

Irish Foreign Affairs

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

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Editorial

The United States and Britain are warning of the danger of civil war in Syria while doing their damndest to bring it about.

The time when they might have said, with any degree of credibility, that they were supporting a movement to overthrow a tyrant so that freedom and democracy might be established, has long passed. That was their story when they invaded Iraq nine years ago, and destroyed the Baath system of state on which the security and the liberal freedom of the individual depended.

It might be that George Bush junior believed that there was a system of liberal democracy latent in the population of Iraq, waiting to spring into place when the Tyranny was destroyed. And Tony Blair genuinely believed whatever the President believed (or pretended to believe). But it is not credible that senior figures in the American administration did not know that what we call civilisation was maintained in Iraq by what we call a Tyranny, and that the destruction of the Tyranny would unleash the religious civil war that was being contained by the Tyranny.

Bush may have just been stupid. Let's give the benefit of the doubt and say that he was, and that he simply did not know what he was doing. But Barrack Obama is clever. And Hilary Clinton is a real smartie. So we must assume that they know what they are doing when they foment religious civil war in the Syrian state in the name of democracy.

Reformed socialists, Communists and Trotskyists have been prominent in the Democratic Militarism of Ameranglia during the past 20 years. In the run-up to the invasion of Iraq a former Communist Party member, who shed tears over his complicity in Stalin's Terror (which had happened before he was born), made war propaganda in the Irish media. That was John Lloyd—who carried immense credibility in those financially innocent times, as he was on the editorial staff of the *Financial Times*. And David Aaranovich, a *Guardian* journalist from a Communist background, was given the run of British television to say that anyone who opposed the Ameranglian invasion to overthrow the Tyranny would be guilty of the murders that would be committed by the Tyranny if it was not overthrown.

The Tyranny was destroyed—and the killing increased a hundredfold. And John Lloyd and David Aaranovich stayed quiet. They did not accept responsibility for the mass killing that followed the destruction of the Tyranny—the State—though they had foisted responsibility for the minor killing done by the regime on all who had opposed the invasion.

In this they were not at all exceptional. Many thousands of others, from the same quarter of the political spectrum, behaved similarly. They were Liberal Democrats on a mission, impelled by a new Utopian ideal in place of the old one. And they felt good about it, regardless of the chaos it brought upon millions—and regardless even of the fact that the political outcome was an enhancement of the power of the religious fundamentalists which they condemned. They are in tune with the White House, so their consciences are at ease.

The White House is the new Rome of the Western world. It is the keeper of the Ideal, and it is the force which imposes that Ideal on the world. And, if it does not actually realise the Ideal in its intervention in other regions, at least it keeps it in mind by tormenting the world with it.

The first Rome conquered a great part of the known world, and administered it for hundreds of years. It knocked the conquered populations into shape by atrociously brutal methods and created what we think of as Europe. It was not existentially problematical to be a Roman citizen. Rome was order and duty. Imperial Rome in decline gave itself a fresh innings when the Emperor Constantine constructed a new Imperial religion for it, drawn from various sources, called Christianity. The distinction between Church and State, which has been the cause of so much conflict in recent times, was a product of Roman Christianity. The action of the Roman Church acted to some extent as a constraint on the destructive activities of the states that were formed on the break up of the Empire.

That restraint was broken when England broke free of Rome, and established itself as a totalitarian Empire in which Church and State were merged, with the State controlling the Church and tending to the consciences of its agents. The unconstrained British Empire embarked on great extermination campaigns with a good conscience because it was the dictator of its own morality.

It set in motion the vast extermination campaign which led to the United States of America, and which the USA continued after its rebellion. In regions where extermination was not practicable the Empire established administrations controlled by Whitehall. The populations of these areas were knocked into shape by brutal methods. Imperial Britain understood itself to be a new Rome, greater than the old Rome. It learned its methods by studying ancient Rome, and copied its brutality. The last major acts of Imperial brutality were conducted *after* what is now being represented as the War Against Fascism, in Malaya in the late 1940s and Kenya in the 1950s.

The Empire, even at the height of its vigour, was never quite sure what its ultimate purpose was in areas where it was not exterminating the native populations in preparation for colonisation. It governed them forcefully and systematically as a master race, while at the same time toying with the notion that it was getting them ready for independence as nation states.

England was an Empire which had its origin in an assertion of total national independence, and therefore nationalism and Imperialism were confusingly blended in its ideology. This gave it great flexibility in political argumentation, but in the end generated a state of mind in which it did not quite know what its purpose was.

The two World Wars which it launched in the first half of the 20th century brought it to the brink of collapse. The First made it a financial dependency of the USA. Its complete bungling of the Second brought Communism to dominance in most of Europe and much of Asia. It was never a serious combatant in the Second. It withdrew from serious battle in June 1940 and only returned in 1944 as a minor ally of the USA. The invasion of Europe in 1944, after the Nazi Armies had been held in the East and were being driven back, had more to do with seizing ground in the West before the Communists reached it than with defeating Germany.

The Empire was unsustainable after 1945. The Empire in Asia had been undermined by Japan, even though it was itself defeated. The two Powers which defeated Germany, the Soviet Union and the USA, were hostile to the Empire. But two last

barbarous wars were fought by the Empire, in Malaya and Kenya, in the name of anti-Communism. And, when a final attempt at Imperial self-assertion was made in 1956—with the joint Anglo/Israeli/French invasion of Egypt—it was sabotaged by the US threat to wreck the British economy financially. (This account leaves aside the small Imperial wars to control various outposts.)

British Imperialist blundering had brought the capitalist world to the verge of extinction when the United States took over from the Empire in 1945. The capitalist system was secure in the USA, which had asserted its ultimate sovereignty over the entire Continent by the Monroe Doctrine. But the “*manifest destiny*” of the United States, proclaimed in the mid-19th century with regard to the Continent, had extended itself beyond the Continent, to Asia, long before 1945. In 1918-19 it had balked at asserting itself in Europe. In 1914 it had backed Britain and France financially in the Anglo/French/Russian war on Germany, and in 1917 it entered the war itself. The only adequate reason that can be found for its entry into the war seems to have been the need to save the immense debt owed to it by Britain and France, which could have been lost if Germany had won.

Britain and France (having lost Russia in 1917) had proved incapable of winning the war, despite their superior resources, and were becoming exhausted and were in danger of losing the war. It was American fighting power, modelled on Prussia, that defeated Germany. Britain and France then ensured that the principles which were proclaimed by the US when entering the war—and which had played a part in securing the Armistice with Germany—were refused implementation. Instead they insisted on imposing a triumphalist, punitive, plundering, provocative and obviously unstable settlement on Germany, and on treating the Armistice as an Unconditional Surrender when it was followed by an incompetent democratic revolution in Germany, a revolution which was encouraged by the Allies.

A viable settlement could only have been made if the United States, as the Power which had won the war, had been willing to

assert its hegemony in Europe as it was doing in Asia. It might easily and reasonably have done so, but it chose not to assert its financial, industrial and military power. Europe was left to the exhibitionist but incompetent militarism of the British and French Empires to be made a mess of.

In 1945 European capitalism could not be left to its own devices and survive. In France the democratically legitimised Government of Vichy was treated as treasonous, a pretence was made that De Gaulle’s desertion of 1940 had somehow been authorised by the French people, and state power was taken by the wartime Resistance, which proceeded instantly to do to the Algerians what the Germans had done to France. In Britain a kind of socialist reform or revolution had been enacted during the war when a Labour Party, energised by the forceful and thoughtful Trade Union boss, Ernest Bevin, had taken over from a demoralised Tory Party. The reform was consolidated politically by the 1945 election. And then Socialist Britain launched its dirty war on Malaya in the name of resisting Communism, because in its virtual bankruptcy it just could not do without Malayan tin and rubber and could not afford to pay market prices for them to an independent Malaya.

But these aggressive remnants of the capitalist Imperialist world could not have been functional without the US undertaking to make them so. Thus there was inescapable US hegemony of the capitalist order of things.

The US had from the early 19th century conceived of itself as a kind of world state. But, when it came to be the undisputed hegemonic power over the capitalist world in 1945, there was no precedent for its relationship to the various parts of its world. It could not be imperialist, either in the sense that the Roman or British Empires were. It could not undertake direct Imperial responsibility for its *de facto* possessions. It sought to shape them, or at least control them, ideologically and financially, but with resort to military action when that did not suffice.

It sometimes seemed that its purpose was to reproduce its own liberal-democratic capitalist model in nation states around the world. But when independent developments occurred which conflicted with its own economic interests, it felt free to overthrow national Governments. And its commitment to liberal democracy was heavily compromised right at the start by its alliance with the most viable state in Western Europe after 1945—Fascist Spain. It also took into its own service elements of the Nazi regime which had been at the centre of the Nazi state.

Until 1990 such things might have been explained as being necessary for the preservation of Capitalism—in its totalitarian conflict with Communism, everything was permissible.

That rationale for its conduct in the Capitalist half of the world disintegrated in 1990 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the conduct of the USA has not altered appreciably since then—on the contrary. It upholds certain states and knocks down others, apparently in accordance with no other standard than the pursuit of its own interest as a major World Power.

It was once the utterly dominant Power in what it used to call the Free World, and is finding it difficult to adapt to a situation in which the capitalist world is not only capable of existing without its rule but of coping better without it.

US conduct in the Middle East is beyond rational comprehension. It appears to be a follow-on from its inexplicable collaboration with the Soviet Union in 1947 to impose a Jewish State on Palestine in defiance of the inhabitants of Palestine

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and of all the states in the Middle East, after Britain, which had launched the project in 1917, had submitted to Jewish terrorism in 1946-7 and piously washed its hands of responsibility; and then to maintain it against the world after the Soviet Union had thought better of the situation and remembered that it was supposed to stand for the self-determination of actual peoples in their territories, rather than for colonial projects and ethnic cleansing.

Perhaps there was some reason, in the Cold War conflict, for unconditional UN support for Jewish nationalist irredentism, to the extent of making Israel an armed nuclear state. When Moscow changed its mind about Israel, it became as good a battleground for the Cold War as any other. But what sense is there in it now?

Democracy is certainly not what the US/UK/Saudi assault on the Syrian State is about. It should have been clear long before 2003 to anyone who had observed the course of the world that democracy was not the issue in the invasion of Iraq. It should now be clear, in the light of what followed the destruction of the Tyranny in Iraq, that what we call democracy is an immensely complex and artificial political construction by comparison with all that preceded it in human history—to which populations get broken in over time. It is not a formula that can be applied to human material anywhere with predictable results, as chemical formulas are applied to non-human material.

This must be well known to the powers-that-be in the United States. It must therefore be concluded that, when the US destroys another state, justifying the destruction by the fact that it is not a democracy as we understand it, the object is merely to destroy it because it obstructs the will of the American state.

England is the first major state which was governed by the political system that we call democracy. A democratic system was first projected in the Putney Debates of the New Model Army in the Civil War of the 1640s. It was two and a half centuries later that something like what we call a democracy came to be established in England, and then it bore little resemblance to what the democratic agitators of the 1640s imagined.

Democracy as we know it rests on a strong state bureaucracy that is part of the structure of government. That structure of government has continuous existence as Parliamentary majorities come and go. Parliament itself consists of parties which act on behalf of the populace, and which have been subject to election by the adult population only since 1928. The bureaucratic system of the state is subject to some degree of direction by the party which holds the majority in Parliament for the time being, but it effectively resists drastic changes of direction. The administrative bureaucracy is the main element of continuity and stability in the state. And the two-party system of Parliamentary politics, established before the democratic franchise was introduced, is a conservative, stabilising element in Parliament despite the ballyhoo of Parliamentary banter.

The logic of the representative system by parties is that the two parties shape themselves to each other in substance while denouncing each other in the marginal sphere of ideology. The parties have been 'stealing each other's clothes' since the mid-19th century. In the 1997 British Election the Tory Government desperately tried to establish policy differences between itself and the Labour Opposition, but Labour thwarted it by adopting by midday any policies the Tories announced in the morning.

Today there seems to be nothing at all at issue, in policy terms, between the parties of the most durable democracy in Europe, but they denounce each other vehemently as if there was.

It is unlikely that this political system would have evolved in England if over the centuries England had been subject to active interference by other states in their own interests in the way it has interfered with other states in its own interest.

In Basra, Mesopotamia and Mosul Britain threw together, for its own convenience, a medley of peoples who had lived in harmony in the Ottoman Empire, and required them to function democratically as a nation-state, while continuing to interfere actively in their affairs—thus making development impossible. And it invaded its own creation three times for its own purposes.

France did likewise in Syria.

Eventually the Baath movement arose and began to hammer the peoples of Iraq and Syria together, so that they might function as a national populace for the purpose of conducting a nation-state—as the Whig Aristocracy did in England in the 18th century, and also attempted to do in Ireland with the Penal Laws to make Ireland British.

A realistic description of functional democracy would be a system of management by which it is brought about that there is government with the consent of the governed, with the governed choosing every few years from a very short list of parties which party will govern them. When we take part in the destruction of another state on the ground that it is not democratic—and Ireland has begun to do that, and wants to do more of it—we pretend that Democracy is a simple matter of letting people govern themselves. That is the fig leaf of destructive Imperialism.

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The Events of 1915 in Eastern Anatolia in the Context of Britain's Great War on the Ottoman Empire

by Pat Walsh

The events that occurred in Eastern Anatolia in 1915 should be located in a broader context than simply that of Turk against Armenian. Both Turks and Armenians were, after all, actors in a much wider drama that was unfolding in the world and any judgement about their actions can only be made with the knowledge that they were responding to circumstances that were not always of their choosing and were often beyond their control.

Even Atatürk was an actor in this great drama imposed from outside by the Imperialist Powers—although he succeeded in assuming a leading role in it and writing a different ending to the script that was intended for the Turks by its creators.

The context of what happened to the Armenians in 1915 is left out of consideration in most discussions. An event can only be understood in relation to other events in history within the context of cause and effect. If other events are extracted then historical understanding is impossible. But it seems that this is the objective of those who wish to replace historical understanding with legal argument in deciding about such things.

Geoffrey Robertson QC wishes for historians to stop discussing the Armenian tragedy altogether. He recently declared in Yerevan that: *"The historians have completed their mission, now it is the time for judges, who will demand proper punishment for guilt and compensation for the Genocide victims. It is no longer a subject of historians but judges,"* In the *New Statesman* of 10th December 2009 Robertson made it clear that the case, for him, is already closed: *"... genocide is a matter for legal judgment, not a matter for historians, and there is no dispute about the Armenian genocide among legal scholars."*

Robertson is an advocate of 'International Law.' I do not share his faith in it. It seems to me to be applied only when it suits the Western Powers and forgotten about when it does not. It is overwhelmingly used to keep the 'lesser states' of Africa and Asia in order and to subvert their sovereignty and independence when the West sees it in its interest to do so.

International Law is applied to the 'lesser states' (whose peoples used to be termed 'lesser breeds' before anti-racism became popular) by the 'superior' states who appear to be above it themselves. In many ways it is the old 'civilizing' mission of Imperialism in a new 'ethical foreign policy' guise. Something that is so partially and inconsistently applied cannot be taken seriously as having moral credibility. And if you take this kind of law seriously at all it is surely debased through its arbitrary application. So I prefer to trust in the historians.

In talking about the context of the events in Eastern Anatolia in 1915 I wish to address six main issues: Firstly, the 1907 reorientation of British Foreign Policy; Secondly, the position the Great War placed the Armenians in; Thirdly, the ideology and practice of genocide and extermination; Fourthly, the problem

of the importation of nationalism into the Ottoman Empire; Fifthly, the Armenian locations in their contemporary context; and lastly, the use of hunger wars and starvation blockades in British warfare.

Reorientation of British Foreign Policy

First of all, let us make no mistake about the single most important event that made what happened in Eastern Anatolia a possibility—the 1907 agreement between England and Russia that prepared the way for the Great War of destruction on Germany and the Ottoman Empire.

For England the war on Ottoman Turkey, which resulted in the Armenian massacres, came about from a revolutionary change of policy at the start of the 20th century. England had acted as an ally of the Ottoman Empire for most of the century before the Great War when Britain was determined to preserve the Ottoman State as a giant buffer zone between its Indian Empire and the expanding Russian Empire. It was part of what was known as the 'Great Game' in England that 'the Russians should not have Constantinople' and the warm water port and access to the Mediterranean that this would have given them.

What completely changed British relations with Ottoman Turkey was the emergence of Germany as a serious commercial rival around the end of the 19th century. Britain had since 1688 practised a 'Balance of Power' policy with regard to Europe. For centuries it had built its empire by keeping Europe divided and by giving military assistance to the weaker powers against any power that might be emerging on the continent. Then, whilst Europe was preoccupied with war England was able to get on with its business of conquering the rest of the world. It had the great advantage of being an island and therefore it could meddle with Europe and then retire from the continental battlefield and let others continue the fighting when enough had been gained. Its chief weapon of war, its Senior Service, was the Royal Navy, which established and controlled the world market for it. When the continent of Europe was at war the Royal Navy took over markets established elsewhere by the other European powers and in this way the British Empire went from strength to strength, economically and in terms of expansion.

During the 19th century Britain's traditional enemy in Europe had been France and her traditional rival in Asia, Russia. However, in the early years of the 20th century England gradually came to the conclusion that Germany was the coming power to be opposed. Therefore, it was decided to overturn the foreign policy of a century and to establish alliances with England's traditional enemies, France and Russia, so that Germany could be encircled and then when war came about Britain would join the conflict and destroy Germany as a commercial rival. The alliance that Britain entered into with Russia in 1907, therefore, was the single most important event that made a British war on Ottoman Turkey inevitable.

This is where Russia came into the equation. As I have said, Britain was an island nation and it was primarily a sea power. It did not have a large army and it had been opposed to military conscription. It would have been impossible for Britain to have defeated Germany by itself. Therefore, it needed the large French army and the even larger Russian Army to do most of the fighting on the continent for it. The Russian Army was particularly important and it was described in England as a 'steamroller' that would roll all the way to Berlin, crushing German resistance by its sheer weight of numbers.

The problem for Britain was that the Russians—unlike the French who wanted to recapture Alsace-Lorraine after their loss to the Germans in 1871—had little real reason to fight Germany. Therefore, something had to be promised to the Czar for his help in destroying Germany. That something was his heart's desire, Constantinople. That fact should always be borne in mind when people suggest that Turkey brought the war on itself. The fact of the matter was that in order to defeat Germany Britain had to promise Constantinople to Russia and in order for the Russians to get Constantinople there had to be a war on Turkey, one way or another.

Turkish historians are not alone in having overlooked the role of Maurice Hankey in these events. Hankey conducted extensive spying operations on behalf of Royal Naval Intelligence in the summer of 1907 based on the contingency that Britain would soon be at war with Germany and Turkey. Hankey was not alone. Clarence Palmer, British vice-consul at Çanakkale, fished and had picnics on the shores of the Dardanelles, marking the Turkish defences, including forts and gun emplacements, in preparation for an assault. Hankey and his colleagues scrutinized the harbours and naval defences of the Ottoman Empire from Syria, through to Smyrna and Istanbul, up to Trabzon on the Black Sea. He surveyed, in particular, the coastal defences of the Dardanelles with an amphibious landing at Gallipoli in mind, to follow up a report of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) entitled '*The Possibility of a Joint Naval and Military Attack upon the Dardanelles*' which had been produced in December 1906. And it was Hankey as Secretary to the CID who first proposed to the British War Cabinet in December 1914 that the pre-war plans should be put into operation as soon as possible.

The alliance with Russia was obviously the main factor that spelled trouble for the Ottoman Empire. But it was not the only factor that encouraged Britain to overturn her traditional foreign policy.

Britain began to show an increasingly aggressive attitude in relation to Istanbul as Germany showed interest in the Ottoman Empire. What worried Britain about the German involvement with the Ottoman Empire was that it was not the parasitic relationship of the other Imperialist powers. The German objective seems to have been to rejuvenate and modernize the Ottoman Empire, partly through the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, in exchange for commercial rights there. England and Russia had seen the Ottoman Empire as the 'sick man of Europe' and they had been waiting around for his death but now they looked on as Germany threatened to revive the sick man, and dash their dreams of conquest.

This great reorientation of British foreign policy had serious consequences for not only the Ottoman Turks but also for the Armenians. Prior to 1907 it was the Russians alone who wished to exploit the Armenians for political ends and the Armenians

always had to consider the likelihood that if they rose in revolt Britain would restrain the Russians from taking advantage of the situation and any uprising would be crushed without foreign help. The Russians complained that they were restrained in assisting the Armenians because of the Cyprus Convention of 1878 between Britain and the Ottoman Sultan. This guaranteed a British war on Russia if the Czar moved into Ottoman territory, in return for Cyprus being occupied by Britain.

But this all changed in 1907. Under the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907 England and Russia agreed an immediate partition of Persia between them and envisaged a future partition of the Ottoman Empire in which the eastern provinces would go to Russia and Mesopotamia would go to Great Britain. Later, once Russia had shown its commitment to the war on Germany, in the secret Constantinople agreement of March 1915, the Ottoman capital which the British described as '*the greatest prize of the war*' was awarded formally to the Czar.

Russian annexation of the eastern Ottoman provinces became the common program of Great Britain and Russia alike. (The fact must be emphasized that there has never been any Russian population in these provinces and that the Armenians constituted Russia's only ground for intervention and eventual annexation.)

The pre-War Armenian revolts illustrate this point very well. In 1894-6 the Armenian nationalists believed they had got signals that the intervention of the Great Powers would take place if they could provoke the Ottomans into a harsh reaction. They attempted to do this but found that Britain had not changed its position at this point and Russia, therefore, could not act. In 1909 in Adana there were further raised expectations of foreign intervention amongst Armenian groups. However, Britain needed the preservation of the Ottoman Empire until Russia was prepared to advance against Germany in a European war. The result was disaster for the Armenians after they had initiated killings in the hope of foreign intervention only to be left to face the consequences of their actions from their neighbours, alone.

By 1914-5 England was in alliance with the Czar and all restraint was removed from Russia and the Armenian nationalists. Mayhem and mutual killings were instigated in the Ottoman Empire by the Entente Powers to bring about its collapse and to facilitate the absorption of its parts into the empires of Britain, France and Russia. In a general war situation which threatened the very existence of the State in which the Armenians lived and which forced them to choose between it and their deliverance by the Great Powers catastrophe for either them or for local Moslems was always going to be the most likely outcome.

Position of the Armenians

As I have said, the context is all-important. The Russians and the other Entente Powers had every interest in stirring up Armenian rebellion to further their war effort while the Ottomans had every interest in preserving good relations with the Armenians. Sean McMeekin's latest book '*The Russian origins of the First World War*' describes a 1908 Russian General Staff memorandum expressly specifying that '*agents from the Christian population*' would cut off rail lines to Constantinople... whereupon native Christians would 'burn down all the wooden bridges spanning the Golden Horn and set fire to Stamboul'. McMeekin comments: "A more explicit blueprint for using Armenians (and other Ottoman Christians)

as a fifth column for an invading Russian army could scarcely be imagined.” (p.146)

Intention is a very important element in judging the nature of an event. The Ottomans had no objective interest in creating an Armenian ‘genocide’. Their interest lay in maintaining the Armenians as a loyal and functional community within the Ottoman State and the Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.) (i.e. Young Turks) would undoubtedly have preferred it if the Armenians had remained that way.

The breakdown in Ottoman State infrastructure and authority caused by the British blockade and by the invading Allied armies was the major factor in turning the position of Armenians and other Christian groups from one of mainstays of the commercial infrastructure of the Ottoman Empire and “the loyal community” into a malevolent element within it. And since the objective of the Allies was the destruction of the commercial life of the Ottoman State through invasion and blockade what future, indeed, had the Armenians in it?

Lately I came across a speech by T.P. O’Connor made in the House of Commons during the debate on the Treaty of Lausanne. O’Connor was one of the last remaining pro-Imperialist Irish MPs left in the British Parliament after the Irish Party had been smashed by Sinn Fein in the 1918 General Election. He made an impassioned plea on behalf of the establishment of an Armenian State in Anatolia, which, he said, had been abandoned in the Treaty signed by the British Empire with the resurgent Turks.

The bulk of O’Connor’s speech is taken up with quotations expressing British support for the Armenians during the war and detailing the betrayal of the Armenians by the Entente after it. However O’Connor also credits the Armenians with having played a vital role in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, despite attempts by the Turks to gain their loyalty. It is interesting in relation to the matter of context. O’Connor said:

“Let us trace what happened to the Armenians during the War. Turkey was in a tight place. She made every effort to obtain the support, or at least the quiescence, of the Armenians. She offered them autonomy when assembled at a National Congress in 1914. She applied the condition that the Armenians should join Turkey in carrying on the War against the Allies. The offer of autonomy was, of course, very attractive, but the Armenians declined to accept it... Not only did the Armenians refuse this insidious offer, but they actually sent 200,000 Armenian soldiers to fight the battle of Russia, then one of our Allies, and it was their splendid resistance, when The Russian army broke down, to the Turks in the Caucasus which helped us finally to win the War. I believe I am right in saying that nearly 200,000 Armenian soldiers lost their lives fighting for the Allies during the War. If it makes no appeal to our humanity, I think that enormous sacrifice in face of immense temptations gives the Armenians a supreme right to our gratitude...” (*House of Commons Debates, 28 March 1923*)

So whilst the Ottomans attempted to retain the loyalty and service of the Armenians with concessions, the Entente Powers sought to use them in their destruction of the Ottoman State. And when the Armenians were no longer useful and Atatürk had established Turkey as a power to be reckoned with, the Entente just left them to their fate.

Unfortunately for the Armenians, they, like other peoples in strategically important areas during 1914-18, found themselves

being used as pawns in a new ‘Great Game.’ After being encouraged to rise and form themselves into a national entity, that was never a practicality given their dispersion across Ottoman territories, they were quickly discarded and forgotten when their interests no longer coincided with those of their Great Power sponsors.

Edward Frederick Knight, the famous journalist from *The Times* of London wrote in 1910:

“Armenia is now but a geographical expression, and ancient Armenia has been partitioned between Turkey, Russia, and Persia. The Armenians in Turkish Armenia are vastly outnumbered by the Moslem population; and the creation of an independent Armenian principality, desired by a section of the revolutionists, was obviously an impracticable scheme. The more sensible Armenians realised that the only alternative for the rule of Turkey was that of Russia, and the experience of their brethren across the border had proved to them that, of the two, the rule of Turkey was to be preferred; for under it they enjoyed a measure of racial autonomy and various privileges — much restricted... which the Russian Government, ever bent on the Russianisation of the nationalities subject to it, would certainly have denied to them.” (‘The Awakening of Turkey’, p.80)

The Armenian nationalists relied upon external forces as the only means of creating an Armenian state within Ottoman territories. This was because they were a relatively small minority in Eastern Anatolia, constituting only about 1 in 6 of the population of the Ottoman lands they claimed. Only through outside help from a Great Power and extensive ethnic cleansing of their Moslem neighbours could they achieve their objective.

The two main uses that Britain had for the Armenians were: firstly, to encourage American participation in the war and secondly, to cultivate and construct a case against the Ottomans in order to justify the incorporation of Moslem lands into the British Empire after the war. These were the primary interests of Britain in them and not their well-being or that they should be governed well. That can be seen in the way Britain failed to press the Armenian case after they had acquired Mesopotamia and Palestine and how they put the Blue Book (Lord Bryce and Arnold Toynbee’s account of the ‘Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire’) back on the shelf, perhaps for use on a future day.

After the Great War Britain had it in her power to bring about an Armenian state and to try those it had accused and detained in connection with the deaths of Armenians. But, despite attempting many things in the world that were immensely more difficult, at the time it decided not to follow through with these two measures, as if it did not take the claims it made against the Turks as seriously as it pretended to, during the war.

Genocide and extermination

The Armenians did not possess land or resources required by the Ottoman Turks for any colonial programme. The major area in which they lived was mainly of interest to the Ottomans because it contained substantial numbers of Turkish and Kurdish Moslems. This can be compared with cases in other places in the world where natives were in possession of territory which Britain and the other Imperial powers required

for their empires. I am thinking of North America and Australia, particularly.

The policy of extermination of 'inferior' races that Britain carried out in the name of progress was openly proclaimed by Charles Dilke and many other important Imperial writers in the 19th Century. Dilke stated frankly and proudly in his immensely popular book *'Greater Britain'* that the Anglo-Saxon race was the most effective genocidal force in world history:

"The English everywhere attempt to introduce civilisation, or to modify that which exists, in a rough-and-ready manner which invariably ends in failure or ends in the destruction of the native race... A gradual extinction of the inferior races is not only a law of nature, but a blessing to mankind... The Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race on earth. Up to the commencement of the now inevitable destruction of the Red Indians of Central North America, of the Maoris, and of the Australians by the English Colonists, no numerous race had ever been blotted out by an invader." (p.223.)

The word 'extirpation' is a much stronger word than the word 'genocide.' 'Extirpation' means the intentional and planned, total and utter destruction of a race. 'Genocide,' according to Article II of the 1948 Convention is a much wider legal concept under which practically all of the European nations could be charged for their activities between 1941 and 1946, when various peoples settled accounts with each other and vast amounts of ethnic cleansing and killing were done. But there does not seem to be any will to engage in such a process.

Nothing like the 'extirpation' practised by European colonialism is applicable to the Ottoman State in relation to the Armenians or any other minority within the territory of the Empire. In fact, the Ottomans were criticized by British writers for their easy-going tolerance of races which, it was suggested, was leading to the demise of their empire. The British Social Darwinists were, in particular, appalled at the way the Ottomans had inter-married and incorporated other races into the governing of their empire and had blended aspects of their cultures into the Ottoman mix. In those days of Empire the British believed in a distinct racial hierarchy and saw 'race-mixing' as an abomination and fatal to the 'racial stock.'

Nationalism and War in the Near East by George Young, 'A Diplomatist,' edited by Lord Courtney of Penwith, and published by Oxford University Press in 1915 (at the time of the Armenian relocations) is a good example of this argument. The British and Ottoman Empires were seen as having entirely different notions of race and governing. It was argued that the British Empire was successful because it was founded on the principle of racial and religious distinction and hierarchy whereas the Ottomans played 'fast and loose' with these categories to the extent that, in the English biological view, they contravened the 'laws of nature', leading to an inevitable Ottoman extinction.

Arnold Toynbee in his famous work *Study of History* argued that the Anglo-Saxon inclination toward ruthless extermination of other races was due to the inspiration that the savage Old Testament of the Christian Bible had on Protestant powers like England and America. He noted that Catholic Imperial powers, like Spain and Portugal, tended to try to convert subject races to Catholicism before inter-breeding with them.

Such ideas, that were prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon notion of 'progress,' would have been seen as inexplicable to the Ottoman Turk.

The point I am making is that if there was a racially genocidal spirit at hand in 1915 it was to be found on the opposing side to the Turks—amongst the Anglo-Saxons who had obliterated races across the world in the name of 'progress' and 'civilisation' and the creation of new great white settler nations, as in America and Australasia.

Hitler may or may not have uttered the notorious question; "*Who remembers the Armenians?*" But the Armenians are remembered today to a much greater degree than the many races that perished as a result of the expansion of England across the globe. And it was not those who killed the Armenians who inspired Hitler. The race he admired most and who he tried to emulate in the world was the Anglo-Saxon (The evidence for this is laid out most comprehensively in a book by the Armenian born Manuel Sarkisyanz entitled *'Hitler's English Inspirers'*.)

After the war, when Atatürk had triumphed over the British, he was very generous to the enemy. But let us speak plainly here. Those who sailed into Gallipoli were representatives of the great genocidal nations of the world. The Turks surely would have seen what these 'extirpating' nations had done across the world to native peoples they had conquered and could have expected the same to be done to them. Those who invaded from the East had been responsible for the clearing of more than a million Caucasian Moslems within living memory. And I have read many British accounts from the period that speculated about what would happen if the Ottomans 'disappeared' without any concern for what would happen to the inhabitants of the State in such an event.

So who knows what might have happened to the Turks if the Tsarist State had not collapsed in 1917 and Atatürk had not seen off the British and their allies between 1919 and 1922.

The use of the word 'genocide' with regard to what happened to the Armenians during the Great War is an attempt to connect Turkey with Nazi Germany and what it did to the Jews. However, a much better analogy would be what happened on the Eastern Front during the Second World War when different groups of people became destabilized by the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Here terrible things were done as state authority began to collapse, society began to return to its elements and people struggled for mere survival in the circumstances.

In 1915 the Russian and British invasions of the Ottoman Empire had a similar effect. The Russians and British invasions raised expectations so that some were willing to exact retribution on people they had grievances against and, in turn, those people exacted revenge on them. No one quite knew under whose authority they would exist when the war was over and therefore all restraint was removed on behaviour. It was under these circumstances and in this context that the relocation of Armenians took place and the mass killings of both Christian and Moslem peoples.

The problem of Nationalism

The cultivation of nationalism was a British Liberal tactic used to break up multi-national Empires of rival powers in the nineteenth century. It worked by sowing the seeds and cultivating the harvest of nationalism in them—whilst denying and repressing it closer to home. In this way Britain sought to undermine enemies or states it saw as rivals by destabilizing them through their 'national' minorities—whilst doing

everything to repress and subdue minorities within their own Empire, of course—as they did in Ireland.

So the clearance of Armenians from Eastern Anatolia should have been seen, from the British perspective, as a ‘progressive’ development, since it was the culmination of the general process that England encouraged with regard to the Ottoman territories and elsewhere in the world.

The responsibility for what happened to the Armenians and the other minorities that existed relatively peacefully within the Ottoman Empire for centuries must be placed, therefore, primarily at the hands of those who attempted to destabilize and ultimately destroy the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire.

The importation of nationalism into the Ottoman Empire for the purposes of weakening it and gaining leverage for the Great Powers there is very much at the root of what happened to the Armenians.

Nationalism was a most unsuitable thing to promote in the region covered by the Ottoman Empire where a great patchwork of peoples were inter-mingled and were inter-dependent. Its promotion in the region by the Entente powers was as disastrous for the many Moslem communities of the Balkans and the Caucasus, who were driven from their homes of centuries, as it was for Christians caught up in the inevitable consequences of the simplifying process it ultimately encouraged.

The catastrophic effect of the Balkan Wars on the Ottoman Empire are often absent from Western accounts of this period. These, beginning in the time of Gladstone, sought to focus on Ottoman ‘atrocities’ against subject peoples, particularly Christians, and ignored the widespread ethnic cleansing and genocide that was practised on Moslems by the Balkan Christians and against each other once the Ottoman State began to disintegrate and after when the Turks had gone.

The Ottoman Empire had been a tolerant multi-ethnic Empire for hundreds of years, in which different races and religions had lived side-by-side in comparative peace and harmony. For instance, alone out of all the states in Europe at the time, the Ottomans accepted the entry and settlement of Jewish refugees fleeing from persecution so that these people could contribute their talents to the commercial life of the Empire.

As a result, the Ottoman Empire became the most successful example of collaboration between different peoples in history. This collaboration was sometimes accomplished through bribery, corruption, dealing, trade-offs and the occasional massacre (that encouraged the settlement of disputes between the various peoples before they became full scale wars). But from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries peoples of diverse races and religions intermingled contentedly and successfully under Ottoman administrations and even the Balkans became a relatively peaceful area.

If there was antagonism between Christian and Moslem in the region it was primarily the result of the Russian Imperial expansionism of the previous three centuries which had seen Tatars, Circassians and Abazians driven from their lands into the Ottoman territories. Armenians took the place of Moslems in the Erivan Khanate in what is modern day Armenia. During the 19th Century the vast ethnic cleansing of Moslems in the

Caucasus by Russia and in the Balkan Wars (1912-13) by the emerging Christian nations set off a wave of inter-ethnic violence and population movements that set a pattern for the history of these regions during the 20th Century.

Raphael Lemkin, who Geoffrey Robertson describes as ‘the legal architect’ of the UN Genocide Convention, interestingly attempted to categorize the phases of Genocide: "*Genocide has two phases: one, the destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor.*" ('*Axis Rule*', p.78)

The Ottomans never attempted anything like this in relation to the subject races of the Empire. The *Millet* system did not even encourage assimilation and provided for the maximum expression of each community’s ‘national pattern’—in great contrast to British Imperialism.

It would not be going too far to suggest that there is a connection between what happened to the Armenian community in Anatolia in 1915 and what was done to the Moslems of the former regions of Ottoman Empire that were conquered by Christian powers in the years before and during the Great War.

If the Balkan Wars had one great effect on the Ottoman Empire and its Moslem inhabitants it was to begin to shatter the long-held faith in multi-ethnic communities existing together in mutual benefit that had characterised the Empire for centuries. And the influx of large numbers of Moslem refugees amongst the Christian communities within the Ottoman Empire must surely have had serious consequences for public order as soon as Anatolia itself was threatened by the Western powers and state authority removed. They would have feared the worst for themselves and their families and be determined it would not happen again.

There would inevitably have been a gradual loss of faith in the multi-ethnic principles of the Ottoman Empire after the experience of the Balkan Wars. We know that some deputies in Istanbul called for a clean break with the Empire's Imperial past advocating a withdrawal from territories that were not predominantly Turkish and a future reliance on the Moslem people of the Anatolian heartland as the one and only trusted basis of the nation. Such sentiment began to be expressed in publications that took the Western view that the Ottoman Empire, not being based on national principles, would collapse like a house of cards.

This development is sometimes called ‘Turkification’ by those wishing to attach the label of ‘genocide’ to what happened in Eastern Anatolia.

In the course of thinking about this issue I read the QC Geoffrey Robinson’s Opinion: ‘*Was there an Armenian Genocide?*’ Robinson knows that intent is very important in legal matters and tries to suggest that the Young Turks

“developed the kind of race supremacy theories that are particularly associated with a build-up to genocide. For example, the racist idea that Turanian nationality was a badge of superiority... public sub-humanising of minority groups... extreme nationalist fervour, demanding a ‘warrior nation’ to prevent the decay of the Turkish race...” (p.15)

Robinson is more accurately describing the characteristics and ideology of British Imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth century than he is the attitudes of the Ottomans to the peoples they governed. For instance, Karl Pearson, a Professor of Mathematics at this (London) University gave a famous lecture in 1907 about the 'superiority of the Aryan race' and the only 'healthy' option facing it: "*that he should go and completely drive out the inferior race. That is what the white man has done in North America... The Australian nation is another case of a great civilisation supplanting a lower race.*" (*National Eugenics, Robert Boyle Lecture, 1907*)

Robinson can present no evidence of a significant racist body of writings that inspired and justified a programme of genocide like that of the English Social Darwinists in the late 19th Century. It is also clear that the Ottoman State did not actively pursue a policy of religious homogeneity in 1915. Events from then to 1923 certainly resulted in the heterogeneous Ottoman State giving way to the largely homogeneous Turkish Republic. But this was due to circumstance more than anything else.

In 1915 the Ottoman Empire was collapsing under the weight of problems that came to it from Europe and the C.U.P. looked for solutions to its predicament in that direction too. It had been a multi-ethnic state based on a healthy disregard for any notions of racial hierarchy. But what was being imposed upon it from the West, in the name of 'progress', was the requirement that society should be based on the nation state rather than a multiethnic/religious combination, with as much racial homogeneity as possible.

If some Ottomans began to lose faith in the multi-ethnic character of their Empire this was a consequence of a process instigated by Liberal Britain and Tsarist Russia in order to destabilize the Ottoman Empire. If a small minority of writers succumbed to British Social Darwinist ideas of 'progress and civilisation' then were they not merely coming up to the benchmark set and propagated successfully by British Imperialism?

The continuation of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire did not require a genocidal policy on the part of the Ottomans; the establishment of a nationalist Armenian state in Anatolia did, however.

This was because, unlike the Greeks and Bulgarians in the old Balkan provinces of Ottoman Europe who possessed majorities and many of the elements of nationhood, in none of the eastern provinces did the Armenians constitute a majority of the population. So whilst it was comparatively easy for Greeks and Bulgarians, once Western ideas of nationalism had reached them, to enlarge the autonomy of their own community institutions into territorial independence, any attempt to transfer Armenian autonomy from a religious to a territorial basis was quite another matter. The population of the modern eastern provinces was such that a restoration of the old Armenian Kingdom was impossible without overcoming six centuries of history through the construction of a homogeneous Armenian State. That would, of necessity, have involved the ethnic cleansing of large numbers of Turks and Kurds and almost certainly have required a policy of genocide against them to achieve a functional and stable Armenia. (At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference the area claimed for an Armenian State was gigantic and included territory as far west as Sivas and Adana).

The Ottoman State was an established functional entity built upon the peace and stability of six centuries whereas an Armenian State in the region would have been inevitably a violent revolutionary affair. These types of constructions are rarely good for any minorities that might find them obstructing the necessary process of 'nation building'. Turks, Kurds and other non-Armenian groups in the new state would have more than likely been exterminated or been driven out.

The question of intention is also relevant. There are instances in which population movements involving slaughter were planned and done intentionally. For instance, the area bombing of Germany during WWII by the RAF had the intention of killing the German workforce. It was planned and refined with the intention of maximising working class casualties within dense population areas. Nagasaki and Hiroshima also come to mind.

There were also huge population movements conducted by the British in Malaya and Kenya during uprisings, about which little was known until recently.

The Harvard professor, Caroline Elkins, took ten years to find out what happened in Kenya between 1952 and 1960. She reveals in her book, *Britain's Gulag: the Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*, that the British detained almost the entire population of Kikuyu, one and a half million people, in camps and fortified villages. Thousands were beaten to death or died from malnutrition, typhoid, tuberculosis and dysentery. In many of the concentration camps, which were authorised at the highest level, almost all the children died. In the camps the inmates were tortured or used as slave labour and above the gates were slogans reminiscent of Auschwitz, such as "Labour and freedom." The British did not bother with body counts, most victims were buried in unmarked graves and files were destroyed to cover up official direction. But tens of thousands died in the camps and during the relocations. Undoubtedly, the intention was to teach the support populations a lesson they would not forget in a hurry. And this was in the second half of the twentieth century, after the crimes of the Nazis had been exposed and people hanged at Nuremburg.

It is not at all a convincing argument to suggest that the Ottomans had any intention or plan to wipe out the Armenians. There was a complete absence of such an idea in Ottoman literature and the appliance of the basic historical principle of cause and effect suggests that the relocations were a practical response to an emergency situation, however badly they might have arguably been handled.

The Ottoman Response in Context

In the spring of 1915 three events precipitated and provoked the Armenian relocations: the Gallipoli landings by the British, a large ambush in Zeytun by Armenian insurgents which resulted in the deaths of 500 Ottoman soldiers on the main supply route into Syria and the Armenian rebellion at Van, which resulted in a massacre of Moslems. In April, Lord Bryce (of Blue Book fame) and the 'Friends of Armenia' in London made a widely publicised appeal for funds to equip Armenian volunteers fighting behind Turkish lines.

Any State will protect itself, if attacked, and these three events, which took place right across Ottoman Turkey, with the Russians on the advance into Anatolia, placed the State on an

emergency footing of the highest order. Population movement was the primary defensive measure taken by the Ottoman State in relation to these events and the position of the Armenians. And most of the deaths occurred incidentally to this emergency measure.

The Russian reform campaign of 1913-14 had left little doubt at Istanbul that Russia aimed to annex Turkey's six eastern provinces over which she had declared a proprietary interest—which was the usual preliminary to an Imperial power declaring a formal protectorate and annexing a region.

In the period between the outbreak of war in Europe and before the declarations of war on the Ottoman Empire the Russians had begun arming the Armenians in preparation for invasion. The invading Russian armies brought with them Armenian groups armed with Allied weapons whose main purpose was to kill Turks and Kurds—which they proceeded to do. British and Russian agents circulated amongst the Armenians behind Turkish lines and provided them with weapons and money to enable them to create general disorder. In the Armenian capture of the city of Van and the general massacre of Moslems that followed, Ottoman soldiers were diverted and prevented from reaching the front to fight the invading Russian forces. All these factors influenced the Ottomans to relocate the Armenian population from the area.

And along with the Armenian relocation there was also a relocation of up to 800,000 Moslems from the war-zone. But when the Ottoman authorities moved various peoples out of the war zones they became prey to other groups with scores to settle, such as the Kurds on the Armenians. Moslem civilians faced similar problems as they fled the attacking Russian armies only to be harassed by armed Armenian bands. And I have seen figures of up to 500,000 Moslems killed by Armenians, with extensive lists of names and modes of death recorded by the Ottoman authorities.

Even before 1915 Eastern Anatolia resembled a powder-keg. The Kurdish tribes were exceedingly well armed and virtually sovereign in the areas they roamed. They and the Christian townsmen bought arms from the Russians and frequent skirmishes occurred between different groups. The Russians flirted with using the Kurds as well as the Armenians as instigators of chaos in the region prior to the war. Order was only maintained by an Ottoman presence between the various elements. If that presence were removed, as it inevitably would be in war-time, it was predictable as to what would occur.

'Relocations' were the standard military response to guerrilla warfare waged behind the lines at the time. A decade and a half before the Turks relocated the Armenians, the British 'relocated' Boer and African civilians away from the war-zone in the Transvaal—into concentration camps. This was not a defensive act conducted in response to encirclement, invasion and rebellion—as was the case in Anatolia in 1915—but was done in the course of an aggressive expansionism aimed at neutralising a population resisting conquest.

Britain conducted its 'relocations' and confinements in stable conditions, controlling the seas around Africa, under no pressure of blockade, with plentiful availability of food supplies, in a localised conflict fought in a gentlemanly way by their opponents. And yet they still managed to kill tens of thousands of Boer and African women and children in the process.

It was called "methods of barbarism" at the time but I have never seen it called 'genocide.'

The Armenians were not imprisoned by the Ottomans but resettled away from the war-zone. It is probable that the majority survived the forced migration into Syria and Armenians away from the war-zone in Istanbul, Izmir and Edirne were largely left alone. Therefore, the character of the Ottoman actions suggests they were more of a defensive emergency war measure than an aggressive colonial or extirpating campaign, practised by the Imperial Powers.

The difference between what the British did in South Africa and what the Ottomans attempted to do in eastern Anatolia in 1915 was that the Ottomans were confronted by a much stronger enemy and assault on their state. The Armenian relocations were conducted in a situation of external invasion, blockade, starvation, inter-community killing and the general lawlessness of a collapsing state apparatus.

There was also a more recent example of relocations for the Ottomans to consider. In January 1915 the Russians and Armenians responded to an Ottoman offensive by massacring upwards of 50,000 Moslems in Kars and Ardahan. This was followed by extensive relocations of Moslems who were behind the Russian lines and in the potential war-zone.

Prof. Cicek's book, *The Great War And The Forced Migration Of Armenians* shows that the Ottomans did not have the intention of destroying the Armenian population in the course of moving those out of the front-line fighting areas and military security zones: he shows that there were attempts to care for them in various ways. The Decree for the relocations issued by the Ottoman Government insisted that those who were being moved should be cared for, protected and adequately fed and preparations were made to this effect. However, the war conditions imposed on the region by the Entente invasions and blockade ensured that such conditions could not be adequately met.

Incidentally, the whole relocation exercise was conducted under the watchful gaze of missionaries and diplomats sympathetic to the Armenians. The atrocity stories employed by the British propaganda departments are largely based on their (mainly) hearsay reports. To compare this with the Holocaust, where defenceless, peaceable Jews were deported to Labour and Extermination Camps, with no foreign diplomats or missionaries to intercede for them, is quite unjustified.

The Christian Missions themselves have some responsibility for what happened to the Armenians. The Ottoman State was subject to a growing tide of missionary activity, particularly from the Anglo-sphere, before the Great War. The mainly Protestant missionaries offered educational opportunities to Christians and a support base for emigrants. Moslems were impervious to conversion: it was the Christians that were susceptible. This missionary work, which the tolerant Ottomans unwisely permitted, broke up the homogenous Armenian community (and other Christian traditions too). In this situation, Nationalism gradually replaced Religion as a cohesive force in the Armenian communities. The missionaries also engendered dissatisfaction with the existing Ottoman arrangements. The Christian missions had extra-territorial status and they acted in conjunction with their own governments and under their protection, outside the normal Ottoman governing system.

All these factors tended toward the development of Armenian communities that were antagonistic toward their neighbours and undermined the existing social relationships that had preserved the peace for centuries.

There is a great double-standard at work here. Britain always wants to judge what happens elsewhere in the world in moral terms, quite apart from context. It judges what other countries do on grounds of high moral principle, but takes a very pragmatic view of its own conduct in the world.

That is why Turkey finds itself in the dock for the Armenian 'genocide' but Britain never seems to face any charges about its conduct in the world.

Hunger Wars and Starvation Blockades

The British blockade of the Ottoman Empire, which began even before the formal declaration of war, was carried out with the intention of starving Ottoman citizens to force them into surrender and encouraging a general collapse of Ottoman society into anarchy. A similar blockade was organised against neutral Greece to encourage regime change and her enlistment in the Allied ranks.

A significant component in the large numbers of deaths in Anatolia was the conditions brought about by the general lack of food in the region. This was largely caused by the military encirclement of the Ottoman Empire and the Royal Navy blockade organised in the seas around it.

It is difficult to ascertain exact statistics on the modes of deaths of victims in the Armenian tragedy. However, the effects of malnutrition and associated diseases are bound to have played a very large part. We are fairly certain that hundreds of thousands died in Syria and Lebanon during this period as British forces prevented food from being supplied from Egypt and Entente warships blockaded the coasts. Turkish soldiers in Mesopotamia and Palestine starved to death in their tens of thousands and the death toll from Typhus reached fifty per cent of the population at times. According to a recent study by Edward Erickson seven times as many Turkish soldiers died from illness than from wounds received in battle. In Eastern Anatolia where there was an absence of roads and railways, transportation of food and medical supplies would have been very difficult, even if they were available.

Thousands of people moving around as refugees from the invading armies of Britain and Russia and the Royal Navy blockade, in chaotic conditions, with the transportation system collapsing, with bandits preying on them under the collapse of order, with the general shortage of food and with primitive sanitation conditions leading to famine, hunger and disease, inevitably resulted in a general reverse to a state of nature in much of the outlying areas of the Empire, particularly in Eastern Anatolia, the war zone between Russia and the Turks.

I have seen it argued that it was the neglect and incompetence of Ottoman authorities that were responsible for such high levels of deaths amongst its own soldiers, prisoners of war and the civilian populations within the blockaded area. However, it must be remembered that Germany suffered nearly a million deaths in some estimates from the starvation blockade organised against it by the Royal Navy. Germany was a highly organised

society with great skills of improvisation that helped it to hold out against blockade for four years. However, it too failed and was ground down by the irresistible force of the Royal Navy.

Hunger and famine have been significant methods of British warfare for centuries. In the seventeenth century they were used by Crown forces to suppress Irish resistance in Ulster. In the nineteenth century during the Irish famine (which the Ottoman Sultan tried to alleviate with aid) at least a million of the population were left to die and more than a million forced out as a useful policy for weakening Ireland for conquest. The same was true of the famines in India presided over by Lord Curzon and others, not to mention what happened in Persia under the British occupation of 1917-19 (Dr. Mohammad Gholi Majd in *The Great Famine and Genocide in Persia, 1917-1919* estimates that as much as 40% or 10 million of the population of Persia was wiped out because of starvation and the associated diseases when the British seized the country's food supplies for its armies of occupation.)

Taking these considerations into account I cannot see how the Ottomans can be held wholly responsible for what happened in Eastern Anatolia. Those organising the invasions and blockade must surely have been aware of the effects of their war policy on the general population within the encircled area. It was designed to kill large numbers, regardless of race or religion, encourage the spread of disease, weaken the population and produce general disorder and conflict within the Ottoman State. And it accomplished all of these objectives.

Before the war considerable effort had been put into calculating the effects of blockading Germany on its civilian population. It had been openly speculated in the British press that not only would it lead to mass starvation, disease and social revolution but, in true Social Darwinist fashion, it would also weaken the German racial stock. It would be foolish to believe that any other eventuality would have been entertained in relation to the appliance of blockade to the much less developed state apparatus in the Ottoman lands.

Conclusion

The logical implication of all this is that if what happened to the Armenians in 1915 is to be described as 'genocide' we must look much wider for those responsible than just within the C.U.P. and Ottoman authorities directly responsible for relocating the Armenians. Firstly, there was the responsibility of the Anglo-French and Russian invasion forces whose arrival in May 1915 signalled that the destruction of the Ottoman Empire was a distinct probability. Secondly, there was the exportation from Europe of Social Darwinist ideas of race homogeneity as the ideal type for societies. This undermined the old heterogeneous Ottoman attitude toward race that had promoted 'live and let live' in the Empire. Thirdly, there was the promotion of nationalism from Europe in order to destabilise the Ottoman State and make multi-ethnic units impossible.

If the deaths of Armenians are seen as 'genocide' the powers that were most responsible for it were Britain and Russia (and to a lesser degree France). In the interests of destroying Germany and conquering the Ottoman territories they made the Ottoman State an impossible place for Armenians to live in the space of a few months after they had lived in it peacefully for centuries. If we are to talk of an Armenian 'genocide' and insist on an official apology we must put these countries in the dock first because without their actions it would never have happened.

Nuclear weapons: The Ultimate Insurance Policy

by David Morrison

Iran has good reason for acquiring nuclear weapons, more so than any other state in this world. Hardly a day has passed in recent years without Israel, or the US, or the UK threatening to use military force against it.

All three are guilty of persistently issuing threats contrary to Article 2.4 of the UN Charter, which requires that all UN member states “shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state” [1].

All three should be expelled from the UN under Article 6 of the Charter, which provides for the expulsion of a member which “has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present Charter”. That’s not going to happen, of course, since two of the miscreants are veto-wielding members of the Security Council (which must recommend any expulsion) and the other is their close ally. That’s the way the UN system works, or rather doesn’t.

If Israel, or the US, or the UK, believed that Iran possessed even the most rudimentary nuclear weapons system, they would not even threaten to use force against it.

Putin on “humanitarian intervention”

States that possess nuclear weapons are not subject to “humanitarian intervention” by the West in order to put in place a regime of which the West approves. As Vladimir Putin wrote in RIA Novosti on 27 February 2012 (See documents p.21), the West’s fondness for armed intervention in sovereign states is a positive encouragement to nuclear proliferation:

“All this fervor around the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea makes one wonder how the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation emerge and who is aggravating them.

“It seems that the more frequent cases of crude and even armed outside interference in the domestic affairs of countries may prompt authoritarian (and other) regimes to possess nuclear weapons. If I have the A-bomb in my pocket, nobody will touch me because it’s more trouble than it is worth. And those who don’t have the bomb might have to sit and wait for ‘humanitarian intervention’.

“Whether we like it or not, foreign interference suggests this train of thought.”[2]

The axis of evil

In his State of the Union address to Congress on 29 January 2002, President George W Bush declared that North Korea, Iran and Iraq “constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world”[3].

Knowing that Iraq didn’t possess a nuclear weapons system, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair launched an invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and overthrew Saddam Hussein’s regime by force.

Knowing that Iran doesn’t possess a nuclear weapons system, Israel and the US and the UK have continuously threatened to use force against it, and may yet actually do so.

However, knowing that North Korea has at least a rudimentary nuclear weapons system, the US has not threatened to use force against it, and can be guaranteed not to do so. When North Korea exploded a nuclear device in May 2009, after initial condemnation the North Korea was invited to take part in negotiations.

There’s a very important lesson there for states that don’t possess nuclear weapons: if you want to be free from “the threat or use of force”, which is supposed to be prohibited by Article 2.4 of the UN Charter, if at all possible, get yourself at least a rudimentary nuclear weapons system. The UN system won’t protect you from “the threat or use of force”. You have a better chance if you possess nuclear weapons. They are the ultimate weapons of self-defence in that a state that possesses them doesn’t get attacked by other states.

After the US/UK invasion of Iraq in March 2003, North Korea’s foreign ministry declared that “the Iraqi war shows that to allow disarmament through inspections does not help avert a war, but rather sparks it”, concluding that “only a tremendous military deterrent force” can prevent attacks on states the US dislikes (see Seumas Milne, *The Guardian*, 10 April 2003 [4]). The regime survives today because it acted upon this impeccably logical conclusion.

The UK’s “ultimate insurance policy”

In December 2006, the UK Government published a White Paper *The Future of the United Kingdom’s Nuclear Deterrent*, which made the case for the UK retaining its nuclear weapons and upgrading its Trident submarine-based delivery system. Paragraph 3-4 of this Paper asserts that the UK must have nuclear weapons

“to deter and prevent nuclear blackmail and acts of aggression against our vital interests that cannot be countered by other means.” [5]

More recently on 18 June 2012, in response to an MP who suggested that nuclear weapons were “completely useless” as a deterrent, UK Minister of Defence, Philip Hammond, told the House of Commons:

“I find it extraordinary that anyone can stand up in this House after 65 years of nuclear-armed peace and say that a strategic deterrent does not make people safer. The possession of a strategic nuclear deterrent has ensured this country’s safety. It ensured that we saw off the threat in the cold war and it will ensure our security in the future.”[6]

On the same occasion, Labour MP, Alison Seabeck, echoed Hammond, saying

“In a security landscape of few guarantees, our independent nuclear deterrent provides us with the ultimate insurance policy, strengthens our national security and increases our ability to achieve long-term global security aims.”[6]

If the UK must have its “ultimate insurance policy” even though no state is threatening it, how can it argue against Iran acquiring them, when the UK itself (and the US and Israel) continuously threaten military action against it? And what chance is there that any of these states abandoning their “ultimate insurance policy”? Answer: none.

All three of these states that are to the fore in threatening military action against Iran possess nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them to targets in Iran. What is more the US Nuclear Posture Review [7], published in April 2010 by the Obama administration, specifically permits a first strike nuclear attack against Iran by the US. It says:

“The United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.” (p17)

That sentence was written with Iran in mind. It permits the US to use nuclear weapons against Iran if it is deemed not to be “in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations”. No doubt the US will reserve unto itself the right to determine which states are not in compliance and therefore eligible for nuclear attack. At this time, it is a cast iron certainty that Iran is eligible—which is a very good reason for Iran acquiring nuclear weapons as soon as possible.

Justification from Barak and Gates

Justification for Iran acquiring nuclear weapons came from an unusual quarter in an interview by Charlie Rose broadcast on PBS television on 15 November 2011 [8]. There asked “wouldn’t you want a nuclear weapon” if you were Iranian, the Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak answered: “Probably, probably”. He justified his reasonable reply as follows:

“I know, I don’t delude myself that they are doing it just because of Israel. They have their history of four thousand years. They look around; they see the Indians are nuclear; the Chinese are nuclear; Pakistan is nuclear, not to mention the Russians. And they look West: what do they see? Saddam tried it; Bashir Assad tried it; Gaddafi tried it; and Israel allegedly has it.”

At that point, realising the hole he had dug for himself, including ditching Israel’s traditional policy of refusing to admit that it has nuclear weapons, he tried valiantly to portray Iran as “totally different” and unworthy of possessing nuclear weapons.

Five years earlier, former US Defence Secretary Robert Gates justified Iran acquiring nuclear weapons in a similar manner, at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 5 December 2006 [9]. Gates was questioned (by Senator Lindsey Graham) about the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and the threat to Israel if it did. He said that he believed that Iran was trying to acquire nuclear weapons, and was lying when it said it wasn’t. However, amazingly, he said that its motivation was self-defence. Asked by Senator Graham:

“Do you believe the Iranians would consider using that nuclear weapons capability against the nation of Israel?”

he replied:

“I don’t know that they would do that, Senator. ... And I think that, while they are certainly pressing, in my opinion, for nuclear capability, I think that they would see it in the first instance as a deterrent. They are surrounded by powers with nuclear weapons: Pakistan to their east, the Russians to the north, the Israelis to the west and us in the Persian Gulf.”

This remarkable reply justifies Iran seeking nuclear weapons as a deterrent against other nuclear powers in the region, including Israel and the US (which he admitted has naval vessels armed with nuclear weapons a few miles off the Iranian coast).

Like Barak, Gates acknowledged that Israel has nuclear weapons, even though it has been US policy for a generation not to do so—which has had the double benefit of not undermining Israel’s traditional policy of ambiguity on the issue and of not requiring the US to take a position for or against Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Of course, it would be against Iran’s obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)[10] for it to acquire nuclear weapons. And it hasn’t done so.

The NPT is a bizarre treaty. Under it, the five states that already possessed nuclear weapons were permitted to sign as “nuclear weapon” states and keep them; the rest had to sign as “non-nuclear-weapon” states and are forbidden from acquiring them. The latter included Iran, which was one of the original signatories on 1 July 1968, when the Treaty was opened for signature.

To be precise, a “nuclear-weapon” state is defined in Article IX(3) of the Treaty as follows:

“For the purposes of this Treaty, a nuclear-weapon State is one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January, 1967.”

Five states – China, France, Russia, the UK and the US—passed that test and were eligible to sign the NPT as “nuclear-weapon” states (though China and France didn’t sign until the 1990s).

The NPT was devised by states that possessed nuclear weapons in order to maintain their monopoly over the possession of nuclear weapons and, if at all possible, prevent other states acquiring them. Their monopoly was written into the NPT itself. What is more, since amendment to the Treaty requires the approval of

“a majority of the votes of all the Parties to the Treaty, including the votes of all nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty”

(to quote Article VIII(2) of the Treaty), their monopoly cannot be taken away without their consent. In other words, their right under the NPT to possess nuclear weapons is inviolable.

And their right under the NPT cannot be overridden by the UN Security Council, since each of these five powers has a right of veto over its decisions.

It is inconceivable that any of these powers will give up their nuclear weapons unilaterally—because they are the ultimate weapons of self-defence. It is true that the NPT pays lip service to the notion of all round nuclear disarmament. Article VI says:

“Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”

But that doesn't require “nuclear-weapon” states to get rid of their nuclear weapons, nor even to negotiate in good faith about getting rid of them, merely to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating ... to nuclear disarmament”.

The five states that had nuclear weapons on 1 January 1967—and were licenced to keep them by the NPT— still possess nuclear weapons more than four decades later and, most likely, will keep them for as long as they exist as states.

India let out of doghouse

189 states are now party to the NPT, 5 as “nuclear-weapon” states and the rest as “non-nuclear-weapon” states.

3 states—India, Israel and Pakistan—refused to sign the NPT and secretly developed nuclear weapons. Since these states chose to remain outside the NPT, they didn't breach any treaty obligations by doing so.

It used to be the case that these three states were in the international nuclear doghouse, in the sense that they were unable to purchase nuclear material and equipment from the rest of the world. This made it difficult for them to expand their civil nuclear programmes.

But, in July 2005, the Bush administration signed the US-India nuclear agreement, an initiative which has led to India being taken out of the doghouse. It is now free to engage in international nuclear commerce, while retaining and developing its nuclear weapons. It has, in effect, become the world's sixth officially recognised nuclear power (see my article *India & Iran: US double standards on nuclear weapons* [11]).

Ireland's small part

As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) of states, Ireland played a small part in India's elevation.

On 6 September 2008, it consented to the amendment of the NSG Guidelines to make an exception for India and allow India, and India alone, to import nuclear goods without having a “comprehensive” safeguards agreement with the IAEA covering all of its nuclear facilities. The NSG Guidelines now incorporate one rule for India, and another for other importing states, which

is akin to writing an exemption for a named individual into an important piece of domestic legislation.

(Ironically, the NSG came into being in 1974 as a result of India developing, and testing, a nuclear device using plutonium from a reactor imported from Canada for civil purposes).

The NSG operates by consensus and theoretically Ireland could have prevented such an extraordinary anomaly being introduced into its Guidelines. But, it didn't.

What is more, the Government pretended that the introduction of this extraordinary anomaly had no significant implications for the NPT. See, for instance, Foreign Minister, Micheál Martin's response to a question from Michael D Higgins in Dáil Éireann on 9 October 2008 [12].

India: a natural strategic partner for the US

Senator Barack Obama voted for the legislation required to enact the US-India nuclear agreement. In July 2008, he explained his actions to the Indian magazine *Outlook*:

“I voted for the US-India nuclear agreement because India is a strong democracy and a natural strategic partner for the US in the 21st century.”[13]

There you have it: the Bush administration, allegedly a determined opponent of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, has rewarded India, a state that has engaged in proliferation to the extent of acquiring around 60 nuclear warheads and the missiles to deliver them. Obama, an equally determined opponent of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, approves wholeheartedly on the grounds that India is “a natural strategic partner for the US”.

There, Obama was speaking during his election campaign. In power, his administration has embraced the US-India agreement. On 23 March 2009, his Deputy Secretary of State, James Steinburg, told a conference on the agreement at the Brookings Institution:

“Both the United States and India have a responsibility to help work, to craft a strengthened NPT regime that fosters safe, affordable nuclear power, to help the globe's energy and environment needs while assuring against the spread of nuclear weapons.”[14]

Think about it: here the US is saying that India, a state that remained outside the NPT so that it was free to develop nuclear weapons, should help “strengthen” the NPT in order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to other states. You couldn't make it up.

It is not as if India is going to sign the NPT. Since it isn't one of the five privileged “nuclear-weapon” states as defined by the NPT, it would have to give up its nuclear weapons and sign as a “non-nuclear-weapon” state. It is safe to say that India will not do that—but nevertheless the US wants it to help “strengthen” the NPT in order to prevent other states acquiring nuclear weapons.

Iran a pariah state

By contrast, the US treats Iran as a pariah state because of its nuclear activities. Unlike India, Iran has been a signatory to the NPT since July 1968, as a “non-nuclear-weapon” state. Everybody agrees that it doesn’t possess any nuclear weapons. It says that its uranium enrichment facilities are not for military purposes and the IAEA has found no evidence to the contrary. Yet Iran has had economic sanctions imposed upon it in order to force it to cease uranium enrichment and other nuclear activities, which are its right under the NPT so long as they are for “peaceful purposes”. Article IV(1) of the NPT says:

“Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes”

Clearly, Iran made the wrong choice in 1968 by signing the NPT. Had it taken the same route as India (and Israel and Pakistan) and refused to sign, it would have been free to engage in any nuclear activities it liked in secret, including activities for military purposes, without breaking any obligations under the NPT.

If it had kept on the right side of the US, it might have been invited by the US to help “strengthen” the NPT in order to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other states.

Withdrawal from NPT

Under Article IX of the NPT, Iran would be within its rights to withdraw from the Treaty and remove the constraints upon it due to NPT membership. Article IX says:

“Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other Parties to the Treaty and to the United Nations Security Council three months in advance. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events it regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests.”

By any objective standard, Iran (and other neighbours of Israel) has good grounds for withdrawal, because of the build up over the past 40 years of an Israeli nuclear arsenal directed at them. There could hardly be a better example of “extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty”, which “have jeopardized [their] supreme interests”.

It might not be wise for Iran to withdraw from the NPT at the present time, since it would risk terrible havoc from the US/UK and/or Israel. But, there is no doubt that such an action would be within Article IX of the NPT.

David Morrison
June 2012

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The enigma of Frank Ryan – Part Two

by Manus O’Riordan

In the current May-June issue of *History Ireland*, I am the unnamed target of a complaint by Des Bell and Fearghal McGarry in their article entitled “The Enigma of Frank Ryan” – the same title as that of their film. Under the heading of “Frank Ryan film pulls back from controversial thesis” I have briefly reviewed that film in the current Spring-Summer issue of the *International Brigade Memorial Trust Newsletter*, while under the heading of “Frank Ryan – Patriot or Collaborator?” I have submitted the following letter to *History Ireland*, although informed by the editor that – for reasons of space – it will not be published in the June-July issue but will be deferred until September-October:

“Des Bell and Fearghal McGarry complain that ‘before the first scene of *The Enigma of Ryan* had been shot, our film had been denounced by an *Irish Democrat* article headlined ‘*Film to slander Frank Ryan as Nazi Collaborator*’.’ They do not name the author of the offending article and are being unfair to that publication on two counts. All it had done was reprint my posting on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives website, and all I had done was respond to the *Sunday Times* report on September 11th last that had quoted Des Bell’s own declared intention ‘*to present to the audience the kind of enigma Frank Ryan was – how he started out on the left and ended up working for fascism*’.

Bell and McGarry now write of the film that was actually made that “the potency of Nazi iconography makes an arresting case concerning Ryan’s status as a collaborator that the dialogue proceeds to undercut”. At the *History Ireland* Hedge School following the film’s screening on February 26th I welcomed the fact that it had retreated from its previously stated purpose and now presented the complexity of Ryan’s position in Germany, a welcome which I restated in the Spring/Summer issue of the *International Brigade Memorial Trust Newsletter*. In that *History Ireland* debate, Fearghal McGarry did indeed return to the ‘*collaborator*’ thesis that he had advanced in his 2003 biography of Ryan, while I, in turn, restated the ‘*patriot*’ argument of my book review for the Spring 2003 issue of *History Ireland*. The Oxford English Dictionary has a very precise political definition of ‘*collaborate*’ as ‘*cooperate traitorously with an enemy*’, while Oxford’s Thesaurus further defines ‘*wartime collaborator*’ as ‘*sympathizer, traitor, quisling, fifth columnist*’. In an interview with Michael McInerney of the *Irish Times* in April 1975, de Valera’s judgement was that ‘*Frank Ryan was a man for whom I have always held the highest regard. In all he did at home or abroad he had as his first aim, the interests of his own country*’. *History Ireland* readers can, of course, make up their own minds, not only by revisiting Fearghal’s biography and my review, but by listening on line to this February’s Hedge School debate. Manus O’Riordan, Ireland Secretary, International Brigade Memorial Trust.”

As I pointed out in the March issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, the title of the Bell film is taken from an article of the same name by Michael McInerney, which came to very different conclusions than the McGarry thesis and which had been first published in the December 1979 issue of the *Old Limerick*

Journal. McInerney died in January 1980. Accordingly, the second part of his article—reproduced below—was first published posthumously, two months later. In a future issue I will return to my original 2003 critique of the McGarry thesis, as well as report in greater detail on my exchanges with him during this February’s debate on the film.

In the meantime, however, I should comment on the following blog posting—under the heading of “Another spy in the *Irish Times*!”—published on the Politics.ie website this May 9th: “Some of you may be aware that *Irish Times* director Major T.B McDowell was effectively working for the Brits during the early 70s. It now transpires—in British state papers referred to in Donnacha Ó Beáicháin’s book on Fianna Fáil—that the *Times* political correspondent Michael McInerney was also supplying information to the Brits. McInerney was reporting on meetings he had with leading figures in the Fianna Fáil government. To add further spice to the story, McInerney was a member of the Communist Party of Ireland (McI had been in the CPNI in the mid-40s – MO’R) and had been the editor of the Connolly Association newspaper when he had lived in London in the 40s and was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.”

But if what McInerney was doing in 1972 is to be judged as reprehensible, he was doing so as an agent of the Irish Government of the day, whereas McDowell was an agent of the British Government—“pure” if not so simple. In the UK papers quoted by Ó Beacháin in his 2010 book *Destiny of the Soldiers*, the British ambassador to Ireland was reporting how Taoiseach Jack Lynch had been trying to keep the lid on things in the wake of the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry and the burning down of the British Embassy in Dublin, but how they could not be seen meeting together, so that McInerney—with the knowledge of Irish Government Ministers—was effectively deputed to inform the British Embassy of Irish Government deliberations and decisions in the wake of that latest Anglo-Irish crisis. That does not make a British spy of McInerney, since he was acting as a conduit (or, more pejoratively, a runner) for the Taoiseach of the day. Unless, of course, we are to conclude of the Lynch Government itself ... but that’s another question!

THE ENIGMA OF FRANK RYAN – PART TWO

by Michael McInerney

(first published in *The Old Limerick Journal*, Vol.1, March 1980)

At an early stage of World War Two its danger to Ireland affected Frank Ryan’s life, and so began the now 40-year-old mystery which has surrounded his name since. An international campaign was launched to secure Ryan’s release, stimulated

by an Irish committee representing all labour and republican interests. Even Cardinal MacRory, Ryan's old opponent and, at one stage, Pope Pius XII, supported the call for his release. In Madrid, the Irish Ambassador, Kerney, had been at the receiving end of the appeals and had used every possible channel to Franco to get Ryan out. By late 1939, soon after de Valera had recognised Franco's Government, Kerney wrote Dublin that he was now confident of Ryan's release. Since that recognition Kerney had used every diplomatic device to win help from Franco Ministers and officials. He contacted British, American and other diplomats to secure Ryan's freedom. He also worked with a Spanish lady, the Duchess of Tetuan, a descendant of Red Hugh O'Donnell of Tironaill, beautiful, dark-haired, who had visited Ryan in jail and had been captivated by him. She had great personal influence and access to Franco. In spite of every pressure, however, by March 1940 Franco still refused to release Ryan. "He is my most important prisoner", he stated on one occasion to Kerney.

In the Spring of 1940 Kerney's Spanish adviser, (but also adviser to the Germans in Madrid) a Senor Champourcin, suggested to Kerney that they might try to use German influence on Franco. After much hesitation, and aware of Dev's anxieties about Irish neutrality, Kerney at last agreed. No objection was raised by Dublin. Soon Ryan was approached in Burgos jail by a German Abwehr officer in Madrid and told that he could be released and sent back to Ireland. But he would have to undertake to make things difficult for England in Ireland, if they did so. Interested, but very worried about this proposal, Ryan confided in a Spanish comrade prisoner—Angel Palaccio (whom I met in Madrid 40 years later - McInerney)—of his distrust of the German officer and the Spanish and German fascists. He told Angel that he would never do anything to prejudice the anti-fascist struggle, and that he certainly would not take the Nazi side in anything. This was early June 1940 and Churchill and a new anti-Hitler government had taken over from Chamberlain in England. Ryan's supreme hope, however, was to return home, so he kept listening. If he could use the Germans to get home, then why not? Anything to avoid 30 years in jail. But he still demanded many guarantees from the Germans and laid down that he would not accept any conditions about his activities in Ireland.

At last Franco agreed with the Germans that he should release Ryan, but not in accordance with the terms that Kerney had expected. Kerney had been led to believe that Ryan would be handed over to him (Kerney) and that he would arrange his return home. Instead, however, Franco's terms were that during the night of July 25th Ryan would be handed over to German Intelligence, secretly, but would have to swear solemnly that he would never again return to Spain. Through Champourcin, who also was adviser to Germany's Embassy in Spain, Kerney was advised that the Germans would either take Ryan back to Ireland or send him to the United States, where he could work with the neutrality lobby there. Germany feared the entry of the United States into the war. Guarantees were given for Ryan's safety in Germany and his freedom from any possible action by the SS, the Gestapo or other such organisations. The Germans also agreed that the transfer could be overseen by the Irish Embassy in Spain. Kerney now believed that Frank Ryan's ordeal was over at last, that he would be taken to France and from there go by U-boat to Ireland. But at the last moment the German Abwehr took over complete control of the transfer. At 2 a.m. on July 25th Wolfgang Blaum, Abwehr Chief in Madrid, called to the jail at Burgos, accompanied by two armed Falangists and

civil guards. Ryan was awakened, ordered to dress, and taken to Blaum's car and driven to Paris. Clearly Ryan had little if any choice about leaving Spain. Champourcin, who was at the jail at the same time, followed the cars to the border; was recognised by Ryan whom he had met, and saw the transfer of Ryan to the Berlin Abwehr officer, Kurt Haller, who drove Ryan to Paris.

Through all this Ryan had no doubt as to whether all this was due to Nazi altruism. The Nazis hoped to use him for their own devices in Ireland in their war against England. At this time, of course, all Europe, apart from Soviet Russia, was under Hitler's rule. Ryan placed no real reliance on German help for Ireland. His knowledge of history told him that the Germans had not fulfilled Casement's hopes in 1916. History also told him that in 1912 the Kaiser had negotiated with Carson, the Ulster leader, who sought German aid to resist any attempt by Asquith, England's Prime Minister, to impose Home Rule on Ireland. Yet he considered himself lucky to be able to return to Ireland, even with German help. In Paris he had comforts, like a bed, a bath and decent food, that he had certainly not enjoyed in Burgos Jail. Yet he felt insecure until he met there a young German friend named Helmut Clissmann, whom he had met and liked in Ireland in the early thirties with another young German, Jupp Hoven. Both now told him that they were attached to the Abwehr and that they had urged Admiral Canaris, Abwehr chief, to secure his release from Spain on the grounds that if Britain were to attack Ireland to occupy the ports (returned to de Valera by Chamberlain in 1938), Ryan would be a great organiser of Irish defence and win the IRA to de Valera in his resistance to England.

There was little rest for Ryan in Paris and after a few days he was suddenly taken, not to Ireland, but to Berlin where, unknown to Clissmann and Hoven, he met, for the first time, Vessenmayer, Ribbentrop's adviser on Ireland. Vessenmayer was also a colonel in the dreaded SS, Hitler's special terror organisation. He was briefed by the adviser on German's policy of full support for Irish neutrality and of Hitler's readiness to aid in Irish defence if England attacked Ireland. But Ryan was not told that Vessenmayer, three months before, had secretly brought Sean Russell, IRA Chief-of-Staff, to Berlin from New York and was planning to send him back to Ireland by U-boat. Russell was to take with him a radio transmitter and plans for IRA activity in Ireland when Germany invaded Britain. A red flower-pot would be placed on the German Embassy window in Dublin as a signal for action by Russell and his men. Ryan, however, was told nothing of this.

Vessenmayer later suggested to Ribbentrop and army and naval chiefs that Ryan also should go with Russell on the U-boat and that the two Irishmen, representing both wings of the IRA, could step up Irish activity against Britain. First it had to be established that the two men, so apart and so bitter in Irish politics, would be prepared to co-operate in Ireland. To establish this both men were invited to Wilhelmstrasse at staggered times. Meeting unexpectedly in Berlin the two Irishmen would be bound to reveal their true feelings. And they did. As already described, immediately on recognition they expressed delight, as indeed most Irish men or women would have done if suddenly meeting a fellow-Irishman in such strange, bizarre, almost unimaginable conditions... "Would you like a lift home in my U-boat, Frank?" asked Sean. "If you're serious, Sean, I certainly would. Sure, I'd go home to Ireland with anyone," replied his old enemy. (It was Russell who had expelled Ryan and his friends from the IRA after the Republican Congress had

been formed in 1934.) Two days later Ryan and Russell, with armed Abwehr officers, travelled by train to Wilhelmshaven and on the journey Ryan recalled later how he and Russell were kept strictly apart, and not allowed to talk, just as they had been separated after that meal in Berlin. On August 8th, only just a fortnight since he had left the Spanish jail, Ryan was on board a U-boat with Russell, bound for Ireland. Silence was also strictly enforced on the boat. Soon, however, disaster overtook them. Russell became very ill and died on August 14th, just 100 miles, or a day's journey, from the Irish coast. He was buried at sea with full German naval honours, wrapped in the German naval ensign. What about Ryan's hopes of home? According to German Foreign Office papers, he was directed to return to the German base. He had no other choice but to do so and was held there for almost four years. 'Rescued' from a Spanish fascist jail by the German Nazis, he had remained with his 'rescuers' for four years and died in their hands.

The news leaked out over the months—after the U-boat tragedy—of Ryan's whereabouts, but none could explain how such a radical socialist, anti-fascist and generally loved man could find himself in Nazi hands. Few except the Irish Government knew of his transfer under armed guard, and Franco had announced formally that "he had escaped with the aid of American friends". He could have been anywhere. The Irish Government was silent for neutrality reasons. Churchill could create serious trouble if the secret leaked out. Even the German Ambassador in Dublin, Herr Hempel, was not informed. And many, even of his friends in Ireland and England, came to believe he had indeed gone over voluntarily to the Nazis.

But he had not. Yet many thousands continued to think of his German period as if Ryan had lived in some 'twilight zone'. To them Germany was a closed chapter, and they continued to think of him as an Irish hero in Ireland and in the Spanish War and the Spanish jail, about which much was known through prudent leaks from Government sources. But many, even still, cannot visualise any circumstances in which Ryan could have survived—even for four years—in the land of Hitler and his dreaded SS and Gestapo. They are fearful, too, of inquiring too deeply. They forgot that Ryan was a man of enormous and varied experience of war, capture, jail and threat in both Ireland and Spain, used to situations demanding quick decision and also much subterfuge. He knew the Marxist theory of recognising the contradictions of capitalism and imperialism and exploiting them in the interests of freedom as indeed Lenin did in 1917 on 'the Kaiser's Finland Station train'. Perhaps Ryan thought he could do in Ireland what Lenin did in Russia. But events were to leave his plans still-born.

Ryan knew, of course, that the Nazis did not 'rescue' him because they liked him. They knew the power of nationalism in Ireland—indeed in every country, even in the USSR, as Stalin recognised after Hitler had invaded Russia—and that the one thing that would draw all republican Irishmen together would be an invasion of Ireland by British forces. Such an event, which they were convinced would happen, would bring men such as de Valera, Ryan, Russell and many other political enemies into an army for the defence of Ireland. In such an army would be all shades of politics—conservative, liberal, labour, communist, socialist, perhaps even fascist. Ryan knew the Germans were aware that his influence could draw the IRA and de Valera into one camp and that he and Russell would join left and right. And so for two years they held Ryan 'in cold storage', awaiting a favourable moment to use him. And all the time they swore they

were arranging his journey home. Friends of the Nazis believe they failed because of the war, but surely with all their power and might and resources the Germans could have taken Ryan from the French coast to Ireland. They took Casement in 1916, at a much more difficult time, and many of their own agents, in the war years of 1939-45.

During those years Ryan remained unharmed because he was an influential Irishman and the Germans wanted friendly relations with de Valera, who knew that Ryan was in their hands. Ryan talked to them about Ireland and the war and answered political questions, but he had to talk to someone. He never once, however, spoke on the German radio to Ireland, much though the Germans would have wished him to do so. Indeed for two years he maintained a secret correspondence with his old friend Kerney, the Irish Ambassador in Madrid, whom he had met both in Ireland and in Spain. He also wrote secretly to another Irish friend, Gerard O'Reilly in New York. In this way, and others, he kept in touch with Irish affairs. Two years later, however, after disastrous war changes in Africa and Russia, Ireland no longer loomed as a peripheral area of war, and Veessenmayer and the Foreign Office lost all interest in Ryan, though he was allowed all material needs. Within months he became seriously ill, though cared for by SS medical men and in SS hospitals. He died on June 10th, 1944.

Anxieties about neutrality prevented de Valera from pressing for his return home after he had been held in Germany for more than a year, though he would have welcomed his arrival from the U-boat in 1940. Since his death no statement has been issued that would rehabilitate Ryan. On this question de Valera, in an interview with this writer, shortly before his (de Valera's) death in 1975, told me: "*I am very pleased that you are writing the biography of this great Irishman. Frank Ryan always put Ireland first in everything he did or said, at home or abroad. He has earned his place in history.*" Hundreds of other men and women paid their tribute in interviews with me. Jim Larkin, in a public statement at the Irish Trade Union Congress in 1939, gave a most colourful and eloquent appreciation of Ryan and his work.

In my own view, after the total collapse of all his hopes in Spain, his supreme and only hope was to return to Ireland and he would have used the "devil himself", as he said, to attain that. But yet, it must be remembered, he was taken from Spain under armed guard. He had no choice. With the prospect of an English invasion of Ireland, his main desire was to be at home to fight against England as he had done in 1921 with de Valera, Russell, and even O'Duffy. It was that thought in the minds of the Germans that sent the U-boat to Ireland in August 1940. At the same time he would have done nothing to aid Nazi Germany. One sentence of Ryan written to Kerney in the summer of 1941 seems to me appropriate to conclude this article on Frank Ryan. It reads: "*If I am ever asked to do something I don't like, don't worry ... I won't do the dirty... And when you plant my tombstone, let it be of granite like my stubborn cranium contents ... Not for nothing did I earn the nickname 'The Mule' in my school days in St. Colman's, Fermoy.*"

Extracts from Russia and the Changing World

Vladimir Putin on foreign affairs

(A) The Arab Spring: lessons and conclusions

A year ago the world witnessed a new phenomenon – nearly simultaneous demonstrations against authoritarian regimes in many Arab countries. The Arab Spring was initially received with hope for positive change. People in Russia sympathized with those who were seeking democratic reform.

However, it soon became clear that events in many countries were not following a civilized scenario. Instead of asserting democracy and protecting the rights of the minority, attempts were being made to depose an enemy and to stage a coup, which only resulted in the replacement of one dominant force with another even more aggressive dominant force.

Foreign interference in support of one side of a domestic conflict and the use of power in this interference gave developments a negative aura. A number of countries did away with the Libyan regime by using air power in the name of humanitarian support. The revolting slaughter of Muammar Gaddafi – not just medieval but primeval – was the manifestation of these actions.

No one should be allowed to employ the Libyan scenario in Syria. The international community must work to achieve an internal Syrian reconciliation. It is important to achieve an early end to the violence no matter what the source, and to initiate a national dialogue – without preconditions or foreign interference and with due respect for the country’s sovereignty. This would create the conditions necessary to introduce the measures for democratization announced by the Syrian leadership. The key objective is to prevent an all-out civil war. Russian diplomacy has worked and will continue to work toward this end.

Sadder but wiser, we oppose the adoption of UN Security Council resolutions that may be interpreted as a signal to armed interference in Syria’s domestic development. Guided by this consistent approach in early February, Russia and China prevented the adoption of an ambiguous resolution that would have encouraged one side of this domestic conflict to resort to violence.

In this context and considering the extremely negative, almost hysterical reaction to the Russian-Chinese veto, I would like to warn our Western colleagues against the temptation to resort to this simple, previously used tactic: if the UN Security Council approves of a given action, fine; if not, we will establish a coalition of the states concerned and strike anyway.

The logic of such conduct is counterproductive and very dangerous. No good can come of it. In any case, it will not help reach a settlement in a country that is going through a domestic conflict. Even worse, it further undermines the entire system of international security as well as the authority and key role of the UN. Let me recall that the right to veto is not some whim but an inalienable part of the world’s agreement that is registered in the UN Charter – incidentally, on U.S. insistence. The implication

of this right is that decisions that raise the objection of even one permanent member of the UN Security Council cannot be well-grounded or effective.

I hope very much that the United States and other countries will consider this sad experience and will not pursue the use of power in Syria without UN Security Council sanctions. In general, I cannot understand what causes this itch for military intervention. Why isn’t there the patience to develop a well-considered, balanced and cooperative approach, all the more so since this approach was already taking shape in the form of the aforementioned Syrian resolution? It only lacked the demand that the armed opposition do the same as the government; in particular, withdraw military units and detachments from cities. The refusal to do so is cynical. If we want to protect civilians – and this is the main goal for Russia – we must make all the participants in the armed confrontation see reason.

And one more point. It appears that with the Arab Spring countries, as with Iraq, Russian companies are losing their decades-long positions in local commercial markets and are being deprived of large commercial contracts. The niches thus vacated are being filled by the economic operatives of the states that had a hand in the change of the ruling regime.

One could reasonably conclude that tragic events have been encouraged to a certain extent by someone’s interest in a re-division of the commercial market rather than a concern for human rights. Be that as it may, we cannot sit back and watch all this with Olympian serenity. We intend to work with the new governments of the Arab countries in order to promptly restore our economic positions.

Generally, the current developments in the Arab world are, in many ways, instructive. They show that a striving to introduce democracy by use of power can produce – and often does produce – contradictory results. They can produce forces that rise from the bottom, including religious extremists, who will strive to change the very direction of a country’s development and the secular nature of a government.

Russia has always had good relations with the moderate representatives of Islam, whose world outlook was close to the traditions of Muslims in Russia. We are ready to develop these contacts further under the current conditions. We are interested in stepping up our political, trade and economic ties with all Arab countries, including those that, let me repeat, have gone through domestic upheaval. Moreover, I see real possibilities that will enable Russia to fully preserve its leading position in the Middle East, where we have always had many friends.

As for the Arab-Israeli conflict, to this day, the “magic recipe” that will produce a final settlement has not been invented. It would be unacceptable to give up on this issue. Considering our close ties with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, Russian diplomacy will continue to work for the resumption of the peace process both on a bilateral basis and within the format

of the Quartet on the Middle East, while coordinating its steps with the Arab League.

The Arab Spring has graphically demonstrated that world public opinion is being shaped by the most active use of advanced information and communications technology. It is possible to say that the Internet, social networks, cell phones, etc. have turned into an effective tool for the promotion of domestic and international policy on par with television. This new variable has come into play and gives us food for thought – how to continue developing the unique freedoms of communication via the Internet and at the same time reduce the risk of its being used by terrorists and other criminal elements.

The notion of “soft power” is being used increasingly often. This implies a matrix of tools and methods to reach foreign policy goals without the use of arms but by exerting information and other levers of influence. Regrettably, these methods are being used all too frequently to develop and provoke extremist, separatist and nationalistic attitudes, to manipulate the public and to conduct direct interference in the domestic policy of sovereign countries.

There must be a clear division between freedom of speech and normal political activity, on the one hand, and illegal instruments of “soft power,” on the other. The civilized work of non-governmental humanitarian and charity organizations deserves every support. This also applies to those who actively criticize the current authorities. However, the activities of “pseudo-NGOs” and other agencies that try to destabilize other countries with outside support are unacceptable.

I’m referring to those cases where the activities of NGOs are not based on the interests (and resources) of local social groups but are funded and supported by outside forces. There are many agents of influence from big countries, international blocks or corporations. When they act in the open – this is simply a form of civilized lobbyism. Russia also uses such institutions – the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, International Humanitarian Cooperation, the Russkiy Mir Foundation and our leading universities who recruit talented students from abroad.

However, Russia does not use or fund national NGOs based in other countries or any foreign political organizations in the pursuit of its own interests. China, India and Brazil do not do this either. We believe that any influence on domestic policy and public attitude in other countries must be exerted in the open; in this way, those who wish to be of influence will do so responsibly.

B) Nuclear proliferation

Today, Iran is the focus of international attention. Needless to say, Russia is worried about the growing threat of a military strike against Iran. If this happens, the consequences will be disastrous. It is impossible to imagine the true scope of this turn of events.

I am convinced that this issue must be settled exclusively by peaceful means. We propose recognizing Iran's right to develop a civilian nuclear program, including the right to enrich uranium. But this must be done in exchange for putting all Iranian nuclear activity under reliable and comprehensive IAEA safeguards. If this is done, the sanctions against Iran,

including the unilateral ones, must be rescinded. The West has shown too much willingness to “punish” certain countries. At any minor development it reaches for sanctions if not armed force. Let me remind you that we are not in the 19th century or even the 20th century now.

Developments around the Korean nuclear issue are no less serious. Violating the non-proliferation regime, Pyongyang openly claims the right to develop “the military atom” and has already conducted two nuclear tests. We cannot accept North Korea's nuclear status. We have consistently advocated the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula – exclusively through political and diplomatic means – and the early resumption of Six-Party Talks.

However, it is evident that not all of our partners share this approach. I am convinced that today it is essential to be particularly careful. It would be inadvisable to try and test the strength of the new North Korean leader and provoke a rash countermeasure.

Allow me to recall that North Korea and Russia share a common border and we cannot choose our neighbors. We will continue conducting an active dialogue with the leaders of North Korea and developing good-neighborly relations with it, while at the same time trying to encourage Pyongyang to settle the nuclear issue. Obviously, it would be easier to do this if mutual trust is built up and the inter-Korean dialogue resumes on the peninsula.

All this fervor around the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea makes one wonder how the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation emerge and who is aggravating them. It seems that the more frequent cases of crude and even armed outside interference in the domestic affairs of countries may prompt authoritarian (and other) regimes to possess nuclear weapons. If I have the A-bomb in my pocket, nobody will touch me because it's more trouble than it is worth. And those who don't have the bomb might have to sit and wait for “humanitarian intervention.”

Whether we like it or not, foreign interference suggests this train of thought. This is why the number of threshold countries that are one step away from “military atom” technology, is growing rather than decreasing. Under these conditions, zones free of weapons of mass destruction are being established in different parts of the world and are becoming increasingly important. Russia has initiated the discussion of the parameters for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

It is essential to do everything we can to prevent any country from being tempted to get nuclear weapons. Non-proliferation campaigners must also change their conduct, especially those that are used to penalizing other countries by force, without letting the diplomats do their job. This was the case in Iraq – its problems have only become worse after an almost decade-long occupation.

If the incentives for becoming a nuclear power are finally eradicated, it will be possible to make the international non-proliferation regime universal and firmly based on existing treaties. This regime would allow all interested countries to fully enjoy the benefits of the “peaceful atom” under IAEA safeguards.

Russia would stand to gain much from this because we are actively operating in international markets, building new nuclear power plants based on safe, modern technology and taking part in the formation of multilateral nuclear enrichment centers and nuclear fuel banks.

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The probable future of Afghanistan is alarming. We have supported the military operation on rendering international aid to that country. However, the NATO-led international military contingent has not met its objectives. The threats of terrorism and drug trafficking have not been reduced. Having announced its withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, the United States has been building, both there and in neighboring countries, military bases without a clear-cut mandate, objectives or duration of operation. Understandably, this does not suit us.

Russia has obvious interests in Afghanistan and these interests are understandable. Afghanistan is our close neighbor and we have a stake in its stable and peaceful development. Most important, we want it to stop being the main source of the drug threat. Illegal drug trafficking has become one of the most urgent threats. It undermines the genetic bank of entire nations, while creating fertile soil for corruption and crime and is leading to the destabilization of Afghanistan. Far from declining, the production of Afghan drugs increased by almost 40% last year. Russia is being subjected to vicious heroin-related aggression that is doing tremendous damage to the health of our people.

The dimensions of the Afghan drug threat make it clear that it can only be overcome by a global effort with reliance on the United Nations and regional organizations - the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the CIS. We are willing to consider much greater participation in the relief operation for the Afghan people

but only on the condition that the international contingent in Afghanistan acts with greater zeal and in our interests, that it will pursue the physical destruction of drug crops and underground laboratories.

Invigorated anti-drug measures inside Afghanistan must be accompanied by the reliable blocking of the routes of opiate transportation to external markets, financial flows and the supply of chemical substances used in heroin production. The goal is to build a comprehensive system of anti-drug security in the region. Russia will contribute to the effective cooperation of the international community for turning the tide in the war against the global drug threat.

It is hard to predict further developments in Afghanistan. Historical experience shows that foreign military presence has not brought it serenity. Only the Afghans can resolve their own problems. I see Russia's role as follows—to help the Afghan people, with the active involvement of other neighboring countries, to develop a sustainable economy and enhance the ability of the national armed forces to counter the threats of terrorism and drug-related crime. We do not object to the process of national reconciliation being joined by participants of the armed opposition, including the Taliban, on condition they renounce violence, recognize the country's Constitution and sever ties with al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. In principle, I believe it is possible to build a peaceful, stable, independent and neutral Afghan state.

The instability that has persisted for years and decades is creating a breeding ground for international terrorism that is universally recognized as one of the most dangerous challenges to the world community. I'd like to note that the crises zones that engender a terrorist threat are located near the Russian borders and are much closer to us than to our European or American partners. The United Nations has adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy but it seems that the struggle against this evil is conducted not under a common universal plan and not consistently but in a series of responses to the most urgent and barbarian manifestations of terror—when the public uproar over the impudent acts of terrorists grows out of proportion. The civilized world must not wait for tragedies like the terrorist attacks in New York in September 2001 or another Beslan disaster and only then act collectively and resolutely after the shock of such cases.

I'm far from denying the results achieved in the war on international terror. There has been progress. In the last few years security services and the law-enforcement agencies of many countries have markedly upgraded their cooperation. But there is still the obvious potential for further anti-terrorist cooperation. Thus, double standards still exist and terrorists are perceived differently in different countries—some are "bad guys" and others are "not so bad." Some forces are not averse to using the latter in political manipulation, for example, in shaking up objectionable ruling regimes.

All available public institutions—the media, religious associations, NGOs, the education system, science and business—must be used to prevent terrorism all over the world. We need a dialogue between religions and, on a broader plane, among civilizations. Russia has many religions, but we have never had religious wars. We could make a contribution to an international discussion on this issue.

(RIA Novosti, 27 February 2012, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20120227/171547818.html>)

Peace and Power — An Introduction

by **Brendan Clifford**

I'm not certain that the author of the pamphlet *Peace And Power*, published in London in 1936, the first part of which is reproduced below, was the same person who contributed a series of articles to James Connolly's paper, *The Workers' Republic*, in January 1916. The names are different, but the way of understanding the world is the same.

The articles in *The Workers' Republic* appeared under the name of Meyrick Cramb. I searched high and low for a trace of a Meyrick Cramb who might have written those articles. All that could be found was a reference in letters by D.H. Lawrence to Lady Ottoline Morrell and Katherine Mansfield in 1916 to a Meyrick Cramb who was the son of J.A. Cramb who published some books on Germany before 1914, and a letter by Cramb to Lady Ottoline Morrell in 1916 which is held in the University of Texas. Nothing published by Cramb himself could be found.

Before coming across this Meyrick Cramb I had accidentally come across Meyrick Booth and had been struck by the similarity between his outlook and the outlook and frame of reference of the *Workers' Republic* articles.

I drew attention to the Meyrick Cramb issue in an article on *Connolly And German Philosophy* in the August 1982 issue of *The Irish Communist*. This was included in a collection of articles on *Connolly And German Socialism* published in 2004, along with the suggestion that the author of the articles was possibly Meyrick Booth.

Writers on Connolly had taken no notice of the Meyrick Cramb articles before I drew attention to them, and they have taken no notice of them since. Connolly is a great name—an icon—but it seems that everybody who looks closely at what he published finds that he is just *wrong*. The obvious problem is that, when the Socialist International proved to be a flop in August 1914, he declared his support for Germany in the war on socialist grounds, and that is just not acceptable from any viewpoint in the range of Irish politics. The fact that he supported Germany in the war is suppressed. It is suppressed by Ruth Dudley Edwards in his entry on Connolly in the (British) *Dictionary Of National Biography* and also in Fergus d'Arcy's entry in the *Dictionary Of Irish Biography*, published by Cambridge University and the Royal Irish Academy.

Connolly was prepared for class war against capitalist war in 1914. When it didn't happen, and the Socialist International broke up on the lines of the capitalist states, he adapted very quickly to the situation, quickly found his orientation in the world as it was, and supported Germany as having the form of capitalism that provided the best conditions for working class life. And it seems that Irish writers—whether revolutionary, reformist or reactionary—live so much in the shadow of English doctrine that they simply find Connolly unintelligible.

They recoil from the fact that he supported Germany, even though he stated the fact clearly within weeks of the British declaration of war, with the article *The War Upon The German Nation*, and it is evident throughout *The Workers' Republic*.

About twenty years ago I attended a weekend conference in Belfast about Robert Lynd, organised by the Communist Party. I was interested in Lynd only because he had written the Introduction to a reprint of *Labour In Irish History* by the Home Rule publishers, Maunsel, issued when Connolly had become famous because of the Easter Rising. Lynd was a British war propagandist. His introduction was a venomous piece of work, designed to discredit Connolly's support for Germany as weak-mindedness. During the session on Connolly, in which this was glossed over, I insisted on pointing out his clear support for Germany. I was denounced from the platform as a kind of Fascist for saying that Connolly supported German militarism.

I think a contributing factor to the inability to cope with Connolly has to do with education. Biographers of Connolly, and writers about him, are all highly educated. They tend to comment on what a marvellous achievement it was on the part of a self-educated man like Connolly to be able to write as well as he did. But Connolly was not self-educated: he was uneducated. I find, from discussions I have had on the matter, that in the era of universal higher education the idea of being uneducated is hard to grasp.

Education is training. It may be other things as well, but essentially it is training. Mass education was found to be a requirement of capitalism beyond the primitive level of its development. It was not only made available but was made compulsory. It is now compulsory to the age of 16 and is available beyond that. At an intermediate stage self-education was fairly widespread. People whose family could not afford to put them through the training later gave themselves a course of training to fit them for whatever they had in mind to become.

Connolly, as far as I know, never educated himself—trained himself—for any role within the system of society. His only training was military. For the rest he figured out the world for himself as he went along. He was not shaped, or burdened, by any system of formal intellectual training. And his rapid and thorough re-orientation within the world situation brought about by the revolutionary flop of early August 1914 was too much for mentally regimented commentators to cope with.

The Workers' Republic was published within that reorientation. Robert Lynd's purpose was to make it incomprehensible, and it must be admitted that he succeeded. *The Workers' Republic* of 1915-16 is the most interesting socialist paper ever published in Ireland, but its influence on the subsequent socialist movement was nil.

It might be that Connolly's Meyrick Cramb was not Meyrick Booth. But it seems to me that that *Workers' Republic* writer could well have written, in the world situation twenty years later, the pamphlet which we begin reprinting below.

I will comment on the matter further in the conclusion of the reprint in the next issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*.

*

PEACE AND POWER

by Meyrick Booth — 1936, London

1. THE BEWILDERMENT OF THE MAN IN THE STREET

The Man in the Street—whether the street be the Strand, the Champs Elysées, Unter den Linden, or the Kremlin Promenade—does not want war.

Mr. Smith, walking down the Strand, opens his newspaper and glances at the headlines:

“£300, 000, 000 for Arms.”

“The Menace of Germany.”

“No more Money for the Unemployed.”

“The Perfect Gas Mask only 8/6.”

“Government has only £1,200 for Impoverished Authors, Musicians and Scientists.”

“Widow with Five Starving Children puts Head in Gas-oven.”

“Lord Nikkelstiel throws £10, 000 Party for Daughter’s Coming of Age.”

“Boom in Armament Shares.”

“Bishop says Pacifism is anti-Christian.”

“French and German Soldiers swear Eternal Friendship on Field of Verdun.”

Mr. Smith (or it may be Herr Meyer, M. Lebrun or Comrade Petrowsky—they are all in the same boat) feels bewildered, helpless and, in a confused way, rather angry.

At the bottom of his mind lurks the outrageous notion: Is it really necessary that money should be poured out like water on the means of death and destruction, while millions lack the necessities of a reasonable life? Is there *no* way out of this horrid tangle?

He rather likes to read about the vow of “No More War” at Verdun, and is inclined to think this way better than that of the Bishop. Then the shadow of Adolf Hitler falls across his mind. He hurries home and sits down to fill up Form C., Schedule D., - Subsection 24-a (Immediate).

Herr Meyer’s mental processes are very similar. But he suddenly remembers those 160,000,000 Russians and their 20,000 Bombers.

With M. Lebrun, Hitler is again the operative word. In the case of his cousin, Signor Brunelli, it is the Inglesi and the terrible Signor Eden.

Yes, they are all in the same boat—a sinking boat.

Whether our Man in the Street lives in a Democracy or in a Dictatorship makes no real difference. So to suggest that the British Citizen, through the medium of his vote, actually controls our foreign policy would be a bad joke. *He does not even know what it is.* Sometimes he feebly tries to follow its elusive winding, but finds that a crossword puzzle is easier.

Out of every hundred Men in the Street one feels that he must really do something. He joins a Peace Movement. There are dozens of these in our country. Some favour complete resistance to war; others point out that we must have two or

three more wars—to quell Hitler, Mussolini, and those naughty Japs—before Peace is safe.

These movements pull against each other and thus ensure the undisturbed continuance of the armaments race.

Eminent soldiers like Sir Ian Hamilton, Lord Mottiston, or Colonel Seton Hutchison, plead eloquently for friendship with our late enemies and with Italy. But the Bishops and the anti-Fascists are too much for them. One section of Labour is all in favour of armed sanctions; another swears by “Uncle George” and his out-and-out anti-war policy.

In a word, *all is confusion*. Nowhere is there any clear policy for those who desire Peace.

The hosts of Pacifism—a few years ago full of hope and confidence—are now disorganized and disrupted. Everywhere those who cry for More Guns and More Bombs are triumphant.

If this is design, we can only marvel at its success.

Would it not, perhaps, be well for Pacifists to ask themselves the plain question: **“Have we followed the right paths in our quest for peace?”**

Is it not possible that in pursuing abstract doctrinaire conceptions such as “Universal Peace” or “Indivisible Peace” there has been a disastrous loss of contact with hard facts? Few would now deny that the League of Nations, in its devotion to abstractions, completely miscalculated the realities of the international situation.

In these notes I suggest that the cause of Peace can best be served by the adoption of *more realistic methods*.

Our point of departure will be peculiar triangular problem presented by the interaction of Democracy, Fascism and Communism.

2. THE NEW STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The League of Nations owed its birth to the old-fashioned doctrinaire individualism of President Wilson.

It was shaped by a political philosophy which looked upon nations as separate entities, self-determinate atoms in world politics. Its function was to regulate the international life of these separate entities and adjust their differences. It never occurred to those responsible that a time would shortly come when **the struggle for power would be not so much between national units as between vast world-embracing international movements.** Communism was then in its early stages and was expected to die in a year or two. Fascism was not yet born. It was accepted as an axiom that Democracy would, in a few years at most, be the universal political form. No one could then have dreamed that, within fifteen years, it would be fighting for its life against immense concentrations of anti-democratic forces.

The emergence of these world-movements with their fierce self-consciousness, their religious fervour and their fanatical intolerance has completely altered the face of international politics. **It has, in fact, largely ceased to be international politics.**

The conflict is now between political religions — not between nations. As I write these words fascist Spaniards are shooting communist Spaniards inside the boundaries of the Spanish state.

The assumption that, in future, nations would act as homogeneous units and confer together as Council of Nations, like individuals around a table, coloured the minds of those who sponsored the League, and indeed is still held (apparently) by most of its supporters. This assumption has now lost its validity.

Did M. Laval really go to Geneva in the fateful day of 1935 as the representative of *France*? While he “represented France” at Geneva millions of his own countrymen hoped and prayed for an Italian triumph; and other millions longed to push him into war with Italy because their hearts were in Moscow!

It is as plain as a pikestaff that conditions of this sort utterly destroy the foundations of the League of Nations.

What then is the conclusion forced upon us by these facts? It is inescapable. **There cannot be a League of Nations until we have nations.** In other words, the various peoples who make up modern civilization must become *inwardly* organized before they can organize outwardly. A nation which contains (say) 25 per cent of Communists, 20 per cent of Fascists, and perhaps another 20 per cent of parties who are the tools of international capital, is no longer a nation; it is an arena of conflict incapable of pursuing a consistent policy either at Geneva or anywhere else.

Such was the plight of Germany prior to 1933. That unhappy land was a mere geographical area filled with a multitude of hopelessly divided people, millions of whom were actually organized in the service of a neighbouring hostile power.

The development of a new principle of national integration is the condition of the formation of an effective League of Nations.

This point of view—which is absolutely basic—has never been adequately understood in our own country, for the simple reason that the instinctive nationalism of the English binds them together despite all party differences.

When once our minds are clear upon this point it is apparent that the admission of Russia to the League was a capital error of judgment. For Soviet Russia pursues systematically (and indeed without concealment) the purpose of destroying other nations from within. It is the deliberate policy of the Soviet State to carry communist propaganda into other lands and create, within their boundaries, large bodies of citizens hostile to their own governments and having their spiritual home in Moscow. In proportion as this succeeds the League of Nations becomes impossible.

3. DEMOCRACY AS POWER-POLITICS

At one time the principle of “live and let live” was fundamental to Democrats. But of late there have been many indications of a radical change. Indeed **the modern Democrat is hardly less aggressive in his attitude towards other political systems than your Fascist or Communist.** It was clear from the attitude of leading democratic politicians (in the winter of 1935-6) that many of them welcomed the idea of a war with Italy (or at any rate a campaign of severe sanctions) with the express object of “smashing Fascism”, and imposing Democracy upon the Italian people. Many of the troubles of Germany during the last sixteen years are due to the fact that the victorious Allies, in the name of Democracy, compelled the German people by sheer force to adopt political forms quite unsuited to their history and national character. At this very moment Great Britain is contemplating

“giving” Democracy to India, although it is notorious that the mass of the people do not want anything of the kind!

Has Democracy itself become a creed which imposes itself by force upon unwilling peoples?

Another pointer in this direction is the extremely aggressive attitude of the democratic Press—the more democratic the more aggressive—towards Nazi Germany. No well-informed person doubts that the majority of the German people support the Hitler regime. But that is not good enough for your fighting Democrat. Self-determination is all very well. But foreign nations must determine only those things which he likes. Otherwise it will be so much the worse for them! After swallowing under compulsion a governmental system they did not want, the German people, at long last, rallied themselves, shook it off, and created a government they did want. “Aha!” said the Democrats, “What are you wicked people doing with a government like that? That is not *my* sort of government. Stop it!”

And in Great Britain, America, Holland and elsewhere, movements were started to boycott German goods, in the hope of forcing Germany to give up her own chosen form of government and return to Democracy!

In the course of numerous arguments with democratic friends I have never succeeded in getting a straightforward answer to the plain question “What is your attitude towards a nation *that has of its own free will* repudiated Democracy and chosen an autocratic form of government?”

Democrats have never been political realists. And to-day they are unable to face the plain facts of the modern world. They simply cannot believe that there are millions of people, including entire nations in the forefront of civilization, who do not like their political medicine, and are determined not to drink it. They still entertain the dangerous notion that, in some way, it will be possible to force open their mouths and pour the bottle down their throats. **To rid the world of this foolish illusion is one of the most important steps towards world-peace.**

Democracy has, step by step, surrendered its ground to the modern creed of Salvationism: “You must believe in Marx and Lenin or you cannot be saved!” or “You must follow Mussolini or you will be damned!” *The true Democrat*, now a very rare bird, *does not say*, “*You must do this or that!*” — he has enough faith in human nature to believe that adults should be free to decide their own politics.

A democratic statesman would not have said to the German people: “You *must* have a parliament.” He would not have agreed to the preposterous treaties by which millions of European citizens were handed over from one power to another like cattle to strengthen the frontiers of “democratic” states. He would not now ally himself with a power which preaches, in every country, doctrines which are the negation of Democracy.

Democracy has, in reality, almost ceased to count in the modern world, not so much because its principles are wrong as because no one—least of the politicians of the democratic powers—any longer puts those principles into action!

Can we (to take an acid test), imagine a French or British politician dealing with the Austrian problem along democratic lines? Can we conceive of him saying: “Let the people of Austria be free to decide their own destiny.” We cannot. We know, all too well, that his attitude towards that long-suffering and so vitally important little country is determined entirely by considerations of power-politics.

We shall return to this topic in a later section. Meanwhile it is enough to place on record the significant fact that western Democracy has moved so far away from its own basic principles that, in the last analysis, despite all that may be said upon the

platform about “the fight for Democracy” or “the Defence of Liberty”, **the ultimate conflict is more and more that between Communism and Fascism.**

4. THE GREAT FISSURE

The danger to Peace inherent in this conflict is enormously intensified by the significant fact that, for the most part, the nations inclining towards Fascism are those which are short of land, while the democratic powers and their Russian allies possess immense areas of undeveloped land.

The great world-conflict between Fascism and Anti-Fascism is thus (speaking roughly) at the same time the fight for land between the “Have Nots” and the “Haves”. This is the central fact of the present-day political situation, and the core of the Peace Problem.

We can scarcely suppose that this state of things is a pure coincidence. Is it not more probable that Fascism has been adopted by the land-hungry nations as a weapon to steel them in their fight for a place in the sun?

Looking out upon the world to-day we see it divided by a great fissure. On the one side stand the British, French, Russians and Americans, owning between them no less than nearly 30 million square miles of land; and the other are the hungry-eyed ranks of the Japanese, Italians, Germans, Poles, Austrians, and Hungarians, who possess, all together, less than one million square miles.

Need one look elsewhere for a complete explanation of the continuing instability of the modern political situation? If a further argument were needed it would be found in the alarming fact that it is precisely the land-hungry nations which show the highest birth-rates and the best survival rates (Russia is here, however, to be excepted).

Consider the following figures:

	Area in square miles	Population in millions	Approximate number of persons per sq. mile
Great Britain, Dominions and Colonies (without India)	11,200,000	118	10.5
France & Colonies	4,400,000	110	24
Russia	8,600,000	170	20

And compare them with these:

Japanese Empire (without Manchukuo)	260,000	92	364
Germany	180,000	67	372
Italy (without Abyssinia, but including the more inhabitable portions of the African possessions.)	200,000	42	210
Poland	140,000	32	228

In these figures, which are truly fantastic in the disproportion they reveal between land where it is wanted and land where it exists, we perceive *the* problem of our age, upon the solution of which depends our peace and happiness.

In the first group, we find almost exactly 400,000,000 people inhabiting roughly 24,000,000 square miles. In the second, 233,000,000 inhabit under 800,000 square miles. The ratio of density of populations is, approximately, 17 per square mile, to 290 per square mile.

These figures should, I think, never be far from our minds in reflecting upon the issues of war and peace; and it would be well if those who use such phrases as “lust of conquest” or “aggressive militarism” when referring to Japanese or Italian aims and methods would ponder their real significance. They might even do more—they might ask themselves whether, if the roles were reversed, the complacency and self-conscious moral virtue of the satiated powers in the first group would survive the change?

It is true of the conflict raging around Fascism and Communism, of the struggle for land and power, as of most other human problems, that its aspect varies entirely according the angle of vision. As seen from the standpoint of the Anti-Fascist (who in this matter represents the land-owning classes) the Fascist is a tiresome and wicked person, who by his aggressive life-outlook disturbs the peace of the world. As seen from the point of view of the hungry peasants of Japan, the patient labourers of Italy, or the crowded masses of Central Europe, this aggressiveness is no more than an insistence upon a long overdue re-distribution of the goods of this world. That the Socialists and their Communist friends should be found so uncompromisingly *on the side of the land-owners* against (as Mussolini justly describes them) “the proletarian nations”, is an anomaly which makes the solution of the problem immeasurably more difficult.

5. THE DANGER OF “SECURITY”

In the face of this menacing situation what attitude should the friends of Peace adopt?

If they are foolish, they will say: “We detest the governments who control these fascistic states, and we will strive to bring about their downfall.”

If they are wise, they will seek to understand the peculiar problems of Italy, Germany and other non-democratic states. They will realize that these authoritarian forms are

(perhaps unconsciously) largely the expression of the land-hunger of these virile nations. And they will say: "Let us seek to create for these peoples, who are, after all, human beings like ourselves, reasonable conditions of life and work. Even if we do not agree with them, we can show a spirit of good-will."

Is it not transparently obvious that the former path will lead to War and the former to Peace?

It is a tragi-comedy that a man like Sir Arnold Wilson [1], who has worked incessantly for sympathy and understanding between our own people and the great peoples of Italy and Germany, should be branded as a "militarist" by a clique of narrow-minded "pacifist" doctrinaires, *whose own policy* (of oil sanctions and closing the Suez Canal), *would have plunged us into a river of blood!*

Does any reasonable man suppose that the cause of Peace and goodwill can be promoted by such an utterance (alas only too typical of many others!) as that of Major Nathan (a shining light amongst the Labour Pacifists): "Italy ought to be isolated as if she were a leper colony."

Who is the true Pacifist? The man who says: "I will have nothing to do with these wicked people, they are outcasts." Or he who says: "I differ from Fascism most profoundly; but I will try to build a bridge leading to Peace."

Is it not contrary to the whole spirit of Peace to side with Haves against the Have Nots, to associate Peace, not with a constructive effort at world-settlement, but with the conservative and egoistic attitude of these who, holding enormous areas of land themselves, seek to deny access to land to others?

For this reason, those who have the cause of Peace at heart should be extremely wary in lending their support to schemes of collective security.

A properly guaranteed system of collective security would be an admirable thing, if the present distribution of territory was such as to do justice to the respective needs of the peoples. But since it is emphatically not, what is called collective security inevitably tends to establish the *status quo*. It is, in fact, merely a method of "bottling up" the nations short of land, and perpetuating the injustices and absurdities of the post-war treaties.

In order to perceive the essential absurdity of any system of rigid security we have only *to look ahead*. If present tendencies are maintained, the populations of some nations will, in less than a hundred years, decline to a mere fraction of the present figure; while others will, in the same time, increase far beyond their present numbers. [2] Is it seriously suggested that the areas of land over which these peoples—the rising and the sinking (in a racial sense)—shall exercise control shall remain unchanged? Such a view is untenable. **If this principle had been applied in the past, human progress would have been brought to a standstill.**

6. HOW PACIFISTS ARE HARNESSSED TO THE CHARIOT OF WAR

Nothing could be more disastrous than the identification of the cause of Peace with Anti-Fascism. The deep fissure which threatens to divide and destroy our civilization will, in this way, be widened still further.

The pacifist who pursues this path ceases to be a bridge-builder and reconciler. **He becomes a combatant in a world-wide conflict in which**

both parties are militarist. For Communists have never claimed to be pacifists. Not only do they preach class-war but they boast continually of their enormous air-force and their unrivalled organization for aggressive gas-war. [3] All over the world, it is Communists who take the lead in forming the Anti-fascist Front. Their aim is to make use of pacifists—whose sentiments so often obscure their judgment—as tools in their campaign against Fascism.

The machinery for converting pacifists into soldiers is already in good working order. Idealists who, a few years ago, were ardent workers in the cause of peace now willingly vote for vast armament programmes. Why? Because they are told that these armaments will be used on the side of Soviet Russia. He who formerly cried: "No more War!" now shouts as loudly as any for armed sanctions against the Fascist states.

The pacifist of the Left-wing has allowed himself to be harnessed to the chariot of war.

What is the work assigned to these tools? The answer is very simple. They are to forge a ring of steel around Germany (and the other Central European Fascist States). France, Russia and Czecho-Slovakia are to hem in the German people, to prevent its development, and (in the view of the more extreme exponents of this policy) gradually to crush it in an industrial and economic sense. It is fervently hoped by our Left-wing politicians that Great Britain will join the ring. With or without war, the downfall of the Hitler regime is to be accomplished. It will be replaced (it is believed) by a Red government in Germany. The Red Flag is to fly from the Pacific to the Atlantic!

Great Britain will then be faced with a vast Red *bloc* (enclosing some 300,000,000 people). She will be compelled, either to join this or to lose her possessions. The final destiny of our country, according to this plan, is to become "a subsidiary Soviet Republic".

This situation suggests that the understanding between the Soviets and the great French financial and armaments interests is strong enough to relegate to the background the antagonism which might have been supposed (at any rate by the Man in the Street) to exist between Communism and Capitalism. To-day, however, it is by no means a matter of course that these two forces are deadly enemies!

Students of politics should pay special attention to the proceedings of the Liberal Summer School, 1936, and to the booklet by "Covenanter" (pub. Gollancz) on *Labour Peace Policy*. Both are most instructive. Perusing them, we see clearly that (speaking broadly) the aim of the Left (and near-Left) wing is not to *make peace* in the proper sense of the term—which involves good-will, a conciliatory spirit, and a desire to understand the problems and difficulties of those who differ from us—but to create a Fighting Front against Fascism.

Although (of course) nominally defensive, this Front will aim, we are told, at hemming in the Fascist States denying them access to land and in general placing them in such a position that they would be subject to coercion by a League of Democratic States. Obviously the non-democratic powers would not accept this situation, and in a short time war would result. Strangely enough—or perhaps *not* strangely, human nature being what it is—the **proposers of this League do not realize how completely contrary their methods are to the spirit of Peace.**

To make the position clear, let us imagine the boot upon the other leg; Germany, Italy, and three or four allied fascistic nations enter into an alliance, the object of which is to encircle democratic nations, deprive them of colonial opportunities and injure their trade and finance. Would this be regarded in France and England as a pacific and friendly action on the part of these Fascist states?

I need hardly say that it would be looked upon as affording cast-iron proof of the aggressive nature of Fascism. Yet it is just such a policy which is to-day being urged upon the British public by numerous "progressive" personalities. (On the other hand others in the same camp, such as Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Lothian, and Sir Herbert Samuel, have shown a wiser spirit.) That anti-democrats are also human beings, entitled to a certain consideration, even if their views do not coincide with those of western progressives has apparently never occurred to the pacifists of the Anti-Fascist Front. They have invented a new motto: Peace on earth and good will toward men—*unless they belong to the political Right!* This is not however, precisely what was meant by the Founder of the Christian Religion.

Since the chariot to which the friends of Peace are thus invited to harness themselves is nothing other, in reality, than the wagon hitched to the Soviet star, it will be well in the ensuing section, to subject this star to a somewhat closer examination.

7. A BLOOD-SOAKED REALITY

"A common enemy exists to-day, who threatens everyone and everything. It is Communism, which seeks to penetrate everywhere It is deplorable that many people do not see, or pretend not to see, the common peril, and even help that destructive force." – The Pope (speaking on May 10th, 1936).

"The object is the erection of one world Soviet Socialist Republic, consisting of subsidiary Soviet Republics, set in what had once been the national countries of the former world of free individuals and free nations... The world nature of our programme is not mere talk, but an all-embracing and blood-soaked reality... Our ultimate aim is world-wide Communism, our fighting preparations are for world revolution, for the conquest of power on a world-wide scale and the establishment of a world proletarian dictatorship." - From *Pravda* (Soviet official newspaper).

"To hundreds of thousands of Russian exiles the following facts are unforgettable: According to figures given by the Soviet, and taking reliable sources into account, some 20,000,000 persons lost their lives during the Russian Revolution either by violence or from starvation and disease. Of these people, 1,766,180 were executed before February, 1922, including 6,000 teachers and professors, 8,800 doctors of medicine, 54,000 army officers, 105,000 police officials, 355,000 of the upper classes, and 855,000 peasants." Letter to *The Times*, on behalf of the Russian Christians, from Mr. A. S. Atherton-Smith." [4] It may be said that we should not rake up the horrors of the past; that it is more important at the present time to cultivate Russian friendship and seek Communist co-operation.

This might indeed be the best course, if it were not for three outstanding facts:

In the first place, those very numerous individuals in the western lands who support the Soviet—or at any rate regard it with mild approval as an "interesting experiment", while violently attacking the great Fascist States—are never tired

of saying when their attention is drawn to the recent German peace offers:

"Ah, but you see you can't *trust* Hitler. Look at what he said in his book *Mein Kampf* (written thirteen years ago). That is the real Hitler!"

Now if the opponents of reconciliation with Germany are to go back so far to look for reasons for rejecting peace, those on the other side must also be allowed to look back a little. The remarkable declaration from the Soviet organ, at the head of this section, is not thirteen years old. *It is only seven years old.* In principle, it has never been repudiated; and every foreign office in the world can bear testimony to the tireless underground propaganda by which these ends are even now being pursued.

There exists in Russia large colleges where young Communists are trained in foreign languages and in propaganda technique, prior to despatching them to other lands, there to undermine the existing governments and prepare the way for Red dictatorship.

In the second place, the methods of terror and extermination have not ceased. They cannot be regarded as belonging to the past. The present-day Bolshevist leader, riding in his Rolls Royce, has not forgotten the means he employed when he was a Red-shirted proletarian.

Ask the peasants of the Ukraine or of East Karelia.

Finally, the Communists and their friends are so prone (rather unwisely on their part) to make use of atrocity propaganda as a weapon in their attack upon Fascism that they cannot reasonably complain if anti-Communists ask questions about the methods employed in Russia!

If a regime which massacred nearly two million opponents is so tactless as to seek to discredit another regime on the ground that the latter executed some two hundred rebels (in June, 1934), it cannot expect to be itself immune from a little gentle criticism.

All is fair in love and war. No doubt the Communists consider themselves justified in making political capital out of the mistakes of the Hitler Government.

But what are we to say about the Left-wingers in England, who take up the attitude that we should not be friends with Germany because of the atrocities of the Nazis; yet urge a close alliance with Russia? Their position is strange indeed. It can only be compared to that of a man who says: "You know, I really can't associate with Mr. A. because he treats his servants so badly; he has beaten a footman, and dismissed a parlourmaid on account of her religious opinions. But I am becoming friendly with Mr. B. It is true that he has murdered his brother, and poisoned two of his children; but I am a broadminded man and am prepared to overlook that. Besides, he is so *interesting!*"

8. "EYES LEFT"

Since the rise of National Socialism in Germany, the centre of gravity of British politics has moved with astonishing rapidity towards the Left. [5] We have been nearly (if not quite) drawn into the orbit of the great international Communist, semi-Communist and High Financial forces revolving about the pivots Paris, Moscow, Prague; forces which are devoted to the task of circumscribing and finally destroying the Nationalistic-Fascistic concentrations based upon Berlin, Rome, Vienna, Warsaw, BudaPesth. *Geneva has come increasingly to function as the world-centre of the diplomatic and financial forces which back the Left in the game of world-politics.*

Bolshevism is now entirely respectable. Its ambassadors, wearing evening-dress made in Savile Row, are welcome guests at the houses of our statesmen, industrialists and financiers; and their women-folk, attired in expensive Paris creations hobnob

with duchesses. Their agents go from one British factory to another buying the munitions of war to be used for the destruction of our cousins across the North Sea.

In Moscow, night-clubs with compulsory evening-dress are being opened. There is a new Russian upper-class, living in large villas, with butlers, servants, chauffeurs complete; a class with its exclusive resorts to which no proletarian can gain admission, and its own luxurious shops.

The West End may be excused for thinking: "There can't be much wrong with those Bolshies! They are quite nice people, just like ourselves."

A very large section of British opinion, including the major part of the Labour and Liberal Press, is now governed by a single principle, of majestic simplicity:

The man who wears a Red Shirt can do no wrong.

In Spain or Mexico, Communist troops burn down churches, crucify priests alive, soak nuns in petrol and then set fire to them; and in general, wage a relentless war against religion. [6] In England, only one or two Right-Wing journals utter anything more than the feeblest of protests. The editors of established Liberal journals, read by the chapel-going middle-class, refer to these church-burning Reds as "our friends and comrades" and (apparently) without a qualm, side with them against the Spanish Christians.

The mentality of these Left-Liberal circles is inexplicable on rational grounds. It is apparently the product of a psychopathic degree of emotionalism. What else can one say about people who become furiously indignant when a Jew in Germany is turned out of a job, yet have hardly a word to say when their "friends" of the Red Front kill hundreds of priests in cold blood? It is obvious that their moral indignation is kept "on tap" for use against political enemies only.

I will not pretend to explain this astounding swing to the Left. Some contributory causes are perhaps: extreme fear of Germany (skilfully exploited by Bolshevik propagandists); a rather pathetic faith (in some circles) in the Soviet system as a cure for all our economic and social troubles, and (in others) the conviction that Communism has now become so completely bourgeois and respectable that there is no longer any point in opposing it. A main cause is no doubt the rapid decline of religion in this country. Communist atheism no longer shocks a nation that is itself so largely atheist. It is not, however, certain that British public opinion is yet ripe for a definitely anti-Christian foreign policy.

9. THE LEFT-WING AT HOME

"The people's Flag is palest pink;

It's not so red as you might think."

In England, sympathy with Communism is very marked in the "leftish" middle-classes and amongst the intelligentsia. In literary circles, success is almost unattainable for writers who do not lean to the Left. Books written in defence of the Soviet system outnumber those on the opposite side by ten to one.

The weekly wage-earner, on the other hand, has shown himself to be highly resistant to Russian influence. In these islands very few proletarians are to be found in the movement which aims at establishing a "proletarian dictatorship". While at Oxford and Cambridge there are flourishing communist clubs supported by the sons of our wealthy and aristocratic houses, in Sheffield, Birmingham or Manchester not one per cent of the people is communist.

Nevertheless it is a serious error to suppose that Communism in England is unimportant because it has failed to carry the masses with it.

In influencing public opinion and the Press, and in evoking an emotional response in the more well-to-do classes it has been enormously successful. [7] Millionaires, dukes, bishops, and professors by the dozen, write to the papers urging us to support Russia, and help the Bolsheviks to smash Fascism. [8]

Those who conceive of Communism as being what its name implies and nothing else must get a shock when they visit Russia—the home of the Left. The contrasts of wealth and poverty are at least as great as in any western nation, and far greater than those visible in Germany. In most of the towns the conditions of over-crowding are appalling judged by any western standard.

At the same time, there is much that is impressive in the immense schemes of electrification, the huge new factories and, above all, the lavish expenditure on education.

Up-to-date statistics are contained in Sir Walter Citrine's book "I Search for Truth in Russia": The purchasing power of the rouble is about 3d. An average wage is some 45 to 50 roubles (ca., 11/- to 12/6) per week. At a Moscow factory for underwear the actual wages are: lowest category 6/3, medium category 10/-, and highest category 15/6 per week. (These wages are less than half those now being paid in Germany.) Many social amenities are, however, free (this applies also, however, to the Fascist nations), and rent is often as low as 1/- a week.

There is an enormous amount of unemployment in Russia amongst those not registered as Communist workers. [9]

According to the *News Chronicle* (a journal by no means hostile to the Soviet State) between two and three million people died in "the man-made famine" in the years 1932 and 1933: "The Russian leaders believed that the peasants needed a lesson, so they let the famine come." American observers in Russia put the figure of deaths even higher. It is very improbable that the total loss of life from starvation since the Bolsheviks came into power is under ten million. There is still famine and hunger on an immense scale. [10] It will be said: "These are the birth-throes of a new order; wait until the Communist have had time to put things straight!"

As they have already been at the helm for nearly twenty years, this remark cannot be regarded as very encouraging to those who are now going through acute suffering under their regime. Without at all questioning that great energy and enthusiasm are at work in Russia, and that a large proportion of the younger generation are keen supporters of the Soviet system, it must still be gravely doubted whether the problem is merely one of *time*, or whether the appalling conditions indicated do not result from fundamental errors in the Communist method and outlook.

Whatever may be thought about Russian internal conditions, it is universally admitted that Communist propaganda is the most skilful and subtle, the best organized and by far the most lavishly financed in the world. It pursues aims which vary completely according to the place and circumstances.

For example, in England it is employed to further internationalism; but, in India, communist agents preach the most intensive nationalism. In Germany, the underground propaganda is all on the side of pacifism; in France, Communists support French militarism. In Spain, Mexico, Brazil or Uruguay, Russia stirs up revolution; in France and England, it protests that its aims are democratic and non-revolutionary.

At the very time that M. Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador, was lecturing to the Liberal Summer School (1936), and

explaining to an open-mouthed audience, that Communism was utterly opposed to war and violence, the Moscow wireless was every evening urging the Spanish Reds to some of the *worst deeds of violence ever witnessed*; the appeal broadcast on August 17th contained these words: “The ruthless extermination of monarchist priests is vital” and “must be continued uninterruptedly.” [11]

It is almost impossible to gauge the true extent of Communist propaganda in any given country, since it now aims, usually, not at enlisting open adherents, but at undermining other political parties from inside.

10. THE GREAT RIDDLE OF MODERN POLITICS

In Mr. Wyndham Lewis’ book, *Left Wings over Europe*, there is a section entitled: “**Why should Democracies wish to make the world safe for Communism?**”

Why indeed? **This is the great riddle of modern politics.** Why should honest church-going Farmer Baldwin, with his pipe and his pigs, be so anxious to lend his support to the “all-embracing and blood-soaked reality” which aims (as Moscow tells us) at the destruction of “free individuals and free nations” in the interests of a world-dictatorship. Is it just the German peril? Or is there some other, less obvious, explanation?

What, as Mr. Lewis says, is the real nature of “the *modus vivendi* subsisting between the Scarlet Woman of Moscow and the smug Pickwicks (or must we say Pecksniffs) of the western world?” Why should the Moscow regime, which is too far to the Left for the British Labour Movement, not be too Left for Mr. Baldwin?

Living, as the present-day Englishman does, completely in the dark as to the motives and methods of the government which he is supposed to have elected, I cannot claim to possess the key to this mystery.

One or two points seem, however, to emerge from the encircling gloom with some distinctness. If Bolshevism were what it professes to be—a Workers’ Movement devoted to the destruction of Capitalism—it is scarcely conceivable that it would be found working amicably side-by-side with Mr. Baldwin and his Cabinet, their friends in the world of finance and big business, and with the great magnates of France.

If we are to believe *The New York Times*, the Soviet system is changing over “with amazing swiftness” to conditions which will “approximate to the normal lines of capitalistic development.” [12] Something of the sort was indeed to be expected from the connexion, which is known to exist between Communism and International Finance. A man does not lend money to those who are about to cut his throat!

Another striking point is that in the world-conflict between Fascism and Communism **the sympathies of virtually all the great capitalist-controlled journals throughout the world are markedly anti-Fascist.** From the standpoint of orthodox Left-Wingers, who believe that big capitalists are the architects of Fascism, this must appear a very odd state of things. One would have thought, indeed, that it must inspire some misgiving in their ranks!

These points, which are clear and undeniable, may serve at least as sign-posts indicating in which direction we should look for a solution of this riddle.

Let us face the situation frankly. Does *anyone* really believe that Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Eden, Mr. Duff-Cooper and their friends, in co-operation with the Bank of England and the City, are supplying with arms and money a government which is devoted to establishing, in its own words, “a world-proletarian Dictatorship”?

On the face of it an alliance between Communism and Fascism would be more probable than one between Communism and democratic Capitalism. For the two former are authoritarian, anti-democratic, militaristic and (in different senses) collectivistic. Many people indeed say they cannot see any difference between them. Even the *Manchester Guardian* describes Nazi Germany as a “classless state”.

Nevertheless, it is *not* with Fascism that Communism makes friends, but with Democracy and Imperialism, with British and French Empires; while the rulers of these great capitalistic states make it clearer every day that they have much in common with Russian Communism and nothing in common with Fascism!

As Alice in Wonderland said, it gets “curiouser and curiouser”. Yet, there *may be*, after all, a quite simple explanation.

Is it not possible that Communism and capitalistic Democracy work together so smoothly because neither is what it pretends to be!

As Mr. Wyndham Lewis points out, we live to-day in a strange world in which words mean—more often than not—the opposite of what they appear to mean.

A “pacifist” now signifies, usually, a man who is prepared to wage war against a political system which he dislikes. On the other hand, a man like Sir Arnold Wilson is dubbed “militarist” because he will not fight in this war.

It is thus not surprising to find that Communism does not mean a system in which wealth is possessed in common. Far from it. It has come to signify, rather, that no one shall possess any wealth at all with the exception of members of the governing clique.

Nor does the Democracy of today stand for “government of the people by the people”. It has come, more and more, to mean a species of camouflaged plutocracy.

Thus, it is not perhaps so very astonishing that when Lord Nikkelstiel of London and Paris, the multimillionaire owner of steel and armament works, meets Comrade Nikolstilovitch of Moscow, who is in authority over vast concerns in Russia, the pair are able to hob-nob most cordially over their vintage wines and Napoleon brandy.

Notes

1. Those who want to know the truth about conditions in Germany and Italy are strongly recommended to read “Walks and Talks Abroad” by Sir Arnold Wilson (pub., Oxford University Press).

2. Writing in the “News Chronicle,” January 16th, 1936, Mr. G. Crowther points out, after a careful analysis of statistics, that present tendencies being maintained, the population of England and Wales will have sunk to no more than 5,000,000 by the year 2036. (The population of Russia will then be some 300,000,000, and that of Japan some 150,000,000.)

3. Russia built up an immense army and air-force long before the Nazi regime in Germany came into power: accordingly these preparations cannot truthfully be explained away as “defence

against the Fascist Peril". The present combined forces of Russia, France and Czecho-Slovakia amount to some 18,000,000 men, as against a maximum German force of 6,000,000.

4. Cf. Figures given by T. W. Hird in "Under Czar and Soviet".

5. In "Left Wings over Europe", by Windham Lewis (pub., Cape) the reader will find a brilliant and penetrating analysis of this tendency.]

6. My friends of the Left will say, "These are the hysterical tales of refugees; they are not true!" May I remind them that the evidence in favour of the so-called Red atrocities in Spain is stronger than that which supported the Nazi atrocity stories in 1933; yet **the latter are accepted without question by the whole of Left opinion in this country.** We heard nothing in 1933 about the "hysteria of refugees!" For my part I am willing to agree to an attitude of extreme scepticism with regard to these atrocity tales, if the principle be applied all round, and we hear no more about the anti-Red atrocities. But to a unilateral application of the sceptical spirit no fair-minded man can agree.

7. In 1932 and 1933 British public opinion (in itself a highly artificial affair worked up by about a dozen wealthy men) completely ignored the frequent political murders committed in Germany by Communists, while showing signs of violent excitement at even the smallest outrage which could be debited to the other side. (A widely-read Liberal newspaper referred to one of these acts of political assassination as a "murder", the quotation marks being no doubt intended to indicate that, where Fascists are concerned, killing is no murder.)

8. Witness the correspondence columns of the "Times" and the "Daily Telegraph" in July and August, 1936.

9. Employment under conditions which include the buying and selling of men and women has been provided for some three million prisoners in the notorious slave camps of North Russia and Siberia. Detailed first-hand information as to these is contained in the work entitled, "I Speak for the Silent," by V.V. Tchernavin (pub., Hamilton).

10. The Danish expert, Strom, who worked for the Soviet, provides us (in his book, "Uncle Gives Us Bread", pub., Allen and Unwin) with a vivid picture of life in the Russian countryside; the struggle for food, the dirt, disease and misery; the corruption and inefficiency of officials; and the appalling Red-tapery which stifles all initiative.

11. Communists have been highly successful in persuading leading personalities in the religious world that Communism and Christianity are nearly, if not quite, identical conceptions. At the same time—in **other** quarters—a precisely opposite propaganda is carried on, to convince the atheistically inclined proletariat of France and Spain that Communism is the deadly enemy of all religion. In "The A.B.C. of Communism" we read: "All religions are one and the same poison—a fight to the death must be declared against them." And Lunatcharsky, Commissar for Education, said: "We hate Christians. Even the best of them must be regarded as our worst enemies. They preach love of one's neighbour and pity, which is contrary to our principles."

12. This was written before the execution of the leaders of the Communist Old Guard in August, 1936. A most illuminating interview with Trotsky appeared in the "News Chronicle" (Aug. 27th, 1936), in which the Communist veteran declared that Russia was now a national, conservative state, Communism (in the real sense of the term) having been thrown overboard by the ruling oligarchy.

New publication by Belfast Historical And Educational Society

Desmond Williams: *The Genesis Of National Socialism*

The Genesis Of National Socialism is the *magnum opus* of Thomas Desmond Williams. He wrote it as a student at University College Dublin. A few years later he was made Professor of Modern History at UCD. But he never as Professor issued a work comparable for substance and quality with what he had written as a student.

The present work covers the formation, under the guidance of Prussia, of a single German state, by bringing together the scores of German petty states into a voluntary union.

Unfortunately, however, it does not deal at all with what is said to be its subject—the formation of the Nazi Party. Nevertheless it was awarded an Honours MA Degree.

As something produced within Irish academia, it is beyond comparison. It stands alone as a giant fragment that came from nowhere.

Williams served in British Intelligence before being appointed Professor of History at UCD. In a comment on Williams' work, Brendan Clifford describes the libel action brought against Williams by the wartime Irish Ambassador to Spain, Leopold Kerney, over allegations of collaboration with the Nazis made by Williams, apparently on the basis of what he thought he knew from his work as a British Intelligence operative.

Clifford also contrasts the way Germany united itself with the way England constructed and maintained the United Kingdom.

Sir Basil Thomson.

Preface to the French edition of Edward M. Brady's *The Irish Secret Service in England 1919-1921*.

Sir Basil Thomson was Head of the CID at Scotland Yard during and after WWI. He was a renowned 'spycatcher' of real and alleged spies and agents who were working for Germany, Ireland and the Communist movement. He arranged for the wide circulation of documents that ensured Roger Casement was hanged. He also arranged that none of these survived so that they could be examined. He was also involved in the forgery known as the 'Zinoviev Letter' that was effectively used against the British Labour Party.

This is his Preface to a French edition of Edward M. Brady's *The Irish secret service in England 1919-1921*. That book gave an account of the IRA's activities in England to support the War of Independence in Ireland. Thomson's Preface is not being published here for its information about that book or for its information about Ireland—much of which is nonsense. But it is useful as it gives an insight into the mentality of a very prominent and typical representative of the British political establishment and his views on Ireland and the Irish at a crucial period in relations between the two countries.

For example, this is his analysis of 1916 and the cause of the war of Independence:

"However, after the abortive insurrection fomented by the Germans in 1916, the revolutionaries got hold of Sinn Fein, and with the help of Irish American subsidies, decided to obtain a complete separation and to establish by force an independent republic. This party gained a majority at the 1918 general elections and gave birth to the I.R.A. (Irish Republican Army). Unfortunately, the natural tendency of the Southern Irish to found secret societies offered the Clan-na-Gael of America the possibility of creating in Ireland a much more sinister grouping, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), direct descendant of the Fenian movement, which after flourishing some fifty years previously had been gradually stamped out."

It seems incredible that anyone could have said in 1933 that the 1918 Election caused the IRA to come into existence. There is no concept whatever that the Election result should have been accepted by the Government of the day and that it was the refusal to do so by the British Government that caused the subsequent war. If that result had been accepted we would never have heard of the IRA.

Jack Lane

Preface

[Translated into French by Michel de l'Epine.

Retranslated into English by Cathy Winch; where Thomson quotes Brady, the original Brady text has been used.]

In this introduction to the French translation of a book by an extreme Irish nationalist I will take the opportunity to dispel certain prejudices on Ireland; prejudices which are still common in France as well as in other countries, including the United States. Ireland is not one country, but two: the Free State of Ireland, comprising the provinces of Leinster, Munster, Connaught and the three Southern counties of Ulster, with a population of slightly under three million inhabitants; and Northern Ireland, comprising the six other counties of Ulster, with a population of just over a million and a quarter. The capital of the Free State is Dublin; that of Northern Ireland, Belfast. Each of these States has its own Parliament; each is subject to the British Crown.

The division of this relatively small island in two distinct States dates from 1922. Until that date the whole island had been governed, for nearly four centuries, by the British Parliament. The reader will judge to what extent the author of this small volume and those who shared his political views were the cause of this change.

As for the reasons for the division of the island in two distinct "dominions" of the British Crown, they are to be found in the history of the race and its religions.

The conquest of England by Rome did not extend to Ireland, and the history of Ireland is little known before the Norwegian and Danish invasions towards the end of the VIIIth century. The invaders occupied the country for nearly three centuries, but their rule was precarious and they were expelled after the battle of Clontarf in 1014.

If the Roman domination did not reach Ireland, it is however through the Romans that the Irish became Christian. Their first missionary, Saint Patrick, was a Roman slave born in England round 389. At the age of sixteen he was taken to Ireland by his master; six years later he managed to escape to Gaul. In 432 he became bishop of Auxerre and went to Ireland to preach the Christian religion.

After the expulsion of the Scandinavians, the Irish leaders (pompously dubbed "kings" by the Irish of the time, even though, in common with their subjects, they led a wretched existence in mud cabins) began to fight among themselves with varying degrees of success, until in 1152 the king of Leinster, having lost his throne, went to Henry II, Norman king of England, and begged him for help to regain his supremacy through force of arms. Henry II consented, so this Irish chief, Dermot, availed himself of the services of Richard of Clare, Norman count of Pembroke, known later by the name of Strongbow, who landed at Waterford on 23 August 1170 with two hundred horsemen and a thousand foot soldiers; he regained Leinster for Dermot, whose daughter he married. He settled in the country. Two years later, Henry II himself landed in Ireland with an army more numerous than Strongbow's and received the allegiance of the different Irish "kings".

The Anglo-Norman domination suffered many vicissitudes in the course of the succeeding centuries; at the beginning to the XVth century it was limited to an area known as the "English Pale", of six hundred square miles. Under the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509) it was much extended and the administration was anglicised by the viceroy Robert Poyning, who called the Parliament of Drogheda. This body decided that the Irish parliament would be dependent on and subordinated to the English parliament. A later Parliament conferred on Henry VIII the title of King of Ireland.

At various times in the course of the following centuries the Irish chafed against their relationship with England; there were several local rebellions which were suppressed with the severity of the times, but the Irish members of Parliament continued to sit in the British House of Commons, the Irish regiments continued to fight bravely and loyally in the ranks of the British army and the Irish, in their thousands, continued to serve in the British civil service and police. This continued until the period covered by this book and continues to this day.

The Irish are not a homogeneous people. Towards the end of the Bronze Age, a Celtic race, the Goidels, invaded Ireland. At the beginning of the Iron Age, Britons, coming from the South of Great Britain, colonised the south east of the island, whereas the Picts, coming from the North, colonised the Northern part. Towards the end of the Roman occupation of Great Britain the dominant tribe was that of the Scoti, who later settled in Scotland. Later still, a continuous flood of immigrants came from Western Scotland into Ulster, driving away gradually the indigenous Irish farming population, and creating the famous naval yards and factories of Belfast. These Scottish immigrants were strict Protestants, whereas the Southern Irish were in the main Catholics. There was as much chance of them coalescing in a national unity as there is of mixing oil and water.

The Irish question was a thorn in the side of British governments for more than a generation. Ireland sent to the British House of Commons some sixty members, mostly partisan of autonomous government, who used all their malicious ingenuity to obstruct the working of parliament for the whole of the second half of the XIXth century. The Fenian movement, which I am just old enough to remember, started a campaign of hostility against England, culminating in an attack on Chester castle with the object of capturing arms. This movement was put a stop to by energetic implementation of the Repressive Laws. The Land League, active against English landlords in Ireland, disappeared also. But the "Irish Question" was a constant for about a century.

It is customary in Great Britain for each member of the House of Lords and the House of Commons to receive a copy of each "Blue Book" published by the parliamentary press. The copies sent to my father, as a member of the House of Lords, were stored in a small room. The room becoming cluttered, a "day of destruction" was fixed upon. My brothers and I set to work, on the basis that any book mentioning Ireland would go in the fire, a sort of preliminary holocaust before a later sorting out. We found that two thirds of the Blue Books dealt with Irish questions, and their burning cleared out the clutter. It was an indication of the extent to which Irish agitation had managed to block the wheels of government during the reign of Queen Victoria. The first plan for Home Rule, presented by Mr Gladstone, was an attempt at remedy, but it was rejected and the Gladstone Cabinet had to resign.

Ireland however continued to demand Home Rule; so when a Liberal government returned to power with a large majority, a new decree was proposed, which gave to Ireland a separate Parliament for the whole of the island. The Catholics of the South would have formed a large majority. The inhabitants of Ulster were so opposed to a plan which would turn them into

milch cows for the Irish treasury in Dublin, that they started to mobilise to prepare for a civil war. Such a war would have been harshly fought and the issue doubtful, because the Southern Irish would have received subsidies and munitions from the Irish of America, determined to turn Ireland into a republic independent from the English Crown. This would never have been accepted by the English Liberals. Such was the position at the beginning of the Great War.

The call for volunteers destined to form the first Kitchener army was magnificently responded to on both sides. The recruiting offices of Belfast and Dublin were besieged by young men, the flower of the country, ardently desirous to enrol and fight under the British flag against the common enemy. All internal dissensions seemed forgotten; some thought that after this brotherhood of arms they would never be taken up again, or at any rate never with the same intensity. The Irish regiments, whether from the North or the South, fought magnificently but suffered heavy losses in men killed, injured or made prisoners. All could have settled down afterwards without the sinister influence of the Irish established in the United States, who had left Ireland during the famine years suffered by the previous generation and for whom, as they were growing up, hatred of English rule had acquired the status of a religious dogma. The Clan-na-Gael was still an active force in America. Some of its members had achieved political power (and fortune, which, in that country, goes with power). They were always ready to subscribe generously to any demand for money which would go to support armed rebellion against English power and for the establishment of an independent Irish republic. Having paid the piper, these Anglo-Americans wanted to call the tune. Ireland, from their point of view, could be a new virgin territory where they could sow secret political influence and reap the money and power which fill the pockets of any political "boss" in the United States.

For the first two years of the War America had become rich selling war munitions to the Allies. Being then a neutral country without marked sympathy for either of the belligerents, it was disposed to do business equally with the Central Powers if they were ready to pay and send in supply ships. However, as the Allies were masters of the seas, this additional source of profit did not materialise.

After the first three months of war, the Germans themselves were short of munitions for a prolonged trench war and they started to worry seriously about the flood of American munitions reaching their enemies, and particularly of the steel shells which caused such damage when they exploded. The appeals of count Bernstoff, German ambassador to Washington, had not received satisfaction other than the response that he was free to buy munitions, just like the Allies—a response which just threw oil on the fire. America then came to be regarded by Berlin as the secret enemy against which all manner of clandestine warfare would be justified.

It happened that a member of the German naval command was an officer who spoke English fluently and had been to America. He was offered a secret mission abroad, to obstruct by all available means the loading of munitions destined to the Allies. No one better than Captain von Rintelen could have been chosen for this job, as unpleasant for a naval officer as it was dangerous. Rintelen was smart, courageous and ingenious; moreover he had been given carte blanche. His first action, on arrival in New York, was to open a munitions purchasing office, as cover for his secret operations. This is not the place to describe these operations in detail; suffice it to say that he took part in causing fires in many munitions vessels on the high seas; that he burned down the main loading quay in New York and set up many other acts of sabotage. Among the New York dockers were many Irishmen who were easily persuaded to go

along with the idea that they served the interests of their county by harming England. Rintelen tried to make the Mexicans declare war to the United States and managed to provoke a strike among the Irish dockers which seriously disrupted the loading of munitions. Ambassador von Bernstoff knew all about his activities (even if later on he denied having had any knowledge of them) but he was at the time strongly committed in another direction, that of mobilising the Irish Americans to support a rebellion in Ireland that would immobilise British troops there. The Clan-na-Gael chiefs were in favour of this plan, if they could count on Germany to supply the necessary arms and military support.

All this was known to us in England thanks to the very messages that Bernstoff sent to Berlin everyday through the ether in encrypted code. We knew the names of the conspirators, the nature of the support promised by the Germans and the date fixed for the rebellions, because we had deciphered the key of the Germanic secret code; this was the most important weapon used during the war, since, in the end, it brought America on the side of the Allies at the time when the human capital on their side was beginning to fail. As strange as it may seem, and although in many occasions we had acted as a result of captured intelligence, it never occurred to the Germans that their messages were intercepted and deciphered; they attributed the leaks to traitors among their own personnel and did not change their secret code.

At the beginning of 1916 a new figure appeared in the tangled web of Irish intrigue, sir Roger Casement, former consul of the British government abroad, decorated for services rendered and relieved of his post in circumstances which remained confidential. After his enforced retirement he had travelled around Western Ireland before going to the United States to offer his services to the German ambassador and his Irish American acolytes. He then travelled to Norway, intending to continue on to Berlin. We knew from Bernstoff's radio messages the name of his ship and the date of his departure. We had a cruiser stop the ship for inspection, but the officer in charge of finding Casement did not manage to identify him among the passengers (he was travelling under an assumed name), so that Casement managed to reach Berlin. He had conversations with the leading men of the German ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Command, and set up with them a programme of recruitment of Irish prisoners of war to carry war against the English into Ireland. Casement had great confidence in his powers of persuasion but he did not manage to convince the Germans. The Irish prisoners were assembled in a camp at Lossen. Casement preached his gospel, but the reception he got was not encouraging; in fact, during one of his visits he was attacked by his own compatriots and forced to make a hasty retreat. It had not occurred to him that men who had been for months subjected to the German prison regime were not likely to feel any friendship towards their jailers or any respect for a man laded with honours by the British government, now reneging on his oath of fidelity to unite with the enemies of his king.

Out of several thousand men, he only managed to recruit fifty-six who were ready to sell the sworn faith cheaply, and even those were not entirely to be trusted. The bitterness of his failure tempered his enthusiasm; he retired to Bavaria to rest and the negotiations between the Germans and the Irish Americans continued without him.

The date of the rising had been fixed for Easter Saturday 1916; the Germans would land arms one or two days previously; an air raid would distract the English the night before the insurrection; Casement and two of his companions would land by sub-marine.

We learnt all that through the encrypted messages from Bernstoff and the replies from Berlin, and were able to take all necessary measures. The Germans were surprised when they found that the coastal region they had chosen to land the weapons, because the Navy did not patrol it, was on alert. As soon as the supply ship, under Norwegian ensign, neared the coast, an auxiliary cruiser came alongside and ordered it to follow it to Queenstown; the crew chose to blow up the vessel and sink it with its compromising load. The same week Casement and his companion Bailey were arrested. Casement was sent to London to be interrogated by me. Bailey made a full confession.

The insurrection was a failure; instead of the five thousand men promised by the Irish, only one thousand five hundred reached Dublin. The rising planned for the Saturday only took place on the Monday morning. One or two public buildings were taken and held for a few hours but well before dusk the insurrection was over and a good number of the participants in prison. Casement was tried for high treason and executed. The danger was past, for a time at any rate. But the harm was done. From this moment the movement which was trying to take advantage of Britain being engaged in war to stab her in the back continued silently. The malcontents launched a policy of secret assassination of which the Irish faithful to the Allied cause were often the victims. The policy was based on the old idea of terror, that is to say, terrorise people who had never done the Irish any harm, to incite them to put pressure on the British government until it gave Ireland its independence.

(To be continued.)

Books published by Athol Books:

Connolly And German Socialism

By Brendan Clifford

German-Irish Collection 2004

The Great War And The Forced Migration Of Armenians

By Kemal Çiçek

2011

"The study of the history of the Turks and Armenians in World War I has suffered from an excess of unsupported assertion. *The Great War and The Forced Migration of Armenians* corrects the record with research that considers all sides of the issue and, more important, bases its conclusions on facts rather than ideology.

"Kemal Çiçek carefully analyzes the various claims that have until now been largely accepted without proper scholarly scrutiny. Utilizing Ottoman, European, and American sources, he shows what actually happened during the relocation of the Ottoman Armenians.

"*The Great War and The Forced Migration of Armenians* will become a cornerstone of the history of the Turks and Armenians in World War I. In the future, anyone who studies that history with an open mind will not be able to ignore Çiçek's detailed and convincing analysis."

Justin McCarthy

Professor of History University of Louisville

Amnesty International

Human Rights Reports on Iraq (2000-2002)

The invasion of Iraq: Not a humanitarian intervention (David Morrison - Update)

“We conclude that, despite the horrors of Saddam Hussein’s rule, the invasion of Iraq cannot be justified as a humanitarian intervention”.

This was the conclusion of Human Rights Watch (HRW), the reputable US human rights organisation, as expressed by its director Kenneth Roth in a document, entitled *War in Iraq: Not a humanitarian Intervention*, published in January 2004.

Roth attempted to lay down ground rules by which to judge when military intervention is justified for humanitarian reasons, and applied those ground rules to the intervention in Iraq in March 2003.

The document starts from the obvious premise that military action inevitably results in death and destruction, and may make matters a great deal worse, and that therefore military intervention for humanitarian purposes should only be contemplated in extreme circumstances to prevent actual, or imminent, killing on a grand scale:

“To state the obvious, war is dangerous. In theory it can be surgical, but the reality is often highly destructive, with a risk of enormous bloodshed. Only large-scale murder, we believe, can justify the death, destruction, and disorder that so often are inherent in war and its aftermath. Other forms of tyranny are deplorable and worth working intensively to end, but they do not in our view rise to the level that would justify the extraordinary response of military force. Only mass slaughter might permit the deliberate taking of life involved in using military force for humanitarian purposes.”

The HRW ground rules exclude military intervention as a punishment for past atrocities:

“‘Better late than never’ is not a justification for humanitarian intervention, which should be countenanced only to stop mass murder, not to punish its perpetrators, desirable as punishment is in such circumstances.”

This principle is manifestly reasonable since the only result of military action in such circumstances is to add to the toll of innocent dead.

[These reports no longer figures on the Amnesty International website]

January to December 2000

Hundreds of people, among them political prisoners including possible prisoners of conscience, were executed. Hundreds of suspected political opponents, including army officers suspected of planning to overthrow the government, were arrested and their fate and whereabouts remained unknown. Torture and ill-treatment were widespread and new punishments, including beheading and the amputation of the tongue, were reportedly introduced. Non-Arabs, mostly Kurds, continued to be forcibly expelled from their homes in the Kirkuk area to Iraqi Kurdistan.

Jan-Dec 2001

Scores of people, including possible prisoners of conscience and armed forces officers suspected of planning to overthrow the government, were executed. Scores of suspected anti-government opponents, including people suspected of having

Labour MP Ann Clwyd consistently argued for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein on humanitarian grounds. In an article in the *Guardian* on 30 March 2004, entitled *Iraq is free at last*, she attempted to justify the invasion because, she said, Saddam Hussein’s regime “cost the lives of 2 million people in wars and internal oppression”.

Let us for the sake of argument not quarrel this wildly exaggerated figure. The vast majority of the deaths occurred more than a decade before the invasion, in the Iran-Iraq war and its aftermath, and in the Iraq-Kuwait war and its aftermath. No such killing was going on in March 2003. (Amnesty International Report reported on “scores” of executions, see Reports below.)

It is absurd to argue that military action to overthrow the regime was justified on humanitarian grounds in March 2003 because of what happened more than a decade earlier, but was no longer happening. Predictably, military action in March 2003, and its aftermath, has merely added greatly to the toll of Iraqi (and other) deaths.

Tony Blair also put forward a humanitarian justification for taking military action: the Iraqi people have been freed from the yoke of Saddam Hussein, who murdered them in their tens of thousands. Look at the mass graves, he often said. But, as we have seen, that argument doesn’t stack up—those mass graves dated from over a decade previously, and no such killing was taking place in March 2003. Invading Iraq in March 2003 didn’t prevent any Iraqi deaths, it has merely added to their number.

The Iraq Body Count organisation (see page 36) has systematically verified the deaths of about 120,000 civilians (from newspaper reports and other sources). (It freely admits that more deaths than this have actually occurred; for example deaths from other war-related outcomes such as disease and malnutrition are not included.)

contacts with opposition groups in exile, were arrested. The fate and whereabouts of most of those arrested, including those detained in previous years, remained unknown. Several people were given lengthy prison terms after grossly unfair trials before special courts. Torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners and detainees were systematic. The two Kurdish political parties controlling Iraqi Kurdistan detained prisoners of conscience, and armed political groups were reportedly responsible for abductions and killings.

Jan-Dec 2002

Scores of people, including possible prisoners of conscience, were executed. A general amnesty for prisoners was announced, but the fate of tens of thousands of people who “disappeared” in previous years remained unknown. Non-Arabs, mostly Kurds, in the Kirkuk region continued to be forcibly expelled to Iraqi Kurdistan. Relatives of opposition activists continued to receive threats.

The Iraq Body Count Project

[The Iraq Body Count organisation came into being because the US/UK refused to count civilian deaths, only their own. General Tommy Franks, the US commander of the invading forces famously remarked: "We don't do body counts". IBC is very careful about facts and dedicated to bringing attention to the actual cost of war. We reproduce below their "Rationale", which is to name the victims and record their time and place of death, to show the results of war in a realistic manner, for the benefit of (mainly US-UK) citizens who elect the leaders who engage in these wars).]

Iraq Body Count (IBC) records the violent civilian deaths that have resulted from the 2003 military intervention in Iraq. Its public database includes deaths caused by US-led coalition forces and paramilitary or criminal attacks by others.

IBC's documentary evidence is drawn from crosschecked media reports of violent events leading to the death of civilians, or of bodies being found, and is supplemented by the careful review and integration of hospital, morgue, