dunn account below is well worth reproducing to reveal what Greater Armenia was all about:

"Dro was national patriot, army chief, legendary guerrilla, Assassin of Russia's viceroy in that cockeyed 1905 revolution, by '15 he was kissed and decorated by Grand Duke Nicholas for taking Erzurum. Today on the world-end uplands of southeast Transcaucasia, he kept Lenin's boys out of Persia. My sixth sense said go with Dro.. At morning tea, Dro and his officers spread out a map of this whole high region called the Karabakh.

Deep in tactics, they spoke Russian, but I got their contempt for Allied "neutral" zones and their distrust of promises made by tribal chiefs. A campaign shaped; note raids on Moslem villages... "Dro's force, mainly cavalry, moves in units of about sixty." my report to the admiral would read. Angelaoot was on a main Baku-Nakhichevan road, by which the Bolsheviks aimed their sweep into Iran. For the moment this had stalled because many Tartars still resisted. Also Nouri Pasha, brother-in-law of Turkey's Enver, waited to see how fast Marxism would convert... "When we secure the frontiers," said Dro with a wink, "I shall make them serve in the Armenian army." It was a lie, they said, that Trotsky had ordered Azerbaidzhan to stop attacking Armenia. Two days ago, twelve of his agents had been seized near here. Lately they'd stolen cows at Kushi. Now the reprisal would be a Tartar village called Djul. Soon we reached a town, Zangebazar of the telephone calls, larger and livelier than Angelaoot. In the main street men stacked rifles, handled machine guns... Here Armenian and Tartar had long borne with one another, but a hero had to act in character, make a demagogic appeal to race and nation like ours to "democracy." My troops have freed forty-five infidel villages in Zangezour," he said loudly, in the Russian I caught. Next he launched into Bolshevism as a "heathen curse," while rapt faces looked into space.

"Dro, you're up against it, bucking Red propaganda." I told him afterwards. "They're fanatics too."

"Well, then, so I must be," he said with a shrug and a grin that simplified things, Dro, yawning, dictated orders—a subaltern in the saddle all night must rope his guns up cliffs to new positions. The town called Djul was on every tongue.

"It will be three hours to take," Dro told me. We'd close in on three sides."

"The men on foot will not shoot, but use only the bayonets,"

Merrimanov said, jabbing a rifle in dumbshow.

"That is for morale," Dro put in, "We must keep the Moslems in terror that our cruelty beats theirs."

"Soldiers or civilians?" I asked.

"There is no difference," said Dro. "All are armed, in uniform or not."

"But the women and children?"

"Will fly with the others as best they may."

Off in the dark Dro's voice was raised in a final harangue to the ranks — no playing up Christ now, or even patriotism, but primordial greed. He was mixing Armenian and Russian in sheer outlaw talk. The word plunder, gradesh, kept coming. "Tomorrow the road will be open —" Back of church, home, and nation, I grasped, man had exact, hard urges, more freshly. Dro was playing on these, as here an eye glittered, there lips were licked...

The ridges circled a wide expanse, its floors still hidden. Hundreds of feet down, the fog held, solid as cotton flock. "Djul lies under that," said Dro, pointing. "Our men also attack Muslims from the other sides."

Then, 'Whee-ee!' — his whistle lined up all at the rock edge. Bayonets clicked upon carbines. Over plunged Archo, his black haunches rippling; then followed the staff, the horde — nose to tail, bellies taking the spur. Armenia in action seemed more like a pageant than war, even though I heard our Utica brass roar.

As I watched from the height, it took ages for Djul to show clear. A sting of machine-gun fire took over from the thumping batteries; cattle lowed, dogs barked, invisible, while I ate a hunk of cheese and drank from a snow puddle. Mist at last

folded upward as men shouted, at first heard faintly. Then came a shrill wailing.

Now among the cloud-streaks rose darker wisps — smoke. Red glimmered about house walls of stone or wattle, into dry weeds on roofs. A mosque stood in a clump of trees, thick and green. Through crooked alleys on fire, horsemen were galloping after figures both mounted and on foot.

“Tartarski!” shouted the Armenian gunner by me. Others pantomimed them in escape over the rocks, while one twisted a bronze shell-nose, loaded, and yanked breech-cord, firing again and again. Shots wasted, I thought, when by afternoon I looked in vain for fallen branch or body. But these shots and the white bursts of shrapnel in the gullies drowned the women’s cries.

At length all shooting petered out. I got on my horse and rode down toward Djul. It burned still but little flame showed now. The way was steep and tough, through dense scrub. Finally on flatter ground I came out suddenly, through alders, on smouldering houses. Across trampled wheat my brothers-in-arms were leading off animals, several calves and a lamb.

Corpses came next, the first a pretty child with straight black hair, large eyes. She looked about twelve years old. She lay in some stubble where meal lay scattered from the sack she’d been toting. The bayonet had gone through her back, I judged, for blood around was scant. Between the breasts one clot, too small for a bullet wound, crusted her homespun dress.

The next was a boy of ten or less, in rawhide jacket and knee-pants. He lay face down in the path by several huts. One arm reached out to the pewter bowl he’d carried, now upset upon its dough. Steel had jabbed just below his neck, into the spine.

There were grownups, too, I saw as I led the sorrel around. Djul was empty of the living till I looked up to see beside me Dro’s German-speaking colonel. He said all Muslims who had not escaped were dead.

“The most are inside houses. Come you and look.”

“No, dammit! My stomach isn’t—”

“One is a Turkish officer in uniform. Him you must see.”

We were under those trees by the mosque, in an open space.

Lint and wool flakes blew about, over the reddish cobbles; they came from bedding slashed to bits for hoarded coins or women’s gewgaws, and had a smell of sweat and char.

“I don’t believe you,” I said, but followed to a nail-studded door. The man pushed it ajar, then spurred away, leaving me to check on the corpse. I thought I should, this charge was so constant, so gritted my teeth and went inside.

The place was cool but reeked of sodden ashes, and was dark at first, for its stone walls had only window slits. Rags strewed the mud floor around an iron tripod over embers that vented their smoke through roof beams black with soot. All looked bare and empty, but in an inner room flies buzzed. As the door swung shut behind me, I saw they came from a man’s body lying face up, naked but for its grimy turban. He was about fifty years old by what was left of his face — a rifle butt had bashed an eye. The one left slanted, as with Tartars rather than with Turks. Any uniform once on him was gone, so I’d no proof which he was, and quickly went out, gagging at the mess of his slashed genitals.

I spread my blanket in a lane between wheatfields. Nearby lay a young lieutenant wearing czarist chevrons, his round Russian face cheerful but unsmiling...

“How many people lived there?”

“Oh, about eight hundred.” He yawned.

“Did you see any Turk officers?”

“No, sir. I was in at dawn. All were Tartar civilians in mufti.”

The lieutenant dozed off, then I, but in the small hours a voice woke me — Dro’s. He stood in the starlight bawling out an officer. Anyone keelhauled so long and furiously I’d never heard. Then abruptly Dro broke into laughter, quick and simple as a child’s. Both were a cover for his sense of guilt, I thought, or hoped. For somehow, despite my boast of irreligion, Christians massacring “infidels” was more horrible than the reverse would have been.

From daybreak on, Armenian villagers poured in from miles around. Men drove off cattle and sheep, some limping from the crossfire. The women plundered happily, chattering like ravens as they picked over the carcass of Djul. They hauled out every hovel’s chattels, the last scrap of food or cloth, and staggered away, packing pots, saddlebags, looms, even spinning-wheels. “Thank you for a lot, Dro,” I said to him back in camp. “But now I must leave.” ...

*We shook hands, the captain said “À bientôt, mon camarade.” And for hours the old Molokan scout and I plodded north across parching plains. Like Lot’s wife I looked back once to see smoke bathing all, doubtless in a sack of other Moslem villages up to the line of snow that was Iran.” (Robert Dunn, *World Alive*, pp. 140-150)*

When the British began to withdraw from the Caucasus the massacres and ethnic cleansing that took place were not done to the Armenians but carried out within the Armenian Erivan Republic against its remaining Moslem population. 300 Moslem villages in the Erivan, Echmiadzin, Surmali and Novobayazet districts were destroyed, tens of thousands killed and 150,000 driven out. Later in the year 62 villages were devastated by Dashnak units with large numbers dying of starvation and for want of shelter in the countryside. During January and March 1920 there were further ethnic cleansing operations conducted by Dashnak forces against Moslem villages which resulted in many deaths. (Musa Gasimli, *From the ‘Armenian Issue’ to the ‘Armenian Genocide’: In search of Historical Truth*, pp.465-8)

In the course of 30 months of rule the Dashnaks reduced the non-Armenian population of their state by at least two-thirds and even the Armenian section by a third. (A.A. Lalaian, *The Counter-Revolutionary Role of the Dashnagzoutiun Party*, pp.96-7)

The Armenian writer, Anastas Mikoyan, described this behaviour as

*“rampant Blackhundred Dashnak chauvinism” saying “As a result of this policy the entire Muslim population of Armenia was removed from power, terrorised by bandit gangs who were ready to reduce the foreign ethnic element in Armenia out of their love for blood and for patriotic reasons, and wipe out as many of them as possible.” (see Ilgar Niftaliyev, *Genocide and Deportation of the Azerbaijanis of Erivan Province, 1918-1920*, IRS, No.65, 2013)*

The first Prime Minister of the Erivan Republic, Hovhannes Katchaznoui, looking back from orderly Sovietized Armenia, admitted similarly that the Dashnaks had in their constant drive to create a homogenised nation actually destroyed their own lands rather than see an “alien” element live upon it:

“We governed our country for two and a half years... We had wars with Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey... We had continual internal fights — Agapapa, Zod, Zanki-Bazar, Vedi-Bazar, the valleys of Milli, Sharour, Nakhichevan, Zangezour... We had kept the entire country under arms, in constant fighting, we had kept all working hands on the battlefields all the time when there was the greatest demand for construction work. The Bolsheviks have freed the people from that calamity, from that heavy burden. We destroyed bread-producing lands like Sharour and Verdi, cattle lands like Agapapapa, wantonly and

without benefit to us.” (Dashnagtzoutiun Has Nothing to do anymore – Report Submitted to the 1923 Conference, pp.89-90)

During November and December of 1919 attempts were made by the Azerbaijani Government to resolve territorial disputes with the Armenians in conferences in Tiflis and Baku so that mutual co-operation could take place in the defence of the Caucasus.

The problem was that the Armenians would never agree to settle outstanding territorial issues when they were of the belief that they would get a better deal from the British.

And at the same time as the Armenian government was negotiating with the Azerbaijanis it sent a Military Mission, headed by General Andranik, to New York, to acquire arms for use *“against the Turks and Kurds and Tatars, the enemies of Christianity” (General Andranik’s Appeal to the Government of the United States in Antranig Chalabian, Dro, pp. 152-4)*

Defence Disabled

The expansionary nationalism of Armenia, therefore, disabled any prospect of a common defence of the Caucasus and meant that the Bolsheviks could pick off Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, one by one. Dashnak activity in Zangezur and Karabakh in early 1920 tied down the Azerbaijan army, away from the frontier with Daghestan, from where the Red Army was mustering in force.

The Armenia issue was discussed at the London Conference, held during February-April 1920. Its decisions formed the basis of The Treaty of Sevres of 1920, which Britain attempted to impose on the Turks using Greek and Armenian proxies, incorporating *“Wilsonian Armenia”* in its terms. The idealistic President Wilson was in favour of taking a Mandate for Armenia, getting his map makers to draw up a great Armenia on a map. Lloyd George made every effort to disown responsibility for any promises that might have been made to them or future disaster that would befall them.

At the end of April 1920, after San Remo, when the Armenian issue was again discussed, Lloyd George told Parliament,

“He knew that some of the Armenian... aspirations had been of a rather colossal character, beyond anything that could be realized under present conditions. They involved... an Armenian Kingdom from sea to sea, from the Mediterranean up to the Black Sea, over a gigantic tract of country where the Armenian population was, unfortunately, but a small percentage. That would be an impossible achievement. To obtain it would be simply to provoke further disaster. Armenians could only maintain that position by means of the help of a great country like the United States. With regard to the boundaries of Armenia they had left these to the arbitration of President Wilson” (The Times 28.4.1920)

Lloyd George had allowed the British delegation in Paris to support this *“Greater Armenia”* that *“would be an impossible achievement”* and which, he knew, would *“provoke further disaster”* for the Armenians and others. But that was fine because Britain had now succeeded in washing its hands of the problem and passed it over to President Wilson to arbitrate on to his heart’s content.

The British relationship with the Armenians had a large part to play in the fall of the Caucasus to the Bolsheviks and its occupation for 70 years by the Soviet Union. This was because for the Caucasus to be defended there had to be two essential conditions.

The first condition was the unity of the Transcaucasian Republics, and this was impossible due to the insatiable desire of the Armenians to take territory off both Azerbaijan and Georgia to create an ever larger Armenian state. As Lord Curzon at San Remo, discussing the defence of the Caucasus,

on 20 April 1920 said: *“The Armenians had forces which might be estimated at 20,000 to 30,000 men. These were unfortunately being employed in fighting neighbouring states. Efforts were being made to put a stop to this...” (DBFPC, Doc.6, p.46)*

It was the presence of an Armenian state in the Caucasus that poisoned relations in the region (and continue to poison relations even today with the illegal seizure of nearly 20 per cent of Azerbaijan in the early 1990s at the fall of the Soviet Union).

