

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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Afghanistan

By Pat Walsh

The two articles that follow this introduction were published in *The Irish Political Review* around a decade ago, in 2008 and 2009.

Now, in 2021, we know that the U.S./U.K. have failed in Afghanistan. There should be no British complaints about President Biden's decision to throw in the towel and cut the Afghan client government loose to face a reckoning with the locals. The British Army was thoroughly defeated in Afghanistan and the UK was doing no good there. The U.S. President has announced that it has fulfilled its original objective in invading the country 20 years ago and the superficial things it has been attempting ever since, termed "progress" are not worth the candle. Those of a superficial disposition are appalled by such realism on the part of the leader of the Western World. They believed, or at least convinced themselves, that the West does nothing but good in the world and its eternal mission has been left unaccomplished. But alas, there is no army but the U.S. Army to fight the good fight and the President is Commander in Chief of that army. So those Pound Shop British Generals can go back to playing with their toy soldiers and dreaming of when Britain ruled the World and screwed it up, before the Americans took over and did the same.

The British Foreign Secretary in 2009 stated that Britain fought the Taliban in Afghanistan to prevent the possibility of them having to be fought on the streets of London. There was never any evidence that the Taliban had any interest in the fleshpots of London. There was far more likelihood that local English jihadists operated in the U.K., and afterwards were siphoned off to Syria, largely because of what the UK was doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. But we can assume on his logic that the battle for London will soon begin, now that the war in Afghanistan has been lost. The frontline will be in Kensington, rather than Kabul!

Prince Harry, the most high status bomber of the Afghans, from a suitably safe location, has retired from his military career to pursue fame and fortune with an American actress. He has become the darling of the liberal West for marrying a "woman of colour" deserting his cruel family, becoming a migrant, and making his own way in life in California.

The Afghan communist government sustained itself for years after the Russian withdrawal and yet the present Western client government in Kabul, shorn of the US Airforce, has shown itself to be something without substance by the speed of its collapse. What the West did for the Afghans is obviously not worth fighting for by the Afghans themselves. They were prepared to fight longer and harder for communist values than Western Liberal values it seems. What does that say? Presumably, that they have had enough of the West and its hypocrisy. It has thoroughly disgraced itself in Afghanistan and other places since it became master of the world.

Spare us the Western liberal bleating about the prospects for "Afghan women". The original Western intervention in Afghanistan was prompted by a local revolt against Afghan communist initiatives to educate Afghan girls. The West worked up an insurrection in Afghanistan for Cold War purposes, arming and training guerrillas who aimed to keep women uneducated

and in their traditional place. The CIA and SAS trained these guerrillas in urban terrorism to enhance their military potential, when they were failing against the Soviet forces. The U.S. and U.K. assisted Bin Laden and other terrorists (freedom fighters?) to establish themselves in Afghanistan to wage jihad. (The spirit of the times is captured in the Hollywood movie, *Charlie Wilson's War* and one of the later Rambo films with Sylvester Stallone, donning a pakol, and leading the jihadists on a white horse, while uttering *God Bless America*). The Mujahideen ultimately captured Kabul and took power and the Western backed war lords turned the country into lawless fiefdoms, where robbery, rape and murder were routine parts of everyday life.

The Taliban, an organised and coherent religious force, were welcomed as a necessary element to rid Afghanistan of this nightmare and bring much needed order and stability to people's lives. And the West did business with them until Bin Laden struck, and bit the hand that fed him, on 9/11. How ungrateful! Was it something we did to annoy him?

These are the facts about the West's destructive recent encounter with Afghanistan that will be absent in 2021 chatter. Those who have failed the Afghans and brought upon them nothing but death and destruction have no reason to bring these facts to the attention of the world.

What is happening now will hopefully enable Afghanistan to develop through its own agency in conjunction with any foreign powers who can aid reconstruction (i.e. China). The Taliban are the only force capable of bringing order and stability to Afghanistan so their speedy victory should be welcomed. The hard fact of the matter, demonstrated by the absence of resistance from the army and state that the US spent trillions of dollars constructing, is that the only people of real substance in Afghanistan are in the ranks of the Taliban. And states have to be built around substance or they will be castles built on sand.

Perhaps the greatest consequence of the Taliban victory in August 2021 will be the end of the Great Game in Afghanistan. That surely would be a positive development, leaving the Afghans free to tend to their own affairs instead of forming the glaxis on which the Great Powers fight their battles.

The Bad Lands of Afghanistan (September 2009) Pat Walsh

The British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, has said that it is essential to fight in the "bad lands of Afghanistan" lest the Taliban have to be fought on the streets of London: "This is about the future of Britain because we know that the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan have been used to launch terrible attacks, not just on the US but on Britain as well." (11 Sept)

Britain should know a lot about the bad lands of Afghanistan since it did so much to create them in the Great Game.

The present border between Afghanistan and Pakistan was established in a treaty signed on 12th November 1893, in Kabul by Sir Mortimer Durand, representing British India, and

Abd al-Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan. Durand had been sent by Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy of British India, to pursue Britain's 'Forward Policy' which was designed to pacify tribal activity along the northwest hinterland of British India. It was a treaty in the British sense of the term, whereby a weaker party signed a piece of paper under duress because the stronger party wanted it and because not to do so would have resulted in worse consequences for the weaker party.

The Durand line came about as a result of the 'Great Game.' The 'Great Game' was the British term for Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia. It stemmed from the British fear that the Russian civilizing mission in Central Asia would extend into Afghanistan and ultimately India. Throughout the 19th century the British were gradually moving North, and the Russians were slowly moving South in Asia. Britain took over the entire Indian sub-continent and, during the same period of time, the forces of the Czar of Russia were taking over Turkic speaking areas, such as Samarkand and Bukhara.

The Imperial ruling class in London viewed the Russian civilizing, particularly of the Moslem regions of Asia, as having great dangers for the Indian Empire and they determined that it should be prevented from entering Afghanistan.

England was also determined to prevent any foreign power from gaining ports that would gain them access to the Persian Gulf or Indian Ocean which might facilitate trade routes out of the sphere of influence of the Royal Navy. Peter the Great of Russia had decreed that Russia must find a warm-water port. Having blocked the Czars in Constantinople through the Crimean War the British feared that Russia would try to establish that warm water port in Karachi.

The Afghan Wars resulted from the British desire to maintain Afghanistan as a buffer state between Russian influence and India and to install puppet regimes in Kabul. When Afghan rulers refused to accept English missions to Kabul armies were sent from India to change their minds.

The First Afghan War (1838-42) had ended in disaster for Britain as an army of 16,000 perished to a man retreating from Kabul. But in the 1870s the New vigorous British Imperialism favoured a 'Forward Policy' toward Afghanistan, holding that the 'defence of India' required pushing its frontiers to the natural barrier of the Hindu Kush, so that Afghanistan, or at

least parts of it, would be brought entirely under British control. In 1876 Disraeli sent the new Indian Viceroy, Lord Lytton, to Delhi with orders to institute the Forward Policy. Shir Ali, the Amir, rejected a demand for a British mission in Kabul in 1876 arguing that if he agreed the Russians might demand the same right and his country would become a battleground of the Great Powers.

After Britain blocked the Russian advance in the Balkans (to Constantinople, it was feared) at the Congress of Berlin the Czar turned his attention to Central Asia. In 1878 Russia sent an uninvited diplomatic mission to Kabul. The British demanded that Shir Ali accept a British mission. Shir Ali had not responded by August 17 when his heir died, throwing the court at Kabul into mourning.

When no reply was received, the British dispatched an envoy, Sir Neville Chamberlain, with a military force. When he was refused permission to cross the Khyber Pass by Afghan troops the British viewed this as a handy pretext for implementing the Forward Policy and grabbing most of Afghanistan. An ultimatum was delivered to Shir Ali, demanding an explanation of his actions and when the Afghan response was viewed as unsatisfactory three British armies entered Afghanistan. Shir Ali, died on a mission to plead with the Czar for help and with British forces occupying much of the country, his son, Yaqub, signed the Treaty of Gandamak to prevent British invasion of the rest of Afghanistan.

According to this agreement, and in return for an annual subsidy and an assurance of assistance in case of Russian aggression, Yaqub agreed to British control of Afghan foreign affairs, the presence of British representatives in Kabul and Kandahar, British control of the Khyber passes, and the cessation of various frontier areas to the Indian Empire. Then the head of the British Mission, Sir Louis Cavagnari, was assassinated, just after he arrived in Kabul. A British army went through the passes and reoccupied Kabul, deposing Yaqub.

But despite the initial success of the military expedition, Britain was unable to control the country outside the capital and it withdrew. Britain would have preferred to incorporate Afghanistan into the Indian Empire. But the British were forced to use the negotiating table and draw up the Durand Line.

The Russians and the British made a deal. Under the treaty everything North and West of Durand's line was Afghanistan. Everything South and East of the line was British India, an area which is now in Pakistan. The Russians would stay North of the Oxus River. The British would stay south of the crest of the Himalayas. In order to make sure that neither country would come into conflict with the other, a sort of giant no-mans land was set up. A buffer state was created which would be in between the Russian and the British Empires. The name of that Buffer State was Afghanistan a state which had not existed previously.

This is the reason why a part of Afghanistan reaches out and touches as far as China. The arm is called the Wakhan Corridor. There, the northern border of Afghanistan is the Oxus River. The southern border is the crest of the Himalayas and Hindu Kush mountains, which converge together at that point. It was important to the British that Russia never came to acquire territory adjacent to India. For this reason, the Wakhan Corridor, which is only eight miles wide at its narrowest point, was made part of Afghanistan and was extended to touch China.

The 'State' of Afghanistan was split in two by the second highest mountain range in the world, the Hindu Kush. The people north of the Hindu Kush had little in common with those south of the Hindu Kush. Their language was different as well as their religion. South of the Hindu Kush, the speakers were primarily Pashtun. North of the Hindu Kush, mostly Turkic languages is spoken, as well as Farsi.

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The Durand Line, whilst constructing a State of distinct peoples in a territory whose geography was not conducive to a state, also split the lands of its major ethnic group in two. The border bisected the Pashtun tribal area, leaving more than half the Pashtun tribes in Pakistan. The Durand Line ran through the middle of the lands of the most important eastern Afghan Pashtun tribes and as a result millions of Pashtuns now inhabit the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Sindh, the cities of Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. (The Pashtun are divided into more than 60 clans, all speaking the common Pashtun language. They number about 12 ½ million in Afghanistan and 14 million in Pakistan. In Pakistan, Pashtun speakers number less than 10 percent of the population of 145 million, which is dominated by Punjabis and other ethnic groups. In Afghanistan, however, a population of 26 million, contains the Pashtun, which constitute nearly half the population of the country, and have, more than often, dominated Afghan affairs.)

The Eastern Pashtuns never regarded the Durand Line through their homeland as an international border and refused to recognize it. No Afghan regime, including the Taliban when they were in power, has accepted the validity of the Durand Line. Afghans have never accepted this border since it was imposed by Imperial Powers with the intention of marking out their spheres of influence rather than an international frontier.

After the communist takeover of Afghanistan in 1978, the government actively challenged the legitimacy of the Durand Line and formally repudiated the Durand Agreement in 1979. In 1993, 100 years after the signing of the Agreement, the Durand Agreement lapsed. Afghanistan refused to renew the treaty, leaving Afghanistan and Pakistan with no official border.

The period between 1907 and 1919 revealed that Britain, even though it had concluded a treaty with Russia, establishing the Line, regarded it as a mere 'scrap of paper' (in the supposed manner of the Kaiser with regard to Belgium) and a temporary situation. It took the attitude it has with all treaties – they are there to be broken when the time is right and a suitable reason or cause found to break them. They are there to support the interests of the time but never to cater for the interests of the future.

As part of its agreement with Russia in 1907, to clear the decks for war on Germany, England had secured the Czar's agreement that Afghanistan should become a British protectorate – thus ending the Great Game. The Czar presumably agreed to this because he got what he had wanted all along – a warm water port. Edward Grey had overturned the main plank of British Foreign Policy of the nineteenth century (known in music hall parlance as 'The Russians shall not have Constantinople') to engage the Russian Steamroller to flatten Germany on its eastern flank, after securing the French in 1904 on the Kaiser's west.

Of course, the Afghans had no say in the matter. Their country had been the battleground in the Great Game and now that the Game was over the winner took the board.

But in 1919 the Czar was gone and Britain felt that all deals were off with regard to Russia with the regime change – accept with regard to Afghanistan where the agreement of 1907 with the Czar was deemed to stand. And the idea of Protectorate started to appear old-hat to the victor.

Afghanistan had remained neutral in the Great War and the new Amir, Amanullah, thought that since the Czar had gone and Britain was free of the Great Game and had fought a war for small nations Afghanistan might be one of those nations that might enjoy the new world of the victors. So he wrote to the Governor General of India declaring his accession to the free and independent state of Afghanistan and his intention of asserting this status through an independent foreign policy. But like Ireland found there were small nations and small nations.

On 3rd June 1919 The Irish News revealed that the situation had developed into the Third Afghan War:

"An Amir was murdered recently – by no means an unusual fate for Amirs – and the Afghans soon afterwards delivered attacks on England's Indian outposts. Therefore 'the Afghans are lawless, ignorant, rapacious, and almost incurably vain; they are a race of desperate fanatics.' ... For long years the Afghans were England's allies; they held the pathway between Russian territory in Central Asia and the Indian Peninsula, and the Russians should fight the Amir's forces if they tried to get to the Punjab. In those days the Afghans were a brave and martial race – fearless mountaineers who loved liberty so well that no Muscovite dared trifle with their territory. Now they are 'lawless, ignorant' etcetera...

Afghanistan is a large country – as big, we learn, as France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland put together. But its population is only between 5,000,000 and 6,000,000. So recently as 1907 – when relations between the Czar's Government and the British Government were becoming cordial – Russia declared that Afghan territory was without the Russian 'sphere of influence' and undertook to act in all its political relations with Afghanistan through the British Ministry. Russia exists no longer as an Imperial State; and Turkey's downfall leaves Afghanistan the largest and most formidable of the Moslem Powers. The headship of the Moslem World has practically reverted to the Amir: and this fact must be borne in mind when the new Anglo-Afghan war is considered... Fomenters of strife have an immense area of operations... Asia must be reconquered from the eastern borders of China to the Mediterranean Sea. The latest Afghan War – the third waged against the mountain tribes of the old 'buffer state' within 42 years – is only one piece of a gigantic movement that may soon reach the dimensions and be marked by the ferocity of a 'Holy War.' Afghanistan cannot cope with the English power in India but it is doubtful whether England will deem it advisable to march troops through the Himalayan Passes again and occupy Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. The cost of conquering the whole country would be serious – in blood and treasure. The cost of holding it would mean a huge annual addition to the burden of taxation. But if the Moslems of Afghanistan are not completely subdued they will be perennially dangerous to the British Empire in India. It is an awkward dilemma: it would be difficult if Afghanistan alone were conquered; but the Afghans are only a small section of the vast Mahommedan population in Western and Central Asia, and in India, the prospects of peace in a continent where war under the 'banner of the Prophet' is considered a solemn duty and where death in battle is looked upon as the opening of the gate to external bliss – the variety of supreme happiness that commends itself to the Oriental imagination – are not particularly hopeful."

In April 1919 the Amir moved troops to the frontier with British India in response to the administrative massacre of 400 Indians by General Edward Dyer at Amritsar. In Britain this was called an 'invasion' since it threatened the Durand Line that England was, itself, about to ignore.

But it could hardly be seen as an 'invasion' to the locals since the area was inhabited by the Pashtun, who moved across both territories, and hardly recognised the existence of a border at all

Fighting broke out in the Hindu Kush and when this proved costly to Britain the RAF bombed Kabul and Jalalabad and the Amir sued for peace.

This was the great opportunity to drive the lesson home to the Afghans that they were to be 'protected' by Britain whether they liked it or not. But when it came to the bit the thought of occupying Kabul, Kandahar and Herat made the Indian administration think again and the Third Afghan War was

ended with the Treaty of Rawalpindi. In this Treaty England conceded the Afghan demands for independence and control of foreign relations and almost immediately the Amir made an agreement with the Bolsheviks for the establishment of a Soviet consulate in Kabul.

Here is Colonel Repington's (The Times military correspondent, and a man 'in the know.')

take on it: "In 1917 and 1919 two very important events occurred. In the former year Imperial Russia collapsed, and in the latter our good friend the Amir Habibula was murdered in his bed. His son Amanulla, immediately after his accession, declared Afghanistan to be a free and independent kingdom. It was his right, for our arrangements with each Amir were personal and not dynastic. He went to war with us, and was let off lightly owing to his youth and inexperience. Our control over his external relations ceased, and also our liability to defend his country from attack.

A third event happened in 1920, namely a decision to send a strong Anglo-Indian force, eventually 45,000 strong into Waziristan – for the ninth time, so far as I can recall – to chastise its people, especially the Mahsuds, who had thoroughly deserved punishment...

We accepted the declaration of independence with calm... But then the unexpected happened again. We gradually discovered that the Government of India had not only sent an army into Waziristan, but meant to occupy it. A complete occupation was apparently found to be too great and costly a business, but our public have not been informed how matters passed at this particular stage... Then we saw that the Government of India had shied at the cost of the complete occupation and had invented a new school of frontier political strategy, namely the 'half-forward' school, and was endeavouring to prove to us what a wonderful invention it was." (Policy And Arms, pp.254-5)

Afghanistan was one of the first signs that Britain's power, which seemed to have increased with its victory in the Great War, and its territorial extensions in the Middle East, was not all it appeared to be. Things began to be done that were always done and then undone, and then done again in a half-hearted fashion, on the cheap. And it was all rather clever but ultimately purposeless. No more British armies marched up the Khyber Pass to Kabul.

The Durand Line and the Afghan State survived because in the moment of victory, when the Afghans were ripe for the taking (if not for the keeping), Britain had exhausted itself in the war to see off Germany.

In the 1980s the Great Game resumed in another form and the Durand Line became a supply route for men and material, encouraged by the state agencies of America and Britain. During the Soviet occupation of Western and Northern Afghanistan, some portions of Eastern and Southern Afghanistan inhabited by the Pashtun became part of a 'free' Afghanistan, a kind of satellite of Pakistan. 6 million Afghans came to Pakistan during this period and more than one million Afghan children were born within Pakistan.

Pakistan has always upheld the legitimacy of the Line and desired to make it permanent because it does not want to lose any more territory (as it did with Bangladesh in 1971) and because it wishes to preserve influence within Afghanistan. Pakistan would prefer an Afghan government dominated by ethnic Pashtuns that would provide it with strategic influence both in its conflict with India and in maintaining access to the Central Asian resources. This is why Pakistan trained and armed the Taliban, and continued to do so even after joining the US in the 'war on terror.' But an unstable Pakistan-Afghanistan border is not a trouble-free proposition for Pakistan and the

more the West has interfered in Afghanistan the more it has pushed the problem into Pakistan territory.

However, Pakistan is aware of the difficulties of governing a section of people who straddle the Line and it administers the Pashtun area through the Federally Administered Tribal Agency (FATA), under the direct control of its central government. Frontier regulations stipulated that the Pashtun clans retain their own legal order through tribal elders' councils and local jirgas (courts). It also permitted the practice of going to war to resolve tribal disputes over land and livestock.

Regulations have allowed smuggling to go on – from weapons to consumer goods. The Pakistan-Afghanistan Agreement on Shipping (costing Pakistan about US\$4-5 billion each year in lost duties) maintains the border as a kind of legal fiction. The agreement guarantees free movement of goods. Travelling from Pakistan to Afghanistan, one would become aware of the border only after it had been crossed through encountering an on-coming truck which in Afghanistan, unlike in Pakistan, drives on the right-hand side of the road.

The Durand Line poses a problem for Afghanistan in maintaining its sovereignty. It weakens the Pashtuns, the majority ethnic group in Afghanistan, preventing them from functioning as a coherent political entity. Some Americans have suggested that the only solution to the problem is to push the Durand Line eastward to the River Indus to bring all the Pashtuns under Afghanistan.

Such a proposal would meet with strong resistance from Pakistan. And perhaps that is the reason the Pakistan Army moved against the Taliban earlier in the year, as this idea was being floated.

What is Britain doing back in Afghanistan? I doubt it if Britain knows itself, let alone the son of a famous Marxist who has found himself in the position of Lord Curzon. About 95 years ago in the course of waging its Great War on Germany a fundamental thing happened in the British State. It established a propaganda department called Wellington House to flood the world with ideas about the benevolent war England waged on its behalf, and on behalf of civilization. The problem is, a lot of the world began to take this in earnest. Not only that, England began to take it in earnest.

The British State, up to the Great War, acted purposefully in the world. During that War, in deluging the world with propaganda, it confused itself into incoherence. That incoherence began to have disastrous effects on the world, which England found itself master of, from 1919.

Propaganda has always been a weapon of the British State but it had never been the basis of policy of that State. From the Great War policy became infected by propaganda until the relationship has become unclear. The war in Afghanistan is now presented in propaganda terms by Foreign Secretary Miliband. But what lies under the propaganda, in the policy? Nothing it appears.

The result, after the Great War, and ever since, has been incoherence at the heart of the British State – beginning and ending in the bad lands of Afghanistan.

Perhaps Britain's army is there just to help the U.S. But the U.S. has had to bail out the British in Helmand because the British evidently thought they could pursue the strategy they have deluded themselves into believing "won the war in Northern Ireland". It was noticed in Washington that Britain was intent on doing what it did in Basra in Helmand – bribe a few elders, make a great deal of walking about without helmets on occasional forays into local towns for the journalists, and scurrying back to barracks. As John Reid put it, the remnants of the Taliban would be subdued "without a shot being fired."

England created “the bad lands of Afghanistan” and it seems not to know what it’s doing there now. It can only hope that the U.S. can find a solution.

Ireland, Prince Harry, And The Great Game

Pat Walsh

Prince Harry has been withdrawn from active service as button pusher for the bombers of the Afghans. Someone else will now have to do the dangerous job of pushing the button for the bombers that Harry pushed. For Prince Harry the war is over. He has played his last innings in the Great Game which England has resumed playing in Afghanistan in conjunction with the United States.

In the past the Great Game proved deadly for England and when America took it up about two decades ago it proved deadly to them too. The Hindu Kush, which for centuries has been only interested in being left alone, has had an unpleasant habit of cursing all those who have disturbed it.

About 25 years ago there was a revolt in the Afghan army over the education of women. The government in Kabul was attempting to bring about some civilising progress in this matter. But the United States and Britain utilised the fundamentalist revolt against the educating of females by escalating a war against progress and its allies in Moscow. Now it has been made into a Hollywood film, without the unhappy ending, of course.

