

Irish Foreign Affairs

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

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Editorial

Two Treaties

Charles de Gaulle and Eamon De Valera each repudiated an Agreement made with the enemy to end a War.

The elected Government of the French democracy declared war on Germany in September 1939. It committed all its forces to the first battle, which did not happen until May 1940. It lost that battle and, with its Army disrupted, it made an Armistice with Germany in June 1940. De Gaulle, who was a Colonel in the Army, repudiated the Armistice, went absent without leave, left the country, and declared from abroad that he was the true France. The French Parliament, accepting the Armistice as the best possible deal in the circumstances, appointed a retired military man, Field Marshal Philippe Pétain, to be the head of the Government, with extraordinary powers, in unoccupied France until a Treaty restoring French sovereignty over the whole territory could be concluded.

Part of France, along the North and along the Border with Spain down to the Mediterranean, remained under German occupation until Britain, which had declared war on Germany jointly with France but had withdrawn its army from battle, withdrew its declaration of war and made a settlement.

A recent British biographer of Pétain, Charles Williams, comments:

“In May 1940... France (and Britain for that matter) suffered an overwhelming military defeat. Pétain... came to the conclusion that Britain would soon collapse and made his dispositions accordingly: an armistice would be followed by a peace treaty, and France would take its place in its own right in a Europe dominated by Germany” (*Pétain*, 2005, p3).

“It was all to be so very simple. Pétain would form what was to be no more than an interim administration. Once Britain surrendered there would be a peace treaty. France would be herself again... The spirit of 1871 would be revived” (p329).

Such is the English way of writing history.

Germany had not declared war on Britain. It had not desired war with Britain. It claimed nothing that Britain owned—not even a little bit of the Empire that Britain had acquired by conquest. It had not even acted to take back a bit of Empire that Britain had taken from it by conquest in 1919. All it had done to enrage Britain, and compel it to launch another World War so soon after winning the First, was to act without British authority with regard to the German city of Danzig.

But, to the British mind, withdrawing from a project on which it had embarked, after failing to achieve it, and after removing its Army from the battlefield, would have been “*surrender*”.

If it had “*surrendered*”, it would have remained in full possession of everything that it possessed before declaring war—and would probably have been more securely in possession of it.

All it would have lost was the status of World Superpower—and that had become illusory after it had broken up Czechoslovakia in September 1938, given a crucial piece of it to Hitler for reasons that have never been disclosed, and established Germany as a major European Power.

But, for England, the failing world-conquerors, whatever was not victory was surrender.

And therefore England in 1940 condemned Pétain as a traitor because he tended to French interests realistically in the light of actual circumstances, after Britain had withdrawn from the battle.

The quick German victory in France was unexpected. Hitler has been much criticised by some of his remarkable Generals for having no plans to carry the war to England after dealing with France. The British Government, which was reading the most secret German codes, knew that Germany was not preparing to invade, therefore it postured heroically, *fighting them on the beaches and on the landing grounds and in the fields and on the streets and in the hills*.

Everyone knew that speech. And when I went to England in the mid-1950s it seemed to me that many people felt as if they had actually fought then in the fields and on the streets.

Fighting on the ditches was not what England would have done—it was what they did in the virtual reality which English society has a useful capacity for living in and experiencing. And, because they did it and the French did not, they despised the French. And their contempt focused on Pétain.

(When I say “*many people*”, I refer to the stratum of what might be called the junior officer class in wartime, reshaping themselves in the course of upward mobility. NCOs, sergeants, were more realistically thoughtful.)

My conclusion at the time was that England would have settled if there had been all-out German preparation for invasion.

Many decades later it was revealed that Churchill had set up an underground army for dealing with a German occupation. Die-hards around the country were organised conspiratorially under the direction of Tom Winteringham, the only English Communist who took an intelligent interest in warfare. Their task was to prevent collaboration. And it seems that its first job was to be preventative assassination of the Chief Constables of Counties, and the general layer of authority at that level. The basic assumption was that there would be wholesale collaboration if it was not prevented by assassination.

I’m sure that, if a German occupation ever seemed imminent, and Churchill still refused to end the War, he would have been removed from Office long before the time came for the order to start killing the layer of potential collaborators at Local Authority level.

England as a force of destiny—or of Providence, according to Milton, Cromwell’s Chief Secretary—feels entitled to require others to sacrifice themselves in its interest, but has never shown any inclination to sacrifice itself. It would make no sense, in terms of its own idea of itself, for it to sacrifice itself. If it went, the Light of the World would be snuffed out. And a British self sacrifice in the circumstances of the Summer of 1940 would have been very obviously futile.

It would have saved itself by withdrawing its declaration of war if that had seemed necessary. It did not seem necessary.

German invasion was never imminent. And Hitler was absurdly concerned about the damage that the destruction of Britain and the falling apart of its Empire would do to civilisation.

So Britain remained at war. It kept Europe on a war footing with propaganda and pin-pricks. And it used its Naval dominance of the world to encourage others into rash actions which enlarged the scope of the War.

It appealed to the United States to come and save civilisation—to come and win the War for it, which it had no prospect of winning for itself. The US did not heed the appeal. It saw the British Empire as an obstacle to free trade which would have to be got rid of. But it gave it armaments in exchange for all its money. And it lent it money to buy more arms, making it a potential bankrupt.

The only hope was Russia. That hope was one of the reasons why Hitler invaded Russia in 1941. A quick victory in Russia would have ended Britain's last hope and therefore would have brought peace. But what happened was that Russia won the War.

Germany was defeated. The Treaty, pending which Pétain had conducted the Armistice Government at Vichy, never happened. Therefore Pétain was a Traitor.

De Gaulle, who had defected from the French Army as it was being defeated in June 1940, raised a kind of Army in exile under British auspices. He declared himself and this little Army to be the true France. He made a persistent nuisance of himself to the British, and he was hated by Roosevelt when the US joined the War at the end of 1942.

When the British Army finally returned to the Continent in 1944, after Russia had torn the stuffing out of the German Army, De Gaulle returned with them, bringing with him the ideal France which he had projected into the clouds on 18th June 1940. The ideal was then imposed on the actual. The actual was painfully altered, like the feet of Cinderella's Ugly Sisters, to fit the ideal.

The actual France had, with little opposition, given Pétain authority to govern unoccupied France for the duration of

the Emergency. The voting in the democratically-elected Parliament in support of giving Pétain exceptional powers was in a proportion of about 7 to 1. But in 1945 the ideal France, which consisted of the personality of De Gaulle, declared that Pétain had acted the part of a Traitor. And a great swathe of the population was found to be lacking in republican virtue. It was guilty of "*civic unworthiness*", and was punished in a variety of ways.

Pétain himself was sentenced to death.

I recall discussion of that event by small farmers in my corner of Slieve Luacra. They are best described as landowning labourers. They worked the land, having taken ownership of it from the gentry around 1905. They had fought their own war in 1919-23. In the 1930s they had supported De Valera in his unilateral remaking of the imposed Treaty. Many of them read two daily papers, the Cork one and one of the two national ones. And they had followed the course of the Second World War closely—which they knew as the Second World War, and not as The Emergency, despite what the smart-alec Professors, and even Tim Pat Coogan, declare.

They were well informed. They had a sense of the reality of things. They knew what Pétain had done in the Great War. And they knew the circumstances in which he had acted in June 1940, having had to make unpleasant decisions in their own War. They also appreciated what De Gaulle had done—his great conjuring trick in pulling a new France out of the hat at the end of a War which had gone in a way that made Pétain's France inappropriate. They were shocked that De Gaulle should condone the way Pétain was being treated, and could see no excuse for him if he let the sentence of execution be implemented. (Sentences of execution in political circumstances were not things that were unknown to them.)

In the event Pétain was reprieved, but was subjected to a prison regime much harsher than the regimes in his prisons, or than the regimes the Germans had imposed on eminent French public figures.

I mention those Slieve Luacra discussions of the De Gaulle/Pétain affair because of a play about that has recently been performed in London. I realised when reading the play that I had never heard the matter discussed as an issue since those days in Slieve Luacra—which must have been seventy years ago.

I don't know what, if anything, the writing and performance of *The Patriotic Traitor* signifies in English politics. The author, Jonathan Lynn, co-wrote the television series, *Yes Minister*. In English culture the tradition of the Court Jester still prevails. It is permissible to tell the truth as comedy or satire. At the time of the First Gulf War, while the politicians and the news media were churning out lies with a facility that Dr. Goebbels would have envied, a true account of the history of British action in the Middle East was told as satire by Rory Bremner in his comedy programme. And the truth about British engagement with Europe was told as comedy in *Yes Minister*. But it does not seem to me that *The Patriotic Traitor* could be performed as satire or comedy.

It is probably an eccentrically serious British play about a very serious matter, and is of no political significance at all.

I'm told that the play could not possibly be performed in France. The French are too earnest.

A very earnest young English intellectual of the genteel middle class enlisted in 1914 for the great war against Prussian evil, and found to his amazement that his Cockney rank-and-file—he was Company Officer—did not believe a word of that

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they were told about the reason for the War but kept on fighting as if they did:

“The Cockney reckons that when peace is declared both sides will rush out of their trenches and shake hands, and be the best of pals. ‘They can’t ‘elp themselves.’ This is the burden of the Cockney’s philosophy of war... Caught up from his civilian life by a wave of tremendous excitement that completely overwhelmed his emotional nature, ...he found himself the plaything of forces he could neither understand nor control. But in splendid faith in the righteousness of these forces he is content to give up his will completely” (Donald Hankey, *A Student In Arms*, 1916, p96).

The French soldier, according to many accounts of him, is a very different sort of creature:

“Their mental level is higher than that of any other soldiers in the world. You can see it in their faces, in the alert look of intelligence. Naturally no soldier should criticise or doubt an order. But each one is sufficiently intelligent to ask himself why such and such an order is given, and he obeys because he is convinced of the necessity. No, you don’t find automatons here as you do in Germany and Prussia”

—or Britain, of course. And this is as it should be. It was France that invented the Age of Reason. (The account of the French soldier was given by a French officer and is found in *Tapestry of A Debacle: From Paris To Vichy. A Book Of Contacts*, by Arved Arenstam, 1942, p11).

*

De Valera’s position in 1921 was similar to De Gaulle’s in 1940 in many ways. Like De Gaulle he was declared to be a traitor. Like De Gaulle, he took over the country and re-shaped its political structure. But there are substantial differences.

De Gaulle committed himself in June 1940 to an ideal of France which found little response in the actual France of the time. He came to power in 1945 through the chances of a War in which he had played little part and was looked on as a nuisance by his Western Allies—who nevertheless had to install him in power after 1945.

De Valera committed himself to the ideal of a Republic in being and remained committed to that ideal when the British Occupation intimidated and coaxed a substantial body of his colleagues to dismantle the Republic and establish in its place a Government under the authority of the Crown. When the ‘Treaty’ dictated by Britain was put to the Dail, it submitted to it by a vote of 64 to 57, a far cry from the majority of 500 by which the French Parliament gave authority to Pétain.

The ‘Treaty’ was not put to the Dail to accept or reject. Britain did not recognise the Dail as having any legitimate authority. If it had voted against the Treaty, Britain would not have recognised the vote as having any authority. It was only by submitting to the Treaty that the Dail became authoritative in British eyes. And, before being recognised as authoritative, the Dail members who supported the Treaty had to meet as the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the British 1920 Act and establish a Government under that Act to implement the Treaty: the Provisional Government. After that the Parliament of Southern Ireland was allowed to call itself the Dail.

Dev and his supporters did not take part in this born-again Dail. They had declared allegiance to the Dail as elected in 1918 and re-elected in 1921, and to the Republic which it had

proclaimed, and they did not recognise the majority of seven by which the free Dail submitted to the dictated Treaty, under pressure of a threat of British resumption, in intensified form, of the war against the Republic, as being either morally or democratically binding.

When De Gaulle deserted from his Government position and from the Army and flew to Britain in early June 1940, he did not hold the allegiance of any section of the French Army. He issued on June 18th, on his own authority, and by means of British radio, a kind of declaration of independence of an imaginary France which was a projection of his personal will, and then he set about constructing his personal Army on British authority with the purpose of contesting control of the French Empire with the French Army—which did not cease to exist when the Armistice was signed. And he did at a later stage engage in a small war with the French Army.

In De Valera’s case a majority of the Army that had fought Britain to the negotiating table rejected the imposed ‘Treaty’, and a substantial part of it was willing to engage in military conflict with the mercenary army that was being constructed by the Treatyite Provisional Government with active British support. De Valera might have been the leader of a strong Anti-Treaty Army if he had chosen to be. But he refused to accept, for many months, that the Dail split on the Treaty signified a final parting of the ways with colleagues with whom he had resisted British military and political power for two years. He kept on trying for a political compromise while the Treatyite leaders prepared for war.

Complete Gaullite intransigence, from the moment the Government delegates in the London negotiations disobeyed Government instructions and signed the ‘Treaty’ on their own authority (which the British media broadcast to the world before the Irish Government knew of it), would probably have served the nation better. De Gaulle, in Dev’s position, would probably have arrested the delegates and courtmartialled them for treason as soon as they landed in Dublin.

The Provisional Government made war on the Republican Army on June 28th, under pressure of a British ultimatum and won it with British arms and ruthless measures. De Valera then set about contesting the issue politically within the system established by the Treatyites, relying on the basic republican sentiment in the society which had been temporarily over-ridden by means of the British threat of Imperial reconquest and the terror methods applied by the Provisional/Free State Government

The Free State authorities tried to prevent this by imposing humiliating conditions on the entry of Republicans to the Dail. Dev found a way around those conditions and, only four years after the crushing Treatyite victory in the Treaty War, the anti-Treaty Party (Fianna Fail) had equal strength in the Dail with the Treaty Party (Cuman na nGaedheal). Then in 1932 it became the Government, and won all subsequent elections until 1948, leaving the state in a condition of stable democracy.

De Gaulle might have acted similarly with regard to the Vichy system of Government, but he chose a different course of action, which has left France ideologically disabled ever since.

It has been authoritatively asserted by Oxbridge-indoctrinated Irish Professors in recent decades that De Valera’s Government denied the existence of the Second World War and decreed that it should be called *The Emergency*. There is no foundation in fact for that statement. I know because I was there—and the newspapers in which the course of the War was reported are still there.

What De Valera did was deny that Ireland was under obligation to support the Crown when it declared war. Churchill asserted the right of the Crown to compel Ireland to enter the War declared in 1939. De Valera asserted Irish independence by declaring Neutrality, and he put the country in a state of readiness, a state of *Emergency*, to meet any British attempt to enforce the asserted rights of the Crown in the matter.

Ireland was certainly not in denial about the War. And it was probably better-informed about the War as a military event than were British readers whose newspapers gave priority to propaganda. The propaganda was censored out of Irish papers—which is possibly the basis of the notion that the existence of the War was denied. The War without the propaganda would have been futile from the British viewpoint. What Britain won was not the War but the propaganda.

The British military contribution to the defeat of Germany was slight. By far the greatest military contribution was that of Communist Russia, followed, a considerable distance behind, by the United States. The USA succeeded in hustling Britain back into the ground war in Europe—the only way the War could have been won—in 1944, after Britain had resisted US pressure to re-engage in 1942 and 1943.

The major British contribution was the diplomatic feat of creating a major War out of the trivial issue of Danzig, after helping Hitler to rearm and making him a gift of Czechoslovakia. Its military contribution was to keep the War going with minimal engagement for a year after losing in June 1940 in the hope that somebody else would come along and defeat Germany for it. Communist Russia, acknowledged by Churchill to have always been Britain's main enemy, came along and defeated Germany—and made a postwar settlement with regard to Poland which brushed aside the purpose for which Britain had said, in the first instance, that it had declared war. The territory that was called Poland in 1945, and that Britain recognised as Poland, was not in the same place as the Poland whose territory Britain had guaranteed in 1939—and it was not independent.

But the outstanding British contribution to the War was the creation of the myth which has served as its history wherever British Imperial influence could reach—and in Ireland ever since its Oxbridge-educated academics became ashamed in the presence of their mentors of the fact that the Irish state had to force its way into existence after Britain's first democratically-elected Parliament made war on the Irish electorate for choosing independence in 1918, the British War myth has become dominant.

Churchill said that Britain could do as it pleased in the War because there would be no actual memory of it, as he would write a suitable history of it and impose it on the mind of the world. And didn't he!

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says in its entry on Pétain:

“Following the German attack on May 1940 in World War 2, Paul Reynaud named Pétain vice premier”.

That is true—in a British way. It would have been more informative to say: ‘Following the German response to the French declaration of war...’

In 1942 the Vichy Government held an investigation into the causes of the military defeat of 1940. The accused were prisoners of the Vichy regime. They had freedom to defend themselves, and they did it so ably—particularly the Socialist Prime Minister of the Popular Front, Léon Blum—that the investigation, known (or unknown) as the *Riom Trial* was abandoned.

I had only a hazy notion of the Riom Trial, got, I think, from the novels of Upton Sinclair. There was no book about it in English—or in French either. It was close to being unknown until Cathy Winch began writing about it.

Charles Williams mentions it with a passing remark: “*The Germans were angry that the Riom trials were about who lost the war rather than who started the war in the first place*” (*Pétain* p403).

Right-thinking people, nurtured on the Churchill myth, know that curiosity about who started the war is a sign of deviancy.

Well France, following Britain, started it.

Britain, until March 1939, had been helping Germany to free itself from the restrictions imposed on it by the dictated Versailles ‘Treaty’—dictated by Britain and France. In March 1939 it suddenly decided to make war on Germany, and it made a military alliance with Poland discouraging it from negotiating the last remaining Versailles issue with Germany: the city of Danzig. Six months earlier Poland, which was in a Treaty relationship with Germany, had acted with Germany and Hungary to dismantle Czechoslovakia with British approval. But now Britain encouraged it to refuse to negotiate with Germany over Danzig—a very minor thing compared with Czechoslovakia. Danzig was a German city within Polish territory, but outside its jurisdiction. Polish Governments had failed to gain a political foothold in it in 20 years. And France followed Britain in making a military alliance with Poland.

I described the Anglo-French military guarantee to Poland in March 1939 as establishing a military encirclement of Germany. Martin Mansergh was shocked. But you needed only to look at the map and know something about the three Armies to see that it was an encirclement. But minds nurtured on the Churchill myth don't see things in that matter-of-fact sort of way. They are teleologically, or even eschatologically, structured. They could only see the future when they looked at the present. But, by denying the present out of which the future developed, they have to resort to things which lie outside the process of causation when they try to write factual histories of the course of events from 1938 to 1940.

It has come to light from the release of documents that the South African Government—the last active adherent of the Empire—warned Downing Street that the Polish Guarantee established a military encirclement of Germany and was therefore a step towards war.

The *Oxford War Pamphlets*, which had been influential in the Great War, were resumed in 1939, and one of them said that, of course, the Polish Guarantee was a military encirclement of Germany, and a good thing too! But Martin Mansergh, English-born and educated adviser to Fianna Fail Taoiseachs, finds it necessary to deny this obvious fact and to cast a suspicion of latent Nazism on anybody who can't help but see it.

France followed Britain into military alliance with Poland when Germany proposed a negotiation of the Danzig issue. It followed Britain in not making good on the Polish Guarantee when Germany broke the encirclement by invading Poland. And it followed Britain in declaring war on Germany after the German invasion of Poland but without acting against Germany during the German/Polish War. But, when Germany responded to the declaration of war on it, it was unable to follow Britain by going home, because it was at home.

When France had to fight alone with a disrupted Army, it had the choice between capitulation and making terms with Germany.

Germany was not engaged in a conquest of France. It was subject to a declaration of war by two Great Powers with extensive resources, and those Powers were putting it under

siege in a systematic and leisurely way. They were not fighting it, but they were preparing to suffocate it. It could not sit on its heels and wait. So it prepared to attack them before they were quite ready, and while they were licking their wounds from the failure of an attempted occupation of Scandinavia—Finland first and then Norway.

In the first instance it prepared for an attack through Belgium, as in 1914, and Britain and France prepared to counter it. But, in January 1940, a German officer carrying the German war plans from Munster to Bonn had his plane blown off course by bad weather and was forced to land in Holland. On the assumption that those plans would find their way into the hands of the enemy, an alternative plan, more adventurous and riskier, which had been proposed by General Manstein, and drawn up in consultation with the pioneer of tank warfare, Guderian, was adopted, and was nervously put into effect on May 10th. It began with the infiltration of a tank force through the Ardennes Forest, and the crossing of the Meuse at Sedan, far to the south of the main Anglo-French forces—which had dashed into Holland and Belgium at the first sign of German movement. Then, within a week, seeing a German force coming up behind them from the south, the British commander, Lord Gort, began his retreat from Belgium.

The story put out instantly by the British propaganda was that France was riddled with Fascist Fifth Columnists who had destroyed the national morale. That propaganda appeared in everything: newspapers, books, pamphlets, and films. But, when I was reading about that turn of events, I could not see what opportunity there was for national morale to affect the course of events. It was a conflict of armies that was decided, in substance, in about a fortnight. To call it the Six Week War is to flatter it. The bulk of the British Army was back home in three weeks. The will of the French populace was not a causative fact, as it had been in 1914-18.

When Marshal Pétain was recalled from his Ambassadorship in Spain to become Prime Minister, the War had already been lost by those who declared it. Nevertheless he was declared a *defeatist* in the British propaganda, and it was said that his defeatism of June 1940 proved that those who had accused him of defeatism in 1916 knew what they were talking about.

Paul Valéry, who for most of my life I only knew as a poet, and not a very good one, was, as I discovered a few years ago, a very big intellectual in French public life between the Wars. In 1931 he spoke at the reception of Pétain into the French Academy:

“What did you do? To mention only the two greatest things, you saved Verdun, and you saved the soul of our country...”

“You examine problems with a clear and exacting eye. Other peoples’ ideas seemed not to influence you greatly. Presently you make a discovery which, to a profane eye, would have appeared simply naïve. But we know, from the examples of science and philosophy, that what looks obvious to the ingenuous sometimes disappears to the eye of the masters, thanks to the very fixity and fineness of their concentration. Then it is that only a genius can perceive some essential and very simple truth, hitherto obscured by the studious labour of many thinking minds.

“You discover simply this: *that gunfire kills...*

“It became clear to you that the prevailing tactical rules tended to give scant importance to this idea that *gunfire kills*. Their authors saw it chiefly as a matter of wasted bullets and time lost in wasting them. It was pretty well universally taught that firing retards offensives...”

When Pétain was put in command, in desperate circumstances, at Verdun, in 1916, he set aside the principle of continuous offensive, organised defensive gunfire, and even justified tactical retreat, and Verdun was held.

And he “*saved the soul of the Army*” in 1917, when it mutinied. He did it, with only about 20 executions, by touring the affected sections of the Army, talking persuasively, and making reforms.

The line was held during the French Mutiny by the stolidity of the unimpressionable ranks of the British Army, including Hankey’s skeptical Cockneys.

It seems obvious that mass motivation was very different in the two Armies. The French, though defending the homeland in an immediate sense in 1916—even though the War was launched for the purpose of irredentist expansion—reflected on what they were being required to do, and mutinied. The British, fighting abroad for an Imperial purpose, carried on regardless.

When I first read in detail about the Battle of the Somme, I wondered what possessed large bodies of men that they should walk slowly all day into well-organised machine-gun fire, with fresh troops coming along the whole time and stepping over the bodies of those who had preceded them. What it put me in mind of was the Gadarene swine in the Bible—which I knew not from the Bible but from Dostoevsky’s quotation of it in *The Possessed*.

It seemed that the Imperial Idea had gripped the British masses during the pre-War generation, causing them to obey mindless orders mindlessly even when battle was reduced to a killing match between total populations with victory to be gained by a slightly favourable per capita rate of attrition.

But the French Army, sloppily uniformed and notoriously unregimented compared with the British, had to be reasoned with. And Pétain, the patriarchal peasant, reasoned with them.