The second essential condition for the defence of the Caucasus was a speedy British/Ottoman Peace settlement. This, of course, was made much more difficult by the British relationship with the Armenians.

Everything stops for tea.

I didn’t know him,
never heard of him,
he’d never be on my mobile SIM.
Seems he was poisoned on a whim.
In Siberia he drank a cup of tea,
took ill on a plane.
He was opposed to Putin.
Just say, in order to abuse your brain,
Jeremy Corbyn is on a plane from Luton,
and takes ill over the North Sea.
And again, just say, off the cuff, Boris Johnson
made the tea,
and then was named and blamed,
courtesy of the red-top judge and jury,
plus, The Times, Telegraph, Guardian, TV and radio
presents a staged fury.
Then, to cap it all, Moscow asks for him.
You would have had it up to the brim.
Don’t ask these questions,
nor, listen to these suggestions:
Was it attempted suicide?,
or a jealous girlfriend he wanted to hide?,
or something past its sell-by-date
like shellfish?,
or other things you wouldn’t wish?
But I do know one thing for sure:
Jeremy WAS poisoned by those whoors
the *caring* media
and other agencies even more seedier.

23rd August, 2020

Wilson John Haire.

Presidential Honours for a Wannabe Nazi Collaborator

by Manus O’Riordan

“The song ‘*Seán Sabhat of Garryowen*’ rang out this August in Áras an Uachtaráin as a score or more IRA veterans came together to mark the 80th anniversary of the death of IRA Chief-of-Staff Seán Russell in August 1940. It was the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, who suggested at the conclusion of the commemoration that they also honour Seán South by singing that song in his memory, and it was his voice that rang out the loudest.”

Nothing of the sort, of course, ever happened. “Fake news”, as it were. But in the limbo period between the General Election this February 8, 2020, which saw Sinn Féin emerge as the party with most electoral support, and the excruciatingly laboured FG/FF marriage which saw Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin finally become a half-term Taoiseach on June 27, a hullabaloo was manufactured concerning the involvement of SF President Mary Lou McDonald in a particular commemoration - a good seventeen years ago. On that occasion, the *Irish Times*, voiced by Kevin Myers, led the charge on September 5, 2003: “One of those who chose to back the Third Reich was the Irish traitor and Nazi collaborator Sean Russell... The Zoggians of Sinn Féin gathered last weekend ... to honour Russell’s contemptible memory. The keynote speaker was Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin candidate for the European Parliament.”

Seventeen years down the road, and a bare week after SF’s dramatic electoral breakthrough, it was the *Irish Times* which once again led the charge, on February 15, this time voiced by Fintan O’Toole, under the heading of «The enigma of Mary Lou McDonald». After a lengthy prelude covering her Fianna Fáil pre-history, O’Toole arrived at his concluding punch lines: “The *Irish Times* noted her debut appearance on a national stage in its report on that 1998 Fianna Fáil ardfheis: «Ms Mary Lou McDonald, Dublin West, speaking on the reform of the RUC, said the RUC was composed exclusively of people from one tradition and they were utterly incapable of carrying out fair policing. There had been victims who had died at the hands of the RUC. There needed to be a root and branch change to the policing system.» None of this was untrue, but it is a little jarring in the context – when a fellow delegate had just read out the names of those disappeared by the IRA, she seemed to be changing the subject to another class of victims... Fast forward less than five years to August 2003 and a SF ceremony in Fairview Park in Dublin, around the statue of Seán Russell. Russell, as chief of staff of the IRA during the second World War, had thrown the ‘republican movement’ behind an armed campaign to establish a German puppet state in Ireland in direct collaboration with the Nazis. One might have thought that if there was one figure the movement would prefer to wrap in a blanket of amnesia, it was Russell.”

Alan English, the latest editor of the *Sunday Independent*, prides himself on broadcasting how “different” he is from previous editors. On May 24 he announced that he was going to be particularly daring that Sunday, devoting a full page to “The Big Interview: ‘Sinn Fein, the IRA and me’ - Mary Lou McDonald ... ambitious leader of Ireland’s fastest growing but most divisive political party”. During the course of that interview, the following exchange took place between McDonald and interviewer Hugh O’Connell:

“HOC: In August 2003, you spoke at a Sinn Fein event to commemorate Sean Russell, who was the IRA chief of staff during World War II and is viewed as a Nazi collaborator. Why

did you do that? MLMcD: I don’t believe that anybody actually believes that he was a Nazi collaborator. He was certainly a militarist. He was certainly somebody who saw in pretty stark terms that Britain’s problem was Ireland’s opportunity. So there was a commemoration there annually. I was asked to speak at it and I did. HOC: Do you regret speaking at it? MLMcD: No. I mean, there were members of his family who still lived in Fairview. Some of them still lived in London and used to come back for the commemoration. HOC: A lot of people would be appalled that you’d speak at a commemorative event for someone like Sean Russell. MLMcD: He was a militarist, but he was not a Nazi collaborator. There’s nothing to support that contention. My assessment of him is that he saw in very narrow terms the struggle for freedom in a framework that was, as I said, ‘Britain’s problem is our opportunity’. I think that was misguided, if that assists you in your line of questioning. HOC: You don’t have any regrets about doing it? MLMcD: It’s like I said earlier on - you have to make your decisions, do your work.”

Micheál Martin Mired In The Myers Mythical Narrative

Within hours, first out of the trap in condemnation was the anxious Taoiseach-in-waiting Micheál Martin. As Philip Ryan recorded next morning in the *Irish Independent* of May 25:

“Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald has come under fire for her support of a former IRA chief of staff who collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. In an interview with the ‘Sunday Independent’, Ms McDonald insisted Sean Russell was a “militarist” but not a “Nazi collaborator”, despite his well-publicised links to the Third Reich during the Holocaust. Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin said Ms McDonald should condemn rather than commemorate someone with links to Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime.

“Nazism was the greatest evil of all time which saw millions killed during the Holocaust, but in Sinn Féin folklore and Mary Lou re-articulates this idea of Britain’s difficulty is Ireland’s opportunity which is a throwback to World War I,” Mr Martin said. “The idea someone was working with the Nazis to undermine Britain when Europe was in great peril and he should be commemorated is something that Sinn Féin need a wake-up call on”, he added. Mr Martin said what Mr Russell did was “wrong” and added that “collaborating with the Nazis should not be condoned in any way”. In 2003, Ms McDonald spoke at a commemoration for Mr Russell, who died on a German submarine while travelling to Nazi Germany to seek support for the IRA. Yesterday, Ms McDonald said Mr Russell’s involvement with the Nazis was “misguided” but insisted she did not regret speaking at his commemoration.”

Seventeen years on, Martin had now decided to regurgitate what he failed to say when it had been demanded of him in the columns of the *Irish Times* in 2003, as he then held office as Minister of Education and Children. In “An Irishman’s Diary” on September 5, 2003, Kevin Myers was in flying form:

“Here’s the truth about Sinn Féin-IRA. They’re not Irish. They’re not even human. Actually, they’re cyborgs, sent from Zog, a bilious, green, warlike planet in the Andromeda Nebula... Mary Lou McDonald, the Sinn Féin candidate for next year’s European elections, is certainly from the planet Zog... One of those who chose to back the Third Reich was the Irish traitor

and Nazi collaborator Sean Russell... Happily, he died before he could do any damage, and the filthy wretch was buried at sea. It is to the enduring shame of Dublin Corporation that it subsequently permitted a statue to this evil pro-Nazi stooge to be erected at Fairview... The Zoggians of Sinn Féin gathered last weekend at the same statue to honour Russell's contemptible memory. The keynote speaker was Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin candidate for the European Parliament... Thus Sinn Féin-IRA gather at the statue of Sean Russell, Nazi collaborator, stooge of the Third Reich, and friend of the Holocaust, and mumble Zoggian gibberish at one another, and no Government minister condemns them. Moreover, why is the statue of the quisling Russell in a public park in Dublin? ... He took the side of the Holocaust, and - happily - perished serving Hitler's cause. And Dublin Corporation, with a predictably nationalistic cowardice, has chosen not to remove the last remaining monument to a servant of the Third Reich in the entire EU..."

The new half-term Taoiseach is, of course, a gentleman, and Martin has not stooped to the vulgar abusive language of Myers. But he is mired in that same Myers "history". As a history graduate and a former history teacher, Myers was better placed than other Government Ministers to offer a reasoned Fianna Fáil critique of Russell in 2003, but he failed to do so. In the *Irish Times* on September 12, 2003, I myself replied to Myers as follows:

«Seán Russell was a man whom de Valera once considered worth making the effort to save from himself. Russell had given sterling service in the 20th century's first war for democracy - the Irish War of Independence fought to give effect to the democratic mandate of the 1918 elections. When de Valera failed to persuade Russell to accept the democratic mandate of his later Republican election victories of the 1930s, he was left with no option but to act ruthlessly and with resolve against Russell and his followers.»

"By all means condemn Russell, as I do, for his actions in defiance of de Valera, specifically his 1939 bombing campaign in England, followed by his request for Nazi German aid to mount an IRA invasion of the North. If Russell's plan had materialised it would have led to either a German or British invasion and occupation of Southern Ireland, bringing to naught de Valera's skilful safeguarding of this State from both war and fascism."

"In his 1958 novel *Victors and Vanquished*, Francis Stuart observed of the Russell-based character's outspokenness in Berlin: "Pro-German when it comes to the English, and pro-Jew when it's a question of the Germans." One might dismiss this as another of Stuart's literary inventions were it not that this assessment was corroborated by a more significant witness - Erwin Lahousen, the first and most important witness for the prosecution at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials in 1945. Lahousen had been head of the second bureau of the German Intelligence Service from 1939 to 1943. An Austrian clerico-fascist by conviction, Lahousen loathed Nazism and had been the key figure in an aborted pre-war plot to assassinate Hitler. It was Lahousen's evidence at Nuremberg that ensured that Hitler's foreign minister Ribbentrop would be sentenced to death."

«It is true that Lahousen's own ideological prejudices led him to make another set of wild and unfounded allegations, such as that Frank Ryan, whom he described as «a ruffian of a distinctly red complexion», had actually murdered Russell. But it is less easy to dismiss what that Nuremberg star witness said of Russell himself. Under the heading of «No Nazi», Lahousen's

character reference on behalf of Russell was published as follows by *The Irish Times* on June 6, 1958: «The Irishman was a hyper-sensitive Celt who, however willing he might be to use the Germans for his own political ends, regarded the Nazi philosophy as anathema. To the Austrian Catholic Lahousen, whom he found much more congenial, Russell poured out his private views of the Nazis, their attempts to convert him. .Lahousen was sympathetic and took a strong and personal liking to the curious Irishman... He admired his integrity and honesty.»

"Lahousen said that "Russell was the only one of the IRA with whom I dealt who was a real Irish Republican of the old school". After what Lahousen described as "one of Russell's fiery denunciations of the Nazi attempts to indoctrinate him", the IRA leader further proclaimed: "I am not a Nazi. I'm not even pro-German. I am an Irishman fighting for the independence of Ireland. The British have been our enemies for hundreds of years. They are the enemies of Germany today. If it suits Germany to give us help to achieve independence I am willing to accept it, but no more, and there must be no strings to the help." I concluded: "This was extremely naïve. As regards his dealings with Nazi Germany, Russell is to be condemned more as a fool than a knave. But notwithstanding that condemnation, Seán Russell is still entitled to the integrity of his reputation, in death no less than in life."

I then came under Redmondite attack in the *Irish Times* on September 24, 2003, when one Dermot Meleady wrote:

"In the course of his defence of the reputation of Sean Russell against Kevin Myers, Manus O'Riordan refers to the Irish War of Independence as "the 20th century's first war for democracy. . fought to give effect to the democratic mandate of the 1918 elections". ... Calling the struggle "a war for democracy" seems to suggest that the fundamentals of that system were not in place in 1918. Such a simplistic formula may be all right for feeding to gullible tourists on the open-topped tour buses of Dublin, but it ignores many facts. Free and fair elections had taken place for decades and, since 1885, on a franchise as wide as could be found anywhere. Thanks to 40 years of patient and peaceful work by Parnell, Dillon and Redmond, an executive responsible to an elected native parliament was there for the taking by 1914, were it not, tragically, for the Ulster difficulty."

A decade later, in November 2013, Myers would launch Meleady's hagiography, *John Redmond - National Leader*. But back in 2003, their line of deriding the democratic character of our War of Independence was twice answered. In my letter of September 29, 2003, I myself wrote: "Dermot Meleady is mistaken in asserting that there was no authorisation by the First Dáil for the War of Independence fought by the Irish Republican Army. Full and formal acceptance of such responsibility for the IRA was proclaimed by that Dáil in March 1921 and subsequently endorsed by the 26-county electorate in voting Sinn Féin back into power as the Second Dáil in the 1921 General Elections. Notwithstanding the bitterness of the Treaty Debates of January 1922, both sides continued to endorse the democratic mandate for that War, with Arthur Griffith referring to it as the war fought against 'the Black-and-Tan terror for twelve months until Britain was forced to offer terms'."