A decade or so ago I remember reading in The Sunday Times an article by some Special Forces operative which detailed how teams of British and Americans instructed the Afghan rabble, who were getting the worst of it from the Russians, in the arts of terrorism and made them into an effective threat to the infidel. And this was printed without comment on the subsequent use of those arts on the friendly infidels.

Much of what is happening now in Afghanistan and Iraq has its roots in Britain’s decision to carve up the Ottoman Empire in 1919-20.

In those days much of the Irish press was Redmondite. But it did a lot more thinking for itself than it does today in ‘independent’ Ireland. The Irish News, the Belfast paper of Joe Devlin, would be a revelation to The Irish News of today, on foreign affairs. In fact it is more radically anti-imperialist than anything modern Ireland produces.

That is a strange fact indeed – that Ireland was more independent minded in its understanding of foreign affairs when it was under the Empire than it is today.

I must admit that I believed that the healthy distrust Ireland had of Britain’s intentions in the world was a product of independent Ireland. I then found it in 1900 with regard to the Boer War in The Freeman’s Journal. I thought that marked an end to it before 1916 and Republican Ireland. But I did not think I would find it in Joe Devlin’s paper in 1919.

Another thing I noticed in studying the Irish papers of this time was how much better was the Devlinitic paper than its Free State equivalents on foreign affairs.

The Devlinitic Irish News was a supporter of the Great War on Germany and Turkey. During the Home Rule struggle the objectives of Irish Nationalism and English Liberalism merged and Redmondite Imperialism was the outcome. The Irish News fully supported all the extensions and escalations that British Imperialism engaged in from the war for democracy and small nations. But around 1920 The Irish News began to realise that what it was hoping for in the world of Imperial triumph was not what was occurring.

In Belfast the Devlinitic dream was turning sour. The Imperial forces, for which The Irish News had helped recruit,

had attempted to put down the Irish democracy. The Irish soldiers who had gone to fight for the Empire against Germany and Turkey, in the expectation of a reward of Home Rule, saw no Home Rule and their homes and families attacked by their former comrades in arms. This seems to have had a disconcerting effect on the Devlinites.

An interesting contrast is revealed between South and North during this period. The coverage of events in the Middle East is much more extensive in the Belfast Irish News than in The Independent. In an editorial, The Balkans Again, The Independent comments on September 19th 1922: “There may be a new war. Well don’t worry. Ireland is busy setting up house. We haven’t time for outside concerns.”

In August 1922 the conflict about the Treaty in the South began to change character. The Free State forces had largely won control of most towns and won the war of territory; the Republican forces had began guerrilla type activity in response. What The Independent meant when it said that “Ireland is busy setting up house” is that the Irish Republic was being disestablished through military force in favour of the Irish Free State – a house acceptable to the Empire.

The Independent was becoming the newspaper of the Free State during this period and it was leaving behind the activist Imperialism of the Redmondite period. That is not to say that it was leaving behind the British influence in its understanding of foreign affairs. That was still there in its world outlook. And that can be seen in contrasting its view to that of The Catholic Bulletin.

An independent Irish viewpoint on the world did not emerge within the popular press until the publication of the Irish Press in 1931. This paper was the newspaper of independent Ireland. All the other papers have been adaptations from the Home Rule era, in one way or another.

The North-East, unlike the South, was still Redmondite, or more correctly, Devlinitic. The Irish News was hesitantly moving toward a Free State position for the purposes of adapting to what the bulk of the nation was doing in the South, but it was doing so within the ambit of the Devlinitic Imperialism of the previous decade or so. That is understandable. To the Northern Catholics the Irish ‘Civil War’ was a travesty and disaster. The main concern in the North was for the conflict between Nationalists in the South to be over so that the main part of the nation could exert itself on the behalf of the Northern Catholics again. That is mainly why The Irish News took the Free State side. But the Catholics of Belfast remained Hibernian/Devlinitic in orientation – despite the British/Unionist provocation that was driving them in a Republican direction.

West Belfast, unlike the rest of the country, was reasonably content with Home Rule and the participation in Imperial affairs that went with it. Belfast was a British city, unlike anything in the South, and it took a continued interest in the affairs of the State it remained part of, and what it was doing in the world. That is why there are references sprinkled about The Irish News about the continued importance of events in the East when the Free State Independent does not want to know.

On May 19th 1919 The Irish News editorial, Dividing Up, reported on the proposed division of the Ottoman Empire amongst the victors:

“Official sanction has not yet been proclaimed in connection with the Allies’ dismemberment of the ‘Turkish Empire.’ There was a time – and that within the memory of men who yet deem themselves far from aged – when the preservation of the Turkish Empire in Europe and Asia was a cardinal point of British ‘Imperial’ policy... England fought the Crimean War to secure Turkish integrity... and now the Turkish Empire is to pass from existence, as greater ‘combinations’ have faded

out of sight. Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, where are they now?...

We do not question England's desire to get Palestine and Mesopotamia. The Suez Canal will then be as completely under English control as the passage through Panama is under American, and the Red Sea will become an 'English lake.' Some years ago Russia (of the Czar) and England 'partitioned' the ancient Kingdom of Persia into 'spheres of influence.' Russia has vanished from the 'Imperialist picture'; we shall soon learn that Persia's genuine interests demand the supervision and 'protection' of the European Power whose new territories adjoin the Dominions of the Shah. In old days the Russian menace to India from the North was the most pressing problem of English statesmanship. The Ameer of Afghanistan and his people were threatened, petted, coaxed, and bribed in turns so that English influence might be maintained and Afghanistan held as a 'buffer state' between the Czar's forces and India. Now the necessity for preserving a sort of independence in Afghanistan has passed away; therefore it is being discovered that the Ameer and the Afghans are behaving badly – that they are treacherous and uncivilised – that they engaged in a 'German Plot' – and that the interests of Law and Order, the League of Nations, Christianity, and Civilisation imperatively require their subjection to proper discipline. When Afghanistan and Persia have been placed in a fitting state of 'protection,' Central Asia, south of Siberia and China, from the Mediterranean and Red Sea to the Pacific Ocean, will be under English dominion. And, of course, we did not go into the war for new territories in Asia or Africa and President Wilson barred conquests, and declared that no people's lands or liberties should be bartered as if they were cattle."

A week or so later on 3rd June The Irish News revealed that the situation had developed into the Third Afghan War:

"An Amir was murdered recently – by no means an unusual fate for Amirs – and the Afghans soon afterwards delivered attacks on England's Indian outposts. Therefore 'the Afghans are lawless, ignorant, rapacious, and almost incurably vain; they are a race of desperate fanatics.' ... For long years the Afghans were England's allies; they held the pathway between Russian territory in Central Asia and the Indian Peninsula, and the Russians should fight the Amir's forces if they tried to get to the Punjab. In those days the Afghans were a brave and martial race – fearless mountaineers who loved liberty so well that no Muscovite dared trifle with their territory. Now they are 'lawless, ignorant' etcetera..."

Afghanistan is a large country – as big, we learn, as France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland put together. But its population is only between 5,000,000 and 6,000,000. So recently as 1907 – when relations between the Czar's Government and the British Government were becoming cordial – Russia declared that Afghan territory was without the Russian 'sphere of influence' and undertook to act in all its political relations with Afghanistan through the British Ministry. Russia exists no longer as an Imperial State; and Turkey's downfall leaves Afghanistan the largest and most formidable of the Moslem Powers. The headship of the Moslem World has practically reverted to the Amir: and this fact must be borne in mind when the new Anglo-Afghan war is considered... Fomenters of strife have an immense area of operations... Asia must be reconquered from the eastern borders of China to the Mediterranean Sea. The latest Afghan War – the third waged against the mountain tribes of the old 'buffer state' within 42 years – is only one piece of a gigantic movement that may soon reach the dimensions and be marked by the ferocity of a 'Holy War.' Afghanistan cannot cope with the English power in India but it is doubtful whether England will deem it advisable to march troops through the Himalayan Passes again and occupy

Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. The cost of conquering the whole country would be serious – in blood and treasure. The cost of holding it would mean a huge annual addition to the burden of taxation. But if the Moslems of Afghanistan are not completely subdued they will be perennially dangerous to the British Empire in India. It is an awkward dilemma: it would be difficult if Afghanistan alone were conquered; but the Afghans are only a small section of the vast Mahommedan population in Western and Central Asia, and in India, the prospects of peace in a continent where war under the 'banner of the Prophet' is considered a solemn duty and where death in battle is looked upon as the opening of the gate to external bliss – the variety of supreme happiness that commends itself to the Oriental imagination – are not particularly hopeful."

The Great Game was the British term for Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia. It stemmed from the British fear that the Russian civilizing mission in Central Asia would extend into Afghanistan and ultimately India. The Imperial ruling class in London viewed the Russian civilizing, particularly of the Moslem regions of Asia, as having great dangers for the Indian Empire and they determined that it should be prevented from entering Afghanistan.

The Afghan Wars resulted from the British desire to maintain Afghanistan as a buffer state between Russian influence and India and to install puppet regimes in Kabul. When Afghan rulers refused to accept English missions to Kabul armies were sent from India to change their minds, as in The Second Afghan War.

The First Afghan War (1838-42) had ended in disaster for Britain as an army of 16,000 perished to a man retreating from Kabul. But in the 1870s the New Imperialism favoured a Forward Policy toward Afghanistan, holding that the 'defence of India' required pushing its frontiers to the natural barrier of the Hindu Kush, so that Afghanistan, or at least parts of it, would be brought entirely under British control. In 1876 Disraeli sent the new Indian Viceroy, Lord Lytton, to Delhi with orders to institute the Forward Policy. Sher Ali, the Emir, rejected a demand for a British mission in Kabul in 1876 arguing that if he agreed the Russians might demand the same right and his country would become a battleground of the Great Powers.

After Britain blocked Russian influence in the Balkans at the Congress of Berlin the Czar turned his attention to Central Asia. In 1878 Russia sent an uninvited diplomatic mission to Kabul. The British demanded that Sher Ali accept a British mission. Sher Ali had not responded by August 17 when his heir died, throwing the court at Kabul into mourning.

When no reply was received, the British dispatched an envoy, Sir Neville Chamberlain, with a military force. When he was refused permission to cross the Khyber Pass by Afghan troops the British viewed this as a handy pretext for implementing the Forward Policy and grabbing most of Afghanistan. An ultimatum was delivered to Sher Ali, demanding an explanation of his actions and when the Afghan response was viewed as unsatisfactory three British armies entered Afghanistan. Sher Ali, died on a mission to plead with the Czar for help and with British forces occupying much of the country, his son, Yaqub, signed the Treaty of Gandamak to prevent British invasion of the rest of Afghanistan.

According to this agreement, and in return for an annual subsidy and an assurance of assistance in case of Russian aggression, Yaqub agreed to British control of Afghan foreign affairs, the presence of British representatives in Kabul and Kandahar, British control of the Khyber passes, and the cessation of various frontier areas to the Indian Empire. Then the head of the British Mission, Sir Louis Cavagnari, was assassinated, just after he arrived in Kabul. A British army went through the passes and reoccupied Kabul, deposing Yaqub.

But despite the initial success of the military expedition, Britain was unable to control the country outside the capital and withdrew.

The Afghan State was always easy to destabilise since it was hardly a state at all. The Afghans preferred to live in their tribal lands with their extended family groups and get on with life free from the 'progress' imposed by a centralising state structure. But the political preferences of the Afghans made them difficult to conquer and control. So in the late nineteenth century Britain used mainly punitive operations against Kabul to maintain an influence that kept the Russians out.

As part of its agreement with Russia in 1907, to clear the decks for war on Germany, England had secured the Czar's agreement that Afghanistan should become a British protectorate – thus ending the Great Game. Of course, the Afghans had no say in the matter. Their country had been the battleground in the Great Game and now that the Game was over the winner took the board.

In 1919 the Czar was gone and Britain felt that all deals were off with regard to Russia with the regime change – accept with regard to Afghanistan where the agreement of 1907 with the Czar was deemed to stand. Only the idea of Protectorate had started to appear old-hat.

Afghanistan had remained neutral in the Great War and the new Amir, Amanullah, thought that since the Czar had gone and Britain was free of the Great Game and had fought a war for small nations Afghanistan might be one of those nations that might enjoy the new world of the victors. So he wrote to the Governor General of India declaring his accession to the free and independent state of Afghanistan and his intention of asserting this status through an independent foreign policy.

In April 1919 the Amir moved troops to the frontier with British India in response to the administrative massacre of 400 Indians by General Edward Dyer at Amritsar. In Britain this was called an 'invasion.' But it can hardly be seen as an invasion since the area around the Afghan/Indian (now Pakistani) frontier is inhabited by the Pashtun, who move across both territories, and hardly recognise the existence of a border at all (Afghanistan's frontier with British India was drawn up by Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893. It was an arbitrary line designed to cut the lands of the Pashtun tribes in two and make them easier to control.)

Fighting broke out in the Hindu Kush and when this proved costly to Britain the RAF bombed Kabul and Jalalabad and the Amir sued for peace.

This was the great opportunity to drive the lesson home to the Afghans that they were to be 'protected' by Britain whether they liked it or not. But when it came to the bit the thought of occupying Kabul, Kandahar and Herat made the Indian administration think again and the Third Afghan War was ended with the Treaty of Rawalpindi. In this Treaty England conceded the Afghan demands for independence and control of foreign relations and almost immediately the Amir made an agreement with the Bolsheviks for the establishment of a Soviet consulate in Kabul.

Afghanistan was the first sign that Britain's power, which seemed to have increased with its victory in the Great War, and its territorial extensions in the Middle East, was not all it appeared to be. No more British armies marched up the Khyber Pass to Kabul.

Is modern 'independent' Ireland closer to the views of Free State Independent or the Devlinite Irish News? I'm afraid it must be The Free State Independent. What does that say about 'independent' Ireland?

Advertisement

The Armenian Insurrection And The Great War

Including two pamphlets by "Armen Garo"
By Pat Walsh

Published by Belfast Historical & Educational Society
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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.

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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 what they thought was 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.

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ECONOMICS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION Part Four

FROM BRETTON WOODS TO THE MARSHALL PLAN

By Peter Brooke

FREE TRADE AND FULL EMPLOYMENT

In 1946 Michael Kalecki published a short essay under the title 'Multilateralism and Full Employment' - the two terms that evoke the two essentially contradictory ideals of the post-war settlement in Europe. Kalecki summarised the problem as follows:

*'Roughly speaking, the principle of multilateralism requires that each country should be guided in its purchases in other countries solely by the price and quality of goods without taking into consideration whether the supplying countries are or are not buyers of the produce of the country in question. It will be seen that the operation of such a system in balancing foreign trade may create serious difficulties for those countries which pursue a policy of maintaining full employment. Each country at full employment will require a certain volume of necessary imports. Now it is by no means obvious that it will be able to secure under a multilateral trade system a level of exports which will provide it with a sufficient amount of foreign exchange to pay for the volume of imports required at full employment. The country concerned may thus tend to achieve more security in its foreign trade by concluding a series of bilateral agreements with other countries relating in some way imports from and exports to those countries. Or it may enter together with other countries into a "regional block" expecting, on the basis of the economic characteristics of the participants, to be able to secure within the block a large part of the required imports in exchange for its exports. (The trade within the block would be operated on a multilateral basis, while the exchange proceeds from exports to countries outside the block would be "pooled" and allocated to the member countries of the block according to a certain schedule.)'*¹

Prior to the war, the only Western European country that had achieved full employment was Nazi Germany. The means by which Hjalmar Schacht and Walther Funk dealt with the problem of balancing imports and exports was looked at in the previous article in this series. They may be said to illustrate the first of the methods Kalecki outlines - 'a series of bilateral agreements with other countries relating in some way imports from and exports to those countries'. Lloyd George in Britain, supported by Keynes, had proclaimed full employment as a realisable aim. But Keynes's argument turned mainly on the uses of public expenditure in manipulating the domestic economy. He had little to say about international trade. His Dublin talk on 'National Self Sufficiency' and the appendix to the General Theory on mercantilism suggest that he rather disapproved of it.

Britain in the 1930s, without achieving full employment, adopted, with Keynes's approval, the second of Kalecki's possible methods, the 'regional block', in this case the Empire expanded to the 'sterling bloc' - the wider area of the world willing to use sterling as its currency.

By the time the war broke out and he was engaged in negotiations with a USA determined to establish multilateralism

1 M. Kalecki: 'Multilateralism and Full Employment', *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue canadienne d'Economie et de Science politique*, Aug 1946, Vol. 12, No. 3, p.322.

- and in a position of strength to do it - Keynes had come to see the methods developed by Schacht and Funk as containing the seeds of a solution. Hence his proposal for an 'International Clearing Union', somewhat on the lines of Funk's 'New Order' in Europe - a system by which money gained from export surpluses would be pooled and made available under certain conditions to countries in deficit. Britain, however, wholly dependent on subventions from the US, was not in a position to impose its will in the matter and the American view prevailed. The American scheme, which was agreed at Bretton Woods to the accompaniment of lashings of American aid to the countries that agreed it (including the Soviet Union) recognised that under multilateral free trade countries would get into balance of payments difficulties. After all, the point of the exercise for the Americans was that they should achieve a balance of payments surplus, but this could not be achieved unless other countries had a balance of payments deficit. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund would provide loans to countries that got into serious difficulties, but these were loans that would have to be repaid and they came with conditions concerning public expenditure which would render any 'Keynesian' policy of maintaining full employment impossible.

But this system did not immediately come into effect and, as we will see in a later article, in the context of the Marshall Plan and the need to mobilise European support for the Korean war, the Americans introduced the 'European Payments Union', which was actually much closer to the Keynes (and Schacht and Funk) principle of the Clearing House.

HARRY DEXTER WHITE AND THE SOVIET UNION

Keynes's antagonists in the negotiation with the United States were Henry Morgenthau and Harry Dexter White, architects of the famous 'Morgenthau Plan' for the de-industrialisation of Germany. Roosevelt, Morgenthau and White were well aware that the consequence of a radical weakening of Germany would be a strengthening of the Soviet Union. The 'Programme to prevent Germany from starting World War III' was worked out, apparently by White, in August 1944 and in September Roosevelt told Cardinal Spellman, who can't have been pleased at the news, that Russian domination of Europe was inevitable. Robert Skidelsky in his biography of Keynes quotes White's biographer, David Rees, as saying:

*'Drawn toward the Soviet Union by an emotional sympathy at the very least ... White may have felt in the late summer of 1944 that the irreversible crushing of the Reich would help to lead to post-war Soviet-American understanding. If the Russians achieved a dominant position in Europe as a result, this might be a price worth paying ...'*²

In 1948, White appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, successfully rebutting charges of conspiracy with the Soviet Union. He died a few days later, apparently of a heart attack. Subsequently definite evidence emerged that almost from the moment that he started working in the Treasury in the 1930s he had been passing classified

2 Robert Skidelsky: *John Maynard Keynes, Fighting for Britain, 1937-1946*, Macmillan 2000. p.362. Lacunae as in Skidelsky. Roosevelt and Spellman, p.363.

documents to people he knew were Soviet agents. But that clandestine activity was small beer compared to the perfectly open initiative he took in April 1944, delivering to the Soviet Union a duplicate set of plates for the printing of the military occupation marks that were to be the legal currency of post-war Germany 'resulting in the Soviets effectively raiding the U.S. Treasury for \$300 - \$500 million, or roughly \$4.0 - \$6.5 billion in today's dollars ...

*'Concerned that the Soviet government might not ratify the conference agreements, White six months later proposed a low-interest U.S. reconstruction loan of \$10 billion for the Soviet Union—more than three times as much as what he advocated in transitional assistance for the United Kingdom. The fact that such a credit was not ultimately offered turned out to be one of the primary reasons the Soviet government decided against joining the IMF and the World Bank, as White had feared it would.'*³

It seems to me fairly clear that, whatever personal sympathies White might have had for the Soviet Union, or whatever his admiration for Soviet Socialism, his ambition was to incorporate the Soviet Union into the multilateral free trading system based on the dollar which he was trying to establish at Bretton Woods. The account I've just been quoting goes on to say (p.128):

'In August 1945, according to testimony given nine years later by the journalist Jonathan Mitchell before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, a gloomy White told Mitchell that the system of government-controlled trading that had emerged during the war would continue into the postwar period, owing to a lack of dollars and gold, which would oblige governments to maintain tight controls on cross-border private trade. The IMF would fail to rectify this problem ... The United States, White continued, would, with its huge domestic market, be able to carry on a system of private enterprise for five to ten years but could not ultimately survive as a capitalist island in a world of state trading.'

'State trading' is as good a two word summary as one could wish of the system Keynes was trying to establish. The implication - not drawn out by the author of the article - is that White's pussyfooting with the Soviet Union was an attempt to subvert the Soviet system, or at least to prevent the division of the world into two irreconcilable camps - Capitalist and Socialist - with a genuine fear that the Socialist system would prove to be the stronger of the two.

Let us step back a little and try to enter into the interesting mind of Harry White.

Although the US had already destroyed the American 'Indians', subjected its black population to a reign of terror, done what it could to subject Latin America to its will and taken control of the Philippines, it was not yet decided on a policy of world domination, with the huge military investment that would entail. It was still willing to accept that there could be other powers in the world. However, it had a problem of which White at the Treasury was acutely aware. It had developed a productive capacity far beyond the consumption capacity of its own domestic market. Some idea of this is given in a French account published in April 1948, the month in which Marshall Aid was finally approved by Congress:

'In fact one can hardly see where France and Europe could at the present time find at once the products and the credits they need other than from the economic power that owns, with only 6% of the population and of the territory of the world, 25% of world revenue, 55% of commercial shipping and which produces 20% of its wheat [blé], 33% copper, 40% rubber,

*45% lead and cotton, 55% of its iron [fonte], 60% of its coal [charbon] and 63% of its petrol.'*⁴

The solution to the problem was exports. But, as we've already seen, it was impossible to develop a substantial export surplus without generating elsewhere in the world a substantial trade deficit. Britain, still the dominant political power in the world, had formed its Empire into a trading bloc that formed an obstacle to the expansion of US trade. In the 1930s, when White began his clandestine dealings with the Soviet Union, the rising European power - Nazi Germany - had devised an ingenious method for conducting international trade that obviated the need for trade surpluses and deficits. It may be that the expansion of the Japanese Empire also posed a potential obstacle to US trade (Japan had been the US's best trading partner). Under those circumstances, might it not be a good idea to open lines of communication with the other potential great power in the world, the Soviet Union? And having seen the collapse of National Socialism in Germany, and outmanoeuvred Keynes in the construction of a new world financial order, was not the prospect of implicating the Soviet Union in this new gold based order also very enticing - perhaps the more tempting for the Soviet Union given that Russia was a gold rich country and Marx was a believer in money that had a value of its own?⁵

At any rate at the end of the war it would be obvious to the US that Europe, Japan and to only a slightly lesser extent Britain, Empire and all, were at its mercy, while the Soviet Union too was wrecked and had absorbed a territory much larger than it could reasonably be expected to support with its own resources. There was now no problem in finding people willing to accept imports from the US. The problem was a lack of money to pay for them. It was up to the US to supply both the goods and the money.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN LOAN AGREEMENT

Morgenthau's influence collapsed very quickly after Truman became President in April 1945. He put in his resignation in protest against not being invited to accompany Truman to Potsdam in July and, probably to his surprise, it was accepted. The rest of his life - he died in 1967 - was devoted to support for the state of Israel. White, however, clung on long enough to be able to deliver one last humiliation to his old sparring partner Keynes through the negotiations for an American loan in December 1945.