And again in 1940 he acted reasonably in recognition of the actual circumstances of the case. France had made war on Germany and lost. The offensive into Belgium and Holland had proved catastrophic when the German gamble of a tank attack through Sedan came off. Within a few weeks the Army had been rendered incapable of conducting regular warfare, and the British had gone home.

Why not call for a general rising of the people, as in 1870? The British asked from across the Channel. Why not organise snipers in Paris as the Germans entered?

Pétain brushed these suggestions aside. What had the rising of the masses achieved in 1870 after the Army had destroyed itself in the bungled invasion of Prussia? And what would street fighting in Paris achieve after another war on Germany had been lost, except the destruction of Paris?

The practical alternatives were partial surrender on terms pending a general settlement of the War, or unacknowledged unconditional surrender, accompanied by guerrilla war, giving the whole country to Germany until Britain settled.

In British language, negotiating terms with Germany, after making war on it and losing, was collaboration with Nazism. It was a Pact with the Devil.

A year later Churchill did make a Pact with a greater Devil. He had succeeded in expanding the War to Russia, and he became the enthusiastically subservient ally of Bolshevism for four years, ordering the British press to go Bolshevik for the duration. He saw Britain as the bastion of civilisation and he saw Bolshevism as its fundamental enemy. He did not see Fascism as an enemy at all. He had, as a Cabinet member made a pilgrimage to Rome in 1927 to do homage to Mussolini. And, when Hitler came to power, he said that if England were ever put in the position in which Germany was put by the Versailles

Treaty, he hoped that somebody like Hitler would arise to restore its independence.

Britain collaborated actively with Hitler in breaking the Versailles conditions and restoring German power. And in 1938 it insisted that France should renege on its Treaty with Czechoslovakia and that the Sudetenland could be given to Hitler.

What had happened between September 1938 and June 1940 which made it profoundly immoral to negotiate terms with Germany after making war on it and losing, while it had been OK to award him Sudetenland and the advanced Czech arms industry?

British policy had changed. And, since the unification of Church and State by the State-organised English Reformation, policy and morality had been the same thing in Britain.

It became wrong for anybody to do what Britain did not want it to do—or not to do what it wanted. It wanted the French Government to maintain its declaration of war on Germany, even though this would have led to German occupation of the whole country. It wanted the Government to abandon the country and set itself up abroad so that it could maintain the declaration of war. And it wanted the Government-in-exile to exhort the population to acts of sabotage.

This was the policy adopted by De Gaulle. He deserted from the Army, flew to England, made a radio broadcast to France which the French ignored, and he set up Free France in some French possessions in Africa of which he managed to gain control.

Free France in Africa did not mean Free Africa. The Imperial apparatus of control and exploitation was maintained, and even intensified.

For Free France abroad, as well as for the Resistance that developed belatedly at home, the independence of France included continued possession of the Empire. When the Resistance became the Government in 1944, it was not a whit less Imperialist than the Vichy Government had been. And, when the disturbance of the War led to some independence demonstrations in Algeria, the Resistance in power sought to nip them in the bud by bombarding cities.

Pétain negotiated the Armistice in order to preserve a French state. De Gaulle went abroad in order to raise an Army in the Empire to liberate the Homeland. Pétain had to make further compromises as the World War became savage, but he did maintain a French state. De Gaulle did not liberate the Homeland with an Army from the Empire. He returned with the Ameranglian forces after Russia had wrecked the German Army.

Pétain then saw his job as having been done, and he tried to negotiate a transfer of power to De Gaulle.

De Gaulle would have no truck with Pétain. He acted as if the state had been surrendered to the Germans and destroyed—which is probably what would have happened if Pétain had not negotiated in 1940 but had urged resistance to the bitter end, regardless of its hopelessness—and as if a new State had to be constructed from the ruins.

There was in fact substantial continuity between the Vichy State and the Gaullist, but that continuity was heavily camouflaged by the mass purge and the myth of the Resistance.

This is something that is well brought out in the play—that the populace collaborated in the first instance and there was no Resistance, but that suddenly, after the tide of the World War had turned decisively against Germany, there was nothing but Resistance and collaborators were hard to find. And the mass collaboration had been more in earnest than the mass Resistance in the first year. And it is well brought out that De

Gaulle knew this and spread his personality over it in order to conceal it.

The meaning of all this was that French public life was based on a lie in 1944-45 and has never recovered from it. Or it was based on a myth.

There was some discussion of the meaning of “*myth*” in the 1970s by Irish academics who could not deal with Northern Ireland realities matter-of-factly, but tried to relate to them obliquely in terms of myth. Translations of the *Antigone* of Sophocles abounded as a safely ambiguous way of coping with the War without actually opposing or supporting it. It was said that myth was something that could not be clearly distinguished from truth, and even that a myth that appeared to be superficially at variance with the truth might be truer than the unvarnished truth. It was all much too clever for my taste.

But, in the case of post-War France, the myth is simply an evasive lie.

If the verb “*to collaborate*” is to be used, and if Vichy was collaboration, then France collaborated. Then in 1944-45 it pretended that it had not collaborated, but that there had been collaborators and that they needed to be purged

The purge was launched, but very soon it had to be curbed. The relationship of the populace to the Occupation and to the Vichy Government was such that there were few who could not be accused of collaboration. An unrestrained purge would soon become a matter of *condemn or be condemned*—as it was in 1793 France and around 1936 in Russia, though with less justification that in those cases, where things were essentially unclear in a social situation that *was* undergoing transformation.

France was not actually undergoing social transformation in 1944-5. What happened was that the War that Britain would not allow to end in June 1940, after it became incapable of winning it, was ended for France in 1944 because Russia had broken the German Army and America had finally compelled Britain to return to the site of its 1940 desertion.

Pétain’s holding operation had preserved French Government. De Gaulle returned from distant parts with the new Occupation forces. In establishing a new arrangement of things he might have taken account of the fact that Pétain had acted in accordance with the actual wishes of the populace after the declaration of war on Germany had ended in defeat, that his extraordinary authority was voted to him by the elected representatives of the people for coping with the Emergency of military defeat, and that at Vichy he was easily available for assassination and would not have survived if there had been any substance to the myth that was now being projected as Gaullism.

The belated Resistance might have been blended with prudent Vichyism to produce a post-War regime that was not based on a comprehensive denial of the actual course of events—a denial that could only limp along when it was deprived of De Gaulle’s grandiloquence.

The purge, intended to exert a salutary influence on the imagination of the populace, was curbed before it began to erode the populace. There were only a few thousand executions. A great many thousands were disfranchised as lacking in civic virtue. Revisionist academics in Ireland allege a similar thing was done in Republican Ireland in 1919-21, but I have never seen that they produced evidence of it. But civic unworthiness was indisputably criminalised and punished during the restoration of Republican virtue in France post-1944. A couple of years later, when the necessity of public make-believe was firmly established, the civically unworthy were amnestied.

But Pétain *was* a Fascist, wasn't he?

De Gaulle lost patience with his Resistance Government in 1946 and retired to the solitude of his country house at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises to contemplate the true France far away from the bustle of the actual France. He waited in aloof impatience for the call to return. When I went to London in the mid-fifties a play was being performed, I think at the Criterion, ridiculing a Great Man who had withdrawn from the multitude, was brooding on ingratitude, and was waiting for the Call. I don't recall if the Great Man was named, but there was no doubt who was meant.

Well, the call came soon after. And he consented to return, but on the condition that he would re-make the Constitution into something worthy of a Great Man.

Fascism! That is the response of the English Left, which was then a very important influence on English public life. (It had two mass circulation weeklies, *Tribune* (which no longer exists) and the *New Statesman* (which was very different then than it is now). I think that that was when I began to understand that Fascism had become a word without definite meaning—that, and the denunciation of Nasser as a Fascist.

The only Fascist State I was ever in was Franco Spain. I was taken there for a cheap holiday, not doubting (since it was established in the Fascist era of Europe) that it was a real Fascist State, of the Clericalist kind. (The orthodox view of the Left at the time was that Catholicism at its best was the antechamber of Fascism.) Despite my intention of enduring the sun and taking an interest in nothing else, it got through to me that, whatever Francoism might be, it was certainly not a *Clericalist* dictatorship. The priests there were obviously timid creatures who knew their place in the social order, and knew that it was not their place to be authoritative. They were a different breed altogether from the Irish priests of that time. Then it took very little investigation to discover that the Church had not put Franco in power as its instrument, but that Franco had rescued the Church and allowed it a place in his regime, along with other elements which it did not approve of.

Spain (with Portugal) was the only Fascist State that survived long enough to outlive the emergency that gave rise to it, and to evolve into something else. It made its own analysis of the World War, more overtly and incisively than neutral Ireland did. It deplored the Anglo-French/German War as European civil war. It approved the German war on Communist Russia and sent a military detachment to take part in it. And it saved the British Empire by refusing either an alliance with Germany, or a passage-of-arms for Germany, which would have gained it Gibraltar. (I have seen it said that Pétain advised Franco on this matter.)

If Britain had lost Gibraltar it would presumably have lost access to the Mediterranean.

The Franco dictatorship was the means by which a democracy that had gone wild was restored to a form of social and political order that was capable of being governed. In very recent times it seems to have been denied in principle that democracies *can* go wild, but for many centuries the standard view of political philosophy was that it was the natural tendency of democracies to go wild unless there were some very particular circumstance operating which overcame that tendency.

Franco apparently understood Fascism in much the same terms as Churchill did when paying homage to Mussolini. It was a means of restoring bourgeois order in a situation in which the elements of society had flown apart and were at war with one another, but in the doing of it bourgeois liberalism, which had proved itself ineffectual, had to be overridden by a

force capable of establishing authority in the state—which in effect means establishing a State. He did not try to establish dictatorship as the normal form of the State by appointing a dictator-heir, as the English dictator Cromwell did. He made arrangements instead for the restoration of functional monarchy, presumably knowing that it would evolve democratically. By means of dictatorship he made Spain a viable national state of the bourgeois kind, but a state with entrenched labour laws that obstructed liberalism.

Within the functional democracy that evolved from Franco Fascism, the demand began to be raised for the application of the law against those who had been active in the construction or operation of the dictatorship, but the authority of the State was influential enough to prevent this from being done.

Law and Justice are elements in the functioning of a state. Natural justice operates outside the law. And if the sense of natural justice is often outraged by the circulation of the commodity called Law—well, that's civilisation.

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Pétain was Ambassador in Spain when Reynaud, in May 1940, asked him to join the Government. Franco advised him to refuse, telling him that he was the symbol of France victorious, and that if he joined the Government in this War it had declared, he would be used as the scapegoat of defeat. He replied that he was very old, and that might be last useful thing he could do.

He returned. He refused to entertain the idea that the Government should abandon France and move to the Empire, leaving the broken Army to carry on disordered resistance to the bitter end and then exhorting the populace to wage a terrorist resistance. He also rejected out of hand Churchill's proposal that France should become part of Britain—that it should, as he put it, become a British Dominion.

What would have been the practical consequence of French acceptance of the Union proposal? I have never seen it discussed. I assume that French refusal to make any agreement in the light of the outcome of battle, in a war that France had started, would have been German occupation of the whole of France against French resistance conducted by irregular warfare, with street fighting in every town—and with Westminster becoming the lawful Government of the French possessions in Africa and the Middle East.

It would not have meant the arrival of a large British force to contest the issue with Germany in June 1940.

Colonel Pierre Tissier, who deserted with De Gaulle, published in London in 1942 a book about the Riom Trial, with a Foreword by De Gaulle. It makes the point that the indictment did not include responsibility for the War, as was originally intended:

“As the indictment did not retain the question of responsibility for the passing in September 1939 from a state of peace to a state of war, the defendants were finally put on trial only for their responsibility in the matter of the defeat...

“The object of the trials was to establish that the defeat was due to the inadequacy of the French war material, itself due to the culpable neglect of the Ministries of Léon Blum and Edouard Daladier.

“By excluding from the trial the question of military operations Marshal Pétain intended to limit the argument to the political and governmental responsibilities in the preparation of the Army for war. When the onus had in this way been cast upon the politicians it would be easy to prove that the soldiers had been in no way responsible for the defeat.

“Again, by confining investigations into the past to the period subsequent to June 1936 the Marshal meant to shield the moderate Governments of the previous legislature, and to lay the onus on the advanced Governments of the 1936 legislature. In this way it was his intention to put the Republican regime on trial and so justify his own dictatorship” (p12-13).

With the exception of the final clause, this seems accurate.

The trial was abandoned because the prosecution was unable to make a case that the Popular Front Government had infected the Army with a political malaise which sapped its will to fight, or that it deprived the Army Command of materials that it wanted.

But the major military Power in Europe, which had not disarmed after its victory of 1918, had declared war on a German state which had been forcibly disarmed under the 1918 Armistice, and which had been kept unarmed under Franco-British supervision until a few years earlier, and France had lost that war-of-choice catastrophically in a few weeks. And therefore somebody had to be declared Guilty either of gross negligence or treason.

Neither side wished to discuss the fact that the War was started by France following Britain. Or to discuss the cause of the War, either the immediate cause in the form of the declaration of war, or the long-term cause, which enabled Germany to respond so effectively to a French declaration of war on it only twenty years after it had been defeated and its State dismantled.

(That long-term cause was, of course, Britain’s refusal to allow France to secure its position against Germany in 1919. The British propaganda had declared categorically that the formation of a German national state under Prussian influence was a unique cause of evil in the world, and the one great obstacle to universal peace.

In 1919 Britain and France punished Germany in a deliberately humiliating way that was certain to arouse a strong desire for revenge amongst Germans, but when France wanted to make arrangements that would insure it against a war of revenge, Britain would not allow it. It vetoed a Rhine frontier for France and condemned the French moves towards a Rhineland separation from Prussia.

Once Germany was defeated and disarmed, it once again saw France as the enemy. The basic principle of British balance-of-power strategy is that the strongest state in Europe is the political enemy. Britain therefore insisted that the German State, established by Prussia, should remain in being, with some deletions on the fringes, and it kept France in a condition of vulnerability relative to a reviving Germany.

Britain established effective ascendancy over French foreign policy in the early 1920s, and encouraged illusions about the League of Nations—which were illusions because it was clear from the outset that the Empire would be the instrument of British policy in the world and that the League would not be allowed any effective authority. It was as an Empire the most powerful state in the world, that Britain conducted the negotiations with Czechoslovakia about giving away its strong western frontier to Hitler in 1938. And it was as an Empire that it browbeat France into revoking its Treaty with Czechoslovakia.

But that aspect of the matter was ruled out of order in discussion of the defeat both by Vichy and the Gaullists.

(But De Gaulle must have been mentioning such things confidentially in his travels, because Churchill accused him of spreading Anglophobia around the world.)

Taking the state of war as given, Vichy could not make a plausible case against Daladier and Blum for the defeat.

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The outcome of the war was a short sharp victory for Germany in the narrowest military terms—which was the only victory that David could achieve against Goliath. It was over before *morale* could enter into it either on the part of the Government or the populace. Dispassionate military historians drool over it as the kind of battle that had not been seen since Hannibal’s victory over the Romans at Cannae.

Here is an account of it by the British military theorist and historian, Basil Liddell Hart, who could claim to have taught both Guderian and De Gaulle how to fight with tanks:

“The course of the world over time was changed... when Hitler’s forces broke through the defence of the West on May 10, 1940. The decisive act of the world-shaking drama began on the 18th, when Guderian’s panzer corps crossed the Meuse at Sedan...”

“The narrow breach at Sedan soon expanded into a vast gap. The German tanks, pouring through it, reached the Channel coast within a week, thus cutting off the Allied armies in Belgium. That disaster led to the fall of France and the isolation of Britain. Although Britain managed to hold out behind her sea-ditch, rescue only came after a prolonged war had become a world-wide struggle. In the end Hitler was overthrown by the weight of America and Russia, but Europe was left exhausted and under the shadow of Communist domination. [That is under the shadow of the force that freed it from Hitler, because the American participation was secondary, both in time and quantity. BC]

“After the catastrophe, the rupture of the French front was commonly viewed as inevitable... But appearances were very different from reality...”

“The heads of the German Army had little faith in the prospects of the offensive which they unwillingly launched on Hitler’s insistence. Hitler himself suffered a sudden loss of confidence at the crucial moment, and imposed a two days halt on the advance just as the spearhead pierced the French defence and had an open path in front of it...”

“But strangest of all, the man who led the spearhead—Guderian—suffered momentary removal from command as a result of his superior’s anxiety to put a brake on his pace in exploiting the breakthrough he had made. Yet but for his ‘offence’ in driving so fast the invasion would probably have failed—and the whole course of world events would have been different...”

“Far from having the overwhelming superiority with which they were credited, Hitler’s armies were actually inferior in numbers to those opposing them. Although the tank drives proved decisive, he had fewer and less powerful tanks than his opponents possessed...”

“Moreover, the issue was virtually decided by a small fraction of his forces before the bulk came into action” (*The 2nd World War*, p65-6).

He quotes General Gamelin after the War:

“It was a remarkable manoeuvre. But had it been entirely foreseen in advance? I do not believe it—any more than Napoleon had foreseen the manoeuvre of Jena, or Moltke that of Sedan [1870]...”

It had not been foreseen. It came about because of the accident that provided the opportunity for putting the Manstein/Guderian idea into effect, and because of Guderian's refusal to be bridled by the Fuhrer at the critical phase.

Or, if foreseen, it was by Liddell Hart, who conceived of the expanding torrent, and saw it being put into effect by the enemy.

If it had been foreseen, the course of world events would probably have been different again from what it was because it was not foreseen. Hitler had not wanted that war. And he had not anticipated quick and comprehensive success in battle with the two Great Powers who had forced the war on him. And, when victory fell into his hands so quickly, he did not know what to do next. His Generals complained he did not know what to do with the victory they delivered him and that he spent the early Summer dithering, instead of forcing matters to a conclusion with Britain, which had forced the war on him.

He finally succeeded in imposing a delaying order on the Army that had defeated France for him, and prevented it from crushing the defeated British Army at Dunkirk and allowed it to be taken home. Military historians have been wondering ever since why he did this. It is unacceptable from the British viewpoint that he should have done it because he did not want to crush Britain, even though it had compelled him to go to war with it—that he genuinely saw the British Empire necessary to the world dominance of European civilisation and could not bring himself to destroy it when it was at his mercy.

A good military reason is sought, but all I have seen is apologetics, designed to ward off the conclusion that he allowed himself to be diverted from the exigencies of war by concern about the effect that the crushing of Britain would have on civilisation. Britain was what he admired most in the world. It had inspired him.

Britain would probably have made an agreement if Hitler had been seen to be acting purposefully in late May and early June 1940 to force conclusion with it.

The French Armistice was a surrender on terms and could not have been otherwise—and the terms were certainly not dishonoured more than the terms of the German Armistice of 1918 had been by the French and British. An Agreement with Britain would not have been a British surrender, even though that is how the possibility is almost always referred to. But it would have been an acceptance by Britain of an equal in Europe, and that would not have accorded with Britain's idea of itself.

So it refused to end the War, blackguarded the French, and set about expanding the War so that others would fight it.

The great Other was the Soviet Union. Destroy that Other and Britain's hope of seeing Germany defeated would be gone, and the War could end. That was a consideration that entered into the decision by Hitler to attack Russia. And it was in the invasion of Russia that the great killings of all kinds were done.

The War changed character in June 1941. It was only then that it became in fact what it has usually been called in the West ever since, the *Anti-Fascist War*.

Britain became Anti-Fascist for the duration of the German/Russian War. Then it promptly reverted to being Anti-Communist.

Here is Britain in Anti-Fascist mode—when the Communist Armies were engaging the Nazi Armies in battle and Britain was engaged in Area Bombing: the obliteration of the residential areas of German cities:

“Consider the situation [in 1940]. France was down and out. Her great army had crumbled away. Her powerful fleet was immobilised... Her ports on the Channel and Atlantic coasts were open to U-boats... Britain herself had lost most of her tanks and guns in France. Her ports and cities were open to air raids... In the Middle East the scheme of defence which had been concerted with the French Government had been knocked to pieces. The position was indeed a dismal one. Viewed dispassionately and with regard only to the military considerations, the prospect was so unpromising that the British Service Chiefs might well have thought it their duty—their hateful duty—to advise the Government that the only possible course was to make terms with Germany. That is what Pétain, Weygand and Darlan would have done—what they did do in fact, counselling the surrender of France. To do anything else was magnificent but not war.

“Britain's Service chiefs did nothing of the kind. They knew their Churchill and they knew their people. “To the devil with probabilities”, they said in effect. “Fight on!” They echoed Admiral Paul Jones famous answer to the summons to yield: “Surrender? Why, we've only just begun to fight!””

The British Service Chiefs also knew other things which the French could not know. They knew that Britain was an island in Gogarty's sense of “*a country surrounded by a Navy*”. They knew that their Navy ruled the oceans of the world. They knew that the War they had declared on Germany had not resulted in the appearance of a single German soldier in the British state. They knew that the deferential people of the state were habituated to waging wars from behind the safety of a sea that was infested with British warships. And their Churchill knew, from his secret reading of the most secret German codes that Hitler, who had said that the British Empire was necessary to his conception of civilisation, was not making convincing preparations to destroy it.

Therefore:

““Fight on!” they said. But how? Only in the air... was it possible to aim at the enemy blows which, resounding, showed the world and, above all, the sore-tried British people that there was fight in the nation still. The withdrawal of France had one compensating advantage at least. France had feared for the safety of her cities. She had put the brake on the use of her and Britain's air striking forces. No longer was Britain bound by the restriction which regard for an ally's wishes had imposed upon her freedom of action. She could carry the war into Germany's hinterland at her own discretion now.”

The bombing war could be unleashed.

The superiority of German air power in 1940, such as it was, was confined to the battlefield. It had battlefield fighter-planes which could act with tanks and infantry in the conflict of armies. What Britain had prepared for was indiscriminate bombing, and it had actually engaged in Imperial policing by this method between the Wars.

The passages I have quoted are from *Volcano Island* (1943) by J.M. Spaight CB, CBE, Late Principal Assistant Secretary, Air Ministry, pp51 & 52.

Spaight was an official propagandist for the destruction of “*The Evil Cities*” (p7).

In a bygone era Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed volcanically:

“They were evil cities. Nature wiped them off the face of the earth. Nature does that no longer, at least directly. There are cities that cry to heaven for thunderbolts to strike them down, cities more evil than Sodom and Gomorrah, cities that are the smithies of hell... Alas! nature makes no volcanoes to order or in answer to prayers of righteous men.

“No, but righteous men can make volcanoes themselves...

“Until but yesterday there was an island which dreamed of many things but never of transforming itself into a raging, rampaging hotbed of volcanoes... It asked nothing of its neighbours but just to be left in peace. It certainly menaced no one in the wide world.

“It had not always been so... It had had a hot and lusty youth... It had given way to a propensity then for land-grabbing...

“It had reformed...

“War came to it... Enemies rose up against it. The men of the evil cities... encompassed it about. Its freedom and its very existence were threatened...

“So they girded their loins... Today that peaceful island, re-inforced by the embattled might of another and greater people across the ocean, is the scene of the most tremendous concentration of far-hitting might which the world has ever seen... Not all the volcanoes that have spouted flame since time began could match it for destructive power. Nothing is safe within two hundred leagues of its shores. It can turn busy marts into islands in a night. It can unbuild cities as if by magic” (p8).

In 1944 Spaight published another book: *Bombing Vindicated*. The technique of “strategic bombing” was being perfected. The enemy population was becoming a military target. Some squeamish Anglican Bishops remembered enough of what Christianity was supposed to be about to wonder if the systematic destruction of residential areas was quite Christian. Spaight explained the facts of life to them:

“Armament and transport workers, as well as all civilians enrolled in the service of passive defence—the fire-fighters, the fire-watchers, the rescue parties, the demolition squads—cannot be classed otherwise than as warriors in the new kind of war..., as warlike as... the soldiers, sailors and airmen” (p115).

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Why didn't France behave as Britain did? Well, because it forced Germany into a state of war with it, fought the war until Germany was in occupation of most of the country, and its Army, though still large numerically, had ceased to be a co-ordinated fighting force.

Gaullist writers hover between two apparently incompatible positions: that the War was not lost at all, and that it was lost because of a powerful conspiracy, headed by Pétain, which wanted to destroy the Republic.

Col. Tissier says both things. This is a pretty definite statement that the War *was* lost:

“On the date of the signing of the armistice the whole world was convinced that the war was, to all intents and purposes, at an end. Great Britain would either sign a *paix blanche*, a peace of stalemate, or she would be crushed by force of arms within a few weeks... All who like us at the time responded to General de Gaulle's appeal were persuaded that they were setting out to save France's honour, but that they were about to fight for a lost cause” (*Government Of Vichy*, p17).

The passage continues:

“The miracle came later. England showed that she was still an island... Later the United States came to place its inexhaustible industrial resources at the disposal of Great Britain. So that today, in spite of momentary set-backs, the strength of the British Empire appears unshaken. And in a few months more, when the UK has won the battle of the Atlantic it will in its turn be able to overshadow the Axis with heavy menace.

“But these facts must be disregarded if we are to understand the armistice” (p17).

Indeed they must. One cannot act in the future. The world would be a very different place if one could. It would probably be incapable of existing.

The Armistice was made in a present in which Britain had left the battlefield, and the USA had refused an appeal to become an ally, and Col. Tissier had decided to make a gesture of honour in a lost cause by leaving France.

The war was unsustainable in France in June 1940. Pétain acted in the actual present but with the probable future in mind. De Gaulle gambled on an improbable future and continued the War in the only way that was possible in the circumstances—he left the country. (The notion that the Imperial possessions might win the War that the Imperial State had lost was fantasy.)

Both eventualities were covered. What was required by national statesmanship in 1944-5 was that the wild gamble on the future should come to terms with the position that had kept a French Government in being in the predicament of 1940.

It was not as if there was a profound ideological antagonism on general social grounds between Gaullism and the National Revolution enacted by Pétain after the Armistice. Even though the purpose of Col. Tissier's book, *The Government Of Vichy* (1942) is to defame Vichy, he feels obliged to say:

“The men who have ranged themselves with General de Gaulle are not all—indeed, far from all—supporters of the Parliamentary system as it was before the war. Most of them are, on the contrary, convinced of the need for profound structural reforms in it” (p13).

Most of the book, of over 300 pages, is in fact description of a functional Vichy system of government.

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This article is a brief theatre review that got out of hand.

To conclude it in line with its beginning. The Armistice was a kind of Treaty, and it was approved by the French democracy—the National Assembly—which conferred exceptional authority on Pétain.

But the democracy was wrong, and it had no right to be wrong, and therefore legitimate authority was not conferred on Pétain.

Why did it not have the right to be wrong? Because it voted under the duress of unfavourable circumstances—the unfavourable circumstance of having declared a war and lost it.

In Col. Tissier's opinion—

“the fact that the Government of Marshal Pétain was not regularly invested with its powers has only one consequence. The Pétain Government, in the eyes of the laws of the Republic, is an insurrectionary Government” (p54).

The National Assembly could do no more than confer *de facto* authority on the Government, because “*the Vichy Assembly was unable to conduct its deliberations away from all external pressure*” (p55).

And of course that *de facto* power depended on the will of the German Army.

Was that not De Valera’s case in January 1922: the Dail was wrong because it acted in breach of the law of the Republic, and it had no right to be wrong because it was acting under the duress of a threat of Imperial war of reconquest if it did not submit to the British imposition that is called a Treaty.

But De Valera’s case was stronger *de jure*, or morally, because the National Assembly was acting under the duress of a war which it had begun and lost while the Dail was made war upon by Britain.

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There were two courses open to Britain in June 1940: to cut its losses in Europe, stabilise the situation there by recognising the Armistice, ending the War which it had declared as being no longer capable of being fought, allowing French Government to be restored over the whole of France (apart from the areas that had long been in contention between France and Germany), consolidating its Empire, and remaining a major World Power—even *the* major World Power: or plunging into the region of utter catastrophe by keeping Europe on a war-footing without being able to do anything more than bomb cities, and use its world power to spread its war throughout the world, in the hope that Germany would be undone by a continuously expanding war.

The thought that the war might have been ended in June 1940—and that it should never have been launched—is a thought that it is impossible to think within the Mesmeric Myth of the post-War era in Britain. It is impossible to think because all that happened in the catastrophic course of spreading the war is read into the situation of June 1940. It is thought of as being implicit in it. It is seen as something that was already there waiting to happen and that would have happened anyway.

Revisionist historians in Ireland—British historians—have worked hard over the past 20 or 30 years at breaking up the Irish national sense as resting on a false sense of inevitability. They have condemned it as teleological, or predestinational, whereas a true sense of history sees it as having been open at many points, at many conjunctures, to going in an entirely different direction.

But, with regard to Britain itself, they are strictly teleological, mesmerised, along with the unpretentious masses, by the myth of the inevitability of it all. The idea of conjunctures with which they sought to undermine the Irish national sense must not be applied to English history—certainly not to August 1914, or September 1939, or June 1940. They do not express it as naively as the great Milton did—Cromwell’s Secretary of State—but they hold it nevertheless, as a career requirement if not as a metaphysical conviction (but scepticism in these things is easily over-rated): England is the force of Providence in the world. What it does is not the haphazard outcome of conjunctures, from which altogether different situations might have developed. It acts with sureness and rightness because it acts in the service of cosmic necessity.

Well, pardon us in Slieve Luaca for not seeing it that way. It acts by choice. And, when the War it declared in September 1939 was lost in June 1940, it chose a course of unlimited catastrophe.

There was a body of opinion in governing circles that would have preferred a different course—the scoundrels! And *The Irish Times*, the English newspaper in the lost colony, seems to have favoured that other course, at least at the time—

“A Chapter Ends

“Hostilities between Germany and Italy, on the one hand, and France on the other, ceased officially at 12.35 o’clock this morning...

“France has suffered the greatest military defeat of modern times; yet the position regarding the immediate future is obscure. We do not propose to examine the merits of the case that Mr Winston Churchill has made against the Bordeaux Government or of the answer that has been given by Marshal Pétain ... Herein... lies the deepest tragedy of the war. France and Great Britain began the struggle as firm allies... If they should be separated now, morally and spiritually as well as by force, Germany will have gained a victory that never could have been gained on the field of battle... Nothing could be more futile than recriminations...

“...Now it is Great Britain’s turn... Each side knows what is at stake; each side is prepared to throw all its resources into a fight which may impoverish Europe for a century and bring what remains of Christian civilisation to utter ruin: (25 June 1940).

*

What England brought about by choosing the line of general catastrophe—bringing about mass killings in Europe on a scale never seen before—is a disabled France and Germany over which Britain holds a power of “recrimination” that stifles thought.

Britain is now deliberating on whether to leave the EU, having undermined it, or to stay in it to make it a British fiefdom.

And the German Chancellor cannot face the prospect of a break with Britain, which “*saved*” it from Nazi tyranny—apparently not noticing that it was the Russian enemy—against which Germany is again apparently contemplating war—that saved it from the Nazism that the great bulk of the German people did not experience as tyranny, any more than most French experienced Pétainism as tyranny.

The English policy towards Europe over three centuries, of preventing the most able state in Europe at any given moment from establishing a European order of things, is now paying off. Europe has no history. France and Germany have no history. All live with a chasm close behind them, and they try to live in amnesia.

Brendan Clifford

□□

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The Irish and Habsburgia: Hidden History of the World

Poetic Commentary on Maria Theresa and the Seven Years War

By Pat Muldowney

The Irish connection with Libya helped the Provisional IRA campaign. The King of Hungary also contributed to the Provos.

The King in question was Maria Theresa of the House of Habsburg who, in theory at least, ruled Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire. When the Habsburg Kaiser of Austria failed to produce a male heir, the warrior Magyars of Hungary, who acknowledged only a King over them, acclaimed the dead Kaiser's daughter Maria Theresa.

What is the connection with Crossmaglen etc.? Semtex is manufactured in the area of Bohemia (now Czech Republic) where Kaiser-and-King Maria Theresa set up a great armaments industry as part of the military development which checked, first, Prussia's Frederick the Great, then Napoleon; and carried on to give a good reckoning against Bismarck, and ultimately against the Entente Powers during the Great War.

So, Crossmaglen.

Ireland has had relations with many foreign countries; for instance Britain, America, France – proper, modern countries who count for something in the International Community. But the Habsburg realms? Isn't that just light-opera-Ruritania, Blue-Danube-Waltz-land, Prisoner of Zenda stuff, with a little bit of Transylvanian creepiness thrown in? Even their most famous military music, the Radetzky March, is so light and cheery you could dance to it.

Surely you can only have real, serious foreign relations with a real, serious country. Like Britain or France, important countries with grown-up leaders, history, politics and conquests. Countries with very big guns which they are ever ready to use. Not some children's fairytale joke of a country; a hold-out from the Middle Ages which by some freakish accident made it into the twentieth century.

Apart from England, with which Ireland's connection was largely antagonistic, arguably the strongest Irish foreign connection was with Spain, in circumstances where the conquest of Ireland was still incomplete and Spain was the dominant world power, so the Irish-Spanish alliance had a realistic chance of breaking the British connection.

Spain's Emperor Charles V was Hapsburg and his dominions included the Holy Roman Empire from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, as well as much of the rest of the world. Habsburgia was then a very serious "country" indeed, and Irish relations with it were also very serious. For a few years the marriage of Charles V's son Philip with England's Queen Mary raised the momentary possibility that Ireland would become part of Habsburgia, along with England.

The conquest of Ireland produced the "Wild Geese" emigration to Spain, and to Austria-Hungary. And particularly to France, which became Britain's main imperial rival as Spanish power declined. Shifting great power alliances saw Wild Geese fighting on opposing sides. The romantic story of Sir Charles Wogan's rescue of Polish Princess Clementina Sobieska from the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor, so she could marry Charles Edward Stuart ("Bonny Prince Charlie"), was translated by Cathy Winch a few years ago.

The Thirty Years War of religion started in the Holy Roman Empire when some Bohemian thickos defenestrated two of the Emperor's representatives in Prague. The pair survived --- unlike the Archduke and his wife in Sarajevo three hundred years later. The most notorious action of the Holy Roman Empire was the extermination of Magdeburg in the Thirty Years War. Even then, Catholics and Protestants were to be found on both sides. The North German Lutherans would probably have been defeated if Catholic France and Lutheran Sweden had not come to their aid.

Following the death of Emperor Charles V, Spain separated from the Holy Roman Empire. Habsburgia gradually lost territories: the Netherlands, North Germany, Italy. Austria-Hungary's core territories were Austrian (South German)/Slav/Magyar. It had no colonies worth talking about. Not even by comparison with Prussia-Germany.

The Austro-Hungarian core, including the North Balkans, held together in voluntary union while the Enlightenment, French revolutionary, romantic nationalist, liberal and socialist movements swept around, through, over and under them. The Habsburg monarchy and its army were the instrument, symbol and focus of their historic unity. Why was this?

After the horrors of the Thirty Years War, the Ottomans pressed up the Danube to the gates of Vienna. They were stopped by the Holy Roman Empire which, in defensive and unifying mode, brought the peoples of the Danube Basin together in resistance. (Peter de Lacy from west Limerick participated in this war. Afterwards he went into the service of Tsar Peter the Great, where he was credited with transforming Russia's military fortunes. His son Franz Moritz von Lacy served in Maria Theresa's army in the Seven Years War, becoming second-in-command under Field-Marshal Daun and successfully fending off the invasion by Prussia's Frederick the Great.)

Defensive war against the Ottomans appears to have generated a loyalty by the Danube countries to the Kaiser-and-King of the Holy Roman Empire, loyalty which endured for centuries against Prussia, Russia and France.

It is possible to speculate in this vein on the sources of this unique central European civilisation. Whatever produced it, it was criminally destroyed by the Great War aggressors.

The centuries-old Treaty of Dingle ensured a kind of common citizenship between Ireland and Habsburgia – until 1918, when Habsburgia was finally torn apart by the barbaric victors of the Great War. In the 17th century Wexford-born William Lamport was one of those who claimed Habsburg citizenship in Spain. Now honoured in Mexico for being their first advocate of independence, he subscribed to the humane ideas of the Dominican monk Bartolomé de Las Casas (“Protector of the Indians”), and in 1659 was executed by burning at the stake for fomenting revolution by the indigenous people against the Spanish colonial settlers. In Austria-Hungary, in addition to Franz Lacy, Irish involvement included Field Marshal Maximilian Ulysses Browne who kept Prussia’s Frederick the Great out of Bohemia in 1756. A few years later Arthur O’Leary from Kerry served as Captain of Hussars in Maria Theresa’s army. Art O’Leary is the subject of a famous Lament (*Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghair*) by his wife Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill, an ancestor of Daniel O’Connell. In 1904 James Joyce went to live in Habsburg Trieste and was an admirer of Austria-Hungary.

In the other direction, Ireland acquired the theoretical physicist Erwin Schroedinger; also Ludwig Wittgenstein who produced his *Philosophical Investigations* in various hideaways during his years here. Both of these came from Vienna. Cornelius Lanczos was a distinguished successor to Schroedinger in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, after coming under McCarthyite pressure in the USA. Lanczos was Habsburg-Hungarian-Jewish. Enjoying a pleasant, settled life for the first time since his Habsburg youth, Lanczos did his best work in Dublin in the 1950’s and ’60’s.

Arthur Griffith’s Sinn Féin party wanted a Dual Monarchy with Britain, like the connection that Hungary had with Austria. The Irish Republican Brotherhood went much further, making Habsburgia one of our “gallant allies in Europe”. There was even a suggestion that Ireland might acquire a German monarch. A Habsburg monarch might actually have made some kind of sense.

It is hard to see how Griffith could have replicated in Britain and Ireland the relationship of the Habsburg monarchs to their dominions. Maria Theresa was loved by her subjects.

Known as *mater castrorum* (mother of camps (of soldiers)), as her death approached Maria Theresa sat her young officer cadets on her lap, lamenting that she would never see them again. Magyar, Slav or Austrian, what kind of worthless coward would refuse to risk his life to defend such a mammy?

Maria Theresa’s ritual coronation as King of Hungary took place when she was barely out of her teens, shortly after giving birth to one of her sixteen children. Before the assembled Magyar nobility, wearing the ancient crown of Saint Stephen, mounted on a horse in heavy gold trappings, she rode at a canter to the summit of a mound of earth taken from the four corners of the Kingdom, and, pointing the sabre of Attila the Hun to the four corners, swore to defend her subjects with her life. The last Kaiser – Charles I of Austria/Charles IV of Hungary – performed this ceremony in Budapest in 1916 even though, as a serving soldier in war-time, he passed up on a Vienna coronation. Film of the 1916 ceremony can be found on the internet.

What were the chances that King George or Queen Victoria or King Edward would have participated in such a ceremony at the inauguration rock on the Hill of Tullyhogue in Dungannon where, for a thousand years or so, the O Neills were installed as chieftains by the O Cahans and O Hagans? Would Prince Charles or Prince William agree to being crowned at Tullyhogue; or at Tara, Croghan, or Cashel?

During her recent landmark visit to Ireland, Queen Elizabeth made conciliatory gestures towards a formerly subject people. But, despite President McAleese’s grovelling forelock-tugging, the Queen’s token gestures barely passed the threshold of the level of respect that a guest head of state might be expected to accord to a neighbouring country. Definitely not in the Maria Theresa league.

Would Gloriana II be prepared to embrace the great seventeenth century Hapsburg-Irish General Owen Roe O’Neill (Battle of Benburb etc.) in more than a token way? Or later figures such as Michael Dwyer and Tom Barry? Oh! Wait a minute! Some of the Queen’s official Irish hosts are more into Churchill themselves. Which sort of lets her Majesty off the hook, doesn’t it?

Anyway, whatever the abstract merits of Griffiths’ British-Irish Monarchy plan, it is hard to see how it could be made to work.

With the exception of Maria Theresa’s son, the Enlightenment fanatic Kaiser Joseph, this mystical Kaiser-and-King’ly magnetism continued through to the end, in the person of the peace-minded soldier-Emperor Charles (1916-18) who was beatified in 2004 – by the Polish Pope, no less. (Beatification can be a preliminary step towards official canonisation, or declaration of Sainthood.)

Emperor Joseph’s father was a Freemason who indoctrinated his son in Voltairism. In the late 18th century Joseph set about a campaign of suppression of ignorant religious superstition, a campaign which was more fanatical than the efforts of the Eastern European Communist Parties during the Cold War. This antagonised the North Italy part of the Holy Roman Empire to such an extent that the superstitious Italian peasants welcomed the more moderate Napoleon Bonaparte when he eventually came calling.

Apart from Austrian Tyrol, all of Italy was eventually lost in the 19th century. Tyrol went in the 20th century. Napoleon Bonaparte took Berlin, and shook Moscow. But Vienna and Budapest, at Napoleon’s doorstep, held out under Kaiser-and-King Francis. The year before Waterloo, Bonaparte “met his Waterloo” at the hands of Habsburg General Radetzky, at Leipzig.

Even under Joseph, the banners of the Habsburg army displayed the Virgin Mary, not eagles or crowns. Speaking broadly, Austria-Hungary fought defensively, fending off aggressors without seeking to destroy and eliminate them. This is a lesson Bismarck seems to have learned from Habsburgia.

Army chaplains of all denominations (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jew, Orthodox) exercised considerable moral authority on the Habsburg army – South Germans (Austrians), Magyars (Hungarians), Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Rumanians,

Moldavians, North Slavs (Southern Poles, Bohemian-Czechs, Moravian-Slovaks), South Slavs (Slovenians, Croats, Serbs).

Habsburg army regulations (1769): *Religion is something you should never speak about. Rather it is something you should strive to live by. Upon pain of severe and unfailing punishment we forbid any behaviour which may create ill feeling between those of different faiths.*

Maria Theresa was scathing of her son's Enlightenment Fintan O'Toole-type smart-alec. It seems Joseph never bounced any army cadets on his knee. Together with the other Catholic powers, and with the Pope in tow, Joseph suppressed the Jesuit Order. The Jesuits survived in Orthodox Russia and Lutheran-Calvinist Prussia, and presumably in the Prussian-Russian parts of partitioned Poland. The partition was initiated by Joseph, a fact not forgotten by the Poles who a century or so earlier helped to save Vienna from the Ottomans in a last-minute rescue mission. (The actual Partition was implemented under Joseph's successor, his slightly less fanatical brother Leopold.)

Suppression of the Jesuits was a catastrophe for the indigenous peoples of South America, where the Jesuits, under the direct authority of Habsburg Emperor in Spain, had outflanked the colonial settlers by attracting the indigenous Indian populations voluntarily into settlements where no settlers could have the slightest contact with them. So they could not be enslaved and worked to death.

These "Reductions" were autonomous Indian cities giving unforced allegiance, under their native chieftainships, and via their handful of unarmed Jesuit mentors, only to God in Heaven and to the Habsburg Emperor in Spain. The cities had industries, schools, hospitals, libraries, and conducted their lives in their own languages which, for the greater glory of God, were given written form by Jesuit scholars, enabling these languages to survive the onslaught of Spanish to the present day.

These recent residents of the South American forest wildernesses had Baroque orchestras for their Baroque churches and basilicas. Spread across the continent of South America, the Reductions were militarily trained and armed for self-defence, which they did very effectively for nearly two centuries.

They did not use money, and could not be exploited by the European settlers. Clearly an intolerable situation. So they were eradicated by the Enlightenment.

Curiously, Indian-Jesuit-Habsburg civilisation is currently on view again, retrieved from the mouldering pages of sheet music which were squirrelled away for safe keeping in the attics of old churches by the mission Indians when the Jesuits were forced to take refuge in Lutheran-Calvinist Prussia and Orthodox Russia. Resurrection of Reduction Baroque is now a feature of the indigenous revival in Bolivia.

So, apart from Edelweiss/the Sound of Music – and Semmelweis/public hygiene, and Polanyi/The Great Transformation, and etc. etc. – what has the Holy Roman Empire ever done for us?

There is an Irish window on Habsburgia as it was in the year 1757. This takes the form of a series of poems by Liam Inglis O.S.A. (Order of St. Augustine), 1709-1778.

Liam English is Liam/William Ryan, probably from Tipperary where there are so many Ryans that they get various nicknames, one of these being "English". He is best known for a poem in praise of irresponsibility, usually sung to a lively tune, which starts as follows:

Ólaim punch is ólaim tae
Is an lá 'n-a dhéidh sin ólaim toddy,
Ní bhím ar meisce ach uair sa ré,
Mo ghrá-sa an déirc is an t-É do cheap í!

[I drink punch and I drink tay
And the day after that I drink toddy (= hot whiskey),
I am drunk only once a month –
I love alms (= begging or mendicancy), and Him who
invented it!]

After various adventures Inglis joined the Dominican Order in Old Friary Lane near Shandon Street in Cork. Not liking the Dominican vow of poverty he went to the Augustinians in Fishamble Street. The jargon of the Butter Market is in some of his verses. The Augustinians sent him to study in Rome around 1744-49, where he encountered Habsburgia.

The Seven Year War (1756-63) was fought on all the known continents of the time, and in America is called the French and Indian War (i.e. the war fought against the French/indigenous alliance.) This was the "First World War", which laid down the geo-political structure of the modern world, leading directly to the American and French revolutions in the first instance.

Here are a few lines from Inglis's extensive commentary on the Seven Year War.

A Éadbháird aoibhinn uasail álainn [to Charles Edward Stuart]

A.D. 1757

...

*Le confadh triallfaidh Iarla an Chláir ghil
Scoilfidh a sciatha, a gliabhgradh gearrfaidh,
Is follus sin gur obair shuilt don iaith-seo tráighte
'S is binn linn Byng is an bás 'n-a bheól!*

...

*[Bright Lord Clare will attack fiercely
He will split their shields and lacerate their breasts
Joyous work for this abandoned land
Byng at death's door is sweetness to us!]*

Clare's Regiment, formed by Daniel O'Brien Viscount Clare, was part of the Irish Brigade of the French Army. Byng is the English Admiral who, for displaying too much caution, was executed *pour encourager les autres*. The third, fourth and fifth words of the fourth line are pronounced *bing ling Byng*.

Thomas Davis's poem *Clare's Dragoons*, celebrates an Irish Brigade victory for France:

When on Ramillie's bloody field,
The baffled French were forced to yield,
The victor Saxon backward reeled
Before the charge of Clare's Dragoons. ...

More from Liam Inglis:

***Leastar an bhráthar* [The monk's butter-vat]**

A.D. 1757

...
*Is cuir chum Pruise cuid i dtráth dhi,
An dá ríogain choidheche sásaimh,
Ríogain Rúise is crú Almaine*
...

*[[O God,] give Prussia the punishment due to her
And always reward the two queens
- The Empress [Elizabeth] of Russia, and the Royal Blood of
Austria [Maria Theresa].]*

Mo ghearán chruaidh le huaislibh Fódla

[My harsh complaint to the nobles of Ireland]

...
*Do fuaireas faisnéis, fionnaidh go fóill mé,
Gurab é rí na Pruise agus uireasbha mhór air
Do chuir teachta agus feasa le fórsa
Le Pandúir go dúthaigh Eógain;*
...
*Adeir cuid eile, agus creidim-se dhóibh-sean
Nach é Pruise do rinn na gnótha
Acht mac ár dtriaith-na Uilliam mac Sheóirse
Atá fé chiach i ndiaidh Hanóber!*
...
*[I received information – understand me still –
That it was the king of Prussia in dire straits
Who sent an expedition to reconnoitre in force
With Pandours to the territory of Eoghan [= Eugene?];*
...
Others say – and I give them credence –
That it was not Prussia that was behind this
But the son of our ruler, William son of George
Who is in desperation over losing Hanover.]

Pandours were Hungarian Cossack-type frontier fighters, normally associated with the Habsburgs rather than Prussia. Eoghan/"Eugene" could be a reference to the great Habsburg general of that name. The Hanoverian George II was king of Great Britain, Ireland and Hanover. His son William was Duke of Cumberland, the butcher of Culloden.

An eól díbh-se a dhaoine i bhfionn Fáil?

[Do ye know, ye people of the land of Ireland?]

...
*Geallaimse díbhse nár gabhadh Prág
'S go mairid a mílid 's gur teann táid,
Do fearadh go fíochmhar
An deabhaidh le fír-nimh
'S do greadadh an Rí anois le Count Daun.*

*Is tapaidh an t-amas tug Brown áigh
'San taca nár mheathta, an prionnsa árd,
Do gearradh na mílte*

Do glanadh an trínse
Do scaipeadh 's do scaoileadh a bhfann-námhad.

...
[I guarantee you that Prague was not taken
That her soldiers live and that they are powerful
Fiercely fought was
The battle with real venom
And the King [of Prussia] was smashed by Count Daun.

Swift was the (counter-)attack of valiant Brown
Likewise his worthy adjutant, the noble prince,
Thousands fell
The trench was cleared
The demoralised enemy was scattered and killed.]

These verses are in the "limerick" metre which apparently originated with Filí na Máighe, the school of Limerick poets associated with the Mangaire Sógach, with whom Inglis is also linked.

The Seven Years War began with the 1756 invasion of Bohemia (modern Czech lands) by Prussian Enlightenment superman Frederick the Great who, after his success in earlier War of Austrian Succession, wanted another slice of Silesia. In a Stalingrad-style tour-de-force, in which Croat irregulars and French-speaking (Walloon/"Belgian") Netherlanders played a significant part, Frederick's blitzkrieg was stopped outside Prague by newly promoted Habsburg-Irish Field Marshal Maximilian Ulysses Browne. With other Irish officers such as de Lacy, Browne was supported by the rather less impressive Prince Charles of Lorraine - who may be the "noble prince" mentioned by Inglis. After Browne had done the heavy lifting, the equally competent Field Marshal Count Leopold Joseph von Daun, who was in overall command, came to his aid. Though Frederick never recovered the initiative, Browne/Daun/Lacy did not push for the destruction of Prussia. That was not the Habsburg way; and this policy of restraint worked for a couple of centuries, until 1918. Crucial to her campaign of defense was Maria Theresa's brilliant network of alliances with France, Sweden and Empress Elizabeth of Russia. Her Chancellor Kaunitz seemed to foreshadow Bismarck, a century later, in the arts of political diplomacy and military restraint. Also crucial were Maria Theresa's Bohemian artillery manufactures, in which Austria-Hungary maintained a lead until 1918. Hitler, who despised Austria-Hungary, got those weapons into his hands courtesy of Britain. Also worth mentioning are Maria Theresa's medical reforms, initiated by a Dr. Brady, the Irish head of the Habsburg army medical corps, which put the University of Vienna at the forefront of this field for centuries. The French speaking Walloon/Belgian region is of course where the Habsburg-Irish nerve-centre was located, in the premier Irish College in Louvain.

Other verses by Inglis feature von Daun, Contades, Brunswick, Boscawen, Senegal, Ticonderoga, Du Quesne. Admiral Edward Boscawen fought the French Atlantic fleet. He signed the execution order of Admiral Byng. Ticonderoga and Du Quesne were military forts in the Great Lakes area of New France, the events/location of the book/film *Last of the Mohicans* in which the French forces were led by General Montcalm. The war saw military and naval engagements in West Africa where Britain and France competed for colonies. Both the West and East Indies were major theatres of war. Thomas Arthur Comte de

Lally fought with Irish Brigade forces against Britain in south India. Stranded without military or naval support, he lost. As prisoner-of-war in England, he returned voluntarily to France to face charges for the military defeat, and was beheaded. Louis XVI exonerated him in 1778. Britain is blamed for the carnage that followed their conquest of India, when customary social precautions against famine were smashed by the new regime.

**Atá an báire imeartha réidh [The Game is Up!]
A.D. 1757**

...

*In Americe siar tá an diabhal ortha ar fad,
Do fágadh 'san nglíadh iad fá chiach is fá cheas,
Ní tháinig leath a dtrian as, ach iarmhar beag lag
An lá san do bhíodar ag Ticonderoga;
Ag Fort Dhu Quesne ní léire bhí a mbail
Do túrnadh gach n-aon ar an gcléir Senegal
Atá a dtóin leis an ngréin ag baoltaigh na mbrat
Is fagfaimíd siúd mar atá sé!*

[In America out west they [the British] are in devil's own trouble,

*The war has left them in sickness and affliction,
Less than one in six of them escaped, a pitiful remnant,
That day they were at Ticonderoga,
At Fort Du Quesne they were no better off
Every last one of them was trounced by the [company from Senegal (?)]*

The daring [French] heroes of the banners (?) have their rear-ends to the sun ["wind in their sails", perhaps],

And let us leave it at that!]

This one is in the voice of King George:

**Is ró-dhian a screadann
A.D. 1757**

Fonn: Óró, a shean-duine leatsa ní gheóbhadsa

Is ró-dhian a screadann an sean-duine Seóirse

"Ó, a Dhia, cá rachad? Níl agam Hanóber

Ná fós Hesse-Cassel, mo bhaile beag cómhgair,

Ná fód mo shean-athrach, táid airgthe dóigthe!

...

Níl suan im ghoire 's ní tirim mo chaoineadh,

'S is cruaidh an choingeal 'n-a bhfuilim ag Laoiseach,

I dtuath na Ruiseach 's a loingeas go fíochmhar

Do buadhadh ar na Pruisigh is briseadh a gcroidhe istigh!

Do b'aerach ádhmhrach áluinn mo choróin seal,

Mo léan mar do tháinig an lá so 'n-a dheóidh sin –

Na Swedes le dásacht ag cárnadh mo shloighte

'S an tréan-trup san Mháire tug naire go deo dham!

Ni dion dam Breatain ná fearann Fódla,

Ní díleas dam Alba ó ghearras a scórnach,

Ní díreach dam danair – ní cara dham cómhursa –

Sínidh im bheathaidh mé is caithidh fén bhfód mé!"

[In desperation out' Georgy-boy shrieks out: "O God! Where will I go? I've lost Hanover, and even my little refuge of Hesse-Cassel; and my forefathers' domains – they are shrivelled and burnt! I have no peace, my lamentations are tearful; Louis [King Louis XV of France] has me in his tight grip; in the Russian expanses – and their fearsome naval forces – the Prussians were defeated and their spirit broken! At one time my crown was blissful, blessed and beautiful; alas! this new day has dawned – the Swedes are brazenly slaughtering my armies, and the brave soldiers of Maria [Theresa] have disgraced me! Britain is no protection for me, nor is Ireland; Scotland rejects me since I cut their throats [at Culloden]; the Danes are untrue to me, my neighbour is not my friend, - Just throw me underground and bury me alive!"]

The Hidden History of the World? In 1763 a relatively humane future for mankind was scotched in favour of the Enlightenment savagery we currently endure. Who has heard of the Jesuit Reductions of South America? Why is Habsburg civilisation now a mere comic opera? What is being concealed from us, and why?

As envisaged and planned by the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser in the sixteenth century, Irish-Ireland was clinically lobotomised in the seventeenth century, to prepare it for death-camp resolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the early 1600's Geoffrey Keating (Foras Feasa) and the Ó Cléirigh's (Four Masters' Annals) saw what was coming and, like the Reduction Indians salvaging their orchestral scores, wrote up the last will and testament of that world, in preparation for oblivion. In the nineteenth century John O'Donovan and Eoghan O'Curry re-opened the dusty obituary, and reminded some people of what used to exist; including Thomas Davis who started to breathe life back into it.

But it was Habsburgia that miraculously kept the Irish mind on life support for centuries in its Irish Colleges. The ballads of Liam Inglis are testimony to this.

Note on Art O'Leary:

O'Leary's grave memorial reads:

"Arthur Leary Generous Brave Handsome Slain in his Bloom lies in this humble Grave Died the 4th May 1771 aged 26 years Having Served the Empress Maria Teresa as Captain of the Hungarian Hussars he returned home to be treacherously shot by order of the British Government his sole crime being that he resisted to part with a favourite horse for the sum of £5."

Here is a piece of the famous Lament (*Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire*), in a format usually extemporised by professional keening women, but in this case by his widow Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill:

...

Mo chara go daingean tu!

is cuimhin lem aigne

an lá breá earraigh úd,

gur bhreá thiodh hata dhuit

faoi bhanda óir tarraingthe;

claíomh cinn airgid,

lámh dheas chalma,

rompsáil bhagarthach –

fír-chritheagla
 ar námhaid chealgach –
 tú i gcóir chun falaracht
is each caol ceannann fút.
D'umhláidís Sasanaigh
síos go talamh duit,
is ní ar mhaithe leat
ach le haon-chorp eagla,
cé gur leo a cailleadh tu,
a mhuirín mh'anama. ...

[Part translation by Eleanor Hull:
Rider of the white palm!
With the silver-hilted sword!
Well your beaver hat became you

With its band of graceful gold;
Your suit of solid homespun yarn
Wrapped close around your form;
Slender shoes of foreign fashion,
And a pin of brightest silver
Fastened in your shirt.
As you rode in stately wise
On your slender steed, white-faced,
After coming over seas,
Even the Saxons bowed before you
Bowed down to the very ground;
Not because they loved you well
But from deadly hate;
For it was by them you fell,
Darling of my soul.] □

Is a 'Little' Holocaust Denial at a Holocaust Museum OK? —Lest we forget: 'First They Came for the Communists'

by Manus O'Riordan

In lighting a candle for the political victims on January 24 at this year's Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration in Dublin, I wore two emblems - that of the International Brigades in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War of 1936-1939, and a commemorative badge in memory of the German Communist Party leader Ernst Thaelmann (1886-1944), imprisoned in solitary confinement for eleven years by the Nazi regime, from his arrest in 1933 until his execution in Buchenwald concentration camp, on 18 August 1944. I was also mindful of the following home truths embodied in a poem based on a sermon by the German Lutheran Pastor Martin Niemoeller:

First they came for the Communists
 And I did not speak out
 Because I was not a Communist
 Then they came for the Socialists
 And I did not speak out
 Because I was not a Socialist
 Then they came for the trade unionists
 And I did not speak out
 Because I was not a trade unionist
 Then they came for the Jews
 And I did not speak out
 Because I was not a Jew
 Then they came for me
 And there was no one left
 To speak out for me.

The following are some excerpts from this year's commemorative programme for that day:

"Political opponents: The torching of the Reichstag national parliament building in 1933 gave the Nazis a pretext for brutally suppressing Communists and, later, Social Democrats. The Nazis abolished trade unions and co-operatives, confiscated their assets and prohibited strikes. As early as 1933, the Nazis established the first concentration camp, Dachau, as a detention centre for political prisoners."

"Liberation: The D-Day Allied invasion of Normandy took place in June 1944. At the same time, the Soviet army was advancing from the East. They liberated Majdanek death camp and reached Warsaw, and the road to Berlin had been opened. As the Allies swept in from the West, the Soviets continued liberating camps and territories in the East. On 27 January 1945 the Soviet army (which included many Jewish soldiers), liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is this date that was designated by the United Nations as international Holocaust Memorial Day."

"Candle Lighting Ceremony: It is customary at Holocaust memorial events, to light six candles in memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Shoah. In Ireland, we also light candles in memory of all the other victims of Nazi atrocities."

"Political victims: In memory of the political victims of the Holocaust, Communists, Socialists, Trade Unionists, and other opponents of the Nazi regime who were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis. Candle lighters: Manus O'Riordan, Ireland Secretary, International Brigade Memorial Trust, and Patricia King, General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions."

But why does the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) censor Niemoeller in this regard? For it is that Museum which must be held responsible for quite deliberately spreading a lie in the USA, that Niemoeller began his statement with the sentence: "First they came for the Socialists", and for compounding the offence by omitting any reference whatsoever to Communists in its "quotation".

Many US Facebook posts towards the end of 2015 reacted against the racist incitement statements of US Republican Presidential hopeful Donald Trump, by proclaiming, in these

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Thoughts on Lord Esher (Part Two)

By Pat Walsh

[From Part One: Reginald Brett, Lord Esher, was an old fashioned Whig aristocrat, one of three outstanding people of consequence within the British State at the time of the Great War. The most important people both asked for and took his advice. He sat in the Committee of Imperial Defence, playing an important role in the preparation for the Great War.

In a letter to his wife on February 26th 1923 Lord Esher wrote:

“I am looking up all my papers on the preparation for the Great War. This began in 1905-1906. By 1908 we had made great strides. I have documentary evidence of this.”]

Lord Esher realised that England needed adjustment to fight a Great War. It had spread out of its island and across the world to such an extent that it had become over-exposed. It had been a maritime power which built an Empire on the seas with an invincible navy. But the Empire had spread so much that it had come into contact in many places with armies of the land powers. And an invincible Navy was therefore no longer adequate to the situation. So the long standing aversion to Conscription had to be overcome to prepare for the war to come.

England was still an oligarchy operating behind an increasingly representative form of government. It was not really a democracy, since more than half the adult population could not vote. But it liked to present itself as such, despite waging its previous world war of 1793-1815 against democracy. So the people planning the War had to proceed through subterfuge, carefully working up the masses in fear of Germany whilst denying to Parliament and even to the Cabinet their intentions. Lord Esher's Journals and Letters reveal his circle of correspondence on affairs of State. It included during 1905-06 alone practically all the important people within the State: H.M. The King, Admiral Fisher, Arthur Balfour, Campbell-Bannerman, Lord Roberts, Sir Douglas Haig, Lord Kitchener, Sir John French, R.B. Haldane, Sir George Clarke (Secretary to the CID), Arnold Forster (War Minister), John Morley (India), Reginald McKenna (Chancellor of the Exchequer), and a host of others.

With these people Reginald Brett conducted discussions about what to do, how to do it and how to overcome the problems the necessary project of organising a Great War against Germany would encounter.

When the democracy eventually found out it unleashed a torrent of propaganda in favour of the thing it had foisted upon it. Confronted with the vital hour it salved its conscience through a welter of moralism directed at the enemy and made things immeasurably worse for all concerned.

Here are Lord Esher's thoughts about organising the War behind the backs of the democracy and manoeuvring round traditional Liberal sensitivities, nearly a decade before the War:

“... the laws of historical and ethnographical evolution... require that we shall fight one of the most powerful military empires that has ever existed. This is *certain*, and we have a very short period of preparation. I fear that proficiency in games, or in the hunting-field, will not help our poor lads much when they have to face the carefully trained and highly educated German officers.” (Letter to the Duchess of Sutherland, September 7th 1906)

In the following letter to Lord Knollys Esher talks about the problem of bringing about conscription in England:

“As you know, I am a confirmed believer in *compulsion*; but until a final experiment has been tried to get the *youth* of the Nation... to volunteer for what is called Home Defence... and until the experiment has proved a failure, there is not much hope of getting Parliament or the Country to agree to the Compulsory principle. I am strongly in favour of Haldane's “County Associations” scheme... As I have so often repeated, at the risk of boring you, we are precisely in the position of Prussia in 1806. Between 1800 and 1806 the Prussians were worrying over “Army Reform.” They possessed a *small* highly trained, beautifully dressed, finely drilled Army; but utterly inadequate to their needs. Their statesmen and soldiers were aware of this. But in the midst of their endless quarrels over the *form* which expansion should take Napoleon came down like an avalanche, and Jena followed.

“The foreign policy of E. Grey, or any other Secretary of State, might land us any day in a similar plight. We have an Army in excess of our requirements for ‘small wars’ – and wholly inadequate to the demands of a great war.

“It was pathetic on manoeuvres to see a “position” five miles in length occupied by the Aldershot Army Corps, and to think of an attack on such a position by German or Turkish troops, when *three* times the number of troops would be certain to be employed. We are still living under the conditions which governed British policy at the time of Queen Anne. We delude ourselves that we are an Island State. We are an Island *Race*, but we have ceased to be an Island State. The King's Empire has got frontiers co-terminous with the land frontiers of some of the greatest military Powers on earth. Russia. Turkey. And the United States. In addition, the commercial and naval superiority of Great Britain is threatened by (not the Kaiser nor any man) *natural forces*, which require the expansion of Germany to sea frontiers. No greater Empire has ever

remained cooped up, without outlets to the sea. Kiel and the Elbe are utterly inadequate. Germany *must* stretch out her limbs seawards. This means perpetual threats to Belgium and Holland. It is only *a question of time*. Are we to depend upon “alliances” or upon ourselves? That is the question. (Letter to Lord Knollys, September 30th 1906)

Haldane’s Army

It should be noted that Esher knew the campaign to recruit an army for “Home Defence” being conducted by the War Minister, Haldane, was a necessary fraud in Liberal England for working toward the larger aim of a Great War on the continent. This is revealed in another letter Esher wrote:

“The Army is not maintained for Home Defence. The enquiries of the Defence Committee prove, that for such a purpose, an Army, however large and well equipped would be useless; for if the command of the sea is maintained, such an army would not be required, and if the command of the sea is lost, it would be starved into submission. The Army is maintained for purpose of re-inforcing British troops in India and in Egypt, and for relieving troops wherever they are quartered abroad.” (Letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 22nd May 1908)

In the following letter to Sir John Fisher, First Lord of the Admiralty, Esher explains the purpose of the “Naval Scare” in England for the command of the sea. Jackie Fisher was continually being annoyed by statements that the Royal Navy was not big enough to deal with the growing German Navy and having to engage in pointless discussions about the matter. Admiral Fisher knew the truth – that the German Navy was no match for the British one, and he had a mind to say it. Esher, however, advised him to keep quiet, in his own interest, since a popular sense of fear gave the First Sea Lord his big Navy:

“It is the discussions which keep alive popular fears and popular interest, upon which alone rest the Navy Estimates. A Nation that believes itself secure, all history teaches is doomed. Anxiety, not a sense of security, lies at the root of readiness for war... An invasion scare is the mill of God which grinds you out a Navy of Dreadnoughts, and keeps the British people war-like in spirit.” (October 1st, 1907)

Lord Esher wrote in his journal, October 2nd 1908:

“Haldane suggested this morning that I should explain to the King the great change which has occurred, over the last two years, in the constitution and readiness for war of the Regular Army. It is exceedingly difficult, as I told him, to do this without tabulated figures. The net result is, no doubt, that the King has *in Great Britain*, a force of 200,000 men which could be ready in 3 weeks, and possibly 18 days, to fight on the line of the Meuse.

“There is no previous period in the history of this country when such a feat was within measurable distance.”

The establishment of this British Expeditionary Force that would fit onto the French left in a future war against Germany is further evidence of England’s intentions in the decade before its Great War.

Richard Haldane’s autobiography reveals that immediately after the Liberal Government came to office in 1906 he was instructed to go into the question of providing British troops for continental service. This was contingent upon “the assistance of Russian pressure on the eastern frontier” of Germany for a war in which France, Russia and England were going to engage. A complete reconstitution of the British Army was then affected, not only in Great Britain but in her self-governing Dominions.

Haldane at the War Office introduced something which had not existed before – the organisation of the British army on a specific war plan for a particular situation so that there was no necessity to change its organisation on the occasion of war. It was a contingency which had never previously been required by Britain, used as it was, to fighting colonial wars in different areas of the world, that demanded a great deal of improvisation. Britain’s military machine was always designed as a fighting force required for use in conjunction with its interests across the globe, and not for the European mainland.

It was always its spare capacity which took on any European intervention that might be required. Now it directed its main effort towards creating a British war machine to fulfill a specifically continental objective – the defeat of Germany alongside its French and Russian allies.

Under Haldane’s supervision, Sir Henry Wilson, Director of Military Operations on the General Staff, and Commandant Foch, of the French Army, organised the military preparations over a period of eight years, which, when war broke out in Europe enabled the British Expeditionary Force to be put on the left flank of the French army in prearranged positions within two weeks of the declaration of war. Wilson prepared for this war by going over the ground on which it was to be fought over and over again on his bicycle.

Esher recorded the following in his Journal, on November 9th 1908:

“Huguet – French Military Attaché – came to Orchard Lea yesterday. The French have no hope of support from Russia. The utmost they hope for, in the present state of Russia (the Slav emotion, the weakness of finances, and weakness of Western frontier forces in material) is that she would mobilise her Polish forces, and so, possibly, neutralise 3 or 4 German Army Corps. The French position is that in Staff and Armament they are at least equal, if not superior, to Germany... The plan is to hold lightly the frontier – nearly 300 miles – with their reserves in rear, ready to deliver a strong counter-attack. They calculate that the Germans can only advance through the “gap,” or by violating the neutrality of Luxembourg and Belgium. They propose to wait on the defensive. They want our troops to be placed under the French Generalissimo. They would form part of the reserve. The idea that an English contingent is wanted for its ‘moral effect,’ which is an idea prevalent here, is scouted by the French. They want the additional force at the decisive point. I am confident that great difficulties would arise if this proposal was known in certain quarters. The placing of the whole of our Army under French Generals is such a wholly new departure. There is no precedent for it at all. Certainly alternative plans will have to be prepared.”

That gives the reason why, despite the numerous scares from 1906 to 1914 the Great War did not come earlier. For some years both Russia and England were lacking in preparation. By

1908, as Lord Hankey's Supreme Command reveals, England was nearly there, but Russia was not. It took 3 years of the War itself for the British to put their army under the command of a French Generalissimo, Marshal Foch – something that General Henry Wilson advised almost from the start.

This, of course, would have been anathema to the Royal Navy. The Senior Service viewed such a thing as a dangerous departure from the magic formula that had made Britain what it was in the world, from 1688-1914. The traditional position was to wage a sea war with the army as an ancillary to it. That made for satisfying the traditional objectives of British warfare, which were fundamentally economic. Britain's destiny should not be handed over to any continental power so that England became the object of its own Balance of Power policy rather than the subject (And in becoming the object of the Balance of Power the British island gave way to the larger American island).

As Esher reveals, the smallness of the British Expeditionary Force was beside the point. Its main purpose was one of morale and of convincing the French that England had warlike intentions to the extent that it would demonstrate a commitment to continental warfare that it had never done before. After engaging with the French in military conversations Britain had to convince its new ally that it would play its part in a continental war on Germany and not just leave them to do the fighting.

Haldane did not just create a fighting force for France, he created military structures in Britain to back up that force and provide for its expansion. A great propaganda campaign was launched to win recruits and popular discussion of military affairs was fostered outside of the British Army for the first time in English history. As part of this general popularising of military affairs, Colonel Repington organised a series of lectures to the Aldershot Military Society that were published in popular format in the Aldershot Military Society Pamphlet series.

The Regular Army began to take on the character of a cadre force which, when the occasion arose, was able to shape large quantities of enthusiastic recruits into the ranks. The Territorial Army that Haldane set up was not a home defence force, meant to repel an invasion, as Esher noted. It was, as Haldane said in the Commons on 8 March 1906, "a skeleton organisation... behind the strike force with the certainty of the power of expansion."

Haldane encouraged private individuals to join in military training and organisation. There was the rapid establishment and growth of the Home Counties Gun Clubs and an effort to develop the military abilities of the masses. A collection of voluntary organisations founded and funded by the middle and upper classes, with patrons and subscribers from right across the Party spectrum, former proconsuls, and senior Army and Navy officers, directed and paid for a formidable propaganda machine, and worked on the lower orders. Baden-Powell, the hero of Mafeking, established his Boy Scouts in 1908 to "harden the nation" and build up a "self reliant, energetic manhood" to populate and defend the Empire, so that it would not go the way of Rome. They got uniforms, with bush hats and bandannas, modelled on Cecil Rhodes troopers in South Africa, and had 100,000 members by 1910. There were also the Boys Brigade and the Girl Guides as adjuncts to this popular militarisation.

Conscription?

But despite Haldane's revolution many prominent Unionists believed this was not enough for a war on Germany. The principles on which the British military system stood began to be publicly challenged by advocates of a conscripted national army, particularly by Lord Robert's 35,000 strong National Service League. Lord Robert's book '*A Nation In Arms*', published in 1907, was a national bestseller. Lord Esher sympathised with this campaign but knew conscription could only be brought about with difficulty in Liberal England.

The British State had a long-standing prejudice against conscription and the formation of a national army – something which was very much the norm in continental Europe. It was believed that the country had done very well without the necessity of a conscript army; it had no land frontiers to protect and the most powerful navy in the world to defend its island; it had a reserve army of labour amongst the unemployed which provided cannon-fodder on the cheap and native armies who were moulded into Imperial forces by English officers; and it made allies with those who possessed powerful armies and who could be got to do most of the fighting. And, of course, there was the traditional affectation of British moral superiority over the continental states, which came from making do with its non-conscript army.

Esher wrote to Lord Roberts about his campaign for Conscription on June 6th 1909 suggesting to him that the voluntary principle had had its advantages and should be maintained for the present. Esher suggested that compulsion would weaken Britain's sea power, the basis of its power in the world, as Governments would economise to fund the larger Home Army. The larger Army would not make any difference to England's security if the Fleet could not command the seas. Esher also warned that compulsion "would probably weaken the power of our people to take the offensive in war, upon which hitherto our Imperial position has largely rested." This was because as the cost of the Home Army increased its "Imperial policing" would have to be cut.

Haldane knew that the Liberal dominated Parliament would not give him the money required to fund a conscript army. And the General Staff themselves, advised by Esher, rejected the idea when they considered the merits of it against having a smaller professional body. Haldane's way of making up the military deficit proved the only acceptable means in the circumstances.

The result of the popularising of the military spirit in English society was that in 1914 Britain was able to sustain a war effort on an unprecedented scale for two years without having to resort to Conscription. There was no question of Britain being unprepared for the war it had been organising, planning and making provision for diplomatically, socially and militarily for the best part of a decade.

It is suggested by some historians that the smallness of the British Army showed the unpreparedness for the war (and a lack of responsibility for it). However, the point is that the size of the British Expeditionary Force was beside the point. The purpose of the Great War was to secure the demise of a growing commercial rival at the greatest advantage to Britain and the least cost to it. The French and Russians were to do the continental fighting as part of the encirclement of Germany: If they suffered in performing this role all the better for England. It was they whom Britain had to deal with once Germany was destroyed. That was the nature of the Balance of Power and it is shown by what Britain did to France after it had won the war.

Britain provided its Navy, the greatest military force in the world, to the encirclement and destruction of Germany. Its Navy could capture trade and markets that armies could not. Through it Britain secured the maximum gains at the least cost to blood and treasure. That was the British way of Warfare and why it fought wars in the first place. The rest was moral camouflage.

Britain could grab territory around the world while the French and Russians had to defend their frontiers if things went wrong. In the worse case Britain could abandon the continent if it had a smallish military commitment (as it did in 1940). It could fight on with its Navy and conclude a peace if necessary leaving its allies in the lurch.

But three things went wrong with this traditional approach: The Germans were more resilient and resourceful than was anticipated; The Liberals (and Irish Redmondites) made the Balance of Power war into a moral crusade to justify their moral collapse; and Asquith appointed Kitchener to the War Office

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or similar words: “First they came for the Mexicans, now they come for the Muslims, and I will not be silent ...”, echoing the powerful anti-Nazi confessional statement of Pastor Martin Niemöller. To echo such an inspiring statement is perfectly legitimate and appropriate, for it does not pretend to be directly quoting the original historical statement itself, but is recasting it for modern times. Yet some of those posts, having been misled by the USHMM, went on to quote its false version of Niemöller. So, what are we to say when such a Memorial deliberately distorts History and Truth itself? In 1999 I visited Washington DC for an economics conference, in my capacity as a member of the Economics Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation. While there, I took the opportunity to visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It was, for the most part, a most moving experience. But then I came across the false quotation that filled me with intense anger. For I had been aware since my 1960s teens that Niemöller had explicitly stated that “first they came for the Communists”. Seeing now that the false USHMM version has prevailed throughout the USA, I have been prompted to visit the USHMM’s own website, to find the following lame attempt at a “justification” for its lie:

“Martin Niemöller (1892-1984) was a prominent Protestant pastor who emerged as an outspoken public foe of Adolf Hitler and spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps. Niemöller is perhaps best remembered for the quotation:

*‘First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak
out—*

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak
for me.’*

“The quotation stems from Niemöller’s lectures during the early postwar period. Different versions of the quotation exist. These can be attributed to the fact that Niemöller spoke extemporaneously and in a number of settings. Much controversy surrounds the content of the poem as it has been printed in varying forms, referring to diverse groups such as Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Jews, Trade Unionists, or Communists depending upon the version. Nonetheless his

with the result that those who held the Conscriptivist position favouring a large war of attrition controlled the waging of the war. And so the small British Expeditionary Force of the Liberal Imperialist war plan became a massive continental commitment of millions of men, first through Liberal propaganda and then through Unionist Compulsion. □

See in Documents:

THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE: ITS FUNCTIONS AND POTENTIALITIES (A lecture delivered by Viscount Esher at the United Service Institution on March 20, 1912, with the Chief of the General Staff”, General Sir John French, G.C.B., in the chair.)

Followed by a Note by Pat Walsh setting out why Britain’s Great War cannot be seen as purely a conspiracy of the gentry or “secret elite”.

point was that Germans—in particular, he believed, the leaders of the Protestant churches—had been complicit through their silence in the Nazi imprisonment, persecution, and murder of millions of people.”

But the website https://en.m.wikiquote.org/wiki/Martin_Niemöller gives the lie to such USHMM obfuscation, establishing that in his very first sermon along these lines, Niemöller clearly identified the Communists as the first victims of the Nazis:

“The origins of this poem first have been traced to a speech given by Niemöller on January 6, 1946, to the representatives of the Confessing Church in Frankfurt. According to research by Harold Marcuse, the original groups mentioned in the speech were Communists, the incurably sick, Jews, and people in occupied countries. Since then, the contents have often been altered to produce numerous variants. Niemöller himself came up with different versions, depending on the year. The most famous and well known alterations are perhaps those beginning ‘First they came for the Jews’ ... Other translations or variants: **‘In Germany, they came first for the Communists, And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Communist; And then they came for the trade unionists, And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a trade unionist; And then they came for the Jews, And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Jew; And then . . . they came for me . . . And by that time there was no one left to speak up.’** Twenty-five years later Niemöller indicated that this was the version he preferred, in a 1971 interview.”

Holocaust denial is indeed a heinous phenomenon, especially the attempt to deny that, as World War Two developed following the 1941 Nazi invasion of the USSR, it had set out to accomplish the genocidal extermination of Jews and Roma. But was not the US Holocaust Memorial Museum engaging in a “little” Holocaust denial itself, with its own Niemöller lie, for the purpose of denying that Communists were Nazi Germany’s first victims? This Museum shamefully surrendered to the remnants of the anti-Communist hysteria that had characterised the McCarthyite period of the Cold War, so well depicted recently in that movie about the Hollywood Ten, “Trumbo”, when indeed, once again, “they first came for the Communists”, including “premature” anti-Fascist International Brigade volunteers, and did not hesitate to use the anti-Semitic term of abuse “Kikes” to describe those Jews among the targets of that US post-War “Red” scare. □

When Irish Republicans Built an American Union: A Salute to Mike Quill and his Comrades.

by Manus O’Riordan

Neo-Redmondism, with its Empire solidarity from the First World War onwards, has sought to caricature the Irish Republican tradition as introverted and incapable of functioning in a wider world. A subset of neo-Redmondism, led by the Sindo (*Sunday Independent*) commentariat, also caricatures as bog ignorant, anything lying outside its self-satisfied concept of urban “sophistication”. It is not just the independent-minded politics of the late Kerry TD Jackie Healy Rae and his successor TD sons, Michael and Danny, that they object to, it is the very accent of their native village of Kilgarvan that they sneer at and ridicule as being somehow “undignified”. So let us here kill two birds with one stone, by remembering the 50th anniversary of the death of Kilgarvan-born Michael J. Quill (18 September 1905 - 28 January 1966), founder of the Transport Workers’ Union of America. Quill was part of a *diaspora* whose banishment from their native land is seldom alluded to by either media or academia – those hundreds of defeated Republicans driven into exile across the Atlantic by the vicious retribution of a victorious Free State regime. This was also the case with Quill’s comrade-in-struggle, Gerald O’Reilly, whose County Meath accent was as strong as ever when I met him in the 1980s, notwithstanding the six decades of his life spent in New York. Quill was once asked why he never dropped his brogue, and he responded that as a penniless immigrant arriving in New York he had nothing to bring with him from his native land but his accent, and he was not going to let go of it now.

Unlike the Dublin chattering classes, New York could take the Kilgarvan accent in its stride. Almost seventeen years after Quill’s death, the *New York Daily News* columnist Michael Daly, unfazed either by Kilgarvan or its accent, could write in its issue of 15 December 2002:

“From out of a morning as misty as memory, one M42 bus after another rolled past the negotiations, each with a logo bearing the likeness of a departed legend whose name springs alive at the first whispers of a transit strike. ‘Michael J. Quill Depot’, read the words circling the likeness. The face in the logo affixed to the driver’s side was just breaking into a smile, as if he were delighting in the Metropolitan Transportation Authority having named its West 40th St. bus depot after him. After all, Mike Quill was the one-time Irish Republican Army guerrilla who became the Metropolitan Transport Authority’s mythic foe. He landed here from Ireland on St. Patrick’s Day 1926 and was a change booth clerk on the IRT line eight years later, when he convened a secret meeting with a half-dozen fellow transit workers in a Manhattan cafeteria. They were weary of working 12-hour days seven days a week for subsistence wages. Quill became the leader of the fledgling Transport Workers Union, and his concern was not limited to wages and hours. He organized rallies against anti-Semitism and insisted the executive board be open to all races...”

“The moment that made Quill a legend came on the first day of 1966, when he called a citywide transit strike. A judge declared the strike illegal, and Quill’s reply would be better remembered

than even his bravest declarations of social conscience. ‘The judge can drop dead in his black robes’, Quill said. Quill was the one who suffered a heart attack, but he held on long enough to see the end of the 12-day strike. He expended the last of his strength addressing a rally celebrating the workers’ 15 per cent raise. Three days later, the 60-year old Quill was dead. An unrelated strike by the hearse drivers union complicated the funeral arrangements. A black station wagon rather than a hearse bore his bronze coffin to St. Patrick’s Cathedral...”

“But the Quill spirit stirred anew in 2000, when Roger Toussaint was elected TWU president. Toussaint had left Trinidad and Tobago in 1974, after his own fight against the legacy of British colonialism. His Caribbean accent was as distinctive as Quill’s brogue as he declared the TWU’s struggle to be about dignity as well as money. ‘The disciplinary system, the plantation mentality that says the workers are the inmates and the bosses are the wardens, is something we’re going to change’, Toussaint said. He was referring to rules such as those that require workers on sick leave to notify their bosses before venturing from home. Negotiations with the MTA over discipline broke down in October and Toussaint staged a walkout. ‘We’re boarding a plane to Ireland, the home of Mike Quill’, Toussaint said. Paying tribute by chance, Toussaint had been invited across the sea by an Irish trade union. He did not fail to pay homage at the memorial in Quill’s hometown of Kilgarvan, County Kerry. The memorial features a photo of Quill and Martin Luther King at the 1961 convention. On October 11, Toussaint addressed a union gathering in nearby Killarney. He was introduced by Manus O’Riordan, who recalled what King had said after Quill’s death. ‘He spent his life ripping the chains of bondage off his fellow man’, King had intoned. ‘This is a man the ages will remember.’ Toussaint also spoke of Quill and sat down to rousing applause. The TWU’s new leader was soon back on the phone to New York. ‘They were really working around the clock from Killarney’, O’Riordan would say. Toussaint returned to New York and on December 7 the TWU gathered at the Javits Convention Center, two blocks down Eleventh Ave. from the Michael J. Quill depot. The members authorized Toussaint to call a strike. ‘Strike! Strike!’ chanted thousands. Yesterday, the negotiations continued at the Grand Hyatt hotel, with the MTA insisting there was no money for raises and the TWU saying it could not accept a zero. The only solution seemed to be for the MTA to offer in respect whatever it cannot give in cash. Meanwhile, the M42 buses kept rolling out of the mist with that logo bearing the almost smiling face of a man from Kilgarvan, where they can tell you empty pockets do not preclude a generous heart.”

See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=NLJVN1dCrI0> for “Michael J. Quill (1905-1966) was one of the founders of the Transport Union of America”, to witness Quill in full Kilgarvan flow, debating the right to strike of public sector workers.

See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=NRfjlgYWPgk> for “1966: The TWU’s Finest Hour”.

See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=yNVPSIm7vR0> for “Michael J. Quill: Fearless Father of the TWU”.

I decided to post the following Facebook tribute on Quill's actual anniversary:

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY, THIS JANUARY 28TH, OF THE DEATH OF THE US UNION PIONEER MIKE QUILL - IRISH REPUBLICAN VETERAN AND SUPPORTER OF THE SPANISH REPUBLIC

One of the most inspiring Union veterans I have had the privilege of meeting in life, and with whom I conducted a correspondence over a number of years, was Gerald O'Reilly (1903-1990), a founding pioneer of the Transport Workers' Union of America. In December 1990, I spoke at a memorial meeting in honour of Gerald O'Reilly, held in Dublin's Irish Labour History Society Museum. My co-speakers were Gerald O'Reilly's fellow County Meath man, Peter Cassells, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and my father, Michael O'Riordan (1917-2006), Chairperson of the Communist Party of Ireland, International Brigade veteran of the Spanish Anti-Fascist War and author of *Connolly Column*.

See <https://cedarlounge.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/twu.pdf> for a full reproduction of the 1988 pamphlet by Gerald O'Reilly, *The Birth And Growth Of The Transport Workers Union*. Gerald wrote therein:

"Although the successful unionisation of the employees of the subway and surface transit systems in New York City was the work of many people, the man who provided the aggressive leadership in the building of the Transport Workers' Union was Michael J. Quill... As one of Michael's earliest associates, I feel I should set down some basic facts to provide an accurate picture of the circumstances under which the Union was born and grew. The Transport Workers' Union had its roots (in the 1930s) in two organisations in New York City: one fairly large - the Clan-na-Gael (also known as the Clan-na-Gael and IRA Clubs); one small - the Irish Workers' Clubs. Michael was a member of both, as was I. When a small group of us - many of whom were members of both organisations - undertook to build a Union, we sought help from different sources. Only one responded favourably: the Communist Party, which Mike and I and many of the other founding members of the Union subsequently joined."

"After the Civil War in Ireland had collapsed in 1923 on the acceptance of an Irish Free State and a divided country, hundreds of its veterans emigrated to the United States where many, like Mike and myself, found employment on New York's transit lines. We had been given transfers from the Irish Republican Army to its affiliates in the United States: the Clan-na-Gael and IRA Clubs, in New York, which had their headquarters in the Tara Hall on West 66th Street. Mike was a member of the Austin Stack club and I was a member of the James Connolly club. Some of us, including Mike, also joined the Irish Workers' Clubs founded by James Galton, an Irish born, United States Army veteran, who had been deported from Ireland for 'radicalism' - a crime which consisted of teaching the social philosophy of James Connolly to small land holders and labourers... James Connolly had been in the United States from 1903 to 1910 and had spent most of that time organising for the IWW and later for the Socialist Party of America. He wrote regularly for the *Industrial Union Bulletin*, advocating industrial unionism as the method that offered the only hope of relief for exploited workers. He explained, for instance, how craft organisation had been the fatal flaw which had defeated striking transit workers in New York City and Yonkers. Jim

Galton was a devoted disciple of Connolly's principles and he read and discussed Connolly's writings at every meeting of the Irish Workers' Clubs. From then on Connolly was a major influence in our lives, and particularly in the life of Michael Quill."

In his 1980 biography, *Frank Ryan - The Search For The Republic*, Sean Cronin related how the future Irish International Brigade leader had shared a platform with Mike Quill in New York in May 1930. When Frank Ryan and George Gilmore broke with the IRA in 1934 to become joint secretaries of the newly formed leftwing Republican Congress, Gerald O'Reilly and Mike Quill established a branch of Republican Congress among their fellow Irish Republican exiles in New York. Cronin went on to relate:

"Frank Ryan was not much concerned with Spain in September 1936. His main worry as Congress joint secretary was that members in America faced expulsion from Clan na Gael if they did not disavow Republican Congress... Mike Quill, founder of the Transport Workers' Union of America, and Gerald O'Reilly, a Union organiser, were told to leave Congress or be expelled from Clan. They cabled Dublin for advice and were told to stay in Clan. The Congress branch in New York folded. A couple of years later they were expelled from Clan anyway."

Cronin continued:

"On Sunday, September 20, three days after Ryan wrote in his September 17 letter to Gerald O'Reilly that 'the front line trenches of Spain are right here', Cardinal McRory, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, publicly denounced Republican Congress for sending a cablegram of support to the Spanish Republican government. He thought it a very serious matter and suggested that the Irish state should suppress movements like Congress... Frank Ryan replied to Cardinal McRory for Republican Congress on September 22... The cable was one of 'sympathy and support to the Spanish, Catalan and Basque peoples in their fight against Fascism', he pointed out."

By December 1936, Frank Ryan himself was on his way to Spain to fight against that very same Fascism. Cronin related:

"The only written comment from him about the whole thing is an undated note, apparently in the second half of November, to Gerald O'Reilly's wife Helen, in New York, asking: 'Do any Irish over there want to go to Spain? Our Column will be going in a fortnight's time.'"

In his Presidential address to the TWU Convention, held in New York's Madison Square Garden in October 1937, Mike Quill proclaimed his opposition to "all oppression of the working class, and that goes for the invasion of Spain today and the slaughter of our brothers-in-arms, the Spanish workers."

In his 1989 history, *In Transit - The Transport Workers Union in New York City*, Joshua B. Freeman wrote:

"The Spanish Civil War precipitated a break between a group of left republicans, including Quill and O'Reilly from the TWU, and the Clan na Gael... When the Quill-O'Reilly group refused to drop its public support for the Spanish Republicans, its supporters were expelled from the Clan."

Frank Ryan was among those captured by the Fascists on the disintegrating Aragon front in March 1938. Sean Cronin related:

“In New York the indefatigable Gerald O’Reilly used his trade union and Irish republican contacts to build an ‘Irish-American Committee for the Release of Frank Ryan’... The members of the committee included ... Michael J. Quill, President of the Transport Workers Union of America.”

Today, on the 50th anniversary of his passing, I wish to pay tribute to Mike Quill by reproducing this 2002 tribute:

MIKE QUILL - KERRY FOUNDER OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS’ UNION OF AMERICA

(An address by Manus O’Riordan, Head of Research, SIPTU - Services Industrial Professional & Technical Union, Ireland - at the Biennial Delegate Conference of the SIPTU South West Region, Killarney, County Kerry, 11 October 2002.)

Comrades and Friends: It is indeed a great honour on the occasion of this Conference that we have among us this evening a delegation from New York Local 100 of the Transport Workers’ Union of America, here to visit the birthplace of that Union - South Kerry! One of the most abiding TV memories of my school days was in 1966, when the newly-elected Mayor of New York, John Lindsay, responded to media goading and decided he would try to face down the Transport Workers’ Union. But he met more than his match when he was confronted by New York’s first ever city-wide transit strike. It was then that I first saw and heard on screen the leader of that strike, Michael J. Quill, denounce, with all his Kerry-accented verbal eloquence, both the Mayor and the Judge who was sending him to prison for violating an anti-strike injunction. Quill persevered and led that Union, which he had founded in 1934, to win its greatest contract ever. Tragedy, however, followed victory. On January 28, 1966, three days after speaking at the mass rally called to celebrate the new contract, Mike Quill was dead. Against all medical advice, he had insisted on leading his members in that momentous struggle. He had literally given his life on the picket-line.

Mike Quill’s fighting spirit had been nurtured in the very Kerry mountains that surround us here in Killarney. He was born in Kilgarvan on September 18, 1905. During Ireland’s War of Independence, fought from 1919 to 1921, the teenage Mike Quill was a dispatch rider, while his family home served as headquarters of the Kerry No. 2 Brigade of the Irish Republican Army. His uncle’s house, also in Kilgarvan, was yet another Republican home, so renowned for its revolutionary sympathies, that the British occupying garrison of Black-and-Tans derisively nicknamed it “Liberty Hall”! In the tragic Civil War that followed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Mike Quill participated in the Republican capture of the town of Kenmare. It was, however, a short-lived victory before the defeat of the side on which he had been fighting. It was during those same years that Mike Quill also had his first experience of industrial struggle, when he and his brother John were fired for staging a sit-in strike in a Kenmare saw-mill. Thereafter, an employment black-list prevailed against Quill, as both a defeated Republican fighter and a sacked industrial activist, leaving him with no other option but emigration. So it was that, on the eve of St. Patrick’s Day 1926, Mike Quill first set foot in the New York City he would make his own. Following a variety of jobs, Quill

finally took up employment in 1929 as a ticket agent with the Interboro Rapid Transit Company, or IRT, the largest subway operation in the USA. Working conditions were horrendous, with Mike often required to be in attendance for four hours without pay until work might finally become available, and then condemned to a slave-driving schedule - 12 hours a night, seven nights a week. In 1961 he recalled:

“During those twelve hour nights we’d chat about the motormen, conductors, guards etc. whose conditions were even worse. They had to work a ‘spread’ of 16 hours each day in order to get 10 hours pay. Negro workers could get jobs only as porters. They were subjected to treatment that makes Little Rock and Birmingham seem liberal and respectable by comparison ... I also saw Catholic ticket agents fired by Catholic bosses for going to Mass early in the morning while the porter ‘covered’ the booth for half an hour. Protestant bosses fired Protestant workers for similar crimes - going to Church. The Jewish workers had no trouble with the subway bosses - Jews were denied employment in the transit lines.”

At that time 50 percent of New York’s transit workers were Irish. Mike Quill and other politicised immigrants began to associate in the Irish Workers’ Clubs that had been established in New York by James Gralton, the only Irishman ever to be deported from his native land because of his political activities. These Irish immigrant workers formed the nucleus of a leadership that would give birth to a new Union in New York. It was my privilege to have known two of Quill’s fellow pioneers in that historic project, Austin Hogan from Cork, who had led the TWU’s New York Local 100, and Gerald O’Reilly from Meath, organiser of the TWU’s annual Connolly Commemoration in New York. Through the Irish Workers’ Clubs, these pioneers learned that James Connolly had not only been an executed leader of the 1916 National Rising. They also learned that he had been an Irish trade union leader and, more significantly, an American union organiser as well. In his 1910 pamphlet “The Axe to the Root”, Connolly had written in great detail of how craft divisions had ensured the defeat of a recent strike of New York transit workers and how much a new model of industrial unionism was required. Quill and his comrades devoured Connolly’s teachings, and a quarter of a century later put them into practice with the foundation of just such a Union on April 12, 1934. You will note that I have referred to these New York workers as transit and not transport workers. The Irish writer and wit Oscar Wilde once observed that both sides of the Atlantic were divided by a common language. “Transit” is the word used in the “American” language. But why, then, did these transit workers call their new union the Transport Workers’ Union of America? Because they wished to honour the name of SIPTU’s predecessor, the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union of Larkin and Connolly, whose history had inspired them to go and do likewise.