Meleady was further answered on the following day by Risteard Mulcahy, son of Richard Mulcahy, IRA Chief-of-Staff during the War of Independence: "Dermot Meleady is not correct in implying that the War of Independence, extending from January, 1920, to July, 1921, was not based on democratic

principles. The decision to commence hostilities was approved by Cathal Brugha, Minister for Defence in the first Dáil, and responsibility for the war was subsequently accepted by Dáil Éireann. One must agree with Mr Meleady that it was unfortunate that Home Rule was not established in 1914. It was equally unfortunate that the 1918 election did not evoke a conciliatory response from Lloyd George and his Cabinet.”

Dermot Meleady went on to be employed by the Israeli Embassy as its Information Officer from 2010 to 2015, officially so at least, if not for longer. And Israeli Embassy Information Officer Meleady did indeed regularly appear in the letters columns of the *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, *Irish Examiner*, and elsewhere, spouting crass anti-Palestinian propaganda during the War on Gaza on behalf of his bosses, the Apartheid State of Israel, which he chose to canonise with his description of it as “a tiny oasis of democracy”.

Fifteen months on from his September 2003 demand for the removal of the Russell statue, Myers saw his objective partly realised when an unidentified paramilitary gang beheaded the statue on December 30, 2004. In a letter to the *Sunday Independent* on January 9, 2005, under the heading of «Russell, knave or naïve?», I reiterated my 2003 argument, but with some additions: “Condemnation of Russell is one thing; character assassination is quite a different matter. Russell was not the Holocaust-championing caricature painted by the so-called “anti-fascist” gang responsible for the paramilitary destruction of his monument on December 30, nor is your report by Jim Cusack (January 2) accurate in stating that it had previously “been vandalised by communists in the Fifties” because it originally was supposed to have had Russell’s arm “raised in a Nazi-style salute”. On the contrary, it had originally been a clenched-fist, which was denounced as “communist” by the anti-semitic and clerical-fascist organisation Maria Duce, who then proceeded to amputate the offending Russell arm. The facts regarding Russell and Nazi Germany are as follows: The UK Public Records Office has released files which show that after intensive post-War interrogation of German intelligence agents at the highest level, British intelligence itself concluded in 1946 that “Russell throughout his stay in Germany had shown considerable reticence towards the Germans and plainly did not regard himself as a German agent”.”

This May 25, Philip Ryan wrongly referred in the *Irish Independent* to Russell’s «well-publicised links to the Third Reich during the Holocaust».

By the time of Russell’s death in August 1940, there had indeed been murders of Polish and Jewish civilians following the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. It would not, however, be until the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, that the Holocaust - that systematic and wholesale slaughter of Jewish populations - began. The Holocaust was programmatically formalised as the genocidal “Final Solution” at the Wannsee Conference of January 1942. And it was well under way, and the April-May 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising against the Holocaust had already been defeated, when a future honoured Fine Gael Government Minister expressed joy in July 1943 that “there is one thing that Germany did, and that was to rout the Jews out of their country”.

Within a fortnight of the Fairview statue beheading as 2004 came to a close, the issue became internationalised. It was no longer just an attack on Russell. The beheaded statue now served as a pretext for an attack on this Republic. On January 13, 2005, under the heading of “Nazi IRA man’s statue beheaded”, David Lister, the Belfast-based Ireland correspondent of the *Times* (UK) conveyed the following denunciation:

“The Irish Republic has been forced to confront the legacy of its neutrality during the Second World War after anti-fascists attacked a memorial to a pro-Nazi IRA leader. A statue to Sean Russell, who died on board a German U-boat in 1940, was left headless after an attack by youths in Fairview Park in Dublin. As the group that looks after the statue admitted that it is almost certainly beyond repair, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Paris called for it to be left unrestored as an enduring symbol of Ireland’s ‘shame’. Shimon Samuels, director for international affairs at the centre, the world’s largest Jewish human rights organisation, told *The Times*: ‘It’s a blot on the history of Ireland, but blots have to see the public light.’ He described the statue’s desecration as ‘an opportunity for Ireland to confront its past’. He said: ‘We’re not iconoclasts but I think the destruction of something like this has a meaning, and we would ask for it to be left there as a lesson of what Irish neutrality was all about’.”

Under the heading of “Jewish group says beheaded ‘Nazi’ statue should be left as ‘symbol of Irish shame’” the *Irish Independent* carried that *Times* (UK) report, and, under the heading of «Anti-Nazi group says let vandalised statue remain», It was regurgitated by Indo Security correspondent Jim Cusack in the *Sunday Independent* on January 16. Now here was an opportunity for «historian» Micheál Martin, at this juncture the Fianna Fáil Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, to correct the record on his Party founder’s policy of wartime neutrality. After all, three years ago, Martin’s Fine Gael counterpart, Leo Varadkar could award cross party plaudits: “Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said he has no problem acknowledging the greatness of Éamon de Valera even if his predecessor was not always right. Mr Varadkar described De Valera’s achievement in keeping Ireland neutral in the Second World War as ‘probably his finest hour’ ... ‘Ireland benefitted from this single-minded determination during the Second World War, as de Valera affirmed our independence, and pursued a neutral course even in the face of considerable hardships and threats. That was probably his finest hour, building on some of his political successes in the 1930s’, Mr Varadkar said.” (*Irish Times*, October 26, 2017).

But back in 2005, Martin did not have the guts to face down Samuels with a Fianna Fáil defence of Irish neutrality. In my own *Sunday Independent* letter that January 23, I did quote such a defence, made by War of Independence veteran, FF founding member and TD, and the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin (twice elected), Bob Briscoe. I wrote: “My previous letter’s opening paragraph had applauded de Valera for acting ruthlessly against Russell and his followers, so this was not at issue. What was at issue was the charge by those who destroyed his statue that he was a Holocaust-championing Nazi. In this 60th anniversary month of the Red Army’s liberation of Auschwitz I deplore the exploitation of the memory of the victims of the Holocaust in the interests of a squalid game of domestic Irish political point-scoring. Although not born until 1949, my very existence can be said to have depended more than most on the failure of Russell’s mission, since my father, a young anti-fascist veteran of the Spanish War, had been sentenced to death

by the Russellites for opposing his strategy within the IRA. But whatever Russell might be condemned for, anti-Semitism was not one of his crimes.”

“There was more than one nationalist movement with its Russell-equivalent, and the Simon Wiesenthal Centre describes one such group’s activities a year after Russell’s death: “Lehi, the ‘Fighters for the Freedom of Israel’, also known by the British as the ‘Stern Gang’, tried unsuccessfully to enlist German help to create a Jewish state in Palestine in exchange for Lehi military and intelligence support. Lehi charged that Britain, through its continued occupation of the Jewish homeland, was as guilty as the Nazis for the slaughter of European Jews.” If Shimon Samuels, the Wiesenthal Centre’s director of international affairs, had ever protested that the Israeli State’s Stern Museum was a blot on the record of the vast majority of Jews in Palestine who supported the war against Hitler, he might have claimed some consistency when he applauded the results of vandalising the Russell monument.”

“It was, however, that outstanding Irish Jewish freedom fighter Bob Briscoe, who had lost 156 known relatives in the Holocaust, who wrote the following defence of de Valera’s neutrality in his 1958 autobiography, a policy that had been loyally and wholeheartedly upheld by the Irish Jewish community as a whole:

‘Britain to us was still an aggressor nation with her troops on Irish soil. We in Ireland believe in democracy. We believe in it for all nations; but we also believe that democracy begins at home. It was on this account politically impossible for Ireland to join England in the war. Was it desirable? I think not. Now how did I personally feel about Ireland’s declaration of neutrality; I who hated Hitler and all he stood for? I thought it was right for Ireland. Ireland’s neutrality was not injurious to England, which even Winston Churchill now admits. No obstacle was put in the way of Irishmen who wanted to go over the border and enlist in the British Army. The extreme irreconcilable element of the IRA did try to profit by England’s difficulty. But de Valera clapped these people in jail as fast as he could catch them.’ ... Notwithstanding the intervention of Shimon Samuels, the integrity of Briscoe’s defence of de Valera’s neutrality remains intact.”

And it is also worth noting that Briscoe himself had also been committed Zionist activist. Indeed, Briscoe adhered to the Jabotinsky Revisionist pro-Irgun end of the Zionist spectrum.

Varadkar’s Amnesia On Fine Gael Fascists And Anti-Semites

The National Graves Association unveiled a new bronze monument to Russell in 2009. Eleven years later, Fianna Fáil Taoiseach-in-waiting Martin finally had something to say about Russell, within hours of the McDonald interview this May 24. Lest the issue be allowed die a death, Fintan O’Toole’s partner in unctuous commentary, Stephen Collins, penned a piece in the *Irish Times* on June 5 which also worked up towards his own particular concluding punch lines: “Sinn Féin’s domination of social media in February’s general election contributed significantly to the party’s stunning success, particularly among younger voters, and it points up an alarming level of complacency or incompetence in the way the other two big parties Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil approached the campaign.... In her recent long interview in the ‘Sunday Independent’ Mary Lou McDonald gave some hostages to fortune with her unapologetic support for the IRA terror campaign and her defence of Nazi collaborator Frank Ryan. Imagine what the “Shinnerbots” would do with that if the boot was on the other foot. Luckily for them there is no evidence that their political opponents are up to the job.” See <http://free-magazines.atholbooks.org/> to access the March,

June and September 2012 issues of *Irish Foreign Affairs* where, in a series of three articles on the theme of «The Patriotism of Frank Ryan», I examined Ryan’s case in considerable detail. In a letter I sent to the *Irish Times* responding to Stephen Collins on June 5 itself, I confined myself to two brief quotations in refutation of his slander of Frank Ryan:

In January 1942 Ryan wrote to Leopold Kerney, the Irish Minister in Madrid: “*In time of national crisis like this, there must be unified command. The country comes before party. So, in his neutrality policy – which is the only sane policy under the circumstances – Dev should get 100% support.*” In an April 1975 interview with the veteran *Irish Times* political correspondent Michael McInerney, ex-President de Valera said: “*I am very pleased that you are writing the biography of this great Irishman. Frank Ryan always put Ireland first in everything he did or said, at home or abroad. He has earned his place in history.*” Collins, more than likely, had a slip of the pen, and had probably meant to say Russell, but he did not wish to be corrected, and so my letter was denied publication by the *Irish Times*. There was, however, another player on hand to try and get the Russell show back on the road.

Leo Varadkar, the then caretaker Fine Gael Taoiseach and now Tánaiste - but privately recognised as “the real Taoiseach”, not only by Fine Gael but by many in Fianna Fáil as well - decided to bide his time for a more calculated intervention. “Statue of ‘Nazi collaborator’ in Dublin park may have to be removed – Taoiseach”, was the headline as the *Irish Independent* reported on June 10: «Mr Varadkar said a statue of Sean Russell, an Irish republican who fought in the 1916 Rising and was a leader during the War of Independence, may need to be removed... «We have a few of our own statues we may need to think about. There is a statue in Fairview Park in Dublin of an Irish republican man who was also a Nazi collaborator... I think any statues that come down should come down legally... let’s not engage in violence.» But a nod is as good as a wink. On June 23, the *Irish Times* reported: «The controversial statue of former IRA leader Seán Russell in Fairview, north Dublin is the latest piece of public artwork to be tampered with. The base of the memorial to Russell in Fairview Park was painted in the colours of the rainbow flag, often used by the LGBT community and its allies ... The paint has since been cleaned off... Earlier this month Taoiseach Leo Varadkar referenced the Russell statue when asked on RTÉ 2FM about the pulling down of statues of historical figures in Britain who profited from the slave trade. «We have a few of our own statues we may need to take down», he said. However, he stressed that any statues that come down should be taken down legally.»

Ah go on Leo! Give us one of your all knowing smirks! Sure, that poor hoor Micheál hasn’t a hope in hell of keeping pace with your own pure sense of divilment! At which juncture, however, Varadkar becomes amnesiac. Two years ago, under the headlines of “Taoiseach draws inspiration from John A Costello’s ‘vision and leadership’ - Varadkar delivers annual commemoration for former Taoiseach in Deansgrange Cemetery”, the *Irish Times* reported on June 18, 2018: “Leo Varadkar has said he thought of a guiding principle held by one of his predecessors, John A Costello, when he took over as Taoiseach last year. The Taoiseach said Mr Costello’s vision for government was that everyone should work ‘for one purpose, and one purpose alone: namely the good of all sections of the people’... Mr Costello became taoiseach of the first coalition government in the State from 1948 and 1951, and served again as taoiseach in the second inter-party government between 1954 and 1957... Mr Varadkar is the first sitting Taoiseach to speak at the Costello Commemoration, now in its third year... Mr Varadkar recalled the newspaper headlines when Mr Costello took over as (the first Fine Gael) Taoiseach. Mr Varadkar

recalled the newspaper headlines when Mr Costello took over as Taoiseach. ‘The impact of ending 16 years of Fianna Fáil rule can be seen in the newspaper headlines of the day. The headline on the first page of the *Irish Independent* was «Mr Costello is Taoiseach». *The Irish Press* went for something different and ran with: «Mr de Valera is no longer Taoiseach.» Mr Varadkar also said Mr Costello’s vision and leadership” in culture and the arts still provide guidance today.»

Varadkar chose to “overlook” the fact that when Costello was loyally following the Fascist founding President of Fine Gael, Blueshirt leader Eoin O’Duffy, he hailed Hitler in words that were never heard from Russell. In Dáil Éireann on February 28, 1934, Costello, the future Fine Gael Taoiseach, had threatened: “The Minister carefully refrained from drawing attention to the fact that the Blackshirts were victorious in Italy and that the Hitler Shirts were victorious in Germany, as, assuredly, in spite of this Bill and in spite of the Public Safety Act, the Blueshirts will be victorious in the Irish Free State.” A statement that Varadkar’s “inspirational” predecessor would never regret having made. Moreover, Varadkar also chooses to remain silent on the fact that two more of his predecessors as Fine Gael Party leader, Richard Mulcahy and James Dillon, were unashamedly and vocally anti-Semitic when denouncing de Valera for allowing Jewish immigrants from Europe to set up new industries in 1930s Ireland. Dillon particularly fulminated against, and mounted a campaign to boycott, the Galway hat factory, Les Modes Modernes, set up in 1937 by Serge Philipson, his wife Sophie, her brother Henri Orbach and Marcel Goldberg. On May 14, 1938, the *Connacht Tribune* reported on Dillon’s call to have “those people sent back to the country from where they came”. In 1939 Goldberg and the Orbach siblings did indeed return to Paris, only to be trapped by the Nazi Occupation the following year, and with Sophie and Henri destined to perish as Holocaust victims in Auschwitz.

And yet, the very day, this June 10, that the *Irish Independent* headlined «Statue of ‘Nazi collaborator’ in Dublin park may have to be removed – Taoiseach», it also had, under the headline «Fine Gael councillor defends tweet where he expressed <love> for Nazi-style salute picture», the following news item from its reporter Ellen Coyne: “A Fine Gael councillor has defended a late night tweet where he expressed his “love” for a picture of Blueshirts performing a Nazi-style salute. Jim O’Leary, the Fine Gael councillor for Dundrum ... was responding to a social media user who ... posted a picture of the Blueshirts, the organisation founded in the 1930s which later became Fine Gael, performing a Nazi-style salute... In response, Mr O’Leary tweeted: “I love that picture of the men that saved free speech for us all from FF & IRA thugs. It’s one of my favourites. Thanks.” Asked to clarify his remarks by Independent.ie, the councillor responded by defending them. “My admiration is for those that secured free speech in Ireland and prevented no platforming 1930s style by protecting Cumann na nGaedheal and Centre Party and then Fine Gael Party meetings from attacks by FF and IRA members/supporters”, he said. The Fine Gael press office did not respond to requests for comment.”

Neither did Varadkar himself make any comment on this Fine Gael Councillor currently re-echoing Costello’s infamous 1934 “Hitler shirts” speech in Dáil Éireann. Not even a squeak. Perhaps we should be thankful for small mercies. At least Councillor O’Leary’s tweet did not evoke a Varadkar smirk. Nor, for that matter has Varadkar ever passed comment on the memorial unveiled by his predecessor in honour of an actual wartime Nazi TD, Oliver J. Flanagan who was to become Fine Gael Minister for Defence 1976-77, an office which Leo

Varadkar would himself hold in addition to being Taoiseach during 2017-20.

Enda Kenny, Varadkar’s immediate predecessor as Party leader 2002-17, and Taoiseach 2011-17, had also been Minister for Defence in 2014 and 2016-2017. On October 29, 2005, “Honouring an old soldier - just don’t recall too much”, Damien Corless reported in the *Irish Independent*: “On Thursday, Fine Gael honoured one of its own when party leader Enda Kenny unveiled a plaque to the late Oliver J Flanagan in Mountmellick, Co Offaly... Some some may feel Enda Kenny and Fine Gael might have given greater consideration to the signals they were sending out by erecting a plaque to a man who was a hate-mongering anti-Semite. Freshly arrived in the Dail in 1943, he called for stern emergency measures “directed against the Jews, who crucified Our Saviour 1,900 years ago and who are crucifying us every day in the week”. Throwing in his lot with the Third Reich, he continued: “There is one thing that Germany did, and that was to rout the Jews out of their country. Until we rout the Jews out of this country, it does not matter what orders you make. Where the bees are, there is honey; and where the Jews are, there is money.”

“In his twilight years, Oliver J would make regular visits to his own graveside in St Joseph’s Cemetery. “One can look around the headstones,” he told one interviewer, “and think - all problems solved.” Unless God turned out to be Jewish.”

It is not that Flanagan was not given every opportunity subsequently to repudiate and apologise for his most notorious Nazi speech, that of July 9, 1943. I myself quoted it in an *Irish Times* letter on October 4, 1975, within weeks of Fine Gael Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave making Flanagan Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence in September 1975. Flanagan’s speech was again quoted in a letter from Ken Hannigan on July 31, 1976. The response? Flanagan remained *schtum* yet again, and Cosgrave rewarded him with further promotion to the office of Minister for Defence itself. The reality was that full knowledge of the Holocaust had not changed that leopard’s spots one *iota*. During the course of World War Two, the pro-German Nazi anti-Semite had been a political opponent of the pro-British Fascist anti-Semite James Dillon. But in the post-War years, Flanagan and Dillon would unite to constitute an anti-Semitic duet.

Following the death of de Valera, the *Irish Times* reported on September 2, 1975, that «the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community in Ireland, the Very Rev. Dr. Isaac Cohen, last night at a synagogue memorial service ... remembered that, at the very earliest opportunity after the War, Mr. De Valera’s Government had made a generous gift of one million tons of Irish meat as a gift to the survivors of inhuman Nazi concentration camps.» Flanagan and Dillon combined to mount a vicious opposition to Dev on this issue. The Dáil report for February 13, 1947, recorded their joint protest. «Mr. Flanagan asked the Minister for Agriculture if he will consider cancelling the proposed gift of 25,000 head of cattle to Europe.” Dillon quoted the *New York Times* of that February 6: «The Irish Government is preparing to ship 10,000,000 lb. of kosher meat to Europe for distribution among Jewish displaced persons.» Mr. Dillon continued: «Is this meat to which Deputy Flanagan referred the kosher meat described by the *New York Times*? ... How much of this meat is going to Europe in the form of kosher meat?” Mr. Flanagan: “It is a damn shame.” And two months later, on April 16, 1947, Dillon directly harassed de Valera himself, protesting that “kosher meat was being shipped to Europe from this country, for distribution among Jewish displaced persons, at a cost of about \$3,000,000”.

What low life past Party leaders and Government Ministers presently inhabit the hallowed Pantheon of Fine Gael! In 1948, a year after Dillon’s anti-Semitic rants against de Valera’s

humanitarian aid to displaced Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, the reward from Fine Gael's first Taoiseach, John A Costello, was to appoint him Minister for Agriculture. In 1954, on his second stint as Taoiseach, Costello once again appointed Dillon Minister of Agriculture, and promoted Oliver J Flanagan to be Dillon's Parliamentary Secretary. On October 28, 2005, the *Irish Times* reported Enda Kenny's mealy mouthed apologetics for Flanagan: «Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny yesterday unveiled a plaque to the late Fine Gael TD Oliver J Flanagan in his home town of Mountmellick, Co Laois. A former minister for defence, Mr Flanagan was once described as <the most right-wing politician> in the country. He died in 1987, aged 67. <Oliver J had many views, some of which I wouldn't agree with, but he had one basic philosophy and that was that the heart of all politics was local>, said Mr Kenny.»

Mr Flanagan was first elected in 1943, and during the second World War created controversy when he advocated 'routing' Jews 'out of Ireland'. I do not need to repeat here my condemnation of the dangerous road taken by Russell's militarism, but he was no Nazi and no anti-Semite. He had not a racist or a sectarian bone in his body. By comparison with that Nazi anti-Semite so honoured by Fine Gael, Russell was a walking saint. But we must just sit it out and wait with bated breath for Varadkar to give an interview suggesting the removal of that Flanagan plaque unveiled by his predecessor.

Israel's Stern Lesson On Nazi Collaboration

Fifteen years ago, I failed to comprehend just how systematically scurrilous a sleveen was the Simon Wiesenthal Centre's Shimon Samuels. Ever since then, Samuels has remained a persistent campaigner in Israel's propaganda war of calumnies against Ireland. In the *Jerusalem Post* on June 26, 2013, yet another reference by him to Russell was followed by an attack on no fewer than three Presidents of Ireland: «A statue to his (Russell's) honor ... was destroyed in 2004 by anti-Nazis and rebuilt by Sinn Fein in 2009. Post-war Ireland was also the focus of Nazi looted-art controversy... President Mary McAleese set the calendar by awarding (the Hunt Museum in Limerick) Ireland's Museum of the Year Prize. We urged that the Prize be suspended pending an independent investigation into the collection's provenance. Certain Irish media hysterically treated the Wiesenthal probe as akin to 'a Mossad conspiracy to punish Ireland for its Palestinian support'... Much of the media trashed our argument for transparency to encourage younger generations to study the implications of Irish neutrality in World War II, the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel and the universal threat of terrorism.»

“From its inception in 1964, the PLO enjoyed generous support from the Irish government ... Ireland also played a major role in the UNIFIL peace-keeping force on the Lebanon-Israel border, creating tensions between Dublin and Jerusalem ... Another Irish president, Mary Robinson ... is an 'Elder', a member of the group of former politicians and UN officials that includes Jimmy Carter and Desmond Tutu... The Elders met last month in Dublin with current Irish President Michael Higgins to launch an anti-Israel boycott campaign, euphemized as 'labelling produce of the settlements'. Higgins' record is unambiguous: mourned for Arafat; denied Hamas is a terrorist organization; in 2007 shared a platform with Ibrahim Mussawi of Hezbollah's Al Manar TV; in 2008 spoke at a march surrounded by Hezbollah banners; and in 2010 proclaimed in Parliament his support for the Gaza flotilla.”

A serious mistake in my 2005 reply to Samuels was to regard Seán Russell and Abraham Stern - otherwise known by his *nom de guerre* <Yair> - as equivalents. They were not. Russell was a Republican militarist pure-and-simple, albeit dangerously so, but devoid of any other ideology. Stern was far more than that - not just a killer of any Palestinian Arab,

Briton or fellow Jew who got in the way of his final aim, but he was also a gifted intellectual. Born in Poland in 1907, he moved to Palestine in 25 and became an outstanding student of Latin and Greek at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, winning a scholarship to the University of Florence in Fascist Italy. In 1929, however, he returned to Palestine in order to engage in the Zionist military struggle - initially with the Hagannah, then with right wing breakaway Irgun, before founding in 1940 his own even more extreme right wing paramilitary organisation, Lehi - Fighters for the Freedom of Israel - but denominated as the Stern Gang by Palestine's British administration. An all round accomplished linguist, Stern founded both Yiddish and Polish language newspapers in Palestine, and would also translate into Hebrew the work of the Cumann na nGaedheal ideologue P. S. O'Hegarty - *The Victory of Sinn Fein - How it Won it and How it Used it*. In February 1942, Stern was to be ambushed by the British Palestine police in a Tel Aviv apartment, and shot “while trying to escape.”

In 2016, under the heading “74 years since the assassination of 'Yair' Stern”, the English language *Arutz Sheva - Israel National News* carried a report of a memorial ceremony at Stern's graveside where the President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, laid a wreath and proclaimed the following: “Yair fascinated the people around him, and his charm did not fade even after his death. On the contrary, his death intensified his call to revolt, he sparked the fire, and strengthened the power of Lehi. Yet, there were those who dismissed his complex character, pinning him as a fascist or terrorist. Yair himself poked fun at these expressions, but he was not a fascist nor a terrorist. Upon his death, Yair won love he did not receive during his life. Upon his murder, he won admiration he never received before. He fought to the bitter end, touched thousands of hearts and ignited in them a nationalistic fire. Yair did not live to see the fruition of his dream, but we did, and we must not forget this moment.”

But, notwithstanding President Rivlin's statement to the contrary, Stern had indeed been both a Fascist and a terrorist. In his 2009 book, *Triumph of Military Zionism: Nationalism and the Origins of the Israeli Right*, the Zionist historian, and *Jewish Chronicle* columnist, Colin Schindler damningly recorded: «Stern devotedly believed that <the enemy of my enemy is my friend> so he approached Nazi Germany. With German armies at the gates of Palestine, he offered co-operation and an alliance with a new totalitarian Hebrew republic.» (p 218). Patrick Bishop's 2004 book on Stern is entitled *The Reckoning: How the Killing of One Man Changed the Fate of the Promised Land*, on which he would be invited to address the London Jewish Cultural Club that March 19. In the *Jewish Chronicle* five days earlier, on Mary 14, under the heading of “British 'execution' that changed Israeli history”, Bishop had already related: “On the morning of 12 February 1942, a British detective (Assistant Superintendent Geoffrey Morton) shot dead a Jewish fugitive in a tiny rooftop flat in Tel Aviv. The death of Avraham Stern was welcome news for the British authorities who ruled Palestine. Stern's men had been responsible for a wave of robberies and bombings that had distracted the security forces from the struggle against Rommel's troops menacing neighbouring Egypt. The Jews of Palestine were also relieved. In the eyes of many, Stern was little more than a gangster and his activities had brought shame on the community. The satisfaction was short-lived. In death, Stern would prove a far more potent enemy to the British than he had ever been in life. The shots in the rooftop flat would echo down the remaining years of Mandate rule and reverberate through the titanic events that shaped the birth of Israel. Today, Stern is honoured in Israel as one of the state's founding fathers, with streets and even a small town named after him. Mention of his name in Britain will ring a loud and discordant bell with people of a certain age. Only last month it sounded once again when the National

Archives released documents showing that the organisation he founded had planned the assassination of none other than Winston Churchill... By the time he was cornered, he (Stern) was the most wanted man in Palestine, with a £1,000 reward on his head. A few weeks earlier, his men had lured the police into a bomb ambush that had left three officers dead - two of them Jewish. Stern was sought for an even more heinous crime. At the start of the war, his former comrades in the Irgun underground militia had put their differences with the British aside and gone off to fight alongside them against the Nazis. But Stern refused to change his view that the British were the real obstacle to a Jewish state in Palestine. On the principle that his enemy's enemies were his friends, he tried to forge an alliance first with Italy, then Germany, by which they would deport their Jews to Palestine in return for behind-the-lines assistance from the Stern gang. Documents I discovered in the Haganah archives in Tel Aviv during the research for my book reveal that Stern operatives were collecting valuable information on military dispositions, apparently to be passed on to the Axis... There is evidence too that the British had decided that Stern should not be taken alive. The secret reports and memos in the Haganah archive reflect a mood that nothing should be left to chance and there is talk of "liquidating" him once he was located."

There can be no underestimating the scope of Stern's ambitions for his "totalitarian Hebrew Republic". His concept of *lebensraum* (living space) involved a *Drang nach Osten* (Drive to the East) aimed at Zionist expansion far beyond the limitations of British Mandatory Palestine - that is, beyond the territories of the present State of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. Stern's programme for Lehi proclaimed:

1. THE NATION: The Jewish people is a covenanted people, the originator of monotheism, formulator of the prophetic teachings, standard bearer of human culture, guardian of glorious patrimony... **2. THE HOMELAND:** The homeland is the Land of Israel within the borders delineated in the Bible ("To your descendants, I shall give this land, from the River of Egypt to the great Euphrates River." *Genesis* 15:18) This is the land of the living, where the entire nation shall live in safety. **3. THE NATION AND ITS LAND:** Israel conquered the land with the sword. There it became a great nation and only there it will be reborn. Hence Israel alone has a right to that land. This is an absolute right. It has never expired and never will... **9. WAR:** Constant war against those who stand in the way of fulfilling the goals. **10. CONQUEST:** The conquest of the homeland from foreign rule and its eternal possession. **14. ALIENS:** Solve the problem of alien population by exchange of population. **15. INGATHERING OF THE EXILES:** Total in-gathering of the exiles to their sovereign state..."

Stern's programme for Israeli expansion to the Euphrates would have involved the conquest of most of Syria, including Damascus and Aleppo, right up to Raqqa, and the conquest of the western half of Iraq, including Kerbala and Najaf, right up to Basra. The "exchange" of the "alien population" - in other words, the indigenous Arabs of Palestine, Syria and Iraq - under such a conquest, would have required the massive "ethnic cleansing" of millions of indigenous inhabitants.

On February 13, 2018, in the Brooklyn-based Hasidic English language newswire, *Hamodia - the Daily Organ of Torah Jewry*, David Gurvitz commented: "Lehi's legacy includes assassination of British officials as well as the murder of Jewish policemen with the Palestine Police Force, leaving Jewish wives widowed and Jewish children orphaned. In January 1941, Lehi leader Avraham Stern dispatched Naftali Lubenchik to meet the German Consul General in Beirut, Lebanon, to offer a proposal to form an alliance to fight the British. It is not clear what the Germans thought of Stern's bizarre invitation. Lubenchik was arrested by the British on his way back from Lebanon and

later died in 1946 in a British prison. We ought not to laud the exploits of a group which murdered Jews and found common cause with the Nazis, no matter how they may be called."

In an article in the *Jewish Chronicle* on December 7, 2017, the secular Zionist Colin Schindler had also indicated his own ongoing distaste for Stern: "In early 1939 Ya'akov Levstein attended a training camp in the Tatra mountains near Slovakia for Irgun Zvai Leumi members, organised by the Polish military. This had been initiated by Avraham Stern, the husband of his cousin and a leader of the Irgun. All this was unknown to Vladimir Jabotinsky, the hallowed leader of the Zionist Right, who placed his hopes in diplomacy and British fair play and whom Stern had compared to Hitler's predecessor, Hindenburg - yesterday's man... On August 26, 1939, Inspector Ralph Cairns, head of the Jewish department of British intelligence in Palestine, and his friend, Ronald Barker, head of the Arab department ... were blown to pieces by Levstein's 15kg mine... Jews who worked for the British authorities - especially the intelligence services - were often targeted... Yet these were difficult times for the Irgun. Jabotinsky had immediately declared his support for the Allies' war effort in 1939 and many members of the Irgun followed his lead. Avraham Stern strongly rejected this approach. Britain, he argued, had declared war against Nazi Germany, not to save the Jews but to defend its own national interests. Moreover, it was doing its utmost to bar the gates of Palestine to millions of desperate Jews trapped in Hitler's Europe. In the summer of 1940, Stern signed Communiqué 112, regarded as the genesis of the group that the British labelled "the Stern Gang", later known as Lehi. Levstein enthusiastically followed Stern out of the Irgun into Lehi. Like Stern, he believed "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". Could Nazi Germany therefore aid Lehi in driving the British out of Palestine? Before the onset of the Shoah, Stern understood Hitler as the latest in a long line of persecutors - not as an exterminator. Naftali Lubenchik was duly sent off to the German Legation in Beirut to explain Stern's ideas - a visit facilitated and prepared by Ya'akov Levstein. Needless to say, Stern's views failed to impress - Hitler was an ideological antisemite bent on destruction..."

"Stern needed funds. The Anglo-Palestine Bank was robbed in September 1940. Unlike the Irgun, which considered itself an underground army, Lehi had no such pretensions and promoted a policy of assassinations and killings. In January 1942 Levstein planned to kill leading British intelligence officers Morton and Wilkin by first creating a diversionary explosion. Levstein rationalised that the two men would turn up to investigate. Instead three Jewish officers, Schiff, Goldman and Dichter with another British inspector, Turton, reached the scene first. The young Lehi operator did not identify them and detonated Levstein's mine. Their deaths in this botched operation turned the Jewish public in the Yishuv vehemently against Lehi. A few days later an apartment in Tel Aviv was raided and two Lehi members shot dead by British police. Levstein was wounded and imprisoned. Stern met his end a few days afterwards when surrounded by Morton and armed policemen. Conflicting explanations about the manner of his death still abound..."

Shindler did not accuse Morton of murdering the unarmed Stern, and one can detect a note of satisfaction at the end result. In that same article he made a point of further pointing out: "MI5 also relied upon the Jewish Agency and British Zionist organisations to pass on any information about Lehi activities - many British Jews did not want violence to spill over from Jerusalem." Shindler the historian was at pains to emphasise that, in 1942, public opinion among Jews in Palestine turned "vehemently against Lehi". Shindler the current affairs commentator does not, however, allude to fact of how great a hero Stern is for the present State of Israel. For such reporting

we have to leave behind Britain's *Jewish Chronicle* and examine instead Israel's own English speaking press.

And So, Presidential Honours For A Wannabe Nazi Collaborator

In *The Times of Israel* on February 20, 2012, and under the headings of «The rehabilitation of an underground revolutionary: Young people turned out in droves this year to mark the 70th anniversary of (Yair) Stern's death», Mitch Ginsburg reported: «Seventy years ago this week ... three British officers burst into a small apartment in south Tel Aviv ... and searched the flat for the most wanted man in Palestine. He was a Polish-born doctoral student of Greek poetry, a scholar of Eros from the Hebrew University, a melancholy romantic by the name of Avraham Stern who had left the University of Florence in Italy and returned to the land of Israel in order to declare war on the British Empire. They didn't find him at first ... (but) when Assistant Superintendent Jeffrey Morton thrust a hand deep into a wooden closet through a thicket of dresses, he touched flesh. Stern was pulled out into the light and shot twice...» “Stern, whose writing was filled with death and the undying glory of valor, was intensely revered by a smattering of followers and widely detested by the majority of Jews in Palestine. He had, after all, advocated for a deal with Nazi Germany, arguing that the Jews in the land of Israel, under the boot of the British, should seek “the least of all evils” and make a pact with the enemies of their enemies, the Nazis, believing that he could oust the British from Palestine and help the Nazis rid Europe of its Jewish presence by moving them to the Hebrew state. This was in January 1941 and virtually no one agreed with him. Thirteen months later he was dead.”

“And yet in modern-day Israel, 70 years after his death, there has been a stamp issued in his honor and a town - Kochav Ya'ir - that bears his name, and hundreds of teenagers that flock to his grave every year ... The shift has certainly come as a shock to his son. Ya'ir Stern - who was given his father's underground name, Ya'ir, in honor of Elazar Ben Ya'ir, the leader of the besieged Jewish rebels on Masada - was born five months after Avraham's death... At this year's ceremony ... the man everyone called Ya'ir was eulogized by the chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, Israel Prize winner Rabbi Meir Yisrael Lau, and one of the wreaths laid on his grave was from the Labor-led Haganah, the archenemies of Stern's Lehi revisionists.”

On December 20, 2016, the *New York Times* published a Jewish critique of the failure of self-regarding US Liberal Zionists to face up to the significance of such ever unfolding realities. Omri Boehm wrote: “The alliance that's beginning to form between Zionist leadership and politicians with anti-Semitic tendencies has the power to transform Jewish-American consciousness for years to come... Last April, Heinz-Christian Strache, leader of Austria's far-right Freedom Party, was embraced in Israel by top members of Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition. Strache's party now celebrates mostly anti-Islam and anti-immigration policies, but it was originally founded by former Austrian Nazis. Jörg Haider, a previous leader of the party, was infamous for showing sympathy for some of Hitler's policies. Another case in point is Geert Wilders, the xenophobic far-right Dutch politician. This month, it was revealed that Wilders's visits to Israel and his meetings with Israeli personnel have been so frequent that the Dutch intelligence community investigated his “ties to Israel and their possible influence on his loyalty.” This phenomenon has been somewhat familiar also in the United States given the close ties between fundamentalist evangelical Christians - whose views on the Jews' part in a larger messianic scheme is flatly anti-Semitic - and the state of Israel. But with Trump, this type of collaboration is introduced to the heart of American politics...”

“The “original sin” of such alliances may be traced back to 1941, in a letter to high Nazi officials, drafted in 1941 by Avraham Stern, known as Yair, a leading early Zionist fighter and member in the 1930s of the paramilitary group Irgun, and later, the founder of another such group, Lehi. In the letter, Stern proposes to collaborate with “Herr Hitler” on “solving the Jewish question” by achieving a “Jewish free Europe.” The solution can be achieved, Stern continues, only through the “settlement of these masses in the home of the Jewish people, Palestine.” To that end, he suggests collaborating with the German's “war efforts,” and establishing a Jewish state on a “national and totalitarian basis,” which will be “bound by treaty with the German Reich”. It has been convenient to ignore the existence of this letter, just as it has been convenient to mitigate the conceptual conditions making it possible. But such tendencies must be rejected. They reinforce the same logic by which the letter itself was written: the sanctification of Zionism to the point of tolerating anti-Semitism. That's the logic that liberal American Jews currently have to fight, but it will prove difficult to uproot. Stern is memorialized in street names in every major Israeli town, and it is not unreasonable to assume that Yair Netanyahu, the prime minister's son, whose father celebrated Stern as a mythical model of Zionist struggle, is called by Stern's nom de guerre.”

Any similar critique cannot be found in the London *Times*, which made itself the vehicle of the previously related Zionist assault on this Republic by Shimon Samuels in 2005. *The Times* (UK) no longer prints a daily Ireland edition. The exception is each Sunday, with the Ireland edition of *The Sunday Times*. In his ‘Atticus’ column for the paper's Irish edition this past January 26, John Burns opted to become a *de facto* spokesperson for the Israeli Embassy in Dublin with, under the heading of “**Higgins risks unholy row by not going to Jerusalem**”, the following inspired spin concerning the President of Ireland: “Monarchs, presidents and prime ministers travelled to Jerusalem last Thursday to remember the Holocaust... Where was Michael D Higgins? The Department of Foreign Affairs confirms an invitation was sent to him by President Reuven Rivlin of Israel. ‘We regret it was ultimately not possible to participate in this important event’, adds the department. Why not? ... Aras an Uachtaráin points out that the president sent a message on behalf of the Irish people to the event, but would not clarify why Higgins was unable to attend in person. The president will be at a Holocaust memorial day commemoration in Dublin today and then travels to Krakow to attend a commemorative event at Auschwitz-Birkenau tomorrow. So could it be he just didn't fancy a trip to Israel, a country with which Ireland has perhaps the worst relationship of any EU state?” Needless to say, John Burns neglected to mention the fact that the aforementioned “affronted” President of Israel is also a repeat offender in according State honours to the wannabe Nazi collaborator ‘Yair’ Stern.