We saw previously how Article VII of the Lend Lease agreement negotiated by White and Keynes committed the parties to 'provide against discrimination in either the United States of America or the United Kingdom against the importation of any produce originating in the other country; and they shall provide for the formulation of measures for the achievement of these ends' and how this provoked a stormy reaction in Britain. As a result 'Roosevelt assured Churchill that Article VII wasn't intended as an attack on Imperial Preference and the impact of it was watered down and combined with other, more interesting aims [including the expansion of production and employment] in the "Mutual Aid (Lend Lease) Agreement" finally signed in February 1942.'⁶ It did however still entail a

4 Jacques-René Rabier: 'Plan Monnet et plan Marshall', *Esprit*, Nouvelle série, No 144 (4), April 1948, pp. 587-8 (fn).

5 For an alternative view - White as unequivocally a traitor to the US acting in the interests of world Communism, see https://www.conservapedia.com/Harry_Dexter_White. Also Anthony Kubek: *The Morgenthau Plan and the Problem of Policy Perversion*, http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v09/v09p287_Kubek.html

6 I'm quoting myself here, from the previous article in this series. The source for the information is Skidelsky, pp.133 and 226.

3 Benn Steil: 'Red White: Why a Founding Father of Postwar Capitalism Spied for the Soviets', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2013, Vol. 92, No. 2, pp.121-2

commitment 'to the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce and to the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers' and this was still opposed by the British Treasury and Bank of England, still anxious to maintain privileged trading relations with the Empire. Now, as a condition of a loan without which Keynes believed the restoration of the British economy was impossible, White demanded not just the dismantling of Imperial preference but also the imminent mutual convertibility of the pound and the dollar. This was part of the Bretton Woods arrangement but it wasn't to be introduced until conditions were ripe, assumed to be several years away. These conditions provoked outrage in Britain and very stormy debates in Parliament.

Skidelsky (p.448) describes the speech Keynes made in the House of Lords in support of the agreement as 'the most courageous and skilful public speech of his life.' But he also describes it as a masterpiece of rhetoric rather than of reasoned analysis. By the time Skidelsky had reached that point in writing his massive biography, he had, as I discussed in the earlier article, been won over to an anti-Keynesian, Friedmanite view of economics (he was reconverted to Keynes by the Great Financial Crash). It could be argued that this final intervention in public life was Keynes arguing against his own life's work and thus contributed to muddying the water of his legacy. He died in April 1946, the month in which the loan he had negotiated was agreed by Congress.

TREATMENT OF GERMANY

By this time, following the election in July 1945, the Labour government was in power and the Potsdam conference in the same month marked the moment when Ernest Bevin appeared on the scene as British Foreign Secretary. Potsdam established the four power division of Germany and a general policy which may have fallen short of the full Morgenthau Plan but was still punitive, based on a policy of de-industrialisation, not to the extent wanted by Morgenthau, reducing Germany to a near-entirely agrarian economy, but to the extent necessary to prevent its re-emergence as a military power. American policy was outlined in the 'US directive to General Eisenhower on military rule of Germany' - JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) 1067, which was approved by Truman in May 1945 while Morgenthau was still in place. Its basic principles were outlined in Paragraph 4:

'a. It should be brought home to the Germans that Germany's ruthless warfare and the fanatical Nazi resistance have destroyed the German economy and made chaos and suffering inevitable and that the Germans cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves.

b. Germany will not be occupied for the purpose of liberation but as a defeated enemy nation. Your aim is not oppression but to occupy Germany for the purpose of realizing certain important Allied objectives. In the conduct of your occupation and administration you should be just but firm and aloof. You will strongly discourage fraternization with the German officials and population.

c. The principal Allied objective is to prevent Germany from ever again becoming a threat to the peace of the world. Essential steps in the accomplishment of this objective are the elimination of Nazism and militarism in all their forms, the immediate apprehension of war criminals for punishment, the industrial disarmament and demilitarization of Germany, with continuing control over Germany's capacity to make war, and the preparation for an eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis.'

In particular, according to para 16:

'Except as may be necessary to carry out these objectives, you will take no steps (a) looking toward the economic

rehabilitation of Germany, or (b) designed to maintain or strengthen the German economy'

and according to para 32:

'Pending final Allied agreements on reparation and on control or elimination of German industries that can be utilized for war production, the Control Council should

a. prohibit and prevent production of iron and steel, chemicals, non-ferrous metals (excluding aluminium and magnesium), machine tools, radio and electrical equipment, automotive vehicles, heavy machinery and important parts thereof, except for the purposes stated in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this directive

b. prohibit and prevent rehabilitation of plant and equipment in such industries except for the purposes stated in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this directive; and

c. safeguard plant and equipment in such industries for transfer on reparation account.'

Some detail was given for this in the March 1946 'Plan for the limitation of German industries':

'According to this plan, industrial capacity was to be reduced to 55% of its 1938 level. In the production goods sector, steel capacity was to be cut to one-fourth the pre-war level, basic chemicals and heavy machinery to one-third, and machine tools to one-tenth. A few industries, mainly those producing the synthetics which had been important during the war, were entirely forbidden. Only a few sectors of light machinery production were to be left untouched; soft-coal output was even to be increased to meet the energy needs of Western Europe.'⁷

PROBLEMS FOR BRITAIN

The occupying power that was least happy with this arrangement was Britain. Churchill had approved the Morgenthau Plan in Quebec in September 1944, after being persuaded by his 'scientific adviser' Frederick Lindemann (created Baron Cherwell in 1941) that the suppression of German industry would be to the benefit of British industry. But, as Keynes knew very well, there was no way that post-war Britain could fill the gap left by a de-industrialised Germany.

In the four-power carve-up of Germany, Britain got the North-West portion, which included the Ruhr Valley which, together with Upper Silesia (gifted by Stalin to Poland) was the industrial power-house of Germany. Given the policy of de-industrialisation, however, this was hardly an advantage. The main food-producing area was in the East, partly in the area gifted to Poland and partly in the area controlled by the Soviet Union. According to Alan Bullock's biography of Ernest Bevin:

*'None of the occupying powers stood to lose as much by this de facto partition of Germany as the British. If hope of getting Germany treated as an economic unit had to be abandoned, the British would be left with an over-crowded zone less capable of supporting itself than any of the others and with no alternatives but to see its population starve or keep them going at British expense.'*⁸

Between June 1945 and April 1946 Britain had to supply one million tons of food to its German zone, in addition to the task of supplying its own troops and difficulties in feeding its own population (Bullock, p.150).

In 1946:

7 Dietmar Petzina: 'The Origin of the European Coal and Steel Community: Economic Forces and Political Interests', *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft / Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, Bd. 137, H. 3., Economic Reconstruction in Europe: The Re-integration of Western Germany: A Symposium (September 1981), pp.454-5.

8 Alan Bullock: *Ernest Bevin - Foreign Secretary, 1945-1951*, London, Heinemann, 1984 (first published 1983), p.147.

'Over Europe as a whole food production was 25% below normal, and for the world 12% below. Besides Europe the worst hit area was South and SE Asia, particularly India. Here at last was an issue on which he could hope to get concerted action. While Attlee wrote to enlist the support of Truman and other heads of government, Bevin tried to bring home the urgency of the situation to the House of Commons, the UN General Assembly, the trade unions, the International Conference of Agricultural Producers ... Much the most effective lead Britain could give was by making food available herself, and Attlee and Bevin decided that this must be done even at the cost of cutting British rations still further. They agreed that 200,000 tons of wheat should be diverted from the UK quota to help Asia, especially India, and a total of 400,000 tons of food exported to the British zone in Germany. The cut in rations was unpopular at home and was seized on by the Opposition as evidence of mismanagement. There was some truth in this. But the Government refused to bow to the storm and on the principle of sharing Bevin demanded to know whether the Opposition, which was loud in proclaiming its belief in the Empire, looked on the 500 million people of India and the East as British subjects, or only the people of the United Kingdom, when it came to food supplies.

'The party row over rationing went on well into the summer, leading to Ben Smith's resignation as Minister of Food on 27 May (he was succeeded by John Strachey) and the introduction of bread rationing, a step never taken in wartime, a month later.' (Bullock, pp.232-3)

PROBLEMS FOR FRANCE

The obvious solution as far as Germany was concerned was to reinvigorate industrial production to produce exports that would generate the money necessary to purchase imports of food. The major obstacle to such a policy was France, as represented, forcefully, by Jean Monnet.

Monnet was High Commissioner of the Plan for Modernisation and Equipment, head of the 'Commissariat du plan' established by De Gaulle just before his sudden resignation as head of the French government in January 1946. He had been in England when France fell to the Germans in June 1940 but instead of joining De Gaulle or returning to France, he had gone to the United States. Roosevelt had sent him as political adviser to General Henri Giraud in Africa, whom the Americans were backing as De Gaulle's rival for the leadership of non-Communist French opposition to Hitler, but after persuading Giraud to renounce the legitimacy of the government at Vichy (thereby losing the support of Vichy supporters, who were not necessarily supporters of the German occupation) he had rallied to De Gaulle.⁹ He had negotiated the Lend-lease arrangement introduced in February 1945 but abruptly terminated (together with the arrangements for the UK and USSR) with the fall of Japan in August. In December he negotiated the new loan from the US (\$550 million, as against the UK's \$3,750 million) and it was as part of the arrangements for this loan that the first 'Monnet Plan' appeared in March 1946.

One of the chief aims of the plan was 'to enable France to play its role in international economic competition and to become a major producer of steel thanks to massive imports of German coal.'¹⁰ Already in October 1945, the French had proposed that the Ruhr, 'vaguely defined but embracing the whole coalfield

9 Account in Julian Jackson: *France - the dark years, 1940-1944*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.457-9.

10 Irwin M. Wall: 'Jean Monnet, les États-Unis et le plan français', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, No. 30 (Apr-Jun., 1991), pp.8-9, my translation from what I assume is a French translation of an English original.

east of the Rhine, was to be turned into an international state with its own independent government supervised by an international authority made up of France, Britain and Benelux representatives and guaranteed as a neutral and independent state by the United States and the Soviet Union. It would have its own customs barriers and its own currency ...'¹¹

Punitive as the Potsdam Agreement might have been, it had envisaged that Germany would, despite the division into four zones, be treated eventually as a single economic unit, thus, for example, giving the Western zones access to the agricultural produce of the Eastern Zone. France, however, had not been represented at Potsdam and did not feel bound by its conclusions. But as one of the four powers occupying Germany the French had a veto on the decisions of the Allied Control Council. Their policy was to work towards the greatest possible weakening of Germany as an economic power and therefore its division or, we might say, re-division, into many different semi-autonomous entities.

Historians have seen a speech by the US Secretary of State, James Byrnes, given in Stuttgart in September 1946 as marking the moment when the US committed to favouring Germany over the Soviet Union, and therefore as a key moment in the development of the Cold War. But at least one historian - John Gimbel - has argued that the speech was in fact mainly directed against France: 'Although cold-war historians have not generally recognised France as the object of Byrnes's Stuttgart speech, the French government and the French public did so at the time. The French press reacted most sharply and critically, and within three days of the speech, the French minister in Washington was at the State Department with the news that the French reception "had been extremely adverse," that Byrnes's promises did not satisfy France's security requirements, and that Bidault [Georges Bidault, chairman of the French Provisional government, June-December 1946] wanted to talk with Bevin and Molotov before he decided what he should do next.'¹² As a result, Byrnes 'floundered' and later, once the Soviet Union had been safely identified as the villain, tried, in his Memoirs for example, to cover his tracks. Nonetheless the situation was explained by a State Department official, John Hilldring, in October to the Meader Committee, set up to examine the corruption and inefficiency of the occupation:

'Explaining to a Meader staff member why the committee should drop its investigation of four-power relationships in Germany, Hilldring reportedly said that one of the first things the committee would learn was that the German economy was suffering mainly because the occupation authorities had shipped to France "every extra ton of coal" mined in Germany. Hilldring implied that this was being done as a result of a policy decision on the "highest levels" to restore the French economy and thus prevent the Communist party from gaining control in the French parliament.' (Gimbel, p.262).

TOWARDS THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

Although the Soviet government was still committed to the Potsdam principle of a single government for a united Germany they did not want to open their own sector to free movement and penetration by the Americans. Their interest therefore generally aligned with that of the French in wanting to keep Germany divided and prevent the restoration of German industry, which was increasingly the ambition of the Americans and, most especially, the British. The French and the Americans

11 Alan S.Milward: *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51*, London, Methuen, 1984, p.128.

12 John Gimbel: 'On the Implementation of the Potsdam Agreement: An Essay on U.S. Postwar German Policy', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (June.,1972), pp.259-60.

complained of the inefficiency of the British in the Ruhr in producing coal but with all the coal going to produce French steel and the Germans forbidden from producing steel of their own, Bevin argued back that German coal miners had little incentive to do any better: 'What brooks no delay,' he wrote in November 1946, 'is a strong set-up in German industry, more devolution on the Germans to make them work out their own salvation, and a drastic cut down of our overheads' (Bullock, p.342). In opposition to the French and the Russians, the British and Americans were fusing their zones into a 'bizon', with free movement across the area and German-led administrative structures scattered across different cities in order to avoid the appearance of an embryo German government.

Elections held in November 1946 established the Communists as the largest party in France and in the US gave both houses to the Republicans, traditionally opposed to US involvement in European affairs. Insofar as the US had a strategy for reducing its commitment to Europe it was reliant on France and, more so, Britain to act as a counterbalance to the rapidly forming Communist bloc but it was increasingly obvious that both countries, primarily concerned with rebuilding and restructuring their own Empires, were not up to the job. In particular:

'Between the 14th and 20th February [1947], Bevin gave notice that Britain would refer the Palestine problem to the United Nations; the Cabinet agreed that British aid to Greece and Turkey could not be renewed after 31 March, and the remaining British troops in Greece would have to be withdrawn, and Attlee announced in the House of Commons that Britain would hand over its responsibilities in India [not part of Bevin's responsibility though he submitted a memo complaining of the way it was handled - PB] by a date not later than June 1948 ... The British Empire appeared to be in process of dissolution and the British lacking either the resources or the will to prevent it. This represented the low point in the Labour Government's fortunes and of Bevin's own career.' (Bullock, pp.362-3)

The Winter of 1946-7 was famously hard. Short-term factory working was introduced in January owing to power cuts, owing in turn to a shortage of coal. 'When the Minister of Fuel and Power (Shinwell) told the Cabinet and later the House of Commons, on Friday 7th February, that a number of power stations would have to shut down completely and that from Monday electricity could no longer be supplied to industry over the greater part of the country, his statement was greeted with astonishment. For the first time in its history, British industrial production was effectively halted for three weeks ...' (p.361).

This was the context in which, in March 1947, Truman gave a speech that is generally regarded as the first statement of the 'Truman doctrine'. It was an appeal to Congress to replace Britain in providing financial, technical and military support to the Greek and Turkish governments, but he expanded the argument into a general obligation to help 'free peoples' resist 'totalitarian' government, indicating that he saw the policy of the Soviet Union as falling into that category:

'The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta Agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

'At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

'One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

'The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

'I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

'I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

'I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.'

A 'doctrine' that was to have important implications for the future.

Bevin was in Moscow when Truman made his speech. He had only just taken on direct responsibility for Germany when the Control Commission for the British sector was placed under the Foreign office. His representative in Germany was Frank Pakenham - later Lord Longford. In Moscow Molotov severely criticised the bizon as a violation of the Potsdam principle of a united Germany. In agreement with the French he wanted the Ruhr taken away from the British and placed under four-power control. He demanded the fulfilment of reparation commitments he claimed had been made at Yalta. Importantly, he wanted, in addition to already existing plant and equipment, further reparations from 'current production in Germany, German assets abroad and the services of German labour' (Bullock, p.377). This would require an increase in German industrial production, albeit to supply the countries Germany had occupied during the war. The British, supported by the Americans, also wanted to increase German industrial production but in this case it was to enable Germany to pay for imports. German imports from January to April 1947 - including the period of the heavy winter - had cost the British and Americans \$163 million (p.389). The French, on the other hand, wanted 'stricter limits on German consumption, and holding down, not increasing the level of German steel production ... The industrial recovery of France and other countries occupied by the Germans must be given priority over that of Germany.' (p.377)

Bullock says that 'by April 1947, his [Bevin's] worst period as Foreign Secretary was over, largely because, following Truman's speech in March 1947, he was now assured that the Americans were committed to remaining in Europe and to the restoration of Germany: 'the feeling of relief that he no longer has to stand up to Russian pressure on his own was immense.' On 28th April, George Marshall, who had replaced James Byrnes as Secretary of State in January, referred to Germany as 'the vital centre of Europe.' To quote Bullock: 'The studies which the State Department now began to produce were based on the assumption that a way could be found for fitting the rehabilitation of Germany, which Marshall had agreed with Bevin in Moscow, into the wider context of a European recovery ... It was out of the search for such a framework that Marshall's offer of aid to Europe emerged.'¹³

TOWARDS THE MARSHALL PLAN

Marshall's speech, given in Harvard on 5th June 1947, analyses the European problem in terms that rather resemble the 'scissors crisis' in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1920s. It was seen in terms of a conflict of interest between town and country:

'The farmer has always produced the foodstuffs to exchange with the city dweller for the other necessities of life. This division of labor is the basis of modern civilization. At the present time it is threatened with breakdown. The town and

13 Quotations from Bullock, pp.392-4.

city industries are not producing adequate goods to exchange with the food producing farmer. Raw materials and fuel are in short supply. Machinery is lacking or worn out. The farmer or the peasant cannot find the goods for sale which he desires to purchase. So the sale of his farm produce for money which he cannot use seems to him an unprofitable transaction. He, therefore, has withdrawn many fields from crop cultivation and is using them for grazing. He feeds more grain to stock and finds for himself and his family an ample supply of food, however short he may be on clothing and the other ordinary gadgets of civilization. Meanwhile people in the cities are short of food and fuel. So the governments are forced to use their foreign money and credits to procure these necessities abroad. This process exhausts funds which are urgently needed for reconstruction. Thus a very serious situation is rapidly developing which bodes no good for the world. The modern system of the division of labor upon which the exchange of products is based is in danger of breaking down.'

It may be that I haven't read enough but in what I have seen this does not seem to be how the problem was seen in Britain and France which were the main countries that had to respond if substance was to be given to Marshall's offer. Both countries were engaged in very ambitious programmes which could only be realised with US help but which the Americans themselves regarded with suspicion. In Britain a Socialist government had the ambition to establish a welfare state, was engaged in a programme of nationalising major industries, and was committed to achieving 'full employment' at a time when it was by no means clear that full employment was compatible with the multilateral free trade that was the main aim of the Americans. It is the more interesting and impressive that the man who was the personification of these British ambitions, Ernest Bevin, was now, as Foreign Secretary, the man the Americans had to deal with.

The case of France is a little more ambiguous. The Monnet Plan had originally been worked out in the context of the American loan of December 1945 and the Americans had formally agreed to it. It laid out 'six key sectors of the economy upon which the rest of the economy depended' - coal (50 million tonnes in 1946, to be increased to 65 in 1950), electricity (23.5 billions of kwh to be increased to 37), steel (4.2 million tonnes to 11), cement (3 million tonnes to 13.5), agricultural machinery (zero to 500), railways (130 million tonnes transported to 240).¹⁴ The aim wasn't just to secure more coal and coke for French needs, important as that was. It was also to deprive Germany of the coal and coke that would enable it to revive its own steel industry. To quote De Gaulle's economic adviser and Director of the Economic Section of the Quai d'Orsay, Hervé Alphand, in a paper submitted in January 1947, 'the surest guarantee for the maintenance of peace will always consist in the limitation of the German steel potential.' (Lynch pp.240-41).

Marshall didn't name any particular European country but by that time it was clear that in American eyes the recovery of Europe presupposed the recovery of Germany. There was what might be interpreted as a hint to France when he said 'Any government which manoeuvres to block the recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us.'

The best known British economic historian dealing with this period - Alan Milward¹⁵ - argues that the Americans

14 Frances M. B. Lynch: 'Resolving the Paradox of the Monnet Plan: National and International Planning in French Reconstruction', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (May, 1984), p.238.

15 To quote Perry Anderson: 'There is some irony in the fact that the country which has contributed least to European integration should have produced the historian who has illuminated it most.' *Review of two books by Milward and François Duchêne's biography of Monnet in London Review of Books*, 4th October, 1996.

were greatly exaggerating the catastrophic state of Europe. Marshall's analysis was based on a memorandum submitted in May 1947 by William L. Clayton, US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, 'a millionaire director of a firm of Texas cotton brokers' and 'a militant free trader who became an author of political tracts in his seventies' (meaning in the 1950s - PB). According to Milward (pp.2-3): 'As Marshall was taking his words from Clayton, most European countries were still in a period of rising output and expanding foreign trade. It could not be shown that any population outside Germany was in danger of starvation and even there the diet was slightly improved over the previous year.'¹⁶ Milward goes into more detail on the very real problems that did exist but remains faithful to this as a broad generalisation.

He argues that Marshall and Clayton needed to present a picture of Europe on the point of collapse in order to overcome the instinctive isolationism of Congress, now dominated by Republicans, and persuade them that the situation posed a threat to the United States. They also had a more parochial interest: 'The Marshall Plan was predominately designed for political objectives. Conceived and pushed through by the Department of State itself, it represented a return to a position of pre-eminence in the making of national policy by that department.' (p.5). In other words it was aimed at wresting back the control over European policy that had been usurped by the Treasury under Morgenthau and White.

CONVERTIBILITY OF STERLING

The core of the Treasury policy - apart from de-industrialisation of Germany - had been the convertibility of sterling, still by far the most important rival to the dollar. This had been key to Article VII of the Lend Lease treaty, to the principles agreed at Bretton Woods and to the loan negotiated between Keynes and White in December 1945. In accordance with the treaty, it was enacted in July, the month following Marshall's speech, and almost immediately (and, one might have thought, predictably) proved disastrous for the British economy. To quote Milward again (p.3):

'Only one phenomenon associated with previous economic crises occurred, a severe fall in gold and foreign exchange reserves in some countries, associated with acute balance of payments difficulties. Yet this was sufficient to bring crashing down one of the pillars on which the post-war capitalist world was intended to be based - the free convertibility of sterling into dollars.'

Milward continues (p.4):

'Had the British economy in the 1930s operated at higher levels of employment the increased demand for imports might have made the balance of payments so weak as to have made it difficult to maintain confidence in the sterling exchange rate. In that sense the higher employment and imports of the post-war period were always likely to produce a loss of confidence and a speculative movement against sterling. The limited convertibility of sterling into dollars, imposed by the terms of the Anglo-American Financial Agreement which had ratified the post-war dollar loan to Britain, was in fact brought to an end after only six weeks, when holders of sterling, suspecting that its value in terms of dollars would fall steeply, began to disembarass themselves of it at an increasing rate.'

Milward sees this as a major problem of the post war period, consequence of the 'enormously increased ... stock of transferable liquid assets in private and corporate hands' and 'The growing familiarity with foreign exchange as a valuable asset ... This tendency had already been clearly observable in

16 Alan S. Milward: *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51*, London, Methuen, 1987 (first published in 1984), pp.2-3.

the period of wildly fluctuating exchange rates which followed the First World War and there was nothing in the Bretton Woods arrangement designed to curb it.'

According to Bullock (this and the following quotes, pp.452-4):

'In the five days, 10-15 August, Britain suffered a drain on her dollar resources to the amount of \$176 million; the Treasury thought it might rise to \$300 million a week, a rate which would exhaust the remaining \$700 million of the American loan in little more than two weeks.'

As a result the Cabinet decided to suspend convertibility on 17th August. It was Bevin's job to inform the US ambassador. He did so in terms calculated to appeal to the Americans. According to the account transmitted by the ambassador, Lew Douglas, to Washington: 'A breach in sterling would necessarily lead to bilateral arrangements [shades of Schacht - PB]; shrinking of trade at the very time they were attempting to expand trade ...' It would also increase the dangers of political instability and opportunities for the Soviet Union in France and Italy.

Here the argument is put in the context of the US desire for increased trade. Appealing to the TUC Congress a fortnight later, on the 3rd September, Bevin put the emphasis on self reliance as the only means by which full employment could be maintained. He used an argument very close to the one we have just read from Milward:

'When the balance of payments went wrong, the old system had one very simple method by which to deal with it. They restricted purchases abroad, they called in credit and they protected unemployment and I well remember on the Macmillan Committee in 1929 and 1930 saying to the then Governor of the Bank of England: 'Why do you say that in these difficulties it is better to keep people on the dole than to employ them?' His answer was: 'You see, if you employ them, you import raw materials; if you employ them, they have a standard of consumption higher than we can afford, and therefore it is better to keep the people at the standard of living that the dole represents than to employ them.'

He continued:

'I get accused of tying Great Britain up to America. My God! I am here this morning to appeal to you to fight for our independence in the workshop, in the mine, in the field. It is a very ignoble thing for any Foreign Secretary to have to deal with anybody on whom you are so dependent. Who wants that position? Who wants it with a trade union training such as I have had, who built a great union on purpose so that I could stand up equal to anyone in the world? ... I want Britain to stand self-reliant and to come back and I can only do that if you come forward ...

'Let me try and put it clearly. I have described the old method of starvation and you are familiar with it. We have now accepted the view that instead of starvation to save ourselves we will adopt production. That is the issue. If you do not give the production then this country will lose its position and back you will be forced, all of you, to the old 1926 position over again. Do not complain that you have not been warned, because that is the issue you have to fight.'

If only we could hear language like that from the Labour Party nowadays!

BEVIN AND THE MARSHALL PLAN

The drama of convertibility was occurring at the same time as the drama of the early stages of the Marshall Plan.

Bevin's response to Marshall's speech was to arrange a meeting with Georges Bidault, now French Foreign Minister,

in Paris. They were joined at the end of the month by Molotov, representing the Soviet Union.

The picture that is usually drawn (for example by Andrew Adonis in his book *Ernest Bevin - Labour's Churchill*) is of an enthusiastic Bevin grabbing the opportunity presented by Marshall's speech, then fending off the real dangers of Soviet involvement. But it must have been obvious to the Soviets after Truman's speech that there was no possibility of their joining the US scheme on any terms that wouldn't involve a radical slackening of their control over Eastern Europe. And it would surely have been equally obvious that the Democrat administration could not have secured the support of a Republican Congress for aid to Europe if it had included support for countries with Communist governments. Support for Socialist Imperialist Britain was already difficult enough.

Milward presents a much more interesting picture. He says that:

'Immediately after Marshall's speech William L. Clayton was sent to explain the new course of American foreign policy in London and Paris. He was not the wisest choice because he was already known for his extreme free-trade views which had aroused stiff suspicions in international economic negotiations after 1945 and particularly in Britain during the negotiations for the Anglo-American financial agreement. In the event most of his conversations in Paris took the form of listening to storms of protest about suspected British-American agreement over some degree of industrial revival in Germany, and in London his visit did more to stimulate British opposition than support ...

'In London, Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, protested to Clayton that the new policy of providing aid to western Europe as an integrated bloc rather than individual countries would mean that Britain would now be "just another European country." As such it would have no protection from the next United States slump. The United States might then change policy again and leave Britain helpless. Bevin's policy was to get the United States to accept that the United Kingdom should have a special interim position for some years rather than have to seek its dollars from the same common pool as its European neighbours.'

According to Milward the whole thinking behind Marshall's offer was based on a drive towards greater European integration. Obviously a situation in which the US had to provide the dollars to enable Europe to buy US exports could not continue indefinitely. It was clearly in the interests of the US that Europe should become a viable economic entity able to trade with the US on more or less equal terms. For a convinced free trader like Clayton that meant following the example of the United States of America and forming a United States of Europe - at the very least abolishing customs barriers and instituting some form of common administration. But, according to Milward (p.63):

*'To participate on equal terms, Bevin feared, in a common European recovery programme would be against British economic and political interests. Rather it was Britain who should take the lead in promoting the recovery of Western Europe. This would not be through any programme of political integration, he suggested, but through limited measures of economic co-operation such as the sectoral industrial agreements being discussed between Britain and France, "The British," Bevin said, "did not want to go into the programme and not do anything ... This would sacrifice the "little bit of dignity we have left."'*¹⁷

Bullock gives a fuller version of this quote (p.415) with Bevin saying 'the U.K. could contribute to economic revival. The U.K. held stocks of rubber and wool and "we, as the British

¹⁷ Pedantic note. This is taken from an account of the meeting kept by FRUS (Foreign Relations of the US), hence the confusion of quote marks as to what is or isn't a direct quote from Bevin.

Empire” could assist materially.’ Bullock comments: ‘the conflict between poverty and pride was obvious. The British were financially dependent on the Americans for their own economic survival, yet wanted to be treated as an equal partner in dispensing aid to the Europeans.’

Milward’s account continues:

‘The concept of western European economic integration in however limited a form did not offer any immediate prospect of relief of Britain’s economic difficulties and it raised all manner of complicated issues about British relations with the Empire and Commonwealth as well as for the world-wide nature of British trade. The inter-ministerial committee which was subsequently set up to deal with all issues relating to the ERP [European Recovery Programme - PB], the so-called “London Committee”, put the matter succinctly:

“This is an artificial means of getting assistance for the UK. We are not economically part of Europe (less than twenty-five per cent of our trade is with Europe); the recovery of continental Europe would not itself solve our problem; we depend upon the rest of the world getting dollars (UK and Europe’s deficits with USA are only half the world’s dollar shortage).”

Clayton’s visit, discussed at some length by Bullock, goes unmentioned by Adonis, though he does acknowledge that Bevin tried to secure a leading position for the UK. He presents this as a momentary aberration.

In Milward’s account, Bevin’s meeting with Bidault was a move to secure British and French leadership over the process as a means of obstructing US ambitions for closer integration. Britain and France were of course the two powers with Empires and therefore interests that went beyond Europe. The rejection of the Soviet Union was something of a sideshow: ‘The State Department’s own decisions had already meant that it was not itself prepared to be seen to be excluding the Soviet Union from the offer of aid, but the insistence on a co-ordinated response and on the treatment of Europe as one common area means that the terms could not possibly be accepted by Moscow.’ (p.64). In a footnote he complains that: ‘A surprising number of historians are reluctant to admit that Marshall and the State Department wished to exclude the Soviet Union rather than merely wishing not to be seen excluding it.’ Molotov turned up in Paris at the end of June with a surprisingly large delegation. Since his objections to a united European response were rather similar to those of France and, more discreetly expressed, of Britain, and since he and the French had similar views on Germany, he might have thought there was a chance of sabotaging the proposal. The French Communist Party had been members of nearly all the governments since the end of the war (the exception, interestingly enough, was the brief period of rule by Léon Blum) and it may have been bad timing on their part that they had left in May, the month before Marshall’s speech, in protest against the French effort to hold onto Vietnam.

The ‘Committee of European Economic Co-operation’ met in Paris on July 12th. Sixteen countries were represented - Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The American State Department hoped for an agreed report containing a single proposal covering the whole of Europe that could be submitted to Congress by September 1st. What they got was, in the words of US Under-Secretary Robert Lovett (Milward, p.81), ‘sixteen shopping lists, which may be dressed up by some large scale but very long term projects such as Alpine Power.’

EUROPEAN RESPONSES

One thing that emerges from Milward’s account (pp.76-7) is that ‘Most intra-Western European trade was conducted through bilateral agreements, usually of annual duration, which aimed at a near equilibrium in payments between the countries in question over the year.’ That, surely, is very close to the Schacht/Funk model. One regional grouping that had an interest in breaking this system down was ‘Benelux’, and especially Belgium. Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg were already in the process of breaking down the barriers between themselves, and Belgium seems to have been the one country in Europe that was enjoying a substantial export surplus. The bilateral agreements were an obstacle to this expansion. Another obstacle was the limitations imposed on Germany. According to Milward (pp.66-7):

‘The exclusion from all decision-making about Germany had been particularly resented in Brussels and The Hague. There, anxious eyes were turned on the crippled German economy and angry protests beginning about Allied policy. The coming conference was seen as a chance to bring pressure to bear on the greater powers over the German question. The Anglo-French attempt to dominate the procedure and structure of the conference only stoked the fires of resentment the more and these circumstances no doubt made the task of formulating a common Benelux policy easier. The first element of this common policy was that the growth of European and therefore German output must be as rapid as possible. Translated into action this meant that United States aid should not be used to subsidise long-term capital investment plans such as the Monnet Plan, whose purpose was to create over a four- to five-year period new comparative advantages for the French economy at the expense of countries, like Belgium, seeking to maximise output as quickly as possible.’

Belgium was also keen to support currency convertibility and higher levels of industry in Germany. This is the more interesting when we consider that all three of the Benelux countries, like France, had been occupied during the war and therefore, one might have thought, would have had the same feelings of resentment and desire to prevent a German resurgence as the French - the more so because, whereas France had been defeated in a war the French had themselves declared, the Benelux countries had been occupied as a defensive measure without any provocation on their part. It seems to me that with regard to the overall process of European integration the Franco-German relationship was always a problem that had to be overcome. The reliable core of the European project was the Benelux-German relationship.

Another distinctive position was taken by the Scandinavian countries which wanted to maintain the connection with the Eastern bloc and were therefore very unhappy that European integration was being proposed as an alternative to the United Nations: ‘The Scandinavian countries, though accepting under protest that the aid requests should be drawn up in Paris and not by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Europe, were opposed to creating any permanent rival to the United Nations.’ (p.81). This was also the British position. It was only at the very last minute that ‘Britain finally accepted a purely Western European organisation, instead of the United Nations organisation which she had originally supported’ (pp.84-5). So much for Adonis’s view (my Kindle edition doesn’t give page references) that ‘Bevin moved swiftly to set up a bespoke West European organisation to plan and administer Marshall Aid with no Soviet involvement: what

became the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (today's OECD). He was anxious to avoid a role for the existing United Nations Economic Commission for Europe because of Soviet membership. Having closed the front door to Stalin, he wasn't going to admit him through the back door.'¹⁸

One realises, of course, that the United Nations, aspiring to represent the whole world, including the Soviet Union, was part of the old Roosevelt-Morgenthau-White programme now being overturned by the State Department under Truman and Marshall.

Milward concludes his account of the Committee of European Economic Co-operation negotiations by saying (p.89):

'In spite of the large number of countries which participated in it and the length of time it lasted, the CEEC had proved an indecisive event. It had done more to reveal the economic and political differences of opinion between Western Europe and the United States and between the Western European countries themselves than to create the strategic bloc which Marshall Aid was intended to produce. For such a great effort it did virtually nothing to promote either reconstruction or integration in Western Europe. There could be no effective steps in either direction until, firstly, the size, conditions and objectives of Marshall Aid were more clearly determined and, secondly, the question of what was to be done in Germany was answered.'

I started this series of articles with the idea of simply giving an account of Joseph Halevi's articles on 'The political economy of Europe since 1945.' Everything I have written so far has been by way of a preface, setting the scene. Having reached this stage in the negotiations over the Marshall Plan I may now be able to revert to my original intention. Suffice it to say here that, as mentioned earlier, Marshall Aid eventually, in 1950, evolved into the 'European Payments Union', which could be described as a clearing union somewhat along the lines proposed by Keynes in his wartime negotiations with White, with the dollar functioning something like Keynes's 'bancor'. It was when this arrangement came to an end in 1957 that the Treaty of Rome was signed.

¹⁸ Adonis's source is probably Bullock. Bullock says (p.406): 'He [Bevin] was particularly anxious to avoid the initiative being taken by the Economic Commission for Europe which the United Nations had just set up and which he feared would be used by the Russians to block progress.' This comes from a Foreign Office brief dated 17th June, that is, as Bullock points out, before he had talked with either the French or the Americans, ie before the discussions with Clayton, at a time before the formal break with Molotov when he still thought Poland and Czechoslovakia at least could be involved in an ad hoc steering committee to discuss the European response to Marshall. That is all Bullock has to say about the UN Commission. Milward by contrast is referring to a Foreign Office document dated 5th September 1947, that is, at the very end of the CEEC hearings. He says: 'The United Kingdom was still officially supporting a position where the technical committees of the CEEC would be discontinued and their work transferred to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Europe.' In a footnote he says that the Commission produced a report: 'A Survey of the Economic Situation and Prospects of Europe' (Geneva 1948), supervised by the great Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, which 'was far more professional than the two volume report of the CEEC. Its appearance created a minor alarm in Washington because it also constituted a scholarly critique of the bases of American policy in Europe ...'

Work by Peter Brooke can be found at:

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Irish Bulletin, Volumes One, Two, Three and Four

Dail Eireann

Edited by Jack Lane

Published by Aubane Historical Society 2012-2019

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It was unadorned with any other content except straightforward factual and irrefutable information. This is what made its reputation and because of that it became one of the most powerful weapons in the war that eventually proved successful.

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A narrative of the Anglo –Irish negotiations in 1921 (Part three)

VOLUME 5. NUMBER 66. IRISH BULLETIN.

THURSDAY, 1ST SEPT

“PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL
FACTS.”

THEIR REACTION TO THE IRISH
NATIONAL DEMAND.

One passage in the British Premier’s letter of August 26th calls for special comment:-

“It is playing with phrases to suggest that the principle of ‘government by the consent of the governed’ compels recognition of that demand (for separate and independent nationhood) on our part or that in repudiating it we are straining geographical and historical considerations to justify a claim to ascendancy over the Irish race. There is no political principle, however clear, that can be applied without regard to limitations imposed by physical and historical facts. Those limitations imposed by physical and historical facts. Those limitations are as necessary as the very principle itself to the structure of every free nation; to deny them would involve the dissolution of all democratic states . . . We do not believe that the permanent reconciliation of Great Britain and Ireland can never be attained without a recognition of their physical and historical interdependence, which makes complete political and economic separation impracticable from both.”

In short, Mr. Lloyd George says: that Ireland has been offered “government by the consent of the governed”; that certain limitations to this offer are made necessary by physical and historical facts. That one of these limitations is the rejection of Ireland’s demand for separation – a separation rendered impossible by the physical and economic interdependence of Great Britain and Ireland.

Has Ireland been Offered Self-Determination?

Let us examine Mr. Lloyd George’s words. Has Ireland been offered “government by the consent of the governed”? Not in the British proposals of July 20th or in either of Mr. Lloyd George’s subsequent communications. Government by the consent of the governed – or, in other words, self-determination – is definitely withheld. The phrase implies a people’s control over its destiny. This is categorically denied to the Irish people. They are not to be permitted to decide their own national status which is preliminary to the establishment of a government. Mr. Lloyd George calls this denial of freedom of choice a mere limitation of the principle of self-determination. It is obvious that it is a repudiation of the principle. Ireland is addressed as a nation, she is admitted to possess the distinctive marks of nationhood; but she is denied the elementary right of every nation to national independence. Nor is this all. She is threatened with annihilation if she does not herself deny her own rights. On August 19th Mr. Lloyd George in the British House of Commons declared that the basis of the British offer “cannot be altered, nor the outline changed”, and in his letter of the 26th he suggested a renewal of the war if the proposals were not accepted. On August 19th the Lord Chancellor of England in the House of Lords speaking for the Government said that if the offer were rejected “hostilities on a scale never before undertaken” would be begun against the Irish people.

But, Mr. Lloyd George protests, the limitations we have placed on our offer of self-determination to Ireland are imposed by “physical and historical facts” which must be taken into account. If the British Premier recognised the real “physical and historical facts” he would find that they do not argue against the independence of Ireland but in favour of it.

The Physical Facts.

What are the physical facts?

Ireland is a geographical unit, its boundaries are the ocean, and it is farther from Britain than Britain is from the continent of Europe. Mr. Lloyd George ignores this and speaks only of Ireland’s “geographical propinquity” to Great Britain. He says it is impossible that Ireland should have a separate existence.

Ireland has an economic life of her own, different from that of Great Britain: this difference has been recognised by the British Government who have found it necessary to pass special legislation to meet it. Conditions 4, 5 and 6 set out in the British proposals take a great part of Ireland’s economic life out of her people’s control.

Ireland is not and has no prospect of becoming a military or naval danger to any Empire. Mr. Lloyd George puts forward the strategical security of the British Empire as the principle reason for depriving Ireland of her independence.

The nearness of the two islands leaves it in England’s power to injure Ireland by military or naval aggression. Such aggression on Ireland’s part would be obviously impossible as her resources are immeasurably less than Great Britain’s. Under the circumstances, the British demand that Ireland’s power to use her own comparatively small resources should be limited suggests rather a desire to increase England’s power of aggression than to prevent Ireland from using any such power. The “physical facts”, of which Mr. Lloyd George speaks, do not conflict with the demand for national independence but, as is obvious, support it.

The Historical Facts.

What are the historical facts?

Ireland has through seven centuries striven to shake herself free from British domination. Mr. Lloyd George proposes that she shall now voluntarily accept that domination.

The Irish people have never ceased to proclaim their individual nationhood. Mr. Lloyd George now demands, with threats, that they shall surrender it.

In three national plebiscites during the last two and a half years the Irish nation has recorded its determination to be free and separate from England. Mr. Lloyd George in the name of “government by the consent of the governed” declares that he cannot accept those plebiscites.

An Anglo-Irish war began simultaneously with the first British attempt to make Ireland a subject province and has continued ever since. Mr. Lloyd George in the name of peace now asks the Irish people to make that subjection permanent.

Ireland has a greater population, greater revenues, greater trade, greater size and greater individuality than several nations whose sovereignty Great Britain recognises. Mr. Lloyd George says that Ireland could not exist as an independent nation.

Ireland’s historical and national unity was never questioned in the past even by Ireland’s enemies. Mr. Lloyd George

deliberately partitions Ireland and makes acceptance of this dismemberment one of the conditions of his offer of self-government. The "historical facts", of which Mr. Lloyd George speaks, do not conflict with the demand for national independence but are proofs of the justice of that demand.

The "Limitations" and Free Democracies.

The British Premier says that the "limitations" contained in the British proposals are "as necessary as the very principle (of self-determination) itself to the structure of every free nation"; "to deny them" he adds "would involve the dissolution of all democratic states." The text of the British proposals of July 20th contradict this statement. The "Limitations" imposed in Ireland's case are not imposed in the case of the Dominions: yet the proposals refer to those Dominions as "free nations" and "democratic states". Were the "limitations" set out in the six conditions imposed by other military empires on other small nations contiguous to them, national independence and democracy itself would disappear from the world. The small nations which rose from the ashes of the Great War were not asked to submit to the military, naval and economic control of their stronger neighbours. Great Britain has recognised these nations as "democratic states", and it is the boast of Mr. Lloyd George that he did much to bring them into being. England fought for four years, and at enormous cost in treasure and men, to defeat the principle which Mr. Lloyd George now states is incompatible with freedom and democracy; for it was on this very plea of strategical necessity and geographical propinquity that Germany excused her destruction of Belgian independence.

Interdependence and Friendly Relations.

"We do not believe," the British Premier says, "that the permanent reconciliation of Great Britain and Ireland can ever be attained without recognition of their physical and historical interdependence, which makes complete political and economic separation impractical for both." The Irish people, too, accept the fact that Great Britain and Ireland are closely linked together. That very interdependence is England's best guarantee that Ireland will not seek to be an aggressor against her. The mutual interests of Ireland, a weak country, and England, a strong country, make for natural friendship between the two. Ireland's weakness renders it impossible for her to counter to those mutual interests even if she were to desire to do so. There is no incompatibility between recognition of Ireland's right to independence and a close bond of union between Ireland and Great Britain. Ireland makes but one condition: that it be a free union. The long antagonism between Ireland and England arose solely from England's attempt to make the subjection of Ireland the first condition of the alliance which should naturally exist between them.

Whatever qualifications of "complete political and economic separation" are made necessary by physical and historical facts will be acceptable to Ireland provided that they are consonant with the principle of "government by the consent of the governed."

SUPPLEMENT TO IRISH BULLETIN. VOL. 5, NO. 66. THURSDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER 1921.

WEEKLY REVIEW OF EVENTS IN IRELAND. NO. 22.

(August 21st to August 27th 1921.)

The following is a brief review of the events in Ireland from Sunday, 21st August to Saturday, midnight, 27th August 1921:-

The Reply to Mr. Lloyd George's Letter.

During the greater part of the week Dail Eireann was in session. The sitting, adjourned on August 20th, was resumed on Monday, August 22nd. It was continued on the 23rd. At both sittings – which were held in private – the British proposals were discussed, and on the second day the reply of the President and Ministry to Mr. Lloyd George's letter of August 13th was communicated to the Dail. Having transacted departmental and other business, the Dail adjourned until Thursday, August 25th, when the sitting was again private. On this date the reply was delivered at 10 Downing Street by Commandants Barton and McGrath, I.R.A., accompanied by Mr. Art O'Brien.

At 12 noon on Friday, 26th, President de Valera at a public session of Dail Eireann, read the text of the reply. It stated that by an unanimous vote Dail Eireann had rejected the proposals on the grounds that they involved a surrender of the whole national position and made negotiations a mockery. Its concluding paragraphs, however, suggested that the negotiation of a peace on the basis of the "broad guiding principle of government by the consent of the governed" was possible, and if the British Premier accepted the principle Dail Eireann would appoint plenipotentiaries for this purpose.

The Premier's Answer.

Mr. Lloyd George answered this communication in a letter dated August 26th in which he prefaced not to understand why the proposals of July 20th were unacceptable to the Irish people. He quoted from the speeches of Irish leaders of other generations carefully selected phrases expressing approval of the British connection, but these quotations did not represent the position of the leaders in question. Mr. Lloyd George repeated the false analogy between Ireland and the Southern States of America. He claimed that the proposals interpreted the principle of "Government by the consent of the governed." He suggested that a renewal of war would follow a rejection of the proposals. But he added that he would be happy to meet the President and his colleagues if they were prepared to examine how far the British proposals could be reconciled with the "aspirations which you represent."

The only new note struck in the Premier's letter was a vague reference to Ireland being offered "free, equal and loyal partnership in the British Commonwealth under one Sovereign." This reference may mean that the six conditions in the original proposals have been dropped, and that only of the sovereignty of King George remains, or, it may mean merely that Mr. Lloyd George persists in the pretence that Ireland is being offered full Dominion Status.

Partition to Remain.

On Saturday, August 27th, Mr. Lloyd George spoke at a public assembly at Barnsley. He claimed that the proposals of July 20th did not involve any question of British ascendancy or domination over the Irish people, adding that he was glad to think that the British Government, in offering such "fair and generous terms," had risen above anti-Irish prejudices. In the same speech Mr. Lloyd George referred to the twenty-eight Republican counties as "Southern" Ireland, implying, as he has implied in other speeches, that the partition of Ireland is to be a condition of any settlement.

Re-Election of President de Valera.

At the Public session of Dail Eireann already referred to, Mr. de Valera said that consequent on the formation of a new Dail it became his duty and that of his Ministry to resign office. His re-election was proposed by Commandant McKeon, I.R.A. and seconded by Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff, I.R.A., both of whom paid tributes to the work the President had already accomplished and expressed the confidence and respect in which he is held by all sections of the people. The re-election was carried unanimously.

The Appointment of Ministers.

The President then nominated a new Ministry. To act as his Cabinet he named: Messrs. Arthur Griffith, (Foreign Affairs); Austin Stack, (Home Affairs); Cathal Brugha, (Defence); Michael Collins, (Finance); Ald. W. Cosgrave, (Local Government); and R. C. Barton (Economic Affairs). Other Ministers appointed were :- Messrs. Kevin O'Higgins, (Local Government); Desmond Fitzgerald, (Publicity); S. S. O'Ceallaigh, (Education); Ernest Blythe, (Trade and Commerce); Art O'Connor, (Agriculture); Sean Etchingham, (Fisheries); Madame Markievicz, (Labour); and Count Plunkett, (Fine Arts.).

President de Valera and the National Position.

Having read the reply to Mr. Lloyd George mentioned above, the President, commenting upon it, said that the position of the new Ministry was the same as that of the old. "We cannot change our position because it is fundamentally sound and just, and the moment we get off that fundamental rock of right and justice then we have no case whatever. No fight can be made except on that rock, and on that rock we shall stand."

Later, when moving the adjournment of the House the President asked for continued allegiance on the part of the people to the National Government. "This nation" he said, "has men and women enough, one by one, to come and fill the places that I hold and that our Cabinet holds, and as one by one we are removed, so one by one they can step into our places, and the British Empire, if it tries force against us, will be gone before the Republic is finished."

Other business at the Public Session included a motion by Mr. Michael Collins, Minister of Finance, for sanction of a new loan proposed to be raised by the National Government. Mr. Collins explained that a sum of £500,000 would be asked for in Ireland, and the sum of 20,000,000 dollars in the United States of America. Sanction was unanimously given.

A motion was also carried for the establishment of a National Trustee who would act as Supervisory Registrar to control all societies which collected funds from the Irish people.

**VOLUME 5. NUMBER 67. IRISH BULLETIN.
FRIDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER. 1921.**

**WHAT BRITISH GOVERNMENT MEANS TO
THE MINORITY IN ULSTER
THE ORGANISATION AND ENCOURAGE-
MENT OF "CIVIL WAR".**

Sir:

His Majesty's Government have considered your letter of August 30th, and have to make the following observations upon it.

The principle of government by consent of the governed is the foundation of British constitutional development, but we cannot accept as a basis of practical conference an interpretation of that principle which would commit us to any demands which you might present – even to the extent of setting up a republic and repudiating the Crown. You must be aware that conference on such a basis is impossible. So applied, the principle of government by consent of the governed would undermine the fabric of every democratic State and drive the civilised world back into tribalism.

On the other hand, we have invited you to discuss our proposals on their merits, in order that you may have no doubt as to the scope and sincerity of our intentions. It would be open to you in such a conference to raise the subject of guarantees on any points in which you may consider Irish freedom prejudiced by these proposals.

His Majesty's Government are loth to believe that you will insist upon rejecting their proposals without examining them in conference. To decline to discuss a settlement which would bestow upon the Irish people the fullest freedom of national development within the Empire can only mean that you repudiate all allegiance to the Crown and all membership of the British Commonwealth. If we were to draw this inference from your letter, then further discussion between us could serve no useful purpose, and all conference would be vain. If, however, we are mistaken in this inference, as we still hope, and if your real objection to our proposals is that they offer Ireland less than the liberty which we have described, that objection can be explored at a Conference.

You will agree that this correspondence has lasted long enough. His Majesty's Government must therefore ask for a definite reply as to whether you are prepared to enter a Conference to ascertain how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire can best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations. If, as we hope, your answer is in the affirmative, I suggest that the Conference should meet at Inverness on the 20th instant.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully

(Signed) D. LLOYD GEORGE.

Eamon de Valera, Esq.

**VOLUME 5. NUMBER 74. IRISH BULLETIN.
TUESDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER 1921.**

BACK TO TRIBALISM.

In his letter to President de Valera dated September 7th 1921, Mr. Lloyd George stated that the principle of government by consent of the governed is "the foundation of British constitutional development," but added that the British Government could not accept an interpretation of that principle which would give Ireland national independence and separation from the British Empire.

"You must be aware that conference on such a basis is impossible. So applied the principle of government by the consent of the governed would undermine the fabric of every democratic State and drive the civilised world back to tribalism."

Obviously government by consent of the governed does not mean that each individual has the right to choose his own government, or that each group of individuals has the right to choose its own government. It means that each nation has the right to choose its own government. Ireland is a nation, as Mr.

Lloyd George has again and again admitted, and it is as a nation that Ireland claims the right to self-determination.

The Creation of a Tribal State.

It is certainly desirable that any settlement that may be arrived at as a result of the present negotiations should not undermine the fabric of any democratic State, and should not tend to drive the civilised world back to tribalism. The independence of Ireland would have no such effect. It is the attempted partition of Ireland which makes for tribalism, for tribalism enters in when self-determination is applied to something which is not a nation. Ireland has declared her willingness to meet any legitimate claims Mr. Lloyd George may put forward, though these claims may have the effect of limiting to some extent the exercise of her inalienable right. In spite of this Mr. Lloyd George says that the nation of Ireland demands more than she has the right to demand, but at the same time he gives to North East Ulster, which does not pretend to be a province still less a nation, the right to refuse any settlement whatever which does not conform to her wishes in every particular. And to reinforce her in this position he arbitrarily establishes a portion of Ulster as a State.

This partition policy is not proposed by Ireland but is proposed by the British Government. In establishing this State Mr. Lloyd George departed from the national basis. He ignored the laws of history, tradition and geography. "Northern Ireland" as his absurd effort in nation building is absurdly called, consists of six of the thirty-two counties in Ireland. The historical province of Ulster consists of nine counties, but though this province has some claim to a geographical and historical unity within Ireland and as part of an Irish Commonwealth, Mr. Lloyd George durst not select it as the area of his new State because its population is almost equally Nationalist and Unionist, and any Government set up for the whole province would have no stable Protestant majority, which was primarily what he sought. Mr. George, therefore, chose an unnatural unit having no boundaries, having no previous historical existence, and having no claim to separation from the rest of Ireland on any grounds that would convince an impartial judge.

The Geographical Position of "Northern Ireland."

It is worthwhile to consider the geographical position of the Six-County State. Although named "Northern Ireland," Donegal, one of the counties included in Mr. Lloyd George's "Southern Ireland," is more northerly than any portion of it. Fermanagh, which is included in the area, has a majority of Republicans, and is geographically propinquitous to none of the five other counties except the county of Tyrone, which also is and has been Nationalist in politics and Catholic in majority. Fermanagh lies across the inland route between the rest of "Southern Ireland" and the county of Donegal, with the result that this maritime county is cut off from the main portion of the nation by a Nationalist county forced against its will under a Parliament foreign to it in faith, ideals, needs and interests. By whatever argument the conversion of the other four counties of North East Ulster into a separate state may be superficially justified, the inclusion of Tyrone and Fermanagh has not one sound argument to support it; unless it be that if these two Catholic counties were, as they should be, attached to "Southern Ireland" the insignificant size of "Northern Ireland" would itself have killed the Partition scheme with ridicule – for Tyrone and Fermanagh, both Republican, form no less than a third of the whole of the six county area.

The Four Counties not Homogenous.

But even the four county area is not homogenous. The protests already made by the counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh are being taken up by the electoral constituencies of South and East Down and South Armagh. These districts about the counties of Louth and Monaghan, both of which have Republican majorities and are included in the area of "Southern Ireland." Both in South and East Down and in South Armagh the majority of the population is Catholic and Nationalist, and any boundary drawn with regard to the wishes of the people would have placed them in Southern Ireland.

In the whole area of South and East Down every elective body with but one exception has been returned with a majority opposed to Partition, and this despite every effort made by the British Local Government Board in Ireland to arrange the constituencies so that the Unionist party would have control of the country. Downpatrick, the capital town, has elected Republicans as a chairman of its three public bodies, the Town Commissioners, the Board of Guardians and the Rural District Council. One of the Parliamentary representatives for the county is Mr. Patrick O'Neill who appeared before the Cabinet of Dail Eireann on September 8th to protest against the inclusion of South and East Down in the partition area.

Again, of the two cities within the Four Country area – Belfast and Derry – one, Derry City, has a Republican majority, and has elected as its parliamentary representative Dr. Eoin MacNeill, Speaker of Dail Eireann, and as its City Council a Corporation in the majority vehemently opposed to partition.

Of the four counties Down, Derry, Antrim and Armagh the Catholic population in Derry and Armagh is greater than either the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, or the Methodist, and in Down the Catholic population is greater than the Episcopalian and the Methodist and is only six per cent less than the Presbyterian. In the six counties taken together the Catholic population is 41.3% of the whole, the Presbyterian 26.7% the Episcopalian 25.4% the Methodist 3.3% and all others 3.3%

"Ulster" and the Irish Nation.

This then is the area that Mr. Lloyd George would partition from the rest of Ireland, forcing upon it a separate statehood it has never demanded and now accepts with unconcealed reluctance. At the same time he preaches the doctrine that self-determination cannot be exercised by a nation five times as great as North East Ulster without resulting in the destruction of all democratic states and the revival of prehistoric barbarism. On the very grounds on which the British Premier unjustly limits self-determination for Ireland, Ireland must in justice to herself limit self-determination for North East Ulster in so far as the exercise of that self-determination would lead to a disappearance of Ireland's ancient unity. But in all matters which are not vital to the existence of Ireland as a nation, Dail Eireann is ready, and has many times publicly stated its readiness, to give Ulster a more generous local autonomy than that conferred upon her people by the British Partition Act.

**VOLUME 5, NUMBER 76. IRISH BULLETIN.
THURSDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1921.**

**THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE.
REPLY OF DAIL EIREANN CABINET TO MR.
LOYD GEORGE'S LETTER
OF SEPTEMBER 7TH 1921.**

The following was issued by the Publicity Department, Dail Eireann, yesterday, 14th September:-

“Dail Eireann met in private Session this morning at 11 a.m. at the Mansion House, Dublin. The Cabinet’s reply to Mr. Lloyd George’s letter was read and unanimously approved.

“In view of a possible Conference with representatives of the British Government, the following Delegation of Plenipotentiaries was unanimously ratified, viz:-

Arthur Griffith, Minister for Foreign Affairs, (Chairman).
Michael Collins, Minister of Finance.
Commdt. R.C. Barton, Minister for Economic Affairs.
Commdt. Eamon Duggan, (Deputy for Meath and Louth).
George Gavan Duffy, Envoy at Rome, (Deputy for Dublin County).

The Private Session ended at 2.30 p.m.”

The reply of the Cabinet sent to the British Prime Minister, and approved unanimously by Dail Eireann yesterday, is as follows:-

“Mansion House, Dublin,

Sept. 12th 1921.

The Right Hon. D. Lloyd George,
10, Downing Street,
Whitehall, London.

Sir,

We have no hesitation in declaring our willingness “to enter a conference to ascertain how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire can best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations.” Our readiness to contemplate such an association was indicated in our letter of August 10th. We have accordingly summoned DAIL EIREANN that we may submit to it for ratification the names of the representatives it is our intention to propose. We hope that these representatives will find it possible to be at Inverness on the date you suggest, September 20th.

In this final note we deem it our duty to reaffirm that our position is and can only be as we have defined it throughout this correspondence. Our nation has formally declared its independence and recognises itself as a sovereign State. It is only as the representatives of that State and as its chosen guardians that we have any authority or powers to act on behalf of our people.

As regards the principle of “government by consent of the governed,” in the very nature of things it must be the basis of any agreement that will achieve the purpose we have at heart, that is, the final reconciliation of our nation with yours. We have suggested no interpretation of that principle save its everyday interpretation, the sense, for example, in which it was understood by the plain men and women of the world when on January 5th 1918 you said:-

“ . . . The settlement of the new Europe must be based on such grounds of reason and justice as will give some promise of stability. Therefore it is that we feel that government with the consent of the governed must be that basis of any territorial settlement in this war.”

These words are the true answer to the criticism of our position which your last letter puts forward. The principle was understood then to mean the right of nations that had been annexed to empires against their will to free themselves from the grappling hook. That is the sense in which we understand it. In reality it is your Government, when it seeks to rend our ancient nation and to partition its territory, that would give to the principle an interpretation that “would undermine the fabric of every democratic state and drive the civilised world back into tribalism.”

I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours,

EAMON DE VALERA

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 78. IRISH BULLETIN. MONDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1921.

THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE. FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PRESIDENT DE VALERA AND THE BRITISH PREMIER.

The IRISH BULLETIN of September 15th published the reply of President de Valera and the Cabinet of Dail Eireann to Mr. Lloyd George’s invitation to a conference in Inverness on September 20th. The President accepted the invitation stating that the position of Ireland’s representatives remained unchanged. “Our Nation,” he said, “has formally declared its independence and recognizes itself as a sovereign State. It is only as the representatives of that State and as its chosen guardians that we have any authority or powers to act on behalf of our people.”

The same evening Mr. Lloyd George telegraphed the following to President de Valera:-

15 – 9 – 21.

Sir,

I informed your emissaries who came to me here on Tuesday, the 13th, that the reiteration of your claim to negotiate with his Majesty’s Government as the representatives of an Independent and Sovereign State would make conference between us impossible.

They brought me a letter from you in which you specifically reaffirm that claim, stating that your Nation “has formally declared its independence and recognises itself as a Sovereign State,” and “it is only,” you added, “as the representatives of that State and as its chosen guardians that we have any authority of powers to act on behalf of our people.” I asked them to warn you of the very serious effect of such a paragraph, and I offered to regard the letter as undelivered to me in order that you might have time to reconsider it. Despite this intimation you have now published the letter in its original form.

I must, accordingly, cancel the arrangements for Conference next week at Inverness, and must consult my colleagues on the course of action which this new situation necessitates.

I will communicate this to you as soon as possible, but as I am for the moment laid up here, a few days delay is inevitable. Meanwhile, I must make it absolutely clear that his Majesty’s Government cannot reconsider the position which I have stated to you.

If we accepted conference with your delegates on a formal statement of the claim which you have reaffirmed it would constitute an official recognition by his Majesty's Government of the severance of Ireland from the Empire and of its existence as an Independent Republic.

It would, moreover, entitle you to declare as of right acknowledged by us that, in preference to association with the British Empire, you would pursue a closer association by treaty with some other Foreign Power. There is only one answer possible to such a claim as that.

The great concessions which his Majesty's Government have made to the feeling of your people in order to secure a lasting settlement deserved, in my opinion, some more generous response, but so far every advance has been made by us. On your part you have not come to meet us by a single step, but have merely reiterated in phrases of emphatic challenge the letter and the spirit of your original claim.

I am, yours faithfully,

D. LLOYD

GEORGE.

The President's Reply.

At 7 p.m. on Friday, September 16th, the Publicity Department of Dail Eireann issued a statement saying:-

"On receipt of Mr. Lloyd George's telegram, President de Valera telegraphed the following reply:-

Mansion House, Dublin
September 16th, 1921.

Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George,

Sir,

I received your telegram last night.

I am surprised that you do not see that if we on our side accepted the Conference on the basis of your letter of September 7th, without making our position equally clear, Ireland's representatives would enter the Conference with their position misunderstood and the cause of Ireland's right irreparably prejudiced.

Throughout the correspondence that has taken place you have defined your Government's position. We have defined ours. If the positions were not so definitely opposed there would, indeed, be no problem to discuss.

It should be obvious that in a case like this, if there is to be any result, the negotiations must meet without prejudice and untrammelled by any conditions whatsoever except those imposed by the facts as they know them.

I am, Sir, Faithfully yours,

EAMON DE

VALERA.'

The British Premier's Answer.

Mr. Lloyd George replied by telegram on September 17th as follows:-

Sir,

I have received the communication which you telegraphed to me last night. It is idle to say that a conference in which we had already met your delegates as representatives of an independent and sovereign State would be a conference "without prejudice." To receive them as such would constitute a formal and official recognition of Ireland's severance from the King's domains.

It would, indeed, entitle you, if you thought fit, to make a treaty of amity with the King, but it would equally entitle you to break off the conference with us at any point and by a right which we ourselves had already recognised to negotiate the union of Ireland with a foreign Power. It would also entitle you, if you insisted upon another appeal to force, to claim from foreign Powers by our implicit admission the rights of lawful belligerents against the King, for if we deal with you as a sovereign and independent State we should have no right to complain to other Powers for following our example. These would be the consequences of receiving your delegates as the representatives of an independent State.

We are prepared, in the words of my letter of the 7th, to discuss with you "how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire can best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations." We cannot consent to any abandonment, however, of the principle of allegiance to the King upon which the whole fabric of the Empire and every constitution within it are based. It is fatal to that principle that your delegates in the conference should be there as the representatives of an independent and sovereign State. While you insist on claiming that, conference between us is impossible.

I am,

yours faithfully,

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

"We have but one Object at Heart."

On the night of Saturday, 17th September, the Publicity Department of Dail Eireann issued the following statement:-

"On receipt of Mr. Lloyd George's telegram today, President de Valera telegraphed as follows:-

Mansion House, Dublin.

Sept', 17, 1921.

The Right Hon. D. Lloyd George,
Gairloch, Scotland.

Sir,

In reply to your last telegram just received, I have only to say that we have already accepted your invitation in the exact words which you re-quote from your letter of the 7th, We have not asked you to abandon any principle – even informally, but surely you must understand that we can only recognise ourselves for what we are.

If this self-recognition be made a reason for the cancellation of the conference, we regret it; but it seems inconsistent. I have already had conferences with you and in these conferences and in my written communications I have never ceased to recognise myself for what I was and am.

If this involves recognition on your part, then you have already recognised us. Had it been our desire to add to the solid substance of Ireland's natural right the veneer of the technicalities of international usage which you now introduce, we might have claimed already the advantage of all these consequences which you fear would flow from the reception of our delegates now.

Believe me, we have but one object at heart, the setting of the conference on such a basis of truth and reality as would make it possible to secure through it the result which the peoples of these two islands so ardently desire.

I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours,

EAMON DE VALERA."

Mr. Lloyd George's Latest Telegram.

On the night of Sunday, September 19th, Mr. Lloyd George telegraphed to the President:-

I have received your telegram of last night, and observe that it does not modify the claim that your delegates should meet us as the representatives of a sovereign and independent State. You made no such condition in advance when you came to see me in July. I invited you then to meet me, in the words of my letter, as "the chosen leader of the great majority in Southern Ireland," and you accepted that invitation. From the very outset of our conversations I told you that we looked to Ireland to own allegiance to the Throne, and to make her future as a member of the British Commonwealth. That was the basis of our proposals, and we cannot alter it. The status which you now claim in advance for your delegates is in effect a repudiation of that basis.

I am prepared to meet your delegates, as I met you in July, in the capacity of "chosen spokesmen" for your people to discuss the association of Ireland with the British Commonwealth. My colleagues and I cannot meet them as the representatives of a sovereign and independent State without disloyalty on our part to the Throne and the Empire. I must, therefore, repeat that unless the second paragraph in your letter of the 12th is withdrawn, conference between us is impossible.

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

**VOLUME 5, NUMBER 85. IRISH BULLETIN.
WEDNESDAY, 28th SEPTEMBER, 1921.**

MR. CHURCHILL'S SPEECH.

—

THE "GENEROUS" GOVERNMENT WHICH THREATENS "REAL WAR."

Mr. Winston Churchill on Saturday last made a speech at Dundee which has been regarded by the British Press as an important ministerial pronouncement. This speech was vague and even self-contradictory, but it did contain a number of statements which were not vague.

Mr. Churchill's Assertions.

Mr. Churchill described the British proposals of July 20th as "fair" and "generous" and referred to them as "the historic offer of Dominion Home Rule." With regard to Ulster,

he said that no one in his senses could conceive Ulster being forced against her will into association with the rest of Ireland. Ulster had made "enormous sacrifices" and no longer stood in the path of the wishes of the rest of Ireland. Her position was now solidly established. Referring to the Irish claim to be a sovereign independent state he said that Irish independence would inevitably lead to a state of civil war between the majority and the minority in Ireland. He threatened that if the Irish people did not accept what is being offered to them they would have to accept "certain war, real war" not "mere bushranging." He also expressed a hope that "a successful conference" would be held.

The "Generous" Offer.

Let us take Mr. Churchill's assertions one by one. Ireland has not been offered Dominion Home Rule. This Mr. Churchill, as Colonial Secretary, should know better than anybody else. The British Government has proposed that for 26 counties of Ireland the present British system of governing Ireland should be modified in some respects, but that this modification should not only leave to England the suzerainty implied in "Dominion Status," but also assure to her control of Irish ports and seas, Irish coasts and air, Irish trade and Irish finance; should retain to her the right to maintain her armed forces in Ireland, while depriving Ireland of the right to decide the strength of her own armed forces.

The Irish people do not consider these proposals satisfactory; still less do they consider them "fair" or "generous." And plainly they do not constitute an offer of Dominion Home Rule, "historic" or otherwise.

The Enormous Sacrifices of North-East Ulster.

Mr. Churchill declares that "Ulster" – by which he means the six North-Eastern counties, almost half of whose area is nationalist in majority – must not be forced against her will into association with the rest of Ireland. But he threatens the Irish people with a war of extermination unless they submit to being forced against their will into association with the British Empire. He says that "Ulster" has made "enormous sacrifices." Ireland has not asked North-East Ulster to make "enormous sacrifices." She asks merely that North-East Ulster accept in national matters the principle of majority rule upon which all democracy is based. Dail Eireann has more than once declared that the Unionist minority shall receive within an Irish State an autonomy as generous as that given to any minority in the world. The "enormous sacrifices" Mr. Churchill speaks of, is the acquiescence by Ulster Unionist politicians in the Partition policy which they protest they hate and have accepted only to satisfy British interests. The position of "Ulster" the Colonial Secretary declares to be "now solidly established." The British Government carefully postponed the truce and a conference until for its own ends it had "established" North-East Ulster in that position from which her reconciliation with the rest of Ireland would be most difficult. The position was not desired by anybody even in North-East Ulster. It was conferred not to benefit North-East Ulster but to create in Ireland two hostile states whose subsequent antagonisms the British Government conceive will assist them in keeping all Ireland subject to their domination.

The Prophecy of "Civil War."

Mr. Churchill prophesies that "civil war" would result from Irish Independence. So far as the British Government could they have done their best to assure that it would. They have disrupted the unity of Ireland and divided the nation [END OF PAGE ONE] into two fragments upon the most hateful

THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE.
PRESIDENT DE VALERA'S LETTER OF
SEPTEMBER 19TH AND THE BRITISH
PREMIER'S REPLY.

of all lines. They have set up or have attempted to set up, a Catholic and a Protestant State within Ireland. Not content with this they have armed the Orange mob in Belfast and elsewhere and encouraged them to attack the Catholic minority. They initiated religious pogroms and then formed the ringleaders of those pogroms into one of the armed forces of the Crown. As a result the only part of Ireland where, since the declaration of the truce, there has been bloodshed and disorder has been that part in which alone the British Government has now influence or authority. In the parts of Ireland where the Republican Government has the allegiance of the majority there has been peace; and never at any time were the Protestant minority attacked or in any way victimised for their religious opinions. Sir Hamar Greenwood himself was forced by facts to admit in the British Parliament that he was unable to find any religious intolerance except in the North, and this at a time when the Republican Government had established its influence in twenty-eight counties in Ireland. So profound has the tolerance of the National majority in Ireland been that not even the pogroms in the North have shaken it. The Catholics and the Protestants live in amity and mutual good will wherever the Catholics are in the majority. The civil war Mr. Churchill predicts for a free Ireland exists now only in that part of Ireland not yet free from British influence. The surest safeguard Ireland has against "civil war" is the destruction of the influence which has already deliberately created "civil war." When that disappears in the North-East as it has already disappeared in the rest of Ireland, pogroms will end and civil war will become impossible.

Threats of Force.

Mr. Churchill threatens Ireland with "certain war, real war" if she does not accept the British proposals. Ireland has already irrevocably rejected these proposals. Threats leave the Irish people cold. They have suffered for centuries in the defence of their national ideals. They do not desire a continuance of the war, but if it is forced upon them they will not shrink from accepting the challenge. If a return to hostilities is made inevitable, Ireland will accept hostilities. Mr. Churchill in explaining the genesis of the British offer said the proposals were made because "the main interest of the British Empire would be so greatly furthered by a lasting settlement and peace with the Irish people." Expediency, not justice dictated the terms offered by the British Cabinet. After three years of Terror the British Government found it expedient to make an offer, inadequate it is true, but which it considers greater than any previous offer made to Ireland. If another three years of war must intervene before the interests of the British Government can be "furthered" by an offer which will be adequate, the Irish people are content to wait.

The desire for a Successful Conference.

The Colonial Secretary wants "a successful conference" because British interests demand it. Ireland also is anxious for a successful conference. But if, as Mr. Churchill suggests, a successful conference can only be one in which Ireland must surrender her national position and yield up her right to self-determination, no successful conference is possible, and the British interests will have to wait on British justice. We are confident that there can be a settlement now on just and honourable lines. We are equally confident that if Great Britain refused such a settlement today she will find in a few years that her interests will compel her to recognise rights which today she declines to recognise.

On Monday, September 19th, 1921, President de Valera telegraphed the following reply to the British Premier's telegram of September 18th, in which Mr. Lloyd George reiterated the statement that any conference with Irish delegates considering themselves to be the representatives of an independent and sovereign state would be tantamount to an official recognition on the part of the British Government of the Irish Republic.

"Mansion House, Dublin,

Sept. 19, 1921.

Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George,
Gairloch,
Scotland.

Sir,

We have had no thought at any time of asking you to accept any conditions precedent to a conference. We would have thought it unreasonable to expect you, as a preliminary, to recognise the Irish Republic formally, or informally, as that you should expect us formally or informally, to surrender our national position. It is precisely because neither side accepts the position of the other that there is a dispute at all, and that a conference is necessary to search for and to discuss such adjustments as might compose it.

A treaty of accommodation and association properly concluded between the peoples of these two islands and between Ireland and the group of States in the British Commonwealth would, we believe, end the dispute forever, and enable the two nations to settle down in peace, each pursuing its own individual development and contributing its own quota to civilisation, but working together in free and friendly co-operation in affairs of agreed common concern. To negotiate such a treaty the respective representatives of the two nations must meet. If you seek to impose preliminary conditions, which we must regard as involving a surrender of our whole position, they cannot meet.

Your last telegram makes it clear that misunderstandings are more likely to increase than diminish, and the cause of peace more likely to be retarded than advanced, by a continuance of the present correspondence. We request you, therefore, to state whether your letter of Sept. 7 is intended to be a demand for a surrender on our part, or an invitation to a conference free on both sides and without prejudice should agreement not be reached. If the latter, we readily confirm our acceptance of the invitation, and our appointed delegates will meet your Government's representatives at any time in the immediate future that you designate.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

EAMON DE VALERA."

On Thursday, September 29th 1921, Mr. Lloyd George replied:-

“Gairloch, 11.25. O.H.M.S.

Eamon de Valera, Esq.
Mansion House,
DUBLIN.

Sir,

His Majesty's Government have given close and earnest consideration to the correspondence which has passed between us since their invitation to you to send delegates to a conference at Inverness.

In spite of their sincere desire for peace, and in spite of the more conciliatory tone of your last communication, they cannot enter a conference upon the basis of this correspondence. Notwithstanding your personal assurance to the contrary, which they much appreciate, it might be argued in future that the acceptance of a conference on this basis had involved them in a recognition which no British Government can accord. On this point they must guard themselves against any possible doubt.

There is no purpose to be served by any further interchange of explanatory and argumentative communications upon this subject. The position taken up by his Majesty's Government is fundamental to the existence of the British Empire, and they cannot alter it.

My colleagues and I remain, keenly anxious to make, in co-operation with your delegates, another determined effort to explore every possibility of settlement by personal discussion. The proposals which we have already made have been taken by the whole world as proof that our endeavours for reconciliation and settlement are no empty form, and we feel that conference, not correspondence, is the most practical and hopeful way to an understanding such as we ardently desire to achieve.

We, therefore, send you forthwith a fresh invitation to a conference in London on October 11, there we can meet your delegates as spokesmen of the people whom you represent with a view to ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire may best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
D. Lloyd George.”

**VOLUME 5, NUMBER 94. IRISH BULLETIN.
TUESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 1921.**

**A PROCLAMATION TO THE PEOPLE
OF IRELAND.**

The Publicity Department of Dail Eireann issued last evening, October 10th, 1921, the following proclamation by President de Valera to the people of Ireland:-

PROCLAMATION.

“FELLOW-CITIZENS, - The Conference in which the accredited representatives of the nation are about to engage with the representatives of the British Government must profoundly influence, and may determine, the whole course of our country's future. It affects the lives and fortunes of every section of the community. Whatever the differences of the past, it is in the interest, as it is the duty, of all Irishmen to stand together for Ireland now.

“Our delegates are keenly conscious of their responsibility. They must be made to feel that a united nation has confidence in them and will support them unflinchingly.

“They share with each one of us the ardent desire that this secular conflict between the rulers of Britain and the Irish people may happily be brought to an end, but they realise that the ending of the conflict does not depend finally upon their will or upon the will of this nation.

“The struggle on our side has always been simply for the maintenance of a right that in its nature is indefeasible, and that cannot, therefore, be either relinquished or compromised.

“The only peace that, in the very nature of things, can end this struggle will be a peace consistent with the nation's right and guaranteeing a freedom worthy of the suffering endured to secure it.

“Such a peace will not be easy to obtain. The claim that conflicts with Ireland's right has been ruthlessly persisted in through centuries of blood. It seems unlikely that this claim will be abandoned now. Peace and that claim are incompatible.

“The delegates are aware that no wisdom of theirs and no ability of theirs will suffice. They indulge, therefore, in no foolish hopes, nor should the country indulge in them. The peace that will end this conflict will be secured, not by the skill of statesmanship of leaders, but by the stern determination of a close-knit nation steeled to the acceptance of death rather than the abandonment of its rightful liberty. Nothing but such a determination in our people can overcome the forces that our delegates will have to contend with.

“By an heroic endurance in suffering Ireland has gained the position she holds. Were the prospect of further horrors or further sacrifices to cause her to quail or falter for a moment, all would again be lost. The threats that could force surrender in one vital particular would be relied on to force surrender in another and another till all were gone. Of necessity Ireland must stand where she is, unyielding and fearless on the rock of right, or be outmanoeuvred and defeated in detail.

“During the negotiations, then, the slightest lowering of the nation's morale will be fatal, and everyone whose thought or action tends to lower it is an enemy of peace – an enemy of the peoples of both islands – an enemy of the cause of humanity, whose progress is intimately linked with each successive triumph of right over might.

“The power against us will use every artifice it knows in the hope of dispiriting, dividing, weakening us. We must all beware. The unity that is essential will best be maintained by an unwavering faith in those who have been deputed to act in the nation's behalf, and a confidence manifesting itself as hitherto in eloquent discipline. For this I appeal.”

John Wear – Why Germany Invaded Poland

Why Germany Invaded Poland Author: John Wear <https://inconvenienthistory.com/11/1/6391> Published: January 14, 2019,

Great Britain's Blank Check to Poland

On March 21, 1939, while hosting French Prime Minister Édouard Daladier, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain discussed a joint front with France, Russia and Poland to act together against German aggression. France agreed at once, and the Russians agreed on the condition that both France and Poland sign first. However, Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck vetoed the agreement on March 24, 1939.[1] Polish statesmen feared Russia more than they did Germany. Polish Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz told the French ambassador, "With the Germans we risk losing our liberty; with the Russians we lose our soul." [2]

Another complication arose in European diplomacy when a movement among the residents of Memel in Lithuania sought to join Germany. The Allied victors in the Versailles Treaty had detached Memel from East Prussia and placed it in a separate League of Nations protectorate. Lithuania then proceeded to seize Memel from the League of Nations shortly after World War I. Memel was historically a German city which in the seven centuries of its history had never separated from its East Prussian homeland. Germany was so weak after World War I that it could not prevent the tiny new-born nation of Lithuania from seizing Memel.[3]

Germany's occupation of Prague in March 1939 had generated uncontrollable excitement among the mostly German population of Memel. The population of Memel was clamoring to return to Germany and could no longer be restrained. The Lithuanian foreign minister traveled to Berlin on March 22, 1939, where he agreed to the immediate transfer of Memel to Germany. The annexation of Memel into Germany went through the next day. The question of Memel exploded of itself without any deliberate German plan of annexation.[4] Polish leaders agreed that the return of Memel to Germany from Lithuania would not constitute an issue of conflict between Germany and Poland.[5]

What did cause conflict between Germany and Poland was the so-called Free City of Danzig.

Danzig was founded in the early 14th century and was historically the key port at the mouth of the great Vistula River. From the beginning Danzig was inhabited almost exclusively by Germans, with the Polish minority in 1922 constituting less than 3% of the city's 365,000 inhabitants. The Treaty of Versailles converted Danzig from a German provincial capital into a League of Nations protectorate subject to numerous strictures established for the benefit of Poland. The great preponderance of the citizens of Danzig had never wanted to leave Germany, and they were eager to return to Germany in 1939. Their eagerness to join Germany was exacerbated by the fact that Germany's economy was healthy while Poland's economy was still mired in depression.[6]

Many of the German citizens of Danzig had consistently demonstrated their unwavering loyalty to National Socialism and its principles. They had even elected a National Socialist

parliamentary majority before this result had been achieved in Germany. It was widely known that Poland was constantly seeking to increase her control over Danzig despite the wishes of Danzig's German majority. Hitler was not opposed to Poland's further economic aspirations at Danzig, but Hitler was resolved never to permit the establishment of a Polish political regime at Danzig. Such a renunciation of Danzig by Hitler would have been a repudiation of the loyalty of Danzig citizens to the Third Reich and their spirit of self-determination.[7]

Germany presented a proposal for a comprehensive settlement of the Danzig question with Poland on October 24, 1938. Hitler's plan would allow Germany to annex Danzig and construct a superhighway and a railroad to East Prussia. In return Poland would be granted a permanent free port in Danzig and the right to build her own highway and railroad to the port. The entire Danzig area would also become a permanent free market for Polish goods on which no German customs duties would be levied. Germany would take the unprecedented step of recognizing and guaranteeing the existing German Polish frontier, including the boundary in Upper Silesia established in 1922. This later provision was extremely important since the Versailles Treaty had given Poland much additional territory which Germany proposed to renounce. Hitler's offer to guarantee Poland's frontiers also carried with it a degree of military security that no other non-Communist nation could match.[8]

Germany's proposed settlement with Poland was far less favorable to Germany than the Thirteenth Point of Wilson's program at Versailles. The Versailles Treaty gave Poland large slices of territory in regions such as West Prussia and Western Posen which were overwhelmingly German. The richest industrial section of Upper Silesia was also later given to Poland despite the fact that Poland had lost the plebiscite there.[9]

Germany was willing to renounce these territories in the interest of German Polish cooperation. This concession of Hitler's was more than adequate to compensate for the German annexation of Danzig and construction of a superhighway and a railroad in the Corridor. The Polish diplomats themselves believed that Germany's proposal was a sincere and realistic basis for a permanent agreement.[10]

On March 26, 1939, the Polish Ambassador to Berlin, Joseph Lipski, formally rejected Germany's settlement proposals. The Poles had waited over five months to reject Germany's proposals, and they refused to countenance any change in existing conditions. Lipski stated to German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop that "it was his painful duty to draw attention to the fact that any further pursuance of these German plans, especially where the return of Danzig to the Reich was concerned, meant war with Poland." [11]

Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck accepted an offer from Great Britain on March 30, 1939, to give an unconditional guarantee of Poland's independence. The British Empire agreed to go to war as an ally of Poland if the Poles decided that war was necessary. In words drafted by British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, Chamberlain spoke in the House of Commons on March 31, 1939:

"I now have to inform the House...that in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to that effect." [12]

Great Britain for the first time in history had left the decision whether or not to fight a war outside of her own country to another nation. Britain's guarantee to Poland was binding without commitments from the Polish side. The British public was astonished by this move. Despite its unprecedented nature, Halifax encountered little difficulty in persuading the British Conservative, Liberal and Labor parties to accept Great Britain's unconditional guarantee to Poland.[13]

Numerous British historians and diplomats have criticized Britain's unilateral guarantee of Poland. For example, British diplomat Roy Denman called the war guarantee to Poland "the most reckless undertaking ever given by a British government. It placed the decision on peace or war in Europe in the hands of a reckless, intransigent, swashbuckling military dictatorship." [14] British historian Niall Ferguson states that the war guarantee to Poland tied Britain's "destiny to that of a regime that was every bit as undemocratic and anti-Semitic as that of Germany." [15] English military historian Liddell Hart stated that the Polish guarantee "placed Britain's destiny in the hands of Poland's rulers, men of very dubious and unstable judgment. Moreover, the guarantee was impossible to fulfill except with Russia's help..." [16]

American historian Richard M. Watt writes concerning Britain's unilateral guarantee to Poland: "This enormously broad guarantee virtually left to the Poles the decision whether or not Britain would go to war. For Britain to give such a blank check to a Central European nation, particularly to Poland — a nation that Britain had generally regarded as irresponsible and greedy — was mind-boggling." [17]

When the Belgian Minister to Germany, Vicomte Jacques Davignon, received the text of the British guarantee to Poland, he exclaimed that "blank check" was the only possible description of the British pledge. Davignon was extremely alarmed in view of the proverbial recklessness of the Poles. German State Secretary Ernst von Weizsäcker attempted to reassure Davignon by claiming that the situation between Germany and Poland was not tragic. However, Davignon correctly feared that the British move would produce war in a very short time.[18]

Weizsäcker later exclaimed scornfully that "the British guarantee to Poland was like offering sugar to an untrained child before it had learned to listen to reason!" [19]

The Deterioration of German-Polish Relations

German-Polish Relations had become strained by the increasing harshness with which the Polish authorities handled the German minority. The Polish government in the 1930s began to confiscate the land of its German minority at bargain prices through public expropriation. The German government resented the fact that German landowners received only one-eighth of the value of their holdings from the Polish government. Since the Polish public was aware of the German situation and desired to exploit it, the German minority in Poland could not sell the land in advance of expropriation. Furthermore, Polish law forbade Germans from privately selling large areas of land.

German diplomats insisted that the November 1937 Minorities Pact with Poland for the equal treatment of German and Polish landowners be observed in 1939. Despite Polish assurances of fairness and equal treatment, German diplomats learned on February 15, 1939, that the latest expropriations of land in Poland were predominantly of German holdings. These expropriations virtually eliminated substantial German landholdings in Poland at a time when most of the larger Polish landholdings were still intact. It became evident that nothing could be done diplomatically to help the German minority in Poland.[20]

Poland threatened Germany with a partial mobilization of her forces on March 23, 1939. Hundreds of thousands of Polish Army reservists were mobilized, and Hitler was warned that Poland would fight to prevent the return of Danzig to Germany. The Poles were surprised to discover that Germany did not take this challenge seriously. Hitler, who deeply desired friendship with Poland, refrained from responding to the Polish threat of war. Germany did not threaten Poland and took no precautionary military measures in response to the Polish partial mobilization. [21]

Hitler regarded a German-Polish agreement as a highly welcome alternative to a German-Polish war. However, no further negotiations for a German-Polish agreement occurred after the British guarantee to Poland because Józef Beck refused to negotiate. Beck ignored repeated German suggestions for further negotiations because Beck knew that Halifax hoped to accomplish the complete destruction of Germany. Halifax had considered an Anglo-German war inevitable since 1936, and Britain's anti-German policy was made public with a speech by Neville Chamberlain on March 17, 1939. Halifax discouraged German-Polish negotiations because he was counting on Poland to provide the pretext for a British pre-emptive war against Germany.[22]

The situation between Germany and Poland deteriorated rapidly during the six weeks from the Polish partial mobilization of March 23, 1939, to a speech delivered by Józef Beck on May 5, 1939. Beck's primary purpose in delivering his speech before the Sejm, the lower house of the Polish parliament, was to convince the Polish public and the world that he was able and willing to challenge Hitler. Beck knew that Halifax had succeeded in creating a warlike atmosphere in Great Britain, and that he could go as far as he wanted without displeasing the British. Beck took an uncompromising attitude in his speech that effectively closed the door to further negotiations with Germany.