Time does not allow for a detailed history of that American Union. Beginning with just 400 members, it fought successfully to organise and represent all 14,000 employed by the IRT. In the next largest subway company - the Brooklyn Manhattan Transit, or BMT line - the successful 1937 sit-down strike led to further victories, which soon brought total union membership to 45,000. In the late 1940s membership was further extended to embrace utility and airline workers. Throughout all this period Quill also remained politically focused. In 1937 he was first elected to the New York City Council on behalf of the American Labor Party. On the final occasion on which he stood for the City Council in 1945, he was elected on the first ballot. Indeed, he was the first candidate to be elected in the entire

city. Nor was he afraid to risk the popularity that had come his way when his principles demanded that he should now swim against the tide. In 1969 and 1970, when I was a student in the United States and was protesting against the Vietnam War, I knew how much we were still a minority viewpoint. And yet, as early as 1965, at his last Union Convention, Mike Quill had the courage of his convictions to confront his members with his own forthright opposition to that War.

Three decades earlier Quill had also risked unpopularity with much of his membership by supporting the Spanish Republic and its right to defend itself against Fascist rebellion and aggression. At Christmas 1937, in the wake of his victory in the New York City Council elections, Mike Quill briefly returned to Ireland in order to marry Molly O'Neill of Cahersiveen, County Kerry. And yet he still found time to have a meeting with a 20 year old Cork volunteer about to set out to fight in defence of the Spanish Republic - my own father Micheál O'Riordan. Quill had already seen a neighbour's child from Kilgarvan, Michael Lehane, make that internationalist commitment to Spain. Lehane would subsequently serve in the Norwegian Merchant Navy on the trans-Atlantic convoys of World War Two, and give up his life in the cause of anti-fascism when his ship fell victim to a Nazi U-boat attack in 1943. In 1989 my father unveiled a plaque in honour of his close friend and comrade-in-arms in Spain, opposite Lehane's birthplace at the Morley's Bridge entrance to Kilgarvan. And in 1997 Mick Lehane was posthumously awarded his Second World War Service medal by the Norwegian Government, in a ceremony appropriately held in Kilgarvan's own Michael J. Quill Memorial Centre.

Mike Quill was a man ahead of his time in so many different ways. Here in Ireland, as we are still struggling to overcome the situation where this country has the worst provision of childcare services in the European Union, it is worth remembering that in 1944 Quill had introduced a bill into the New York City Council to establish free childcare centres for working mothers. And as issues of racism in varying guises now need to be confronted in Ireland, we can also learn from Quill's inspired leadership. An unequivocal and relentless foe of all forms of anti-Semitism, Quill declared at the end of World War Two: "We licked the race haters in Europe, but the millions of Jewish dead cannot be restored to life". Mike Quill was a Kerryman who was never afraid to court unpopularity by fearlessly tackling any anti-Semitism encountered among his fellow-Irishmen. In the 1930s the anti-Semitism of Father Charles Coughlin's Christian Front, and that of the associated stormtroopers of America's Christian Mobilisers, was finding a sympathetic hearing among significant sections of New York's Irish. Quill took them on head-to-head in June 1939 when he staged a rally against anti-Semitism in a 95 percent Irish district of the South Bronx, and won over the overwhelming majority of the four thousand Irish who came to hear him. He was in the best traditions of James Connolly himself who, in 1902, had issued a Yiddish-language address to Jewish immigrant workers in Dublin.

Throughout his life Quill also fought relentlessly against colour prejudice. In marked contrast to other railroad unions of the 1930s, which either excluded black workers entirely or accorded them only second class status, the Transport Workers' Union from the very outset declared it was open to all workers without regard to colour. Indeed, the African-American IRT porter Clarence King was elected to the very first TWU Executive Board. Here again, Quill was prepared to face down reactionary white racism whenever it raised its ugly head among his own Union membership. In 1944 he successfully brought to an end a boss-inspired wildcat strike of white members in

Philadelphia who had been encouraged to rebel against a Union contract which had secured promotion rights to the grade of conductor for eight black porters. In 1961, when Quill received a letter allegedly written by twenty-five TWU airline workers in Tennessee protesting against the Union's support for the Civil Rights desegregation campaign, his immediate response was to invite the Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King to address that year's Union Convention. Quill introduced the Rev. King with the following prophetic words:

"We may very well be making history here, in the presence of the man who is entrusted with the banner of American liberty that was taken from Lincoln when he was shot 95 years ago ... Dr. King was almost stabbed to death, has been shot at, has been arrested more often than anybody in the United States, South and North ... Dr. King's life at this moment is in just as great danger as was Lincoln's. And he has to walk with care if he is to continue to lead this crusade."

Quill's own earlier death in 1966 was to spare him from seeing his prediction of the murder of Martin Luther King come true. It would have devastated him, for one of the proudest displays at the Quill Centre in Kilgarvan is a photograph of those two great leaders united together at that 1961 Union Convention. As for Quill's own philosophy of life, he summed it up as follows:

"I believe in the Corporal Works of Mercy, the Ten Commandments, the American Declaration of Independence and James Connolly's outline of a socialist society ... Most of my life I've been called a lunatic because I believe that I am my brother's keeper. I organize poor and exploited workers, I fight for the civil rights of minorities, and I believe in peace. It appears to have become old-fashioned to make social commitments - to want a world free of war, poverty and disease. This is my religion."

On the occasion of Quill's death one particular leader paid the following tribute:

"Mike Quill was a fighter for decent things all his life - Irish Independence, labour organization and racial equality. He spent his life ripping the chains of bondage off his fellow man. This is a man the ages will remember."

That was praise indeed - particularly when we recall that the speaker in question was none other than that outstanding 20th century beacon of freedom - the Reverend Martin Luther King himself. At this Conference of SIPTU, being held in Kerry, we can warmly assure our colleagues from the Transport Workers' Union of America that we too are truly proud of that disciple of James Connolly - Michael J. Quill of Kilgarvan and New York. So, let us all salute his memory! □

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The Committee of Imperial Defence: Its Functions and Potentialities

A lecture delivered by Viscount Esher

at the United Service Institution on March 20, 1912, with the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir John French, G.C.B., in the chair.

[In this 1912 lecture Lord Esher explains that until 1904, English politicians in charge of the country were only interested in defence 'in fits and starts'; after 1904, they thought about defence continuously, and the Committee of Imperial Defence was the instrument of this continuity. The Committee met privately, and thus avoided the necessity of publicly discussing defence policy.]

Our national institutions are the outcome of slow processes of national and Imperial requirements as they arise, and have never emanated from the brain of the theorist. Government by Cabinet is an illustration of this. The origin and evolution of the Committee of Imperial Defence is another.

The rise of a great Sea Power in competition with the British Navy — that force upon which, hitherto, the security of Great Britain and of the British Empire has rested — has rendered imperative the consideration of Imperial Defence as a problem which cannot be solved by Great Britain alone. Statesmanship has before it the choice between Foreign alliances, and a practical federation of the Empire for purposes of common defence. The matter is urgent and a decision cannot be postponed...

In order to federate more or less independent groups of men of the same race and speech, some menace is required to their pride and independence. The Chauvinism of the Napoleonic tradition, and the French spirit of Revanche, federated and have kept together the German Empire. Bismarck, far-seeing, of esprit positif, found in Alsace-Lorraine the instrument he required to hold together the South and North German peoples.

His successors have provided us with a weapon equally potent for our purposes. No British statesman could have federated the British Empire. That object may, however, be accomplished by the menace of the German Fleet.

I have been interested all my life in the study of naval and military matters, and I have been deeply concerned, during the past sixteen or seventeen years, in the organization of the military forces of the Crown; but I wish to preface what I have to say by the general statement that no man who has regard for the individual or collective happiness and prosperity of his fellow-countrymen can look upon war otherwise than as the greatest of all curses, and naval and military preparation for war otherwise than as the most odious of all necessities.

It is a deep-rooted fallacy in the minds of men that a study of the past throws clear light upon the conduct of public affairs, whether the question be naval, military, or civil, or whether the time be the present or the immediate future... It is only a half-truth to say that the invention of gunpowder influenced tactics, but did not materially influence strategy in war. It is altogether fallacious to suppose that the shrinkage of the world brought about by scientific invention and the interlacing of commercial relations between all civilized peoples have not profoundly

influenced both the course and the results of war itself. After all, what is war? It is the final struggle for supremacy, for the supremacy of one man or body of men, or a nation, over others. In former times the struggle was limited to those whom victory specially concerned, and it did not concern every inhabitant of a town or every native of a country.

There are portions of our own Empire to-day where defeat and conquest would only mean, to the common people, the substitution of one set of masters for another. War nowadays, between great European States, means a struggle not only between bands of armed men, upon which the masses of the people can look, comparatively speaking, immune and unaffected, but it means a contest in which every individual member of a nation is unavoidably concerned, and in which his material welfare is jeopardized.

I am not referring only to conflict between nations in arms, and I have not in mind only conscript forces. If Great Britain were at war tomorrow with a first-class European Power the welfare of every individual Englishman would be quite as much at stake, although Great Britain is not a nation in arms, as would be the welfare of every individual member of a country which had the conscript law.

In a prolonged struggle, or even in a struggle of short duration, between two great Empires, many other forces come into play other than those immediately within the orbit of the clash of arms; and these forces have a trenchant bearing upon the issue... war to-day between two great nations, hampered for military purposes by their civilization, cannot be fought under the confined conditions of a century ago, nor is it likely that ever again a great European war will be fought out to a finish. These speculations, with all their infinite suggestion of commercial disaster, of financial ruin, and of individual suffering, appear so pregnant with restraining influences that I confess it seems to me almost unthinkable that Great Britain, or Germany, or France should ever again in cold blood let loose upon each other the forces of war.

It would be folly, however, and criminal folly, to ignore the element of passion. Men are not, unfortunately, governed by reason alone. Napoleon said that imagination rules the world, and imagination often runs riot, and is frequently misdirected.

Even though the odds are heavy against a war between any two or more of the great nations of Europe, there is always left in reserve the odd chance...

We are sometimes told that vast preparation for war, expansive and burdensome, crushing down the full expansive commercial activities of a nation, inflicting hardship upon every individual man or woman and child composing a nation, is unnecessary, and is economically unsound, because the economic results of defeat to the individual are not so heavy as the economic weight of preparation.

This I honestly believe to be true, and, if men were governed by economic considerations alone, would furnish an unanswerable reason for abandoning preparations for war.

Men, and nations of men, however, are the slaves of passion and of unreason, and the great drama of war often moves within a sphere from which man's imagination excludes all considerations of prudence. There is always the odd chance in reserve, and there is always the haunting possibility of the ancestral house and home in ruins.

Given, then, that preparation for war is a high premium which every nation governed by wisdom and forethought is bound to pay for insurance against possibly tragic disaster, it surely follows that preparation, which is bound to be expensive in any case, should be as complete as it can be made, so that the co-ordinated forces of a nation can be concentrated at the critical moment upon the enemy.

This brings me to my second point.

What are the forces which an adequate scheme of preparation should co-ordinate, and what is the best and surest method of co-ordinating them ?

I wish to say, at this juncture, that we cannot avoid taking, for the purposes of discussion, the constitution of our country as we find it, and also the British Empire under the conditions in which we know it to-day. Analogies between our own system of government and methods which can satisfactorily be applied under other systems of government, whether in the past or on the Continent of Europe, can only be misleading, and I ask you to disregard them.

Our country and our Empire are not ruled in a vacuum, but under conditions which some of us may deplore, but which in the main we are obliged to accept. These conditions impose upon statesmen, upon eminent civil servants, upon the Lords of the Admiralty, and upon the General Staff of the Army, limitations which many would be glad to be free from, and which all would desire in some respects to modify. These limitations, however, are for the present so firmly fixed that it would be foolish to ignore them, and hopeless to contend against them.

The limitations I refer to are —

First, that our system of government is based upon the representation of the People's will, and carries with it, by tradition, the custom of explaining fully, and in public, the reasons justifying expenditure of money, and the necessity of obtaining thereto the assent of Parliament. Second, that the great Dominions oversea are not, except so far as sentiment is concerned, integral portions of the British Empire, but are in reality self-governing States, in alliance with Great Britain.

It follows, therefore, when we come to consider the most effective method of preparing for war, and for campaigns, whether by sea or land, that we are constrained to frame plans in accordance with our Parliamentary institutions, and with our hetero-geneous Imperial system. If any drastic change is contemplated, involving the rearrangement of our State Departments, the first question a reformer has to ask himself is whether the approval of the House of Commons is likely to be obtained.

And likewise, if any strategic plan is formulated by those whose duty it is to make preparation for war involving united Imperial effort, the first question they have to ask themselves is whether such a plan is likely to commend itself to the self-governing Dominions.

These are the conditions and limitations which have to be borne in mind, and from the trammels of which we cannot at present escape.

When, therefore, we come to consider the means for co-ordinating the fighting and defensive forces of the Empire, it will be seen that a plan, Napoleonic in scope and design, and resting upon a centralized basis, would not at present be practically feasible...

And now I must ask you to consider, for a few moments, the methods by which Prime Ministers, and especially the present Prime Minister, have recently tried to co-ordinate those national and Imperial forces which would have to be brought into operation if the Empire is to put out its full strength in the event of a great war.

It is not sufficiently realized yet that, during the last decade, the attitude of the official mind in this country towards questions of national defence has undergone a revolutionary change. Students of our parliamentary history are well aware that these matters only engage the attention of Parliament and of the country by fits and starts. Up to the year 1904 even statesmen shrank from applying their minds consistently to problems of defence. A distinct change for the better then occurred. Mr. Balfour's Administration must always be memorable in the history of national defence for two reforms pregnant of far-reaching results. Mr. Balfour created a General Staff for the Army, and he gave body and substance to the Committee of Imperial Defence.

What is the Committee of Imperial Defence ? It is often referred to, sometimes with a kind of awe, sometimes with malice not untinged with contempt. It had its origin many years ago in the mind of Lord Salisbury, when, in a well-remembered phrase, he suggested to his fellow-countrymen that they should study large maps before discussing questions of Imperial Strategy. Much later in life he crystallized this notion and drew together representatives of the Admiralty and the War Office in a small committee, under the presidency of the late Duke of Devonshire, for the purpose of studying large maps and strategical questions. This committee was accustomed to meet at the Foreign Office, and the services of a Foreign Office clerk were placed at its disposal. There were no regular meetings, and no records were kept of its deliberations or decisions. Its existence was shadowy, but it contained the germs of the present Committee of Imperial Defence.

After the War Office Reconstitution Committee had finally reported to Mr. Balfour, that Minister immediately gave effect to one of its most vital recommendations, and a permanent secretariat was instituted for the Committee of Imperial Defence. It was the first step in the evolution of that body. Mr. Balfour's object was to establish a permanent advisory committee on defence questions, and, by giving it a secretariat, to ensure that its deliberations and decisions should be carefully preserved, and a continuity of practice maintained. The theory enunciated by Mr. Balfour — and his theory coincided with his practice — was that the Committee should only meet when summoned by

the Prime Minister, who was its only permanent member. He summoned the Committee when he chose, and he summoned to it whomsoever he pleased. This theory is still in vogue, and has been endorsed on several occasions by the present Prime Minister. In point of fact, Mr. Balfour himself destroyed his own conception of the Committee when he appointed to serve upon it two permanent members who were habitually summoned to attend its meetings.

Accidentally this new departure led to invaluable developments, and further important changes were made by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and quite notably by Mr. Asquith. The late Prime Minister initiated a plan of appointing sub-committees to enquire into and report upon strategic and technical questions, with authority to call witnesses and to take shorthand notes of evidence. This changed at once the status of the Committee, and widened its scope of operative labours.

The discussions of the full Committee were precluded by what may be called scientific inquiry. Mr. Asquith went a step further. He noted, after a very short experience, that in preparation for war every department of State was concerned.

He proceeded, therefore, to summon the heads or representatives of many of the great public Departments to attend these sub-committees, and more recently he established a Standing Sub-Committee, to be presided over alternately by the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War, and composed of representatives of the Admiralty and War Office, the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade, the Customs, and indeed all the great Departments, for the purpose of co-ordinating in war the Naval, Military, and Civil Forces of the State. This Standing Sub-Committee was instructed to constantly review and revise its own recommendations.

I am permitted, in order to give you some idea of the subjects with which this Committee deals beyond the scope of the more obvious naval and military problems, to mention that its enquiries have ranged over such matters as Aerial Navigation, the strategical aspects of the Forth and Clyde Canal, oversea transport of reinforcements in time of war, the treatment of aliens in time of war, press censorship in war, postal censorship in war, trading with the enemy, wireless stations through-out the Empire, local transportation and distribution of food supplies in time of war, etc.

To unravel the complicated meshes of matters such as these is a work of peculiar difficulty. It requires experienced handling, and no single Minister with the usual official staff would be equal to the task.

This is my final point. I mean that the co-ordination of the material forces of the country for war is not the sole concern of the Admiralty and the War Office, but includes in its active sphere almost every branch of civil administration; and further, that the conditions under which all the forces of the Empire can be co-ordinated are constantly changing. It follows that, whether for purposes of war-preparation in time of peace, or whether for the purpose of taking those initial steps in war which decide its theatre and objectives, the supreme co-ordinating authority can only be the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, who are responsible to Parliament.

The Prime Minister cannot abdicate this function, perhaps the most important one of his high office, and for this purpose the Defence Committee acts as his bureau or department.

It must never be forgotten that the duties of the Committee of Imperial Defence are purely advisory. That Committee has no executive authority, and under our present institutions it never could possess any. It exists for the purpose of enquiry and advice, with the object of examining into every branch of Imperial Defence under ever-changing conditions, and for the purpose of placing conclusions and evidence in support of them at the disposal of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Under our constitutional forms of government, and with our well-established parliamentary traditions, it is certainly the best and most effective method for focussing in war national and Imperial effort which can at present be devised.

To sum up:

1. War between European nations, because of their interdependence and because of the interlacing of national life, becomes every day more difficult and improbable.

2. Just as wars on the Continent of Europe, lasting Thirty or even Seven years, have become impossible, so war of any kind in the same sphere tends to become more difficult and unlikely.

3. For many years yet, however, the chances of supreme acts of folly, due to sentiment and passion, remain a constant factor of national existence, so that it would be criminal to be unprepared for war.

4. Whether for conscript peoples or for Great Britain, success in war depends upon the prudent co-ordination in peace of all the material forces of the nation.

5. These forces are not only naval and military, but involve, for their full exercise, careful preparation and forethought by the great civilian branches of Administration and Government.

6. Bound as we are by parliamentary tradition, and owing to the looseness of our Imperial ties, the most effective method yet found for co-ordinating these forces is the Committee of Imperial Defence, acting, not as an executive body, but as a Standing

Board of Advisers, at the disposal of the Prime Minister and of his Cabinet.

7. Finally, if I may be allowed to renew an aspiration which I expressed many years ago (I think it was in 1904 or 1905) : it is that we may live to see the great Dominions sending annually their representatives to sit upon the Committee of Imperial Defence, and that thus a long step may be taken towards that federation of the Empire which has been the dream of patriots here and overseas.

Note by Pat Walsh on a Balance of Power War spoiled by Democracy:

This lecture is really about how to prepare a Great War behind the back of a democracy. It should be read alongside an entry from Lord Esher's private Journal, on October 4th 1911. In this Esher, as a Permanent Member of the Committee of Imperial Defence, describes how he told the Prime Minister, Asquith, how his State intended to fight the Great War:

"The Prime Minister came to my room this morning to discuss the Admiralty... Then we talked about the General Staff scheme of landing an army in France. The Prime Minister is opposed

to this plan. He will not hear of the despatch of more than four Divisions. He has told Haldane so. But, I reminded him that the mere fact of the War Office plan having been worked out in detail with the French General Staff (which is the case) has certainly committed us to fight, whether the cabinet likes it or not, and that the combined plan of the two General Staffs holds the field. It is certainly an extraordinary thing that our officers should have been permitted to arrange all the details, trains, landing, concentration etc., when the Cabinet have never been consulted. I asked the Prime Minister if he thought that it would be possible to have an English force concentrated in France within seven days of the outbreak of the war, in view of the fact that the Cabinet (the majority of them) have never heard of the plan. He thinks it impossible!... Altogether the Prime Minister showed that he had thought a good deal of these problems.” (Journals and Letters of Lord Esher (1938), Vol. III, p.61)

This entry puts Lord Esher’s lecture into its true perspective. After the Great War had been meticulously planned for, the problem for the Prime Minister was to get it through the Cabinet and Parliament at the chosen moment. In a later part we will show how this was done, through a secret arrangement with the Opposition front bench which rendered any opposition to

Continued from p. 40

He refers to James Connolly in support of this logic. But Connolly’s position was much simpler. Failing to dislodge the rebels from their positions, Britain could still deploy unlimited artillery, shells and bombs to flatten Dublin to the ground along with everything and everybody in it, without bothering about such trivialities as mandates or popular support.

Mandate or no mandate, there’s no answer to that. After all, might is right, isn’t it?

Mr O’Mahony is in good company. In the House of Commons, John Redmond pleaded with the British government to concede “self-government” in Dublin with county council-type powers. To head off accusations that the treacherous Irish would use this trifling concession to seek even more power, Redmond assured Parliament that, since the British army would remain in occupation of Ireland, any such disloyalty could at any time be put down by force. Might is right.

But unlike Mr O’Mahony, Redmond at least was consistent. Many times, including in the House of Commons, he acknowledged the right of the Irish to use force against the unmandated occupying power. Though doubting the possibility of success in arms against the world’s superpower, he expressed admiration and respect for those who held this position.

But the Great War instigated by Britain changed everything — for Pearse, Connolly, even Redmond. The first great assembly of Irish military in modern times took place, not in Easter 1916, but at Easter 1915, when 27,000 Volunteers paraded in Dublin under Redmond’s command, to the cheers of a crowd of 200,000 people (Freeman’s Journal, April 5, 1915). Redmond’s purpose was to issue a forceful military warning to the British government not to renege on his cherished Home Rule, and to the Ulster Volunteer Force not to resist it.

Redmond had good reason for this demonstration of force. For his great gamble was already lost. By the end of 1915, and without bothering about elections, mandates or other such democratic trivialities, the founders and leaders of the UVF had taken control of the British government and were to remain securely in power for a decade or so. Home Rule was toast, and everybody knew it.

England’s entry into the war impotent. It meant that the Liberal Cabinet and Parliamentary Party had the choice of rejecting the war and forming an opposition to it or giving their imprimatur to it and swallowing their principles. They could not stop the war, however, only ensure it was entered into by a Liberal Imperialist/ Unionist Coalition government. The luring of the Germans into Belgium and Redmond’s support ensured it was Liberal War that was declared.

This gave it its catastrophic character, since it then had to be fought on universalistic moral principles on which no compromise could be made. It also took it out of the realm of the plans devised by the Committee of Imperial Defence, which had imagined a limited military intervention on England’s part with a traditional Balance of Power war involving Sea Power being prominent.

That is why Britain’s Great War cannot be seen as purely a conspiracy of the gentry or “secret elite”. It was undoubtedly organised in such a way, but it was limited by the system in which it was developed, as Esher describes, and most of all, in its actual waging it became a war of the English middle-class democracy. And it was all the worst for that.

Here is what Connolly said at the outset of the Great War: “Should a German army land in Ireland tomorrow we should be perfectly justified in joining it, if by doing so we could rid this country once and for all from its connection with the Brigand Empire that drags us unwillingly into this War”.

And three weeks later: “(Britain) was determined that since Germany could not be beaten in fair competition industrially, she must be beaten unfairly by organising a military and naval conspiracy against her... The British capitalist class has planned this colossal crime in order to ensure its uninterrupted domination of the commerce of the world.”

And in the most important public statement of his life — the Easter 1916 Proclamation, which Connolly composed and printed: “ ... supported by gallant allies in Europe ..., (Ireland) strikes in full confidence of victory.”

Victory? Mr O’Mahony says they failed. The success of the Rising was definitely established within two years by the overwhelming political support for Sinn Féin in the 1918 Election. This was further overwhelmingly endorsed in the Municipal Elections of January 1920, the Rural and County Elections of June 1920 and the 100% result in the 26 counties for Sinn Féin in the General Election of May 1921.