See also <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/?s=Manus> for the full text of “*Many Different Jewish Voices*”, my February 2020 commentary on the anti-Corbyn anathema published by the London *Times* on November 26, 2019, and authored by Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, under the rhetorical and hysterical heading of “*What will become of Jews and Judaism in Britain if the Labour Party forms the next government?*”. That character assassination of Corbyn published by the London *Times* portrayed him as nothing less than a reincarnation of Hitler. Yet this self-styled «paper of record» has persistently failed to record the high profile honouring of Stern in today's the State of Israel. My article here has opened with a spoof paragraph about a non-existent ceremony in honour of Seán Russell held by President Higgins

in Áras an Uachtaráin - which, needless to say, would be utterly «fake news». But what follows hereunder is an all too true «real news» report of a commemorative ceremony held in Beit HaNassi, the official residence of the President of Israel. As the *Jerusalem Post* reported on March 2, 2017: “Veterans mark 75th anniversary of Stern Group founder’s death. PRESIDENT REUVEN RIVLIN sits in the center of former Lehi members and others marking 75 years since the death of the group’s founder Avraham Stern. *Anonymous Soldiers*, the Stern Group anthem written by the movement’s founder Avraham Stern, rang out Thursday at the President’s Residence in Jerusalem. Some 30 veterans of the organization came together to mark the 75th anniversary of Stern’s assassination by the British. The Stern Group is also known by the name Lehi, an acronym for Lochamei Herut Israel, or Israel Freedom Fighters... It was President Reuven Rivlin who suggested at the conclusion of the meeting that they sing the anthem, and it was his voice that rang out the loudest. ‘We were the only underground movement that refused to collaborate with the British’, declared Jerusalem-born Yael Ben Dov... The Irgun, also known by the name Etzel, was willing to join the British in battling the Nazis, as was the Hagana. The Stern Group refused, however, doing its utmost to remove the British from Israel. Chairman of the Lehi Legacy organization Yair Stern, who is named for the father he never knew, echoed Rivlin’s sentiments, saying that 75 years after his

father’s murder there has been a turnaround in attitudes toward underground fighters since the early years of the state, when Stern Group members were ostracized and denied medical treatment and jobs. Today, stated Rivlin, they are treated with the respect due to them.”

In 2017, it was the President of Israel himself, with his own voice ringing out the loudest, who was to lead off the singing of Stern’s anthem of the Zionist conquest of Palestine, and whose lyrics include the following:

Anonymous soldiers, we are here without uniforms ...

In cities and towns we will raise our flag
emblazoned with defence and conquest ...

We were not drafted with force, like so many slaves
to spill our blood on foreign lands.
Our desire is to always be free men
Our dream is to die for our land...

In our places thousands of others will come

To fight and to conquer, forever.

Only in the Apartheid State of Israel - canonised by erstwhile Israeli Embassy spokesperson Dermot Meleady as “a tiny oasis of democracy” - could one find such a Presidential celebration of a wannabe collaborator with Nazi Germany, seeking a common war against Britain in 1941.

Nariman Narimanov – A Patriotic, Humanistic Bolshevik

Pat Walsh

Nariman Narimanov, who was born 150 years ago this April, was a patriotic, humanistic Bolshevik. He was also the major figure who facilitated the Bolshevization of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which began around this time in the same month 100 ago.

It may seem strange to some readers to commemorate these two events. After all, the Bolshevik system rotted from within and collapsed about a generation ago and the era of nationalism returned with a vengeance to the Southern Caucasus and many other areas frozen in the Stalinist ice age.

Assisting in the Bolshevizing of one’s country is not likely to win someone many plaudits in the former countries of the Soviet Union today. However, history is made by those who work within the events that confront them and should be assessed in the light of what is achieved in the circumstances. It is not about anticipating how the world might look a century later and keeping on the “right side of history”. It is not about being judged on alternative courses of events that were never realistic propositions at the time.

Nariman Narimanov’s giant statue still commands the heights over Baku, a generation after the Soviet system came down and Gorbachev’s senseless massacre of more than a hundred civilians in the city during Black January 1990. Alone among his comrades, Nariman Narimanov still takes a place of honour overlooking the city in which he lived and which he served. And that takes some explaining.

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Before the cataclysm of 1914 the world lived in the age of Empires and there was no reason to suggest that this age was coming to an end. In fact, all the indications were that the future of the world was Imperial and all parts of the globe were to be taken in hand by the great Empires and that is where the destinies of all peoples lay. The age of nations seemed to be ending. That is what most of the Imperial literature said prior to 1914. And then came the Great War.

The greatest Empire of all, in 1914, the British Empire, unexpectedly declared the beginning of a new era in the course of its Great War on Germany. It said that it was fighting for an ideal world in its great Millenarian war for civilization. This was a “war for small nations” and “democracy” against Prussian autocracy etc.

It was all propaganda, of course, to salve the consciences of the Liberals who became drawn into this latest British Balance of Power war for world predominance, and to entice smaller powers into the ranks of the Triple Entente, who might tip the balance against Germany and the Ottomans. But the trumpeted morality of the new world being heard, was acted upon and nothing was ever the same again. The Age of Empire was over – or if there were empires afterwards, they were nothing like what had been before 1914.

Between 1914 and 1918 there was a paradigm shift in the world.

Azerbaijan (or the “Tartars” as the people of this territory were called then) did not respond to Britain’s new world in 1914. The Moslems of the Southern Caucasus had been under Tsarist authority then for nearly a century. It would be an exaggeration to say they were content, but their politics suggested that discontent was largely a product of being second-class citizens in the Russian Empire, rather than anything of a separatist disposition. Any serious discontent or trouble nearly always occurred in relation to Armenian activity, as in 1905-06, rather than being directed at the state itself.

There was a small national movement with a maximum demand for cultural autonomy but the Russian Empire was largely its horizon (with cultural rights connected to Azerbaijan’s Turkish and Persian influences to the forefront). The same was true in Georgia and to an extent among the Armenians (although the Dashnaks had developed other ideas!)

In any case, Britain’s new world was not meant for the peoples of its own Empire, or its allies – Russia and France.

It was only meant for peoples who could play a part in the weakening the German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman states – the enemy. The Moslems of the Caucasus, despite the presence of their Turkish brothers in the ranks of the enemy, remained loyal to the Russian Empire which had ruled them for a century. Their only problem with the Tsar was that they, unlike the Armenians and Georgians, were not permitted to fight for Russia. They were expected to remain passive objects of history whilst everyone around them was becoming militarized in the course of the Tsar's war.

And then the Tsarist State, under the pressure of the War it had catastrophically taken on, began to collapse. More accurately, it went into collapse as a result of Britain's refusal to let it stop fighting the War, in order to preserve itself. It was driven to destruction by the blood sacrifice that was required of it in the war against the Germans. And that process of self-destruction was engaged in by the Provisional Government that had overthrown the Tsar in the February Revolution, no less than the regime it replaced. In fact, even more so. And its Allies were very pleased at the Russian Revolution that would enable the new democratic Russia to engage in war more vigorously than the Tsarist slackers who had put the brakes on the Russian Steamroller.

The collapse of the Russian State in 1917, under the pressure of war, was what changed the course of history for the peoples of the Southern Caucasus. All three of the main peoples – Georgians, Armenians and Azeris, at first attempted to run with the February Revolution and develop as part of a democratized and decentralized Russian State. They were prevented from doing so by what happened at the centre of the Empire. When the Bolsheviks took power in October they attempted to preserve Transcaucasia as an island of the February development, awaiting a return to the ideals of the original Revolution, as that Revolution showed itself to be unable to govern the state.

The Bolsheviks, who had no intention of driving the Russian Steamroller to destruction to assist the Imperialist war, attempted to trump the British Imperialist propaganda about small nations and freedom, which was at that point being amplified by President Wilson and the U.S. entry into the War, with their own "rights to self-determination." The problem for Britain, with this, is that the Bolsheviks seemed to be making it a universal principle and therefore a weapon to be applied within the empires of the Entente as well as the Central Powers and Ottoman enemy. That would be hugely disabling to the Allied War effort and it was a very unwelcome development indeed.

All of this propaganda about nations and peoples becoming free had inevitable repercussions in the Southern Caucasus as nations began to emerge out of the catastrophe of war and the collapse of empire.

The Caucasian Moslem/Azeri national movement was centred around the Musavat party. The Musavat originally aimed at autonomy for Transcaucasia, but under pressure of events a fully fledged independence movement began to develop. Chief amongst the events that provoked a national awakening were the British financing and arming of the Armenians as a substitute to replace the dissolving Russian front, which had been disorganized by Lenin's invitation to the peasants to take their land. Then there were the massacres of Moslems in Baku and Quba in March 1918 when the Armenians availed of an attack by the forces of the Baku Soviet on the Musavat to carry out an ethnic war on the "Tartars". All this led to the May 28, 1918 declaration of Azerbaijani independence, the day after the Georgian Mensheviks had done likewise, under German protection.

The new Azeri national forces managed to capture Baku in late 1918 in conjunction with an Ottoman army that unexpectedly

found its way clear to the East after the dissolution of the Russian lines. It took the city from a combined force of Red and White Russians, British Imperialists of the Dunsterforce and Armenian Dashnaks. This was an event that had a galvanizing effect on the Azeri national movement, despite the short duration of its success.

The Great War and consequent collapse of the Russian State had put everything in flux in the Southern Caucasus. Although the Moslems of the region had developed some of the features of a national movement prior to this catastrophic event, the very complexity of the people of the territory that became Azerbaijan, and their historical experience under the Tsarist State, required a jolt to kick-start the process of nation building. What happened between February and 1917 and March 1918 provided this jolt. No longer would the "Tatars" remain in the role that the Russian Empire expected of them, remaining largely inert as passive objects of history

(It is sometimes asserted by Armenian propagandists that Azerbaijan is a "fake nation" created by Stalin. Stalin certainly knew what a nation was, being the Bolshevik's expert on the subject, and he had no desire to create nations where there were none. So he took Azerbaijan as being a nation, just like Armenia and Georgia, and treated it accordingly. with a national territory, including Karabakh. The problem for Azeri nation building was not the non-existence of a nation but the complexity of the nation, which did not neatly fit into the narrow parameters of Armenian nationalism. Azerbaijan had a wider Moslem world beyond it, in Russia, Iran and Turkey, to which it was very much attached in a historical, linguistic, religious and social way, and a richer heritage which impeded the simplicity of the type of nation building that the Armenians engaged in – the mere sorting out of territory with the expulsion of all who did not conform to the Armenian racial construct.)

A few weeks after the battle of Baku the Turks were forced out of Azerbaijan by the terms of the Mudros Armistice, when Istanbul suffered defeat in the Great War, and the Musavat accepted the British occupation as a second opportunity for national development, rather than as a defeat of the Republic proclaimed on May 28th.

The impetus of events, and in particular the capture of the capital by national forces, meant that the Azerbaijani national movement was a force that had to be taken into account by the British occupation that began in November 1918. And this was particularly the case because whilst the British occupation of Transcaucasia seemed to be a great victory, not only in the Great War on Germany and Ottoman Turkey but also a strategic triumph in the Great Game against Russia, all was not what it seemed.

This is the context in which Nariman Narimanov operated from 1917 to 1920. Nariman was born in 1870 into an Azeri family in multi-ethnic Tiflis/Tbilisi. He was the son of a merchant who also was a travelling musician singing in Armenian and Georgian, as well as the Azeri language. The family was not wealthy, but were able to send Nariman to a teacher's seminary at Gori. He was one of only five Azeris there (Lilana Riga, *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire*, p.198). Nariman became a teacher and a trained physician in Odessa and he went on to write a number of books, including the novel *Bahadur and Suna* as well as being the translator of Nikolai Gogol's *Inspector General* into Azeri.

He was a humanistic socialist both in personal life and in his politics. Although Narimanov benefited, unlike most "Tatars" in the Russian Empire, from receiving a good education, he had to support 11 family members, the children of his brothers and sisters, for a period of nearly 30 years, until he was able to give the last girl away for marriage. And he even felt some guilt for not having helped improve the lot of wider humanity

earlier, because of his domestic responsibilities (*Azerbaijan International*, Winter 2004, 13.4. pp.32-5).

During the 1890s, Nariman involved himself in various cultural nationalist pursuits, being an activist in promoting literature in the Azeri language. But he was a complex character, like most of the new national intelligentsia – a secularized Moslem, assimilated Russian “Tatar” who admired Peter the Great, linguistically Turkish/Azeri and ethnically Azerbaijani, from a background in ethnically diverse Tiflis, the capital of Transcaucasia. He was, in many ways, an assimilated Azeri, whose progressive politics came from the European influences within the Russian State (Lilana Riga, *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire*, p.203).

Nariman came to Baku around 1905 (the year of the terrible violence in the city) and joined the *Hummet*, which was a local political party connected to the Russian Social Democrats. The *Hummet* in Baku, was the world’s first socialist party of and for a Moslem population. It led Azeri and Persian oil and fishery workers in strikes and went on to play an important role in revolutionary activity. But it was not an entirely Moslem organisation, having an ethnically mixed leadership. A young Joseph Stalin, then living in Baku, and a Bolshevik Social Democrat, certainly associated himself with it, during his political activities in the city. Narimanov translated the RSDLP programme into Azeri. At this point most elected Azeris were aligned with the Kadets in the Dumas of 1906 and 1907 and Narimanov was part of only a small minority of socialists.

When the Persian Revolution broke out in December 1905 it provoked great interest in Baku with the close links. Nariman Narimanov set up the Social Democrat organisation in Iran and the insurgents in Tabriz were supplied with arms from Baku. Nearly a thousand men from North of the Araxes river, which separated the Azeri population between the Russian Empire and Iran, fought in the rising in Tabriz in 1908 (Tadeusz Swietochowski, *National Consciousness and Political Orientations in Azerbaijan, 1905-1920*, pp.9-10).

Narimanov, now under surveillance from the police. was arrested after a search of his apartment in Tiflis, and after some months of imprisonment was sentenced, by the Tsarist authorities, to 5 years in exile at Astrakhan. After banishment Narimanov returned to Baku in 1913 and became a leading figure in the *Hummet*.

When the Bolsheviks later excluded the *Hummet* from association with the RSDLP because of its nationalist tendencies, Narimanov joined the Bolsheviks. The RSDLP tended toward Bolshevism in Baku whereas in Tiflis/Georgia and the regions it was predominantly Menshevik. After the 1917 October coup, the Bolsheviks issued their decree proclaiming the rights of nations to self-determination. The implication of this was that any nation within the region of the territory of the Russian Empire could secede from it and form its own national state. This declaration impressed Narimanov and increased his involvement with the Bolsheviks, as respecters of national rights.

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It was really in 1919/20 that Nariman Narimanov, the Azerbaijani Communist, and former Commissar in the Baku Commune, became a key figure in the course of events in Transcaucasia. But first, he had had involvement with the ill-fated Baku Soviet.

The Baku Soviet that had taken power in the city in 1917/18 was not a wholly Russian/Armenian affair. A number of Azerbaijanis held important positions on the Soviet of People’s Commissars, including Nariman Narimanov, who occupied the city’s Economic portfolio, and Mirhasan Vezirov and Meshhedi Azizbeyov, who served under their Armenian leader, Stephan

Shaumyan (Adalet Tahirzade and Dilgam Ahmed, *The Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920)*, p.40).

In early 1918 tensions rose between the Baku Soviet and the Musavat, who the communists saw as the main barrier to their control of the city. Narimanov, seeing the dangerous progression of events, attempted a desperate last-minute intervention with Shaumyan to prevent the attack of the largely Armenian forces of the Baku Soviet on the Musavat, that he knew would spark off inter-ethnic killing, like in 1905-06 (Tadeusz Swietochowski, *The Himmat Party: Socialism and the National Question in Russian Azerbaijan, 1904-1920*, in *Cahiers du Monde Russe*, 1978, 19. p.125). But to no avail. After the Soviet shelling of the Moslem quarters of the city, the Armenians forgot about class solidarity and reverted to ethnic type and began a fierce massacre of Moslem civilians in the city that left about 12,000 dead during the “March Days” of 1918.

Incensed by the massacres of Moslem civilians in Baku by the Armenians fighting with the Baku Soviet forces, Narimanov began agitating during 1919, with Lenin and Stalin, for a different Bolshevik approach to the Caucasian Moslems. Narimanov did not have the same view of the March events as more recent interpretations. He later told Stalin, in a memorandum, that he believed the class war had metamorphosed into an ethnic war in the space of a day:

“Since we didn’t have enough resources, in the time of need comrade Shahumyan agreed that Armenian forces would act in defence of Soviet power. The right civil war had been proceeding as planned until noon the following day, but that afternoon I began to get reports that the war was turning into an ethnic massacre. A lot of characteristic scenes followed, but I shall remain silent on this subject... Finally, a Moslem delegation comes to me, and they ask to stop the war admitting their defeat. I call comrade Dzhaparidze right away. He promises to send deputies. At this very moment the Dashnaks hit on my apartment. I go into hiding. They take my brother. In an hour my family and I are rescued from the Dashnak “defenders of Soviet power” by comrade Shahumyan. After that the Dashnaks ran wild in the city of Baku for three days. Those “defenders of Soviet power” took a lot of Muslim women with children hostage.” (Nariman Narimanov, *K IstoriiNasheyRevoluyutsii v Okrainakh*, pp. 59-60).

In a speech given not long after the fall of the Baku Commune, Narimanov blamed the collapse of Soviet power on the Bolsheviks’ single-minded desire for the control of the oil city (Sara Brinegar, *The Oil Deal: Nariman Narimanov and the Sovietization of Azerbaijan*, *Slavic Review*, Number 2, Summer 2017, p. 378. Izbrannye Narimanov, “Vzgliadnazakhvatkavkaza,” 2, pp.185–96, and Izbrannye Narimanov, “Skakimlozungom my idem na Kavkaz,” 2, pp.176–85).

He argued that the prioritizing of capturing and holding oil production, no matter what the consequences for the local population, was a deeply flawed policy. This was the primary reason for the demise of the Soviet stronghold, Narimanov suggested, since it had alienated the local population and brought them back with the Ottomans to expel the Baku Soviet. Socialists in future needed to have a policy for constructing an Azerbaijani Communist state, with the active participation of local Moslems, if they were going to succeed in expanding Bolshevism into Transcaucasia, contended Narimanov (Izbrannye Narimanov, *Vzgliadnazakhvatkavkaza*, 2, pp. 85–96).

In January, 1919 a Commissariat of Transcaucasian Moslems came into being at Astrakhan led by prominent local Moslems including Narimanov, Effendiev, Sultanov, and Musabekov. The Astrakhan Department’s aim was to prepare, through agitation and propaganda in the Azeri language, the ground for

the Bolshevization of Azerbaijan. However, first the Bolsheviks had to see off the White guard armies of Kolchak, Denikin etc. that Britain was actively supporting with arms, ammunition and training, in order to secure regime change in Russia.

Narimanov emerged as the foremost proponent among the Bolsheviks for the occupation of all of the Azerbaijan Republic, arguing that Baku could never be safely held by the Communists without authority being exerted over the rest of the country, as the failure in 1918 had demonstrated. He wanted the Azerbaijani heartland to be fully integrated with the economy of Baku, making the peasants and Proletariat co-dependent. Furthermore, he argued that a Moslem-led committee within the Bolshevik Party was essential to the implementation of any future Sovietization (Sara Brinegar, *The Oil Deal: Nariman Narimanov and the Sovietization of Azerbaijan*, *Slavic Review*, Number 2, Summer 2017, p. 379). Narimanov was also in favour of the spread of Soviet power into Iran.

With this objective in mind, Narimanov worked for the incorporation of the *Hummet* Party into the Bolshevik Party. In late July 1919, Narimanov attended a conference in Moscow on the nationalities question and met with Lenin and the Russian Foreign Minister, G.V. Chicherin. Upon Narimanov's request the Politburo agreed that the *Hummet* should be an autonomous Moslem committee of the Bolsheviks (Sara Brinegar, *The Oil Deal: Nariman Narimanov and the Sovietization of Azerbaijan*, *Slavic Review*, Number 2, Summer 2017, p. 379).

When the Azeri Bolsheviks had fled Baku with the collapse of the Commune, nearly all of them had become members of the Commissariat for the Affairs of the Moslem Caucasus within the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID). They thereafter worked to carry out revolution in Azerbaijan from North of the Caucasus in Bolshevik-held territory, in Astrakhan, where Narimanov had been in exile a decade earlier. In July 1919, Narimanov, acting as the Azerbaijani Communist Chairman of the Public Education Department of the Astrakhan Governorate, sent a letter to Nesib Bey Yusifbeyli, representing the Azerbaijan government in Baku. At that point the British had declared their intention to withdraw from the Southern Caucasus to shore up their territorial gains elsewhere.

In his letter of July 16th 1919, Comrade Narimanov accused Nesib Bey and the Musavat of betraying the interests of the Proletariat and the Socialist State that had been established in Russia, which Nariman believed would inevitably recapture Baku and be a progressive force in Azerbaijan and across the Moslem world:

"I have always spoken strictly against the supporters of inviting the Turks to the Caucasus... While you developed your ideas of panturkism and panislamism, I was resolutely against you as a communist... Turkey came with "victory" and left you shamefully... The main thing that has forced you to speak against Soviet power with foam from the mouth are the interests of a group of rich men – the interest of the Baku millionaires... Kolchak has been smashed. Denikin will soon come to an end, too. The strong arms and hands of Soviet Russia will be opened. If you are as deaf and blind as you were before, if now you still do not see or hear what is happening across the world, especially after the Versailles Peace, then you are not scared of Soviet Russia... For your entire policy, the reckoning with is coming, when you will face the Court of Transcaucasian Moslem workers and farmers... Did you not understand that Azerbaijan, together with Baku, was of special importance to Soviet Russia? Soviet Russia's relations with Armenia and Georgia do not have such a special place, but Baku is the life source for Soviet Russia... You cannot play with the life of an entire nation, but you are criminally playing... Let Soviet rule be established in all Islamic states and peoples. Then they will do in ten years the things they could not do in a hundred

*years... You need brave honesty to confess this: "We did not understand the essence of the Russian revolution, we did not take into consideration all the consequences of the devastating Imperialist war, we are leaving the arena and let it be Soviet power in Azerbaijan!" (Adalet Tahirzade and Dilgam Ahmed, *The Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920)*, pp.108-90).*

The Caucasus Republics could not, of course, respond to the Bolshevik appeals, even if they had wanted to, because of their dependence on the British Occupation. This British protection, while it remained, enabled them to dismiss Narimanov's criticism out of hand. This was the point at which the White guard General Denikin was moving forward on Moscow and the Bolsheviks looked more likely to be pinned back by the Whites than to move forward to Baku. The Musavat government therefore, could afford to ignore Bolshevik communications, be glad that Denikin was moving North, having his hands full with his war on the Soviets, and hope that the British would see to it he did not come South in the future.

The Musavat had taken in earnest the new world proclaimed by Britain during the Great War and this was the main reason for their collaboration with Britain's military governors, and the peaceful acceptance of the British occupation during late 1918 to mid-1919. The belief was that the Azerbaijan Republic, which had been ended by the Ottoman defeat, would be nurtured into a new existence by British power, in an orderly and stable region presided over by the predominant empire in the world, that had been vastly expanded through its victory in the Great War. The culmination of this would be recognition of statehood by the new League of Nations established by the Allies at the Paris Peace Conference.

There was some reason to believe this would indeed be the case. At the end of the Great War British forces had flooded into the Southern Caucasus and established a new frontier against the old enemy of the Great Game. that stretched from Istanbul eastwards to the Indian Empire. Britain had defeated its enemies – Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Ottomans – and had begun absorbing their territories, partitioning their states and re-ordering the world, in conjunction with its allies at Paris.

But all was not as it seemed. In winning its Great War and gaining a large amount of new territory for its empire Britain had over-extended itself. Germany and Ottoman Turkey had proved impossible to defeat with its original allies and one – Russia – had collapsed in the course of the War. Other allies accumulated on the way, like Italy and Greece, had proved incapable of tipping the balance and it was only U.S. finance and finally, manpower that staved off the unthinkable – having to conclude a negotiated peace.

After the Great War Britain was in financial hock to the United States and had to take into account its emerging power in both the conclusion of a settlement and further Imperialist activities. Britain was also handicapped by the democracy which the Great War had brought into being through the necessity of conscripting the masses and making it a popular war. Concluding the settlement and conducting policy in the old way was impossible.

So Britain's will to power in the world was something of an illusion and its staying power in Transcaucasia, as a new frontier in the Great Game against Russia, was transient. And to exacerbate everything it just couldn't make up its mind about what to do against Russia. In the end it financed and helped organise the White guard element in the Civil War but balked at Churchill's demand that it commit itself to a full scale war to destroy Bolshevism.

The other major problem was British policy toward Ottoman Turkey. Churchill made the suggestion that a speedy and honourable settlement be made with the Turks (and Germans) in order that they could be turned against the Bolsheviks, and

provide the forces Britain was incapable of supplying to defend the Caucasus front. But the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, would have none of it. He pursued the policy of using the Greeks (and Armenians) as catspaws to bring Istanbul to heel and impose a harsh treaty upon the Turks which would have confined them to an Anatolian wasteland.

Because of this the Turkish resistance was forced to seek out the only ally it could to facilitate a resurgence against the British Imperialists -the Bolsheviks. The Azerbaijan land bridge was indispensable to the alliance that enabled Ankara to fight the Imperialists. And this policy of the British Prime Minister sealed the fate of Transcaucasia.

In an ideal world Azerbaijan, and the other Transcaucasian Republics, could have developed into independent states in 1920 and taken their place among the nations of the world, with the imprimatur of the League of Nations. But Britain, which had declared the ideal world in its war, subverted it as soon as the war was over. It failed to follow through on what it had declared and encouraged others to believe in. It failed to help defend what it supposedly held in principle to be what it had fought its war for.

So where did that leave Azerbaijan? It could not proceed to independent statehood outside the hegemony of the victorious powers at Paris, as an isolated fragment, left to its own devices. For one thing it was not isolated, but had an aggressive neighbour (Armenia) mounting attacks on its territory to take that territory for itself.

It would inevitably fall within the embrace of Russia again. It was really a question of British Imperialist hegemony or Soviet hegemony. There really was no third course.

Britain also subverted the internal defence of Transcaucasia by leaving the territorial dimensions of an Armenian state undefined. Of course, the Armenians with their grandiose and unrealisable plans for state building on a vast scale, contributed much to such destabilisation. And the two things interacted to amplify the problem, with the British encouraging the Armenians to hold themselves aloof from territorial settlements with Georgia and Azerbaijan, and the common defence of the region, in the hope that they would gain something much more substantial from London than they could negotiate with neighbours at the conference table. So whilst Britain provided a degree of order and security through its occupation, it subverted this by leaving the question of Armenian territorial award open to destabilize everything in the region.

Nariman Narimanov had little faith in the British and knew that Azerbaijan, with the rest of the Caucasus would return to the Russian Empire after it revived itself. He therefore believed that the important thing to determine was which Russia – Socialist or White guard was to triumph?

In his assessment of the geopolitics of the situation Nariman Narimanov proved to be correct.

On August 16, 1919 Stalin, as Commissar for the Nationalities, wrote a letter to Chicherin on the necessity of removing Armenians from affairs affecting Azerbaijan and Turkey and putting Comrade Narimanov to the fore in order to implement the Sovietization of the Moslem countries of the Russian Empire. Stalin assured the Foreign Minister that Narimanov, who was known to be patriotic and independent-minded, would act as the Bolshevik's "flag" to rally the Moslems of the Southern Caucasus, whilst the Central Committee retained overall control of policy (Adalet Tahirzade and Dilgam Ahmed, *The Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920)*, p.110.)

A week after this letter Narimanov was appointed head of the Near East Department of the Commissariat for the Foreign Affairs of R.S.F.S.R (ibid).

When in September 1919 a delegation of Turkish nationalists arrived in Baku to enlist the support of the Azerbaijani Government, they were refused support by the Musavat Government, who, now heavily dependent on goodwill from London, probably feared British retaliation (particularly in relation to Armenian territorial demands). The Musavat who had bound themselves to Britain in their Azerbaijani nation-building project were to now suffer the consequences of their dependency on British Imperialism. It was the *Hummet* who took up the Turkish offer and "played the role of a bridge between the proletarian revolutionary Moscow and the revolutionary movement in Turkey." (Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia*, p.232).

Narimanov convinced Lenin to adopt his policy with regard to a Soviet Azerbaijani Republic and Lenin sent him back to Azerbaijan with a specific mandate to facilitate the integration of the oil city of Baku with the Azerbaijani countryside, in a new Socialist nation-building project. As the Red Army prepared for invasion under cover of an "people's uprising", Narimanov was appointed Commissar for the Affairs of the Moslem Caucasus and his colleagues were ear-marked for posts in a future Soviet government in Azerbaijan. Narimanov, was to head, first, the Azerbaijan Revolutionary Committee and subsequently, the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

Narimanov, as an Azerbaijani Communist with a Soviet nation-building programme, provided the Bolshevik conquest with the required legitimacy among the majority Moslem population, to overcome the previous association with Russian control of the city and Armenian terror. So, Narimanov emerged as the critical intermediary between the Bolshevik Party and the wider population of Azerbaijan, to facilitate its Sovietization (Sara Brinegar, *The Oil Deal: Nariman Narimanov and the Sovietization of Azerbaijan*, *Slavic Review*, Number 2, Summer 2017, pp. 372-9).

Narimanov therefore occupied a pivotal position between safeguarding the interests of the Proletarian Revolution and those of the Azerbaijani people.

As Sara Brinegar has noted of Narimanov:

"His goals were threefold. First, to shape Bolshevik modernizing policies in Azerbaijan among the Muslim population. Second, to mitigate the use of violence against the wider population, preventing a re-occurrence of the Baku Commune. Third and finally, to expand the revolution into Persia... Narimanov... understood that the Red Army was not simply going to walk away from Baku. It was too vital to the winning of the Civil War. In fact, he viewed a Bolshevik takeover, in some form or another, as both inevitable and ultimately desirable because he believed the Soviets were a modernizing force that would benefit Azerbaijan. Instead, he argued that for a renewed invasion of Baku to succeed in the long term, the Bolsheviks would have to maintain regional stability and avoid the violence of 1918 that bookended the Baku Commune... Narimanov agreed to do what he could to help supply Soviet Russia with oil and Lenin put Narimanov in charge of the Soviet government of Azerbaijan (Sovnarkom) with the understanding that he would be granted significant leeway in cultural policies. In other words, Narimanov promised to provide the political and social stability in Azerbaijan necessary to maintain Soviet power and assure Russian access to Baku's critical oil reserves. Narimanov believed that Azerbaijan could walk a line where it was tightly bound to Russia out of both ideological affinity and economic necessity while maintaining a degree of independence in local and cultural affairs... Lenin, for his part, maintained that Narimanov was Moscow's only real link to the Muslim peasantry of the south Caucasus and that he was, at least initially, indispensable. The implication was clear: access to Baku's oil was an overriding concern to the stability of Soviet

Russia. If the Bolsheviks took Baku, they would have to take all of formally Russian Azerbaijan.” (Sara Brinegar, *The Oil Deal: Nariman Narimanov and the Sovietization of Azerbaijan*, *Slavic Review*, Number 2, Summer 2017, pp. 373-4).

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On September 1st 1920, the Bolsheviks convened the famous Congress of the Peoples of the East at Baku, broadcasting the message that the Soviet State stood with the oppressed Moslems against Western Imperialism. It was opened by Nariman Narimanov. The largest delegation to it came to the capital of Soviet Azerbaijan from Turkey. According to Bolshevik sources, nearly 2,000 delegates attended, representing a wide range of Asian countries and movements. There was a much greater attendance in Baku than had attended the first All-Russian Congress of Moslems in November 1918. (S. White, *Communism and the East: The Baku Congress, 1920*, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1974, pp. 492-3). In his address, Zinoviev, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Comintern launched an appeal to the peoples of the Tsarist Empire in Central Asia and the Caucasus, to join the Russian revolution and wage war against British Imperialism (TourajAtabaki and SolmazRustamova-Towhidi, *The Making of Collective Memory; The Politics of Archive in Soviet Azerbaijan*, p.320).

Narimanov’s influence at this juncture probably had a strong bearing on preventing Karabakh being detached from Azerbaijan by the Soviet power. Stalin insisted that it remain a part of the country when many of the Bolsheviks were willing to cede it to Armenia. Narimanov was less happy with the handover of Zangezur to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic and wrote to Lenin on the matter when he was one of the chairmen of the Union Council of the Trans-Caucasus Soviet Federated Socialist Republics. He was convinced that Armenian intrigues were responsible for the poor treatment of Azerbaijan:

“Azerbaijan has proclaimed its resources to be the resources of the Soviet republic and has proved this in practice. Azerbaijan has renounced its territories in favour of Armenia, even when at one time it was considered impossible for political considerations... The Centre has given as a concession undisputed Azerbaijani territory to Armenia and it is an historical mistake impossible to rectify; Armenia, which has always protected Denikin, gains independence and additionally gets Azerbaijani land, while Azerbaijan, which of all the Trans-Caucasus republics first embraced Soviet Russia’s authority, loses both its independence and territories, and the expression ‘independent Azerbaijan’ is never been heard on the lips; Azerbaijan is now in such a situation that the Mirzoyans decide its fate without any hindrance.”

Narimanov also had an influence on saving Nakhchivan for Azerbaijan. In January 1921, Ordzhonikidze and Kirov cabled the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks and argued, on behalf of the Armenians, that

“the Turks could create in Nakhchivan their own buffer zone; they want to establish their own khanate here. Then the railroad will be in their hands, they will cut us off from Tabriz and Iran and dismember Armenia.”

Ordzhonikidze’s argument was challenged by Narimanov who cabled Lenin in mid-February saying that in his view,

“there is no doubt that the Ankara government sincerely wants to connect its fate with us against England.”

This was food for thought because handing the Azeri majority region of Nakhchivan would have undermined everything the Soviet objectives of defeating British Imperialism and spreading the revolution into the Moslem East. It came at a crucial point because at that moment a Turkish delegation was about to travel to Moscow to negotiate a peace treaty that would cement the alliance between Ankara and the Bolsheviks against the Imperialists. The Turkish delegation went to Moscow via Baku, where Narimanov gave them advice on how they should deal with the Soviets. He told the Turkish delegates that Chicherin, the Soviet Foreign Affairs commissar, was not the man to do business with. He was on the wrong side of many issues in the East and the Turks should do everything possible to deal directly with Lenin or “if this was not achieved, to turn to Stalin for help.” It was good advice and led to a functional deal that paid dividends in the Turkish war of independence.

During the first years of Soviet Azerbaijan, Narimanov found himself increasingly at odds with the leaders of the Transcaucasian party who had been drafted in by Moscow, especially Sergo Ordzhonikidze. Narimanov’s opposition to the centre’s policies, especially the merging of the three Republics into a Transcaucasian Federation, led to his removal from Baku in 1922, with a “promotion” to Moscow.

Despite this Narimanov wrote a famous 1925 treatise “*Lenin and the East*” (*Lenin i vostok*), which honoured Lenin a year after his death. It praised the Soviet leader for having helped liberate Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan from Imperialist oppression. The essay was reprinted in 1970 as a pamphlet, and was popular in the homes of the last generation of Soviet Azerbaijanis (Leah Feldman, *Red Jihad*, p.232 and Nariman Narimanov, *Lenin ivostok*, p.37).

Narimanov lived to be disappointed with the Sovietization he had helped facilitate. He struggled hard to minimize the forcefulness of the Bolshevikization of his country and the repression unleashed on those who resisted the process. In this he undoubtedly saved lives. The early years of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic were fruitful to the populace in many respects, after the instability of the previous few years. But the inhumanity Narimanov saw in the system inevitably distressed him.

Nearly five years on from the Red Army’s capture of Baku, during February 1925, when he was Chairman of the Soviet of People’s Commissars, he wrote a letter to his young son, Najaf, detailing his fears for the future, which centred around his belief that Bolshevism was proceeding down the wrong path, to self-destruction. Nariman told his son that although the ruthless pursuit of power of state had been absolutely essential in the circumstances of 1917-20, it was now necessary to pursue more humanistic ideals, or the moral emptiness of Bolshevism would ultimately result in its demise:

“I was a Social Democrat, but these days, more and more, I discern that they are abandoning their goals. I used to have confidence in the agenda of the Bolsheviks and envisioned my own goals being fulfilled through them. I thought slavery would be abolished in the world this way. Maybe Bolshevism won’t

exist by the time you read these lines. But if that be the case, it doesn't mean that we don't need Bolshevism. It means that we were not able to save it, that we underestimated it, and that our attitude towards these goals was shortsighted. We must say it openly: we became so arrogant with power that we occupied ourselves with meaningless issues and arguments, and we forgot about the real work we had to do. Power destroys most people. And thus it has happened: power has spoiled most of our outstanding leaders. They decided to take control of the fate of a great state and become dictators... It was necessary at the beginning. But to continue this path today will cause Bolshevism to collapse.

Now, as I write these lines to you, the situation is that the Communists can't even talk among themselves about our major mistakes that have been caused by those carelessly ruling the government who have declared themselves as "the heirs of Lenin" after his death.

You'll understand more fully about these issues from the extensive speech that I have written for the Central Committee. You'll become aware of many things through that speech. You'll understand that your father was not afraid of saying things that most others didn't have the courage to say, or did not want

to risk saying, out of fear of losing their position and power." (Azerbaijan International, Winter 2005, 13.4. pp. 32-5 for details and the, unfortunately uncompleted, letter).

Less than 6 weeks later, after an argument with Stalin, Narimanov died in suspicious circumstances, claimed to have been a heart attack. He was only 55. His fate was far from unique among Bolsheviki who fell out with Stalin. After his sudden death Narimanov was cremated, given a full state funeral and was laid to rest in the Kremlin wall.

His son, Najaf, went on to join the Communist Party and commanded a tank division in the great patriotic war. He was decorated for his valour at Stalingrad, dying in battle with the Red Army defending the city of Volnokakha, in Ukraine, from the Germans and their allies.

Because Britain abandoned Transcaucasia in 1919-20 the national development of Azerbaijan had to take place within the Soviet system. That system lasted far longer than Narimanov thought it would, but it indeed collapsed, as he had predicted it would.

What lives on, however, is the Azerbaijan Republic, born



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in the collapse of the Tsarist State, and developed over two generations within the Soviet Union and reborn at its demise, with Narimanov watching over it all, high above Baku.

Painting of Narimanov in 1970 by Azerbaijani artist Ogtay Sadigzade