Beck made numerous false and hypocritical statements in his speech. One of the most astonishing claims in his speech was that there was nothing extraordinary about the British guarantee to Poland. He described it as a normal step in the pursuit of friendly relations with a neighboring country. This was in sharp contrast to British diplomat Sir Alexander Cadogan's statement to Joseph Kennedy that Britain's guarantee to Poland was without precedent in the entire history of British foreign policy. [23]

Beck ended his speech with a stirring climax that produced wild excitement in the Polish Sejm. Someone in the audience screamed loudly, "We do not need peace!" and pandemonium followed. Beck had made many Poles in the audience determined to fight Germany. This feeling resulted from their ignorance which made it impossible for them to criticize the numerous falsehoods and misstatements in Beck's speech. Beck made the

audience feel that Hitler had insulted the honor of Poland with what were actually quite reasonable peace proposals. Beck had effectively made Germany the deadly enemy of Poland.[24]

More than 1 million ethnic Germans resided in Poland at the time of Beck's speech, and these Germans were the principal victims of the German-Polish crisis in the coming weeks. The Germans in Poland were subjected to increasing doses of violence from the dominant Poles. The British public was told repeatedly that the grievances of the German minority in Poland were largely imaginary. The average British citizen was completely unaware of the terror and fear of death that stalked these Germans in Poland. Ultimately, many thousands of Germans in Poland died in consequence of the crisis. They were among the first victims of British Foreign Secretary Halifax's war policy against Germany.[25]

The immediate responsibility for security measures involving the German minority in Poland rested with Interior Department Ministerial Director Wacław Zyborski. Zyborski consented to discuss the situation on June 23, 1939, with Walther Kohnert, one of the leaders of the German minority at Bromberg. Zyborski admitted to Kohnert that the Germans of Poland were in an unenviable situation, but he was not sympathetic to their plight. Zyborski ended their lengthy conversation by stating frankly that his policy required a severe treatment of the German minority in Poland. He made it clear that it was impossible for the Germans of Poland to alleviate their hard fate. The Germans in Poland were the helpless hostages of the Polish community and the Polish state.[26]

Other leaders of the German minority in Poland repeatedly appealed to the Polish government for help during this period. Sen. Hans Hasbach, the leader of the conservative German minority faction, and Dr. Rudolf Wiesner, the leader of the Young German Party, each made multiple appeals to Poland's government to end the violence. In a futile appeal on July 6, 1939, to Premier Sławoj-Skądkowski, head of Poland's Department of Interior, Wiesner referred to the waves of public violence against the Germans at Tomaszów near Łódź, May 13-15th, at Konstancin, May 21-22nd, and at Pabianice, June 22-23, 1939. The appeal of Wiesner produced no results. The leaders of the German political groups eventually recognized that they had no influence with Polish authorities despite their loyal attitudes toward Poland. It was "open season" on the Germans of Poland with the approval of the Polish government.[27]

Polish anti-German incidents also occurred against the German majority in the Free City of Danzig. On May 21, 1939, Zygmunt Morawski, a former Polish soldier, murdered a German at Kalthof on Danzig territory. The incident itself would not have been so unusual except for the fact that Polish officials acted as if Poland and not the League of Nations had sovereign power over Danzig. Polish officials refused to apologize for the incident, and they treated with contempt the effort of Danzig authorities to bring Morawski to trial. The Poles in Danzig considered themselves above the law.[28]

Tension steadily mounted at Danzig after the Morawski murder. The German citizens of Danzig were convinced that Poland would show them no mercy if Poland gained the upper hand. The Poles were furious when they learned that Danzig was defying Poland by organizing its own militia for home defense. The Poles blamed Hitler for this situation. The Polish government protested to German Ambassador Hans von Moltke

on July 1, 1939, about the Danzig government's military-defense measures. Józef Beck told French Ambassador Léon Noël on July 6, 1939, that the Polish government had decided that additional measures were necessary to meet the alleged threat from Danzig.[29]

On July 29, 1939, the Danzig government presented two protest notes to the Poles concerning illegal activities of Polish custom inspectors and frontier officials. The Polish government responded by terminating the export of duty-free herring and margarine from Danzig to Poland. Polish officials next announced in the early hours of August 5, 1939, that the frontiers of Danzig would be closed to the importation of all foreign food products unless the Danzig government promised by the end of the day never to interfere with the activities of Polish customs inspectors. This threat was formidable since Danzig produced only a relatively small portion of its own food. All Polish customs inspectors would also bear arms while performing their duty after August 5, 1939. The Polish ultimatum made it obvious that Poland intended to replace the League of Nations as the sovereign power at Danzig.[30]

Hitler concluded that Poland was seeking to provoke an immediate conflict with Germany. The Danzig government submitted to the Polish ultimatum in accordance with Hitler's recommendation.[31] Józef Beck explained to British Ambassador Kennard that the Polish government was prepared to take military measures against Danzig if it failed to accept Poland's terms. The citizens of Danzig were convinced that Poland would have executed a full military occupation of Danzig had the Polish ultimatum been rejected. It was apparent to the German government that the British and French were either unable or unwilling to restrain the Polish government from arbitrary steps that could result in war.[32]

On August 7, 1939, the Polish censors permitted the newspaper *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny* in Kraków to feature an article of unprecedented candor. The article stated that Polish units were constantly crossing the German frontier to destroy German military installations and to carry captured German military materiel into Poland. The Polish government failed to prevent the newspaper, which had the largest circulation in Poland, from telling the world that Poland was instigating a series of violations of Germany's frontier with Poland.[33]

Polish Ambassador Jerzy Potocki unsuccessfully attempted to persuade Józef Beck to seek an agreement with Germany. Potocki later succinctly explained the situation in Poland by stating "Poland prefers Danzig to peace." [34]

President Roosevelt knew that Poland had caused the crisis which began at Danzig, and he was worried that the American public might learn the truth about the situation. This could be a decisive factor in discouraging Roosevelt's plan for American military intervention in Europe. Roosevelt instructed U.S. Ambassador Biddle to urge the Poles to be more careful in making it appear that German moves were responsible for any inevitable explosion at Danzig. Biddle reported to Roosevelt on August 11, 1939, that Beck expressed no interest in engaging in a series of elaborate but empty maneuvers designed to deceive the American public. Beck stated that at the moment he was content to have full British support for his policy.[35]

Roosevelt also feared that American politicians might discover the facts about the hopeless dilemma which Poland's provocative policy created for Germany. When American

Democratic Party Campaign Manager and Post-Master General James Farley visited Berlin, Roosevelt instructed the American Embassy in Berlin to prevent unsupervised contact between Farley and the German leaders. The German Foreign Office concluded on August 10, 1939 that it was impossible to penetrate the wall of security around Farley. The Germans knew that President Roosevelt was determined to prevent them from freely communicating with visiting American leaders.[36]

Polish Atrocities Force War.

On August 14, 1939, the Polish authorities in East Upper Silesia launched a campaign of mass arrests against the German minority. The Poles then proceeded to close and confiscate the remaining German businesses, clubs and welfare installations. The arrested Germans were forced to march toward the interior of Poland in prisoner columns. The various German groups in Poland were frantic by this time; they feared the Poles would attempt the total extermination of the German minority in the event of war. Thousands of Germans were seeking to escape arrest by crossing the border into Germany. Some of the worst recent Polish atrocities included the mutilation of several Germans. The Polish public was urged not to regard their German minority as helpless hostages who could be butchered with impunity.[37]

Rudolf Wiesner, who was the most prominent of the German minority leaders in Poland, spoke of a disaster “of inconceivable magnitude” since the early months of 1939. Wiesner claimed that the last Germans had been dismissed from their jobs without the benefit of unemployment relief, and that hunger and privation were stamped on the faces of the Germans in Poland. German welfare agencies, cooperatives and trade associations had been closed by Polish authorities. Exceptional martial-law conditions of the earlier frontier zone had been extended to include more than one-third of the territory of Poland. The mass arrests, deportations, mutilations and beatings of the last few weeks in Poland surpassed anything that had happened before. Wiesner insisted that the German minority leaders merely desired the restoration of peace, the banishment of the specter of war, and the right to live and work in peace. Wiesner was arrested by the Poles on August 16, 1939 on suspicion of conducting espionage for Germany in Poland.[38]

The German press devoted increasing space to detailed accounts of atrocities against the Germans in Poland. The *Völkischer Beobachter* reported that more than 80,000 German refugees from Poland had succeeded in reaching German territory by August 20, 1939. The German Foreign Office had received a huge file of specific reports of excesses against national and ethnic Germans in Poland. More than 1,500 documented reports had been received since March 1939, and more than 10 detailed reports were arriving in the German Foreign Office each day. The reports presented a staggering picture of brutality and human misery.[39]

W. L. White, an American journalist, later recalled that there was no doubt among well-informed people by this time that horrible atrocities were being inflicted every day on the Germans of Poland.[40] Donald Day, a Chicago Tribune correspondent, reported on the atrocious treatment the Poles had meted out to the ethnic Germans in Poland:

“...I traveled up to the Polish corridor where the German authorities permitted me to interview the German refugees from many Polish cities and towns. The story was the same. Mass arrests and long marches along roads toward the interior of Poland. The railroads were crowded with troop movements.

Those who fell by the wayside were shot. The Polish authorities seemed to have gone mad. I have been questioning people all my life and I think I know how to make deductions from the exaggerated stories told by people who have passed through harrowing personal experiences. But even with generous allowance, the situation was plenty bad. To me the war seemed only a question of hours.” [41]

British Ambassador Nevile Henderson in Berlin was concentrating on obtaining recognition from Halifax of the cruel fate of the German minority in Poland. Henderson emphatically warned Halifax on August 24, 1939, that German complaints about the treatment of the German minority in Poland were fully supported by the facts. Henderson knew that the Germans were prepared to negotiate, and he stated to Halifax that war between Poland and Germany was inevitable unless negotiations were resumed between the two countries. Henderson pleaded with Halifax that it would be contrary to Polish interests to attempt a full military occupation of Danzig, and he added a scathingly effective denunciation of Polish policy. What Henderson failed to realize is that Halifax was pursuing war for its own sake as an instrument of policy. Halifax desired the complete destruction of Germany.[42]

On August 25, 1939, Ambassador Henderson reported to Halifax the latest Polish atrocity at Bielitz, Upper Silesia. Henderson never relied on official German statements concerning these incidents, but instead based his reports on information he received from neutral sources. The Poles continued to forcibly deport the Germans of that area, and compelled them to march into the interior of Poland. Eight Germans were murdered and many more were injured during one of these actions.

Hitler was faced with a terrible dilemma. If Hitler did nothing, the Germans of Poland and Danzig would be abandoned to the cruelty and violence of a hostile Poland. If Hitler took effective action against the Poles, the British and French might declare war against Germany. Henderson feared that the Bielitz atrocity would be the final straw to prompt Hitler to invade Poland. Henderson, who strongly desired peace with Germany, deplored the failure of the British government to exercise restraint over the Polish authorities.[43]

On August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union entered into the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement. This non-aggression pact contained a secret protocol which recognized a Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. German recognition of this Soviet sphere of influence would not apply in the event of a diplomatic settlement of the German-Polish dispute. Hitler had hoped to recover the diplomatic initiative through the Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact. However, Chamberlain warned Hitler in a letter dated August 23, 1939, that Great Britain would support Poland with military force regardless of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement. Józef Beck also continued to refuse to negotiate a peaceful settlement with Germany.[44]

Germany made a new offer to Poland on August 29, 1939, for a last diplomatic campaign to settle the German-Polish dispute. The terms of a new German plan for a settlement, the so-called Marienwerder proposals, were less important than the offer to negotiate as such. The terms of the Marienwerder proposals were intended as nothing more than a tentative German plan for a possible settlement. The German government emphasized that these terms were formulated to offer a basis for unimpeded

negotiations between equals rather than constituting a series of demands which Poland would be required to accept.

There was nothing to prevent the Poles from offering an entirely new set of proposals of their own. The Germans, in offering to negotiate with Poland, were indicating that they favored a diplomatic settlement over war with Poland. The willingness of the Poles to negotiate would not in any way have implied a Polish retreat or their readiness to recognize the German annexation of Danzig. The Poles could have justified their acceptance to negotiate with the announcement that Germany, and not Poland, had found it necessary to request new negotiations.

In refusing to negotiate, the Poles were announcing that they favored war. The refusal of British Foreign Secretary Halifax to encourage the Poles to negotiate indicated that he also favored war.[45] French Prime Minister Daladier and British Prime Minister Chamberlain were both privately critical of the Polish government. Daladier in private denounced the “criminal folly” of the Poles. Chamberlain admitted to Ambassador Joseph Kennedy that it was the Poles, and not the Germans, who were unreasonable. Kennedy reported to President Roosevelt, “frankly he [Chamberlain] is more worried about getting the Poles to be reasonable than the Germans.”

However, neither Daladier nor Chamberlain made any effort to influence the Poles to negotiate with the Germans.[46] On August 29, 1939, the Polish government decided upon the general mobilization of its army. The Polish military plans stipulated that general mobilization would be ordered only in the event of Poland’s decision for war. Henderson informed Halifax of some of the verified Polish violations prior to the war. The Poles blew up the Dirschau (Tzew) bridge across the Vistula River even though the eastern approach to the bridge was in German territory (East Prussia). The Poles also occupied a number of Danzig installations and engaged in fighting with the citizens of Danzig on the same day. Henderson reported that Hitler was not insisting on the total military defeat of Poland.

Hitler was prepared to terminate hostilities if the Poles indicated that they were willing to negotiate a satisfactory settlement.[47] Germany decided to invade Poland on September 1, 1939. All of the British leaders claimed that the entire responsibility for starting the war was Hitler’s. Prime Minister Chamberlain broadcast that evening on British radio that “the responsibility for this terrible catastrophe (war in Poland) lies on the shoulders of one man, the German Chancellor.” Chamberlain claimed that Hitler had ordered Poland to come to Berlin with the unconditional obligation of accepting without discussion the exact German terms. Chamberlain denied that Germany had invited the Poles to engage in normal negotiations. Chamberlain’s statements were unvarnished lies, but the Polish case was so weak that it was impossible to defend it with the truth.

Halifax also delivered a cleverly hypocritical speech to the House of Lords on the evening of September 1, 1939. Halifax claimed that the best proof of the British will to peace was to have Chamberlain, the great appeasement leader, carry Great Britain into war. Halifax concealed the fact that he had taken over the direction of British foreign policy from Chamberlain in October 1938, and that Great Britain would probably not be moving into war had this not happened. He assured his audience that Hitler, before the bar of history, would have to assume full responsibility for starting the war. Halifax insisted

that the English conscience was clear, and that, in looking back, he did not wish to change a thing as far as British policy was concerned.[48]

On September 2, 1939, Italy and Germany agreed to hold a mediation conference among themselves and Great Britain, France and Poland. Halifax attempted to destroy the conference plan by insisting that Germany withdraw her forces from Poland and Danzig before Great Britain and France would consider attending the mediation conference. French Foreign Minister Bonnet knew that no nation would accept such treatment, and that the attitude of Halifax was unreasonable and unrealistic. Ultimately, the mediation effort collapsed, and both Great Britain and France declared war against Germany on September 3, 1939. When Hitler read the British declaration of war against Germany, he paused and asked of no one in particular: “What now?”[49]

Germany was now in an unnecessary war with three European nations. Similar to the other British leaders, Neville Henderson, the British ambassador to Germany, later claimed that the entire responsibility for starting the war was Hitler’s. Henderson wrote in his memoirs in 1940: “If Hitler wanted peace he knew how to insure it; if he wanted war, he knew equally well what would bring it about. The choice lay with him, and in the end the entire responsibility for war was his.” [50] Henderson forgot in this passage that he had repeatedly warned Halifax that the Polish atrocities against the German minority in Poland were extreme. Hitler invaded Poland in order to end these atrocities.

Polish Atrocities Continue against German Minority

The Germans in Poland continued to experience an atmosphere of terror in the early part of September 1939. Throughout the country the Germans had been told, “If war comes to Poland you will all be hanged.” This prophecy was later fulfilled in many cases. The famous Bloody Sunday in Toruń on September 3, 1939, was accompanied by similar massacres elsewhere in Poland. These massacres brought a tragic end to the long suffering of many ethnic Germans. This catastrophe had been anticipated by the Germans before the outbreak of war, as reflected by the flight, or attempted escape, of large numbers of Germans from Poland. The feelings of these Germans were revealed by the desperate slogan, “Away from this hell, and back to the Reich!”[51]

Dr. Alfred-Maurice de Zayas writes concerning the ethnic Germans in Poland:

“The first victims of the war were Volksdeutsche, ethnic German civilians resident in and citizens of Poland. Using lists prepared years earlier, in part by lower administrative offices, Poland immediately deported 15,000 Germans to Eastern Poland. Fear and rage at the quick German victories led to hysteria. German “spies” were seen everywhere, suspected of forming a fifth column. More than 5,000 German civilians were murdered in the first days of the war. They were hostages and scapegoats at the same time. Gruesome scenes were played out in Bromberg on September 3, as well as in several other places throughout the province of Posen, in Pommerellen, wherever German minorities resided.” [52]

Polish atrocities against ethnic Germans have been documented in the book ‘Polish Acts of Atrocity against the German Minority in Poland.’

Most of the outside world dismissed this book as nothing more than propaganda used to justify Hitler's invasion of Poland. However, skeptics failed to notice that forensic pathologists from the International Red Cross and medical and legal observers from the United States verified the findings of these investigations of Polish war crimes. These investigations were also conducted by German police and civil administrations, and not the National Socialist Party or the German military. Moreover, both anti-German and other university-trained researchers have acknowledged that the charges in the book are based entirely on factual evidence.[53]

The book 'Polish Acts of Atrocity against the German Minority in Poland' stated:

"When the first edition of this collection of documents went to press on November 17, 1939, 5,437 cases of murder committed by soldiers of the Polish army and by Polish civilians against men, women and children of the German minority had been definitely ascertained. It was known that the total when fully ascertained would be very much higher. Between that date and February 1, 1940, the number of identified victims mounted to 12,857. At the present stage investigations disclose that in addition to these 12,857, more than 45,000 persons are still missing. Since there is no trace of them, they must also be considered victims of the Polish terror. Even the figure 58,000 is not final. There can be no doubt that the inquiries now being carried out will result in the disclosure of additional thousands dead and missing." [54]

Medical examinations of the dead showed that Germans of all ages, from four months to 82 years of age, were murdered. The report concluded:

"It was shown that the murders were committed with the greatest brutality and that in many cases they were purely sadistic acts — that gouging of eyes was established and that other forms of mutilation, as supported by the depositions of witnesses, may be considered as true. The method by which the individual murders were committed in many cases reveals studied physical and mental torture; in this connection several cases of killing extended over many hours and of slow death due to neglect had to be mentioned. By far the most important finding seems to be the proof that murder by such chance weapons as clubs or knives was the exception, and that as a rule modern, highly-effective army rifles and pistols were available to the murderers. It must be emphasized further that it was possible to show, down to the minutest detail, that there could have been no possibility of execution [under military law]." [55]

The Polish atrocities were not acts of personal revenge, professional jealousy or class hatred; instead, they were a concerted political action. They were organized mass murders caused by a psychosis of political animosity. The hate-inspired urge to destroy everything German was driven by the Polish press, radio, school and government propaganda.

Britain's blank check of support had encouraged Poland to conduct inhuman atrocities against its German minority.[56]

The book 'Polish Acts of Atrocity against the German Minority in Poland' explained why the Polish government encouraged such atrocities:

"The guarantee of assistance given Poland by the British Government was the agent which lent impetus to Britain's policy of encirclement. It was designed to exploit the problem of Danzig and the Corridor to begin a war, desired and long-prepared by England, for the annihilation of Greater Germany.

In Warsaw moderation was no longer considered necessary, and the opinion held was that matters could be safely brought to a head. England was backing this diabolical game, having guaranteed the "integrity" of the Polish state. The British assurance of assistance meant that Poland was to be the battering ram of Germany's enemies. Henceforth Poland neglected no form of provocation of Germany and, in its blindness, dreamt of "victorious battle at Berlin's gates." Had it not been for the encouragement of the English war clique, which was stiffening Poland's attitude toward the Reich and whose promises led Warsaw to feel safe, the Polish Government would hardly have let matters develop to the point where Polish soldiers and civilians would eventually interpret the slogan to extirpate all German influence as an incitement to the murder and bestial mutilation of human beings." [57]

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EU Expansion into the South Caucasus: Ukraine II?

Pat Walsh

On July 9th European Union Council President Charles Michel announced an "unprecedented financial package" designed to help the Armenian government continue "democratic reforms" and improve the socio-economic situation in the country. Michel stressed the desire of the EU to become "an active partner" to Armenia, offering Yerevan an aid package of 2.6 billion Euros over the next 5 years, 1 billion more than the EU had previously earmarked in an earlier proposal. The amount is so large it nearly equals Armenia's annual budget for next year. The package is being generally viewed as a reward for what the EU deemed to be recent fair elections and the return of Nikol Pashinyan as Prime Minister.

The aid to Armenia is part of a package for the EU's 6 post-Soviet Eastern Partnership countries. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a joint initiative launched in 2009 by the European Union, its Member States and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine ('the partner countries'). However, Armenia's share far outweighs that of any other country. War ravaged Ukraine, for instance, with a population of 45 million (compared to Armenia's less than 3 million) and which signed an Association Agreement with the EU, is getting only 1.9 billion Euros compared to Armenia's 2.6 billion. Azerbaijan, which is shouldering the main burden of Armenia's aggressions in the Southern Caucasus, is being allocated a paltry 140 million Euros, mostly for Green initiatives.

If the EU's intention was merely to assist in the economic reconstruction of the region and provide resources that would enhance the existing peace process there could be no objection to such a project. Azerbaijan, for instance, already has signed economic agreements on strategic partnership with 9 EU member states – a third of the European Union. Its main trading

partner is the European Union, which accounts for about 40 per cent of Azerbaijan's trade. The Southern Gas Corridor is also important to Europe's energy security.

However, there is good reason to suspect that the true nature of EU involvement – its geopolitical orientation – is not all about co-operation and development for the mutual benefit of Europe and the South Caucasus. Another agenda is at work.

Michel's Plan seems to be something of a Marshall plan for the reconstruction of Armenia, providing for the rejuvenation of the Armenian economy. But it will also certainly go somewhere toward altering the balance of power in the region, which has been heavily against Armenia since defeat in the Karabakh War.

The EU, having had its fingers burnt in its misadventure in Ukraine in 2013 by the crisis its interference provoked, and having had time to lick its wounds during the Trump interregnum, now seems to be hell-bent on expansionist interventionism in the Southern Caucasus. And there is little doubt its prime target is Armenia.

What is the EU hoping to accomplish in its thrust into the Southern Caucasus? The answer does not lie in its fine phrases and fancy words. It lies in its history.

What is the EU?

Expansion or consolidation? That was the dilemma faced by the British Empire at the zenith of its power in 1900. It made the wrong choice and the result was the Great War of 1914. The EU, having failed to cohere, only seems to know what it is when it is expanding these days.





East. The UK was the main champion of Turkish membership of the EU, for example, against opposition from most of the other member states. But having accomplished its mission to divert the EU from consolidating itself to expanding itself, Britain left, with the EU firmly on a continuous expansionary course, even when it has been presented with its best opportunity for decades to consolidate. However, faced with a serious crisis with Britain over the Northern Ireland Protocol it is still driving eastward toward its Ostland.

The great value of the Soviet buffer in Eastern Europe for the European Union's development was that it forced the EU to cohere through its containment. What was good about the EU was achieved during this period, before its expansionary instincts were let loose by the collapse of the USSR.

EU expansion has been eastward, both in economic and military forms, from the end of the Cold War. With the EU's enlargement to the frontier zones of Eastern Europe it became an adversarial geopolitical player without the means to follow through on its new pretensions. Its misadventure in Ukraine, around a decade ago, should have been a salutary lesson to all about the dangers of its actions.

In the Ukraine EU expansionism placed the newly elected government of Viktor Yanukovich in a difficult predicament by offering membership of the Union and the prospect of joining NATO. The EU is not NATO, of course, but what it is, in effect, is the vanguard of NATO, the soft power wing of the West's military expression directed at Russia. Or as Professor Richard Sakwa recently noted about the EU: "it has become little more than the civilian wing of the Atlantic security alliance." (Frontline Ukraine, p.227)

The Yanukovich government knew that if it took the deal the EU offered it would come into conflict with Russia. It knew that its industries would be devastated by leaving the Russian sphere, by losing Russian subsidised energy supplies and joining the capitalist competition of the world market. When the EU offered a miserly sum to Ukraine as a bribe to come out of the Russian sphere the Ukraine government backtracked and went back to Moscow. The EU went frantic over its rejection. Presumably, it is not making the same mistake with Armenia with money.

Richard Sakwa, Professor of European and Russian Politics, comments about the EU's Ukrainian misadventure in his book 'Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands': "The goal was to engineer Ukraine's separation from Moscow to steer it into the Western camp. From 2010 negotiations began on an Association Agreement with the country, specifying reform priorities... The Association Agreement was initialled on 30 March... 2012, but the plan to sign it... provided the gravest European crisis in a generation... The EU was launched on the path of geopolitical competition, something for which it was neither institutionally nor intellectually ready. Not only was the Association Agreement incompatible with Ukraine's existing free-trade agreements with Russia, but there was also the Lisbon requirement for Ukraine to align its defence and security policy with the EU. This was an extraordinary inversion: instead of overcoming the logic of conflict, the EU became an instrument for its reproduction in new forms. This is not the EU that a whole generation of idealists, scarred by the memory of European civil wars, sought to build. It also deeply alienated Russia, shattering the post-Cold War security system. Not surprisingly, as soon as the Ukraine crisis escalated, the

Eastward expansion was first embarked upon by the EU after its political consolidation was disrupted by British entry in the 1970s. After a brief European phase Britain began to disrupt Europe through encouragement to enlarge and expand to the



Map showing the South Caucasus. The territory of Armenia extends to the South, splitting Azerbaijan in two; the Western part of Azerbaijan is Nakhchivan. The land that connects Armenia to Iran and splits Azerbaijan (the ‘North-South corridor’) is Syunik, or Western Zangezur.

See the following EU website for an extremely detailed description of how the EU is planning to spend 1 million Euro a week developing Armenia and Western Zangezur in particular:
https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/cooperation_map.pdf [Extracts below]

“THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ARMENIA PARTNER FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL ARMENIANS €1 MILLION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT (DONATION) FROM THE EU PER WEEK

[Work already done under this scheme:]

930 Small and Medium-size Enterprises received advisory services, leading to an average increase of business activity of more than 30%.

1 500 new jobs created over the past years in the non-agricultural SME sector.

6 000 products of Armenian origin can be imported into the EU without customs duties under the GSP+ Scheme.

100 SMEs have benefited from cheaper access to finance with the support of the EU bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Armenian SMEs to access a newly established private equity fund representing more than €40 million of new potential investment.”

burden of geopolitical leadership shifted to the US, which was far more organisationally and temperamentally suited for this type of conflict... The EU had been marginalised – in a conflict that its actions have provoked and that is taking place in its ‘neighbourhood’.” (pp. 40-1)

When the EU saw its Ukrainian project in ruins Brussels attempted to rescue the situation by attempting to broker a deal between the elected Ukrainian government and the Maidan insurrection, that EU actions had prompted. This infuriated the Obama administration which wanted to play the geopolitical game against Moscow out to the full. Victoria Nuland, Obama’s Assistant Secretary of State famously exclaimed “Fuck the EU!” in a leaked conversation.

The US did not want to settle things down in Ukraine. It wanted an insurrection in Ukraine, and brushed aside the attempted EU compromise, as unnecessary weakness shown to Moscow. The Maidan insurrection and coup d’état were being managed by Washington as a geopolitical move with the objective of unseating President Putin, who had resurrected Russia from the dire position it had assumed after Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Ukrainian territorial disintegration was, of course, the inevitable consequence of Russian resistance to EU/US attempts to recruit Ukraine to the anti-Russian camp.

The EU’s main purpose in the world seems to be the aggravation of Russia. It has no army to follow through on the aggravation it causes and is totally reliant on the US to be its army, through NATO, or otherwise. However, this makes the EU highly dependent on the US willingness to take on the conflict it inevitably stirs up, on its behalf. During the Trump Presidency, when the rogue President decided to let the world outside the US sort out its own affairs the EU was at a loss to know what to do with itself. However, the activist Biden Presidency has given it a new purpose in life – the old purpose – and it has now thrust into the Southern Caucasus to meddle with things there. The EU is furthermore invested with great moral purpose for its new adventure, feeling that it has a moral crusading US President at its back, and fighting the good fight against “authoritarians” for the expansion of western democracy, instead of being made redundant by an immoral scoundrel in the White House.

This brings us to a greater understanding of what the EU actually is. The EU likes to present itself as a union for the mutual benefit of countries, bringing former enemies together through common and compatible interests. The EU pretends it is about bringing peace, stability and development to those on its expanding hinterland who supposedly need it. It says to the world: “Be like us. We got over our differences and produced a miracle of collaboration. And look at us now! We brought about peace and friendship in Europe. We are amazing!” Only that is not the true story.

Europe lives within a false memory of itself as it has been reconstructed into the EU. It has become to believe this false memory and now trumpets it to the world at every conference, project and initiative it organizes. Doubtlessly much of the world believes it too, especially when Euros grease the palm.

It is a myth that the EU brought about peace in Europe; it was a consequence of the peace that the Soviet Union and the US imposed militarily on a devastated continent after the Second World War Europe had brought about in a generation. Europe

destroyed a large part of the world in the 2 World Wars it fought with itself from 1914. It reconstructed many parts of the Middle East not for the better, out of the Ottoman Empire it liquidated for Imperialist purposes. But now it believes and presents itself as a model of goodness, having got its act together at last.

It was the United States which actually created the EU and Europe as we know it. The project would never have got off the ground without US insistence that it must happen. The Marshall Plan was conditional on acceptance of a plan for a federal Europe to counter the power of the Soviet Union, which was the main beneficiary of the European War that Stalin took advantage of to construct a great buffer zone in Eastern Europe to guard against further aggression from the West. The US had originally wanted to permanently disable Germany and pastoralise it under the Morgenthau Plan. But the Red Army in Berlin led to the adoption of a radically different approach by the US, involving resurrecting the part of Germany saved and forcing the French to work with their former enemies to rebuild something capable of preventing the onward march of Communism across the continent within favourable conditions.

Ivan T. Berend’s book, *The History of European Integration*, details how only the application of overwhelming US financial, military and diplomatic power knocked French and German heads together to ensure the European union project was made possible and implemented. Allan Dulles made it clear that the Marshall Plan was conditional on Europeans working together and integrating to form an effective counter-buffer to Soviet power.

The main European contribution to the new Europe was in extensive acts of ethnic cleansing and genocide against citizens who found themselves no longer welcome in the states they inhabited after what had been done in the war by Europeans. Millions were killed or forcefully relocated to produce the new Europe, overseen by the United Nations (A recent book by James Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies*, estimates that more than 9 million Germans alone died as a result of Allied starvation and expulsion policies in the five years after 1945). What happened in Eastern Anatolia in 1915 was nothing to what occurred in Europe in the period after 1945.

The EU was created by the US and given a purpose by Washington. And in 1990, as the Cold War ended upon the collapse of the USSR, it knew just what its mission was – to expand eastward, mopping up the former Soviet buffer countries and remaking them in its own image in conjunction with US power which was proclaimed as history ending.

Of course, a number of these countries mopped up in the anti-Russian advance have lately protested against being remade in the image of the new liberal ideologues who now run the EU. Hungary and Poland have resisted attempts to dictate to them about their national morality and family life, seeing the new European consciousness as undermining of their traditional values, culture and social relations. These old nations with long-standing traditional cultures cannot spontaneously metamorphose through a wave of the EU magic wand casting its spell of new consciousness. And now the Brussels liberal ideologues, along with more superficial cosmopolitan people in some nations, have made noises about sanctioning them for their independence of belief and refusal to adapt to the latest LGBT etc. faddism.

This should be a lesson to the Southern Caucasus – Euro come with strings attached.

Target Armenia

A fool and a knave created the Republic of Armenia as we know it. The fool was Gorbachev and the knave was Yeltsin. Gorbachev destroyed the Soviet Union in a delusional attempt to reform it and Yeltsin, in a power grab, enacted national revolutions by liquidating the multi-national state, enacting capitalist revolutions by giving away nationalised property to cronies, who became oligarchs who operated through corruption.

Armenia played a prominent part in instigating the fall of the Soviet Union during 1987-90. However, what appeared to be a secessionist movement quickly reverted to type. The process of disintegration it helped begin in Yerevan was revealed to be all about ridding itself of the multi-national state in order to renew its territorial expansionism at the expense of its neighbours – particularly the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan. Independence has been a minor consideration for Armenia ever since with the major objective being the traditional pursuits of Armenian nationalism which survived even the great Stalin Ice Age to re-emerge as soon as the Bolshevik boot was taken off the throat.

Nikol Pashinyan was more about undoing the negative effects of one consequence of Yeltsin – cronyism/corruption – that had filtered away the state's resources, than asserting Armenian independence. When Pashinyan was confronted with opposition from the cronies on the Karabakh issue he countered them with ultra-nationalism that led to the Second Karabakh War. The war, and his subsequent election victory, has given Pashinyan a second chance. But is the EU now depriving Armenia of an opportunity to finally grasp the nettle of its fundamental problem and the necessity of making peace with its neighbours, by presenting Yerevan with a “get-out-of-gaol-free” card through the finance necessary to extricate themselves from the situation which produced this opportunity?

EU promises of Euros made prior to the election largely explain the recent confidence of Pashinyan, the defeated war leader, who has now summoned up the will to threaten the implementation of the most important points of the Trilateral Moscow Peace Agreement. On the eve of Charles Michel's visit to Yerevan, Pashinyan stated that he was not going to honour the clause in the agreement which made provision for the construction of the Zangezur transport corridor between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. This part of the Trilateral Agreement, which is guaranteed by the President of Russia, and which is of strategic importance to Russia's interests in the region, will not be implemented according to the Armenian Prime Minister. It seems that the EU, and its money, has provided Pashinyan with the Dutch courage needed to defy Moscow. It will be interesting to see how long this lasts but Moscow can be assured there will be much twisting and turning by the slippery eels of Yerevan.

In the short to medium term Nikol Pashinyan's strategy is to get Armenia's defence provided for by Moscow, while its economy is rebuilt by Brussels. That policy is the best way out of the desperate situation Armenia finds itself in, for Pashinyan. If successful it would effectively checkmate the opposition and be a win-win situation for cash-strapped Armenia, with the

hope that it could be revived in the long-term. It avoids having to generate good relations and make peace with Turkey, which is the implication of the Trilateral Agreement. It is, however, a policy of squaring a circle. It will demand a great deal of political skill to maintain this balancing act between Russia and the West.

As part of their financial subvention to Yerevan, the European emissaries from Brussels have indicated their willingness to support the opening of another corridor, to rival the Trilateral Agreement one, with access to the West through Georgia. 600 million Euros will be allocated toward the completion of this new north-south highway to the Iranian border. The Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, Suren Papikyan told reporters that this project would involve tunnelling through mountains and the building of great bridges and in total would cost an estimated 1.5 billion Euros.

The large amounts of EU financing devoted to the road through Zangezur, “indicates that this funding has a strategic meaning for the EU,” according to Arman Yeghoyan, a member of parliament from Pashinyan's My Step coalition: “From India, Iran, the Gulf, Armenia, and Georgia, a road to Europe. Six hundred million is allocated for that road alone.” This is Armenia's bridge to Europe, avoiding Russia and Turkey. The European Commission also announced that in the next 5 years it is going to allocate over 1.5 billion Euros to Armenia for the construction of a number of key projects, including the development of Western Zangezur (which it calls Syunik region).

Trouble Ahead?

Armenia has treaty commitments which conflict with those it is entering into with its new European financiers. The treaty establishing the Eurasian Economic Union, signed in May 2014 by the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, came into force in January 2015. This treaty, facilitating Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union, was signed in October 2014. Tigran Suren Sargsyan, a former Prime Minister of Armenia, has been Chairman of the board of the Eurasian Economic Commission since 2016. During 2013, around the time of the start of the Ukraine crisis, the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, indicated a willingness to sign up to an Association Agreement with the EU. He was then put under pressure by Moscow to abandon this course and Armenia instead initialled the agreement with Russia's EEU.

The 2018 Velvet Revolution which brought Nikol Pashinyan to power was viewed as a pro-European development. Armenia was seen as attempting to create a geopolitical balance between the EU and EEU/Russia, wishing to collaborate with both. But the EU stated in 2016 that “if Armenia were to join any customs union, this would not be compatible with concluding a bilateral Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Armenia because a customs union has a common external trade policy and an individual member country no longer has sovereign control over its external trade policies”. This was similar to EU demands of the UK when it negotiated its exit from the EU. Armenia could not have it both ways.

The decision of the EU to allocate 1.6 Billion Euros to Armenia within the next 5 years, out of a regional allocation of 2.3 Billion Euros, speaks volumes. Around 70% of the proposed EU regional aid is being presented to Armenia, the state with the

smallest population, which has been responsible for most of the regional conflict, ethnic cleansing of 800,000 Azerbaijanis and which operated an occupation policy against international law, until it was forced out after provoking a second war. Only 30% of the aid is to be received by Georgia and Azerbaijan, which has been subjected to both military aggression and occupation and has the prime role in reconstructing the areas devastated by Armenia's actions. The EU's contribution of 150 million Euros to Azerbaijan is really a nominal sum to maintain a pretence of "balance". It is derisory small change for Brussels.

This indicates the EU's real intentions in the region, showing that Brussels obviously sets a higher priority on partnership with Armenia and the development of the Armenian economy than on the post-war reconstruction of the South Caucasus. In other words, despite Michel's fine words about conflict resolution and peace building, the EU is less interested in important aspects like the transformation of the conflict, demining of Azerbaijani territories, return of IDPs to their homes, the socio-economic development of the entire region, and the reconciliation of the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan than it is to extracting Armenia from the Russian sphere.

Yeghoyan suggested that the EU's aid package to Armenia, in contrast to what it offered to Azerbaijan, was a reward for Yerevan's more "Europe-friendly" attitude. He noted that the EU funding "has a clear political undertone because Azerbaijan is refusing to implement reforms, the EU usually provides funding in exchange for reforms... Recently the EU and Azerbaijan have had a tense relationship."

It goes without saying that the Europeans have always had a biased position in relation to Azerbaijan, in regard to the conflict with Armenia. That was clearly demonstrated during the occupation of Karabakh, in the recent war and now, in its aftermath. Michel notably referred to "Nagorno-Karabakh" as a "disputed territory" in his visit to Yerevan. "Nagorno-Karabakh" is, in fact, gone from the map. It was an autonomous region of Azerbaijan created by the Bolsheviks nearly a century ago, in July 1923, that created an Armenian majority within an artificially drawn boundary line. It was abolished in November 1991. When the Armenians seized it in the early 1990s they took a large part of Azerbaijani territory with it, expelling 800,000 people from the region they went on to occupy for nearly 3 decades. The Armenians, in their victorious mode, called this occupied land "Artsakh" rather than "Nagorno-Karabakh" and they constructed a pseudo-state out of it. "Nagorno-Karabakh" and "Artsakh" were, however, finished by the Azerbaijani liberation war in the Fall of 2020. What remains of it is a small rump with about 25,000 Armenians inhabiting an area ring-fenced by Russian forces. It is not sustainable on any other basis but Russian military power.

There is nothing, or never was, anything making "Nagorno-Karabakh" a "disputed territory". Under International Law it always was, and is, a part of Azerbaijan and the UN and practically every state in the world recognized it as such. Four UN Security Council resolutions in 1993 described the Armenian presence in Karabakh as an illegal occupation of Azerbaijan's sovereign territory. The Azerbaijani army implemented these resolutions in 2020 after the failure of international organisations over decades to resolve the conflict. Only Armenia disputed that Karabakh was a part of Azerbaijan, making the pretence that it was a break-away secessionist state that somehow emerged through its own efforts. Armenia, despite wishing to incorporate it within Armenia never formally

claimed it and, in fact, never recognized it, despite propping it up militarily and financially.

So Charles Michel should not be using the term "Nagorno-Karabakh" or the phrase "disputed territory" because when he does it makes it clear the EU is taking sides in favour of the Armenian nationalist narrative against the International Law of Nations.

Armenia, a weak state with a shattered economy, is, however, likely to be much more amenable to dancing to the EU tune for its Euros, than the strong, independent and functional state of Azerbaijan. But the EU will have its work cut out keeping Armenia to its itinerary particularly when Russian resistance appears. There is little chance that the Michel Plan will be a Marshall Plan for the South Caucasus. Even if the EU had the will for such a project, which it doesn't, it does not have the power the US had in 1945 to see it through.

However, the EU is not deterred and has been explicit in its objectives. Its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell (High Representative of EU Foreign and Security Policy) recently stated that the EU needed to "push back, constrain, and engage" Moscow. Borrell made the remarks while presenting a report detailing his proposed strategy for the EU. EU leaders debated the report at a summit last month amid divisions between some members over how to deal with Moscow. The proposed strategy included details on future relations between Brussels and the six former Soviet republics in the EU's Eastern Partnership program. It stated that the EU "firmly rejects the Russian pursuit of a privileged sphere of influence" over those countries. "The Eastern partners have a full, sovereign right to shape the breadth and depth of their relations with the EU and other international players freely," it continued. The EU would continue to "strengthen the Eastern partners' resilience via bilateral agreements" through EU Association Agreements and trade treaties. It also said the EU should continue "important financial support" to the Eastern Partnership countries and others with a focus on "necessary reforms in the economy, governance and the rule of law, green and digital transformations, and inclusive societies." Borrell concluded that "Time and again, the European Union has demonstrated unity despite attempts by Russia to divide us... This unity remains our biggest asset and needs to be even more robust." (<https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-eu-borrell-plan/31311091.html>)

Borrell was the diplomat who was given a public dressing down by Sergei Lavrov at a disastrous press conference in Moscow in February 2021. The Russian Foreign Minister accused EU leaders of lying about the poisoning of Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny and called the European Union an "unreliable partner" acting more and more "like the United States". The incident illustrated clearly the EU weakness in relation to Russia – all ringcraft and no punching power.

Armenia, like the ex-Soviet Eastern European states, is being recruited by the EU in order to detach it – and Georgia – from the Russian sphere of influence. Western propaganda directed toward Eastern European states was designed to encourage nationalism in them so that a nationalist antagonism would be developed between these states and Russia. And the EU continues to encourage hostile nationalist attitudes towards Russia in these countries in various ways.

Sergei Lavrov signalled that Russia was viewing the EU move into the Southern Caucasus with concern in a webinar t: “They are trying to form a belt of instability around us, forcing our closest neighbours, fraternal peoples to make a choice – either you are with the West, or you are with the Russian Federation... They want to surround us with a cordon sanitaire, and even derive some benefit from the fact that the West will exert a decisive influence on the development of our neighbours... Now, our Western colleagues are trying to expand their presence, including military, along the perimeter of our borders, including Central Asia and Transcaucasia.” (Azeridaily 23.07.2021)

Lavrov’s reference to the “cordon sanitaire” shows that even if Europe forgets its history, the Russians do not. In 1919-20 Europe attempted to erect a great buffer of small states right around the Russian perimeter, from the Baltic to the Caspian Sea. Halford Mackinder, the famous father of geopolitics who promoted the Heartland theory, was sent as High Commissioner to the Southern Caucasus, to bolster its defences. While the “cordon sanitaire” was successful to the North, for a generation, thanks to Pilsudski’s victory over Lenin, in the Southern Caucasus it quickly collapsed when Europe failed to make good its promises to defend the region against the Red Army.

Whatever about the recent success of the EU’s strategy in Eastern Europe it would be most inappropriate to attempt such a thing in the Southern Caucasus. Armenian nationalism is primarily not anti-Russian. A large segment of Armenian society views Russia as a natural ally, and a last line of defence, against their more numerous neighbours whom Armenian nationalism is prone to antagonize. The encouragement of Armenian nationalism in the hope that it will be directed against Moscow would be a disastrous development. Any brief anti-Russian direction such a policy would produce would be quickly superseded by the exercise of nationalist passions against the neighbours and their territory, as was the case in 1987-90.

It seems that the EU, blocked in Ukraine after it provoked the disintegration of the Ukrainian state, is now hell bent on expanding into the Southern Caucasus proceeding through the aforementioned methods. It seems determined to probe and aggravate Russia there and undo the delicate situation, and Russian brokered armistice, that has existed since the Karabakh war. Its number one target is Armenia. Its secondary target is Georgia, which is already being chastised for anti-LGBT behaviour. Azerbaijan it pays lip service to, but it is clear that it is lined up as an “authoritarian state” in the EU sights. It is also Turkish so persona non grata to the European Christian club. So we can see what the EU is aiming to do in providing Armenia and Pashinyan with the money to get out of responsibilities and cause problems for the Russians in the cause of “democracy”.

Something should be said about the new cold war involving western democratic activism against “authoritarian” states. These so-called “authoritarian” states often have elections like any western democratic state. Their governments are popularly elected and their leaders are very popular. However, these elections result in governments that the West do not like, for one reason or another (whether it be their unwillingness to be penetrated by Western capitalism or penetrated by LGBT etc). So, perhaps these popularly-elected governments (i.e. democratic) are merely functional and their systems actually defence mechanisms against penetration, disintegration and plunder. That, after all is the purpose of a state! If we could see an “authoritarian” state which has been overthrown by democratic activism and a viable democratic state established

in its place the fairy stories of the West might be believable. But all the evidence has been to the contrary.

It is very important Armenia is forced into honouring the actual settlement it signed up to, for the overall good of the South Caucasus region. There is no fantasy EU alternative. It is essential that Armenia makes peace with its neighbours within a regional settlement that curtails revanchist Armenian nationalism through a new sense of responsibility. However, recent history and politics seems to strongly suggest that the EU seems to be determined to undermine the existing peace agreement through mindless meddling that will recklessly destabilise the region, mainly to get at Russia. The EU is using the Armenians, who they know are in a tight corner, to do so. Such European Union activity is potentially dangerous and it is a very concerning development that can only lead to trouble ahead if it is played out to the full. Is it a coincidence that the most serious outbreak of conflict since the end of the war last November has occurred since the EU visit emboldened Yerevan?

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