The results of this unprecedented sequence of elections across three years establish beyond any shadow of doubt the overwhelming support for the Easter Rising. It was a unique democratic endorsement of a Rebellion and laid the basis for the democratic state we have today, which is one of the longest lasting in the world

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Websites associated with atholbooks.org: http://www.david-morrison.org.uk http://www.british-values.com http://drpatwalsh.com https://lefroggydotcom.wordpress.com http://heideggerreview.org http://atholstreetpeople.org
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A Visit to Crimea, Summer 2014 (Part 3)

[Two French communists visited Crimea in summer 2014 after the reunification with Russia in March 2014. They report on what they saw, and the conversations they had, in Russian, with local people. The text was initially published as entries in the blog 'histoireetsociété.wordpress.com'.

(Extract from "The USSR, 20 years after", by Danielle Bleitrach and Marianne Dunlop, translated from the French by Cathy Winch.)]

Nostalgia does not explain everything

As we drive down the main street of Simferopol, the window of a department store draws our attention. The shop sells shoes and clothes and the shop sign reads: "СССР" (USSR) with the picture of a collective farm worker with a head scarf putting a finger to her lips: СССР, and, underneath, the slogan "*The store where prices are like in the days of the Soviet Union.*"

Anton, our driver, explains that there is also a restaurant called СССР, which recreates the universe of the Soviet Union. It is on the first floor above the main post office. When we arrive at lunchtime, in the great post office hall, we see women dressed as the saleswomen in the USSR used to be dressed, a cross between a nurse and a collective farm worker, distributing pizza and pain au chocolat in exchange for a tiny amount of money.

Prices like in the days of the Soviet Union

The restaurant is patronized by a large number of women on their lunch hour, enjoying cups of tea to make their break last a bit longer. They appear to have slowly grown old under portraits of Lenin, Brezhnev and a quite unrecognizable Marx. Not the smallest Stalin on the horizon.

After a frugal meal, that would not have you necessarily calling for second helpings, but probably healthy, as used to be the case in a Soviet canteen, we go for a digestive walk in the city streets. Look, Karl Marx street! Ella, our Crimean friend, makes a face, pointing out a brand new Orthodox church. Her sour face means: "They're making themselves at home!" She is a communist and a Tatar, which explains her prejudice against orthodoxy. To the point that she claims it is a new build whereas the sign indicates that it is a renovation. Opposite stands the first Soviet tank to enter the city in 1944, decorated with a red flag and the hammer and sickle.

We buy tickets for the Moscow circus which is visiting on Friday. A little further into the park, a tent in which two activists explain what to send for the Donbass, a list of medicines and necessities. Marianne rushes up to them and explains that we are here to inform the French to the best of our ability and adds that we are planning solidarity meetings where we will try to raise funds. The activist agrees: "*The most important is information, let people know the truth!*"

I must also tell you about that Saturday night, in the park, where it looks as if every Simferopol family is attending a

reconstitution of the Great Patriotic War in 3D. Everyone must pass through a metal detector to be checked for weapons.

It is the Russians who have installed these safety measures. And even if it causes some pushing and queuing, families are very happy to be looked after in that way. Like the friendly little men in green. We take a photo at the foot of the immense statue of Lenin, our friend calls out to him, "*You're lucky we protected you, otherwise you wouldn't be here!*" At that moment Arturo, a little boy, a wonderful little devil, a six year old lunar poet, who thanks his grandmother for her food by saying "*Grandma you're magic!*" lets go his ball which rolls into the road. A little green man, faithful to his legend, picks it up and hands it to the child.

The 3D show provokes howls, when the planes dives into the crowd, the crowd screams, "No, not that ..."

But when at the end, it's victory, there is an explosion of joy, everyone shouts: "*We won,*" with a joy on the edge of tears ... Because the paradox of the situation is that if in quiet areas people can move about, including between Crimea and Ukraine, on the other hand people in Slavyansk and Donetsk, where bombing continues, are either stopped by Ukrainian road blocks around the city, or do not know where to go and refuse to abandon their modest assets.

In France, in Western Europe, every effort is made to muddy the waters, an Atlanticist "left" is trying to reverse the roles, making out that the fascists are the people fighting in the Donbass, with Russian nationalists leading this fight alongside Putin's special services. If the left is willing to justify civilian massacres by fascists, it must rethink its ideology.

Homo Sovieticus, the Donbass an open wound

All this merits reflection ... So this little note in haste to say that we worked hard and well to prepare meetings of aid and support in France. As a result we are tired, and I arrived here Friday evening in advance of Marianne who will join me on Sunday, in a small hotel on the beach.

In the entrance patio, we are greeted by a gigantic gilded bust of Lenin, framed in red flags. On each of the two floors of the building, twenty rooms open out on outside walkways with a view of a bust of Vladimir Ilyich in the courtyard. The whole buried beneath clusters of fragrant roses such as we no longer have in France. Their scent is so powerful that it brings to my mouth that divine taste: strong black tea sweetened only with rose jam...

This evening Marianne writes to me, in difficult circumstances. We have agreed that she would interview one of the sons of the family we are staying with. He has returned from Zaporozhye and witnessed the crowd of refugees from Donetsk to Crimea. She wrote me a mail:

“This morning I was able to talk a bit with Ruslan about the refugees. Here’s what he told me. He wanted to get on the train in Kamysh Zaria, in the north of Zaporozhye, adjacent to Donetsk province. There were only tickets for the following week. But it didn’t matter, they let people ride without a ticket, people just put money given directly in the hand of the train and carriage conductors, who profit from the occasion.

It cost our friend one hundred grivnas instead of the usual forty and he does not get a ticket. The next stop is Bolshoi Tokma, then Fedorovka and off to Melitopol. There, surprise, there are customs officers, border guards with police dogs and Kalashnikovs. A border in the middle of Ukraine. The carriages are inspected thoroughly, the inspection lasts an hour...”

And there Marianne is interrupted, an hour later she starts again and sends a message which I copy below in its entirety and then she stops again.

“I send you the rest of the story, but first I must tell you that Svetlana is asking for news of you, what you eat, if you go to the sea, etc. And also it is difficult to write, because the lines jump about constantly, the words are all over the place ...

So, the inspection on the train. Doors and windows closed, it’s hot, the children cry, it’s stifling, someone asks for a door to be opened, but it is forbidden.”

Today, rereading these lines in November 2014, I can’t help but think of the recent words of Poroshenko, the Ukrainian President, the way he explained what the Donetsk and Lugansk populations were going to suffer, especially children that their bombing would condemn to *“living in cellars.”* My own childhood reawakens and I hear the cries of little ones, and the others coughing as they choke but lifting the hatch would be too dangerous.

“I wrote another five lines but everything is wiped out as I write.” says Marianne tapping on the keyboard in exasperation..

So now, our communication is done at the pace of the exodus experienced by a friend whose wife is Ukrainian, he is half Tatar and half Russian and he tried to help his mother-in-law, who no longer receives her pension and has to live on her garden and her chickens and is terrified by the rumours she hears.

The epicenter of the tremor sweeping down to us in the so peaceful Crimea, is apparently limited, it is in Donetsk and some strategic cities where fighting is taking place. There is out of the question to go there, it is very dangerous and we would be in the way of the fighters who for their part do everything they can to evacuate women, children and the elderly, even if some of those have returned to active service; it is an entire people who is resisting and now considers that Ukraine is another country. Blood flowed. But all around, in large areas, the effects are there and we feel the waves, because of the exodus of the weakest and also of those seeking work to try to feed their family...

Ruslan went to help his mother-in-law and he plans to go and fetch her, despite the difficulties of the journey ...

He describes the exodus, widespread disorder, the ransoming of the victims, which all started from the attack of the army

and special forces coming from Kiev into the Donbass. When Marianne is here tonight, we will complete the report.

If Svetlana, the doctor friend with whom I was living in Simferopol, worries about me, is because I have to eat a salt-free diet and I am in an out of season resort, and my hotel—a centre for communist party seminars—will only start serving meals next Tuesday. Meanwhile, since last night, with we share the kitchen with communists newly arrived from Donetsk; in the small corner shop we managed to find eggs, tomatoes and a can of tuna, which I can’t swallow because I can’t get over the idea that it’s canned in adulterated engine oil. In the small store, in the heart of a council estate with its washing lines, people buy groceries by the unit, carefully counting out their small change, even here the daily difficulties are apparent ...

All this to tell you the difference between what is said in France and what we see here: a French friend writes to me about Poroshenko’s declaration, approved of by Fabius: Ukraine’s territorial integrity respected, EU membership in the future, and Ukrainian the only official language ...

But do what people think about that? Frankly, they couldn’t care less what Poroshenko said ... For some, giving in is absolutely out of the question, they will be slaughtered like the Communards, for others the State is totally bankrupt and they expect nothing of it ... They have a lot of problems to solve ... The main thing is to stand firm, besides disorder is such that this guy seems to them rather pointless, they just wonder how long he will remain in power before his rivals do him in ... Where there are safe zones, where people enjoy some protection, at least in the Southeast, they try to make themselves invisible. Anyone able to defend the houses, protect the children and ensure the minimum is approved of. The political reduced to its essence: living together for security.

As long as you do not perceive this, you will not understand that Putin really has the best role, he ensures the protection of Crimea, now a sanctuary, he welcomes in Rostov part of the refugees. He refused the generalization of war. We French, however, we are on the side of a failed power that is no more than a puppet of the United States and is using fascists to wage war against its own people ... Again Putin mockingly says to us, *“Now try and cope with what you have created!”*

Meanwhile in this month of June 2014, we are in this holiday centre, under the protection of a bronze bust of Lenin. It seems like a dream when you consider what is happening a few kilometers away ...

Prices are incredible, fifty euros for a week’s accommodation. It is open to tourism and Marianne with her spirit of enterprise is already planning to hold Esperanto conferences there. But it is also where, Lenin oblige, the party organizes its seminars and pioneer festivals ... Tomorrow a group of Donbass Communist is expected ... I’ll tell you more soon, but I already have material for three articles, information accumulates without us having the time to use it, another reason why we have chosen this time beside the sea.

Domenico Losurdo

The Germans: A *Sonderweg* of an Irredeemable Nation?

Domenico Losurdo (born 1941) is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Urbino, Italy. He is the author of many books, which have been translated into German, French and Spanish. His books *Hegel and the Freedom of Moderns*, *Heidegger and the Ideology of War*, and *Liberalism* have been translated into English.

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

The book 'The Germans—a *Sonderweg* of an Irredeemable Nation' has only been published in German; the following is translated from the German translation of the Italian original by Angela Stone.

CHAPTER 1

THE GERMAN SONDERWEG AND OTHER CASES OF SONDERWEG

1. What is *Sonderweg*?

Seldom is a topic in history considered so thoroughly as the history of Germany, where a *deus ex machina* is most often used to 'explain' German history. The concept of *Sonderweg* (literally translated as a 'special way') has been applied to a host of different countries, although it sometimes appears as the same concept under a different name. In 1851, in an open letter to the French historian Jules Michelet, Alexander I. Herzen protested against the tendency of portraying Russia as an 'absolutely unchangeable' country and the Russians as 'a cursed race' because of the autocracy and feudal privilege of their country. Unfortunately, however, although Herzen rejected the term *Sonderweg* to describe his own country, he went on to use the term to describe China, a country he described as *semper idem*, always the same, with its rejection of modernity and individuals' freedom (Herzen 1852 p. 24).

Around this time, Alexis de Tocqueville was formulating the theory of French *Sonderweg* due to the despotic regime of Napoleon III. He wrote of an inherent curse inflicting the nation, a nation which had suffered under absolute monarchies for centuries and then had been responsible for the Jacobin terror and later the Bonaparte dictatorship. Directly after Mussolini's seizure of power, a courageous democrat, Piero Gobetti, spoke of fascism as a disease that had been breeding in the body of the Italian nation for centuries. According to Gobetti the onset of this 'disease' began when Italy refused to support the Reformation, which German lands rightly embraced. He explained that in a few years, thanks to the violence of groups of fascist thugs, the power of Mussolini— a man who was often treated with patience and even sympathy by the liberal world and the Catholic hierarchy— began to be felt. For Gobetti Germany was shaped by Luther and the 'Protestant ethic'

(Gobetti 1983, p.11f). Germany with the November revolution had shaken off the Hohenzollern dynasty and introduced the progressive institutions of the Weimar Republic. The country offered a positive model that Italy, with its Catholic, monarchic and fascist authoritarianism, stood well apart from.

This very incomplete list of cases of *Sonderweg* is telling. The theory of German *Sonderweg* sets German history in opposition to the rest of the world; indeed, similar theories have also set one country or another in opposition to the rest of the world including Germany. Far from springing from the need to understand German history, the theory of *Sonderweg* is like a topos, a commonplace to which we turn for refuge when having to deal with a new or unusual historic phenomenon. Upon further inspection of history it becomes apparent that there is nothing more recurrent than the *Sonderweg*!

Furthermore, the idea of a *Sonderweg* encourages a mentality of laziness. Looking for a way to explain the persistence of autocracy in Russia? That is where the Russian *Sonderweg* comes in! Investigating the reasons for the victory of Bonapartism in mid-19th century France? The easiest solution is to refer to the French *Sonderweg*! We have seen Gobetti act in such a way in his behaviour towards Italian fascism in 1924 and still today there exists a tendency to refer to *Sonderweg* in discussions about Nazism.

The results of these methods are actually absurd. National stereotypes, which form the basis of *Sonderweg* for different countries, have practically the same results whether they are used to determine the *Sonderweg* of another land or another people. When reading a classic on political thought one can read a narrative describing 'a nation that marches in step'. This

nation's people possess 'a fear of isolation' and harbour the 'wish to herd together'. Ever-inclined to conform to autocracy, freedom is of the 'least importance' to them, 'which is why, at moments of danger, they are always, logically, ready to abandon it'. Which nation is it, then, that is inherently incapable of comprehending and respecting the independence of the individual? And that is always prepared to bow down before dictators and tyrannical authorities? We would be very likely to think of Germany; however in 1856, the author quoted here, Tocqueville, is describing Bonapartism which was introduced in France a few years previously (Tocqueville 1951 Vol.2, p.331ff).

In those days the preconception whereby the French embodied herd mentality and a compelling tendency to sacrifice individual autonomy for iron disciplined social collectiveness, had also spread to Germany. A leading representative of Prussian conservatism, Heinrich Leo, explained autocracy in these terms. He saw autocracy as going deep back into French history and explained it with the 'realism' i.e. essentialism of 'Roman-Celtic orientation' that tended to deal 'with abstract concepts rather than with realities'. The important point was about counteracting these 'abstract concepts of despotism', and about reclaiming the worth of the individual and reasserting the nominalism of 'German orientation' (Losurdo 2009a, ch.21, para1).

Is there anyone today who, in order to explain the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon, would still refer to the incorrigible herd mentality of the French people? Or refer to their insensitivity to the value of freedom?

Today the theory of a reactionary German *Sonderweg* creates further uproar and people question why. When Tocqueville was formulating his thesis, a liberal regime was developing in the United States and in England. This also occurred in Piedmont, which was in the process of unifying Italy. Even in Germany despotism was less oppressive than in France, and centralism was a lot less developed. A unique and disastrous fate seemed to bear down on France: the classical country of absolute monarchy experienced one after the other the Jacobin terror, the military dictatorship of Napoleon I and finally the actual Bonapartist regime of Napoleon III. At least the theory of French exceptionalism is plausible at first glance. The theory of German exceptionalism does not even appear to be plausible. When Hitler called the Nazi movement into life and started his campaign of dictatorship, he explicitly referred to Mussolini's model in Italy. Also, the fascist regime was implemented in countless other countries, however differently constituted.

2. A reactionary Germany for all eternity?

Although many years have passed since the outbreak of the Third Reich, its mythology proves to be enduring. Such mythology reconstructs the history of the German nation, portraying it as if it were completely dictated by a negative teleology that amounts inevitably to the barbarity of the Third Reich and the horror of 'the final solution' (*die Endlösung*). Even highly educated intellectuals seem to forget the many centuries when Germany was seen as a symbol for revolution. When Marquis de Condorcet appealed to the Germans in 1792 to boycott the forthcoming counterrevolutionary crusade against the new France, he even went so far as to say: 'we have you to thank for our freedom' (Condorcet 1968 Vol 12, p. 162f).

The French philosopher's argument resonates clearly and convincingly, despite its political motivation. In 1789, the course of fighting against the *Ancien Régime* that had been started in Germany by Luther came to a close. Just as the French revolution, the Reformation in Germany was a huge mass movement, whereas the break from Rome in England

was simply the result of an initiative from above. England also inspired and led the coalition against revolutionary France. In an implicit or explicit polemic against England, which was considered the citadel of reaction, the French-German alliances, that is, the alliances between both nations, represented progress and revolution. This thinking deeply penetrated the great philosophical eras reaching from Kant to Fichte and Hegel to Marx.

Just as England is a target for the progressive powers, so is it a role model for the pioneers of a reactionary Germany. In 1847 Friedrich Wilhelm IV refused to grant a constitution and national parliament. To demand a representative based not on status but on parties or political and ideological currents was completely 'ungerman'. It was equally as foreign to Prussian traditions to seek success and harmony in artificial rules, as in "constructed and assigned constitutions" for example. The romantic King set the English model wholly against the French model, and asked that we never lose sight of 'the example of a prosperous country whose constitution is unequalled over the centuries, but which has not created one piece of paper' and to deal with England with great consideration.

The picture presented here persisted for centuries and seemed to be constantly reaffirmed rather than altered. The Bourbons who were expelled from revolutionary France found refuge in England, a country which, along with tsarist Russia had stayed protected from the colossal wave of revolution. This was significant considering the fact that in 1848 the revolution had affected the majority of continental Europe, including Germany. The wide-spread public opinion that Germany, along with France, embodied the ideas of the revolution continued throughout the entire 19th Century. In the mid-19th Century, Herzen praised the Hegel dialectic as the 'algebra of the revolution'. With this thought in mind, a first-rate statesman, Camillo Benso of Cavour, warned against a disturbing phenomenon in Italy, saying that they were 'seeing a lot of communists coming from the German universities'. This caused alarm bells to ring which resonated across the Atlantic and reached the United States, where a theoretician on slavery commented that 'Germany [was] full of communists'. On the other side of the barricade, Franz Mehring agreed with this, saying 'the modern working class fight for emancipation is the most glorious and largest fight for freedom ever known, and centuries of German disgrace obscure the fact that German social democracy is leading the way in this battle'.

In fact, for a wide and heterogeneous circle of intellectuals in this period, it was now Germany alone that represented revolutionary spirit and strength, qualities which had been connected to France for a long time. After the terrible repression of the Paris Commune, Karl Marx formulated a thesis that the 'centre of gravity of the western European workers movement shifted from France to Germany' (Marx-Engels-Werke [MEW] 33, 5). Engels also believed this to be true, commenting that the revolutionary role, perceived by all in France, including those in the Paris Commune, as *avant-garde*, was now assigned to Germany. According to Marx, Germany had meanwhile advanced 'into the central area of the socialist movement' on an international level. This was not only because of numbers or because of Germany's organisational efficiency but was also due to the exemplary 'theoretical sense' and revolutionary strength that German workers possess (MEW 22, 462; MEW 18, 516f).

This thesis was backed up by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin at the beginning of the 20th century, helped by the fact that the German socialist movement had succeeded in triumphantly overcoming a 'difficult test, the anti-socialist legislation' (Lenin Werke [LW], 5, 383). Due to the Germans' determination and military capabilities under legal and illegal conditions, the

social democracy which came to power in the second Reich led the way as a model to follow. ‘Take the Germans ...’, Lenin commented, ‘the Germans had only a disdainful smile left for these demagogic experiments [...]. Just look at the Germans [...]. They know very well [...].’ (LW, 5, 477f and 489). Even in 1909, Trotsky set Russia in opposition to Germany, saying that in Russia the population bore Asian despotism and backwardness passively and patiently, whereas in Germany revolutionary tremors penetrated the whole country. In Germany, ‘socialist workers see themselves as active participants in world politics, and they follow with great interest events occurring in the Balkans or the debates in the Reichstag’. The Reichstag was a building where the ideas of the strongest and the most organised socialist party in Europe—even in the world—were voiced.

Once more we find the same picture, albeit presented from a different viewpoint, put forward by reactionary orientated authors. The ‘enlightened’ Nietzsche formulated the thesis that ‘the German socialist is the most dangerous because no particular urgency drives him, but only an ideology, which Engels famously praised as ‘theoretical sense’. In *Ecce Homo* this concept is taken further: ‘the Germans are *canaille*, they are the egalitarian nation *par excellence*’; ‘the German places everyone on an equal footing’. (See Losurdo 1989, ch.5 and 2009a ch.17)’

Up to the outbreak of the First World War, this picture does not change. In the years 1914 to 1918, however, we do start to see some changes. On the one hand, the ‘act of betrayal’, the social chauvinistic behaviour, discredited German social democracy in revolutionary and pacifist circles. On the other hand, the Allies, and above all Wilson’s USA after their intervention, presented the war waged by the Allies as a crusade. This was a ‘crusade’ which targeted the antidemocratic, military and warmongering Vendée—which was made to represent the whole of Germany—and tried to use it to spread democracy all over the world. During a presentation in Heidelberg on the 23rd March 1918 (on Democracy and Aristocracy in American life), Max Weber was able to use irony with ease when addressing this claim which was put forward by a country in which the Ku Klux Klan and lynching of blacks still raged, a country which is characterised by the regime of white supremacy, the regime that, as we will see, becomes an essential point of reference for Nazi ideology.

As we can see, these stereotypes connected to a German *Sonderweg* are still widespread today, and are still not the subject of historical study. Should we brand Germany as the country of relentless militarism and eternal warfare? At the beginning of the 19th Century, Madame de Staël described the Germans as being too suited to poetry and philosophy and too taken by a taste for ‘impartiality’ to face the ‘fear of danger’ and show the ‘courage’ needed by soldiers. ‘The taste for war in general’ was prevalent in France in the years of Napoleonic rule, but had not yet spread to Germany (Staël-Holstein 1968, Vol.1 p.60f).

3. German Racism and Racialization of the Germans

The idea of Germany being burdened by an eternal curse of a reactionary and criminal *Sonderweg* has its origins in the war ideology of the Entente Powers. And so a myth began to form that is completely ungrounded in historical terms and bleak in political terms. From 1914 onwards, Germans were branded as Huns and Vandals, Barbarians pure and simple. Whilst it is true that on the one hand, the Germans have indeed succeeded in providing a fatal contribution to the history of racism, on the other hand, from the Second World War onwards, they have also been subjected to a process of racialization themselves.

In Italy, Benedetto Croce draws our attention to this point. He remarks that the interpretation of the war as a conflict between ‘Germanic’ and ‘Latinate’ does not lose any of its hateful quality when it is taken up by the Italian or French or English side, with the value judgment reversed. Condemning the entire German nation as ‘a cursed people’ is no less absurd than calling it the ‘chosen people’.

With the onset of the Second World War unleashed by Hitler, the theory of the inherent barbaric and war-hungry characteristics of the German nation not only gets its second wind, but also takes on new and disturbing overtones. In a speech in April 1941, Churchill said the following: ‘There are less than 70 million malignant Huns- some of whom are curable, others killable’.

Much more commonplace is the attitude of another important statesman. After explaining in Yalta that he felt ‘more bloodthirsty for the Germans than ever’ because of the horrors they committed, Franklin Delano Roosevelt unwittingly took up the proposal already made in the First World War by a pious and well-known pastor. The American president expressed himself, saying, ‘We have to deal with Germany harshly, and I mean the German nation, not just the Nazis. Either we castrate the German nation, or we have to deal with the Germans in such a way that they will not be able to bring people into the world who would wish to carry on as before’.

The idea of ‘castration’ clearly expresses the completed process of the racialization of the enemy. In the light of this we can consider Croce’s critical opinion once more. When he highlights the ‘historical nature’ of the ‘evil’ people of the Hitler regime and their ideologies, he underlines how the demanded ‘sterilisations’ were in reality imitated ‘from the Nazis’ given example’. In fact, the ‘final solution’ repeated in the programmes or motivations in the Third Reich, led the way for the ‘mass sterilisation of the Jews’ (On the racialization of the Germans during both world wars, see Losurdo 2007, ch.4, para 2 and 5).

4. German *Sonderweg* and American exceptionalism

We have already seen that the category of German *Sonderweg* can be and has been historically applied to very different countries such as France, Russia and China. But *Sonderweg* can be especially applied in relation to the USA. Now we will examine how.

The course of colonialism does not run in a uniform manner in different cultures and geographical areas. The famous historian, Arnold Toynbee, has pointed out that, above all, ‘our English method of colonialization’ is characterised by the ‘total annihilation of the existing local population’. Convinced as they were of being the chosen people, ‘the Protestant English-speaking colonists of the New World exterminated the Native Americans as they did the bison from the east to the west coast of the continent’ (Toynbee 1951-54, Vol.1, p.465f and 211ff). However, we still find many Native Americans in countries in Latin America. They even play an important role there in the current developments of the emancipation movement. This is not the case in the US, however, where the policy of extermination has become even more radical.

There are also a few points of difference to consider where the fate of the blacks is concerned. After a certain point in time, slavery spread across the whole American continent. It must be remembered, however, that while Spanish colonies implemented mainly ancillary slavery, in British America, and later in the USA, chattel slavery was most common, meaning that the slaves became goods. This led to the dehumanisation and objectification of the slave. Members of their family could

be brought to the market and sold and purchased as separate goods. The foundation of the USA brought with it an absolute racial state, meaning that the fate of its inhabitants was predetermined by their race. In the first years of its existence this state was almost always ruled by presidents who were slave owners. It is hard to find elsewhere such a clearly regulated racial state, at least not before the introduction of apartheid in South Africa and before the Third Reich.

Furthermore, it must also be noted that the United States were one of the last countries to abolish slavery on the American continent. Previously, they had distinguished themselves by their policy of condemning Haiti to starvation to force them to surrender. Haiti was the first country in the western hemisphere to abolish slavery, after which, the former slaves assumed power. Moreover, the USA reintroduced slavery in Texas in the middle of the 19th Century, a state that the US snatched away from Mexico in the war.

The formal abolition of slavery in the United States came in 1865, thirty years after the corresponding measure in the English colonies and was even further behind those countries that had won their independence from Spain. However, even this did not signify an end of the racial state for the United States. A regime of white supremacy was instituted in every aspect of social life; racial segregation was enforced in schools, in lifts, in the cemetery, and sexual relationships and marriages between the races were forbidden and treated as a crime. And that's not all. The 'dangerous' blacks were often blamed unjustly for the rape of white women and subjected to prolonged torture, often in mass events that lasted for hours. Such events saw women and children taking part, and ended with the distribution or sale of souvenirs from the event—teeth or bones from the skull and from other body parts of the victim were on offer to the audience. There is no trace of that type of regime to be found in Latin America.

Additionally, there does not seem to be evidence of anything comparable happening in the Third Reich. There are no examples of lynch law against members of a 'lower race' happening as a mass event in the Third Reich, as was happening in the US. At any rate, the regime of white supremacy outlived the downfall of Nazi Germany. This meant that, in the middle of the 20th Century, there were still several states in the US - in the South especially - that had maintained elements of the racial state.

Occasionally, this racism against blacks manifested in more insidious forms, for which Bill Clinton felt compelled to give the Afro-American community an apology. The Italian newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, reported that 'in Alabama in the sixties, 400 coloured people were used by the government as human guinea pigs. Those who were suffering from syphilis were not treated because the authorities wanted to investigate the effects of the disease in a "sample of the population"' (R.E. 1997. *Corriere della Sera* 10.4, p.8).

In the light of such a gruesome history spanning over a century should we be referring to a racist *Sonderweg* for the USA? The myth of German *Sonderweg* is equivalent to the myth of North American exceptionalism. The latter term still holds a decisively positive value judgement because it is used to celebrate a nation chosen by God that is, by definition, equipped with a higher moral sensibility. But the term '*Sonderweg*', too, had positive meanings before it became synonymous with the particular curse inflicting Germany, as it also served to mean a country and a nation who were luckily spared the disastrous revolutions, which in particular characterised France. Shouldn't we also reconsider our value judgement when considering exceptionalism? It is interesting to examine the way in which an important US American historian characterises the history of his country. He declares that, 'a stable and direct connection

between the property of slaves and political power existed only in the United States. And only in the United States did slave owners play a central role in the foundation of states and the creation of representative bodies.' (Davis 1982, p. 33)

These have all been things concerning the past. How will exceptionalism be interpreted in the future when the country that claims to embody it continues to be responsible for the starting of new wars, a country which promotes with increasing arrogance the divine mission of the country apparently chosen by God? If it follows the course of German *Sonderweg*, US American exceptionalism could even become synonymous with reactionary inflexibility or even for the incorrigible tendency to play 'the master race'. This option can certainly not be ruled out. So once again: are we dealing here with a racist *Sonderweg*?

That would be a misleading approach and one that takes the easy way out once again. Take, for example, the US American historian who pointed out the crucial role of the slave owner in the configuration of the political and constitutional system of his country. One could argue that there was actually something similar happening in liberal England. The key author here is John Locke, shareholder of the Royal African Company, the society that organised the slave trade, the profitable trade which the country of the Glorious Revolution hastened to establish as its monopoly. The calculations published by the Liverpool Courier on the 22nd August 1832 reveal the role that slavery played in the economy of the country: $\frac{3}{4}$ of British coffee, $\frac{15}{16}$ of Britain's cotton, $\frac{22}{23}$ of sugar, and $\frac{34}{35}$ of tobacco was produced by slaves. Finally there is also the political weight of slavery in Britain: in 1790 two or three dozen members with interests in the West Indies were sitting in the English Parliament. Furthermore, the English conquerors' treatment of the Irish population is the model that the North American settlers used in their relations with the Native Americans. The comparison mentioned is by no means solely an Anglo-Saxon matter. In liberal Holland in the 17th Century the liberal elite who were in power were totally committed to the slave trade (See Losurdo 2010, ch.1).

With regards to the United States' history, it is true that the US have developed as a racial state over a long period, firstly with black slavery and then with the regime of white supremacy that followed. When we consider the countries of the European metropolis and their colonies we are often confronted with two sets of laws: one set for conquerors, and one for the conquered. It deals with the same phenomenon of the racial state, which we have seen at work in the US, even if in the U.S. it is more public due to the spatial proximity in which the different races live. The century-long continuation of the racial state in the United States cannot be explained by a mythical idea of an eternal and uniform America. Instead, it can be explained by the fact that in this country the colonial people are situated on the same territory as where the ruling race lived, and these felt themselves forced to measures that were superfluous in Europe. In this way the dominating white race can conserve their purity more easily because of the spatial distance that separates them from the 'lower' race, who are settled on the other side of the sea.

To conclude, when people speak of the curse of the German *Sonderweg*, they at the same time push into the background the fate that countries like England and the United States inflicted on the blacks, the Irish and the Native Americans. A similar shift, which overseas colonial people are prone to, takes the same idea, only now seeing only the curse of North American exceptionalism. In each case one isolates and attempts to make absolute one particular aspect of reality, losing sight of the whole picture. A most antidialectical way of going about things.

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Putin: Meeting with Russian Armed Forces Service Personnel

At a meeting in the Kremlin's St George Hall, Vladimir Putin presented state decorations to service personnel and defence industry specialists who distinguished themselves in the performance of special missions in the Syrian Arab Republic.

March 17, 2016

The Kremlin,

More than 700 officers and men of the Aerospace Forces, the Ground Forces and the Navy attended the ceremony, along with representatives of the military-industrial complex.

* * *

President of Russia Vladimir Putin:

Comrade officers, friends,

I would like to welcome you – all the service personnel who took part in the operation in Syria.

All of you – pilots, sailors, service personnel of control bodies, of special purpose units, intelligence, communication and procurement, military advisers – acted consistently and with precision.

Words of special gratitude go to the female service personnel. You serve alongside men, with persistence and dignity. Your choice in life brings you our deep respect.

Thank you all for your dedication to our Fatherland.

Russia is proud of you, of its soldiers and officers who protect the interests of their homeland with a great degree of professionalism and courage.

Comrade officers,

You remember what the situation was like in September of 2015. Back then, a significant part of the country was seized by terrorist groups, and the situation was getting worse.

In full compliance with international law, at the request of the legitimate government and the country's president, we made a decision to launch our military operation. From the very start, we were very clear about its goals: support of the Syrian army in its lawful struggle with terrorist groups. Our actions were also timed for the period of active assaults against the terrorists. We stated clearly that we did not intend to get involved in an internal Syrian conflict. Only the Syrians themselves should seek a final solution and decide their country's future.

The main target of our operation was terrorism. The struggle against international terrorism is a fair and righteous cause. This is a struggle against enemies of civilisation, against those

who bring barbarity and violence, trying to renounce the great spiritual, humanitarian values that the world rests on.

I would like to repeat that the main goal of our actions in Syria was to stop the global evil and not to let terrorism spread to Russia. And our country has demonstrated its unquestionable leadership, willpower and responsibility.

Regarding the results we have achieved. Your actions and intense combat effort turned the situation around. We did not let this terrorist tumour grow, destroyed the bandits' hiding places and munitions depots and blocked oil smuggling routes that brought the terrorists their main funding.

We have done a huge amount of work to support the lawful Syrian authorities – this is what I spoke about when addressing the United Nations on the organisation's 70th anniversary. We strengthened their armed forces, which are now capable of not only holding back the terrorists, but also of conducting assault operations against them. The Syrian army has gained the strategic initiative and continues clearing its land of terrorists.

The main thing is that we have created conditions for the start of a peaceful process. We have managed to achieve positive, constructive cooperation with the United States of America and a number of other countries, as well as with the responsible political forces within Syria that truly wish to stop the war and find the only possible political solution to the conflict. It was you, Russian soldiers who opened up the road to peace.

Comrade officers,

After the ceasefire agreement was reached between the opposition and government forces, the scope of work for our aviation units was significantly reduced. The number of sorties went down threefold from 60–80 to 20–30 a day.

This made the grouping we had created there excessive in the military sense. The decision to withdraw a significant part of our service personnel and equipment was coordinated with the President of Syria Bashar al-Assad, who was notified of our plans in advance and supported them.

I would like to add that in our joint statement, Russia and the United States stressed that the struggle against terrorist organisations, recognised as such by the UN, will continue. Meanwhile, the government troops in Syria will not conduct any action against the armed units of the Syrian opposition that indicated their commitment to a ceasefire.

At the same time, I would like to stress that any group violating the ceasefire will be taken off the list provided by the United States, with all the consequences that come with it.

In this connection, I would like to specify the tasks our service personnel remaining in the Syrian Republic will be working on.

I will repeat that the primary task is to monitor ceasefire and create conditions for a political internal dialogue in Syria.

Our bases in Syria are at Tartus and Khmeimim, the service personnel there are reliably protected from land, sea and air. All the components of the deployed air defence system, including close range Pantsir-F and long-range S-400 Triumph units will be on regular duty.

I would like to note that we have significantly restored the potential of the Syrian air defence forces as well. All the parties concerned have been made aware of this. We proceed from fundamental international norms – nobody has the right to violate the airspace of a sovereign country, Syria in this case.

We have created together with the American side an efficient mechanism to prevent air incidents, but all our partners have been warned that our air defence systems will be used against any target that we deem to be threatening Russian service personnel. I want to stress – any target.

We will of course continue to provide assistance to the lawful Syrian government. This assistance is comprehensive in nature and includes financial aid, supplies of equipment and arms, assistance in training and building Syrian armed forces, reconnaissance support and assistance to headquarters in planning operations. And finally, direct support, I mean, the use of our space force and strike and fighter aviation. The Russian forces that remain in Syria are enough to ensure this.

We will continue to assist the Syrian army and authorities in their fight against the so-called Islamic State, Jabhat al-Nusra and other terrorist groups that have been declared as such, as I have said, by the UN Security Council. Our uncompromising attitude to terrorism remains unchanged.

What will the balance of forces be like after the reduction of the Russian group? A balance would be ensured.

Moreover, I am certain that with our support and strengthening of the Syrian army, we will shortly see the patriotic forces there achieve success in their struggle against terrorism.

As you may know, fierce fighting is on around Palmyra and on the approaches to the city. I hope this treasure of the world civilisation, or whatever is left of it after the bandits got there, would be returned to the people of Syria and the whole world.

If necessary, of course, Russia will be able to enhance its group in the region in a matter of hours to a size required for a specific situation and to use all the options available.

We would not want to do that. Military escalation is not our choice. Therefore, we still count on the common sense of both sides, on the adherence by both the Syrian authorities and the opposition to a peaceful process.

In this connection, I would like to note the position of President Bashar al-Assad. We see his reserve, his sincere striving for peace, his readiness for compromise and dialogue. The very fact that we withdrew part of our military group there against the backdrop of negotiations on the Syrian settlement that started in Geneva is an important positive signal, and I am certain that all parties to the Syrian conflict will duly appreciate it.

We will work and make every effort in coordination with our partners to help establish peace in Syria, to rid the long-suffering people of Syria of the terrorist threat and help the Syrians restore their country.

Comrade officers,

You have proved that our army and navy are strong, modern and well equipped and our warriors are steadfast, well-trained

and hardened, capable of resolving the most complicated large-scale tasks.

In the course of the anti-terrorist operation, you have performed more than 9,000 operational sorties. Mass strikes using high-precision Kalibr cruise missiles with a range of 1,500 km were dealt at terrorist facilities from our naval ships located in two seas – the Caspian and the Mediterranean, both from subsurface ships and a submarine. We are proud of the professional actions of our navy.

Our long-range strategic aviation has also done a good job. Thus, they used new air-based X-101 missiles with a range of about 4,500 km. And finally, over the short period in Syria, as I have said, we deployed a modern and efficient air defence system and developed cooperation between all the forces and resources and organised administrative support for the group. Our military transport aviation and Navy support vessels have done well too.

In other words, all the most important support issues, the organisation of our group in a remote combat area were resolved competently and in a timely manner, which again demonstrated the enhanced quality of Russia's Armed Forces.

I would also like to thank representatives of the military-industrial complex: workers, engineers and designers. The latest Russian weaponry has passed the tests, and not at shooting ranges but in real combat. This is the best and the most serious test.

This experience will make it possible to introduce necessary changes, to improve the efficiency and reliability of the equipment, to create new generation weaponry, and to improve the Armed Forces and enhance their combat capability. Life itself has shown that they are a reliable guarantee of our country's security.

We should bear in mind the threats that appear when we do not do things on time; we should remember the lessons of history, including the tragic events of the beginning of World War II and the Great Patriotic War, the price we paid for mistakes in military construction and planning and the shortage in new military equipment. Everything should be done on time, while weakness, neglect and omissions are always dangerous.

The military operation in Syria certainly required certain funds, however the main part of the funding came from the Defence Ministry, their resources. Some 33 billion rubles were earmarked in the Ministry's 2015 budget for military exercises. We simply retargeted these funds to support our group in Syria, and there is hardly a better way of training and perfecting combat skills than under real combat conditions. In this sense, it is better to use motor operating time and combat stock in combat than at a testing range. You, professionals, know this better than anyone else.

Obviously, additional funds will be required to restock our arsenals, equipment and ammunition, including repairs of the equipment that was used in Syria. I am sure these costs are reasonable and necessary, because this was a chance to test everything in combat, find faults and rectify them. These costs help enhance our country's defence capability and resolve strategic and current tasks to ensure Russia's security. We need to do it now, to avoid paying a much higher price later.

That price is high, and I am not talking about money now. Here in this hall are Yelena Peshkova, Valentina Cheremisina, Irina Poznych and Yulia Zhuravleva – widows of our comrade officers who died fighting terrorists. I know that for their families and friends, the loss of Oleg, Ivan, Alexander and Fedor is irreparable. We all take this as our own loss. That is why I used your husbands', fathers' and sons' first names. I spoke not as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief or President, but as a grateful citizen of Russia who grieves over this loss. We

will remember their courage and chivalry; we will remember them as real men and courageous warriors.

Comrade officers,

The large-scale operation in Syria went on for more than 5 months in a complicated region, far from Russia, and you have done your duty with honour by protecting the security of your country and your people at faraway frontiers. The tasks you were set have been generally met, troops are returning to their regular deployment locations, returning home, to Russia.

I would like to note here, for this audience and for the entire country: Russia's main agenda today is that of peace. It has to do with developing the economy in complicated conditions, with maintaining and improving the wellbeing of our people. However, without ensuring our security, without creating a battle-ready, modern and efficient Army and Navy we

would not resolve a single task. Moreover, the very existence of a sovereign and independent Russia would not be possible without it.

It is very symbolic that we are honouring you in the legendary St George hall that holds the history of Russia's military glory along with the names of its great sons. Everything here is filled with the victorious spirit of Russian warriors. Our officers and men have demonstrated yet again that they are courageous, noble, strong-willed warriors, true to their Fatherland

Thank you for your service. I thank all the participants of the military operation in Syria. Thank you.

Allow me now to move on to the presentation of state decorations. I will not be able to present them all today. I will present them to some of you; however, I assure you that we know how each one of you did your duty.

Thank you.

Zyuganov on the Red Army, 23rd Feb. 2016

- On February 23 in Moscow were organized a demonstration and rally in honour of the 98th anniversary of the Soviet Army and Navy. The president of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the head of patriotic and popular forces of Russia, Gennady Zyuganov, gave a speech.

Dear friends, dear comrades, I do not tire of repeating that in the world there are nearly 200 countries today. But only a dozen of them have a thousand year history, as our beloved homeland. You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of countries which in their history mastered all aspects of scientific, technical and artistic creativity. There are only two countries in the world which, in the last 500 years, have never lost their sovereignty - ours and the United Kingdom. Only one country in the world in 1000 years of history has been forced to spend 700 years in battles and campaigns to defend its independence, its land, its truth, its culture and its faith.

The army for all of us is a second temple. We honour the feats of our fathers and grandfathers - the victors. And we will do everything for the army to be strong, dignified and continue the best traditions of struggle.

Our party and the Patriotic People's Movement welcome the agreement on the peaceful solution of the Syrian problem. I am confident that the contribution of our armed forces, which in a few months proved that it was possible to defeat the bandits

who seized entire states in the Middle East, was decisive. But the armoured train must always be on the siding and the powder must be kept dry.

I remind you that the legendary Red Army of workers and peasants was born when 14 Entente countries came to share the spoils of the desintegrating Russian Empire and smother the young Soviet republic. Only the genius of Lenin, Stalin's wisdom and the will of our people made it possible to expel the occupiers of all ports and cities and ensure our safety. Thus was born the legendary Army of workers and peasants who stood up to the Entente.

The second campaign of a new Entente under the direction of Hitler also failed. It was cut to pieces in Moscow and at Stalingrad and the Kursk salient. These are the feats of the Red Army and the Bolshevik Party. Our Soviet people proved that it was the victorious people, which bows to no one. Although Hitler had gathered all the nations of Europe under his banner.

But today, a third Entente has formed under the direction of American globalists and NATO leaders. They already have more than a thousand tanks stationed in the Baltic countries, they have set fire to fraternal Ukraine, and opened the way for these gangsters and Nazis, who are ready for a new campaign against our nation.

Churchill on the Red Army, 23rd Feb. 1942

Red Army's Anniversary A message to Premier Stalin February 23, 1942

The 24th anniversary of the foundation of the Red Army is being celebrated to-day after eight months of a campaign which has reflected the greatest glory on its officers and men, and has enshrined its deeds in history for all time. On this proud occasion I convey to you, the Chairman of the Defence Committee of the USSR, and to all members of the Soviet forces,

an expression of the admiration and gratitude with which the people of the British Empire have watched their exploits, and of our confidence in the victorious end of the struggle which we are waging together against the common foe.

Winston Churchill

Cork Evening Echo Newspaper, Letters re 1916

letters@eecho.ie

14.1.2016

Dear Editor— In the *Evening Echo* of last Saturday (9.1.2016) both John Dolan and T. P. O'Mahony raised the question of the 1916 leaders lacking a “democratic mandate.”

Surely the most blatant example of a lack of a democratic mandate was that of the Occupation force, Britain.

In the December, 1918, General Election when the Republican movement did receive an overwhelming mandate : Britain's reply was the Auxiliaries and the Black and Tans!

Where was Washington and Jefferson's “democratic mandate” for the American Revolution?

The media and academia all proclaim the United States as the jewel in the democratic crown.

What was good for the U.S. revolution is surely equally good for an Irish Republic.

PAT MALONEY, Editor,
“Labour Comment,”
CORK CITY

23.1.2016

PAT Maloney seeks to establish a parallel between the American Revolution and the Easter Rising of 1916. (Letters, Jan. 19).

The American Revolution had a large measure of popular support, which is why it succeeded. The Easter Rising was doomed from the outset—something recognised by James Connolly himself.

It is not the honour, integrity, courage or idealism of the 1916 leaders that is being questioned; it is the dangerous implications of the precedent they set.

To argue, as Pat Maloney has, that it happened elsewhere doesn't alter in any way the nature of that precedent.

The other question that we are entitled to ask is—would Connolly and Pdraig Pearse look on Ireland in 2016 and ask: “Was it for this that we gave the ‘last full measure of devotion’ (to borrow a phrase from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address)”?

I think Pat knows the answer.

TP O'Mahony

29.1. 2016

It's wrong to connect Rising with Troubles

TP O'Mahony (Letters, Jan 23) criticises the 1916 Easter Rising because, he says, of “the dangerous implications of the precedent it set”.

This is somewhat mysterious. Why not say plainly what is the precedent?

40

Was it the precedent of liberation of subject peoples in the British Empire, an Empire which began to disintegrate after 1916?

Or was it like the precedent set by Sweden in 1905?

For 100 years or so, Sweden ruled Norway. The Norwegians let it be known that they would prefer to govern themselves. Just to make sure, Sweden held a plebiscite of the Norwegians, and accordingly made arrangements for orderly departure so that Norway could have its own independent government.

Not a shot fired, and Sweden and Norway have enjoyed good neighbourly relations ever since.

That's a precedent, all right. But I doubt whether it is the precedent that Mr O'Mahony is hinting at. We will not really know until he tells us. So I will try to help him.

Unlike most countries in the world, for nearly 50 years of the 20th century Ireland was mercifully free from armed conflict, even though such violence was endemic here during the preceding centuries. (I wonder why?)

During 1968-1994, however, a violent conflict took place in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland. Combatants on all sides of that struggle would sometimes set their experience in a context of earlier episodes such as American civil rights or colonial liberation. And also the Irish War of Independence, including the 1916 Rising.

Depending on their inherited traditions and sentiments, some naturally looked for inspiration in the earlier conflicts, while others equally naturally saw them as a threat.

I suggest that, rather than dealing with the 1916 Rising in its own context and on its own merits, Mr O'Mahony is committing the anachronism of viewing the 1916 Rising through a prism of the later and very different events in Northern Ireland.

Eamonn de Paor
Dunmore East

1.3.2016

The Rising didn't fail, elections proved that

JOHN Dolan and T. P. O'Mahony (Jan 9) complain that the 1916 Easter Rising had no mandate. Mr O'Mahony says (Jan 23) that, unlike 1916, the unmandated American armed revolt was justified by the popular support it enjoyed, and that is why, unlike 1916, the American rebellion succeeded.

At this point Mr O'Mahony throws his logic into reverse. He says 1916 failed, so therefore it must NOT have enjoyed majority support. In other words, if it had HAD majority support at the time, 1916 would have succeeded just like the American rebels.

Mr O'Mahony's case seems to be that mandates/popular support are definitively established, not by voting but by victory in arms. Might is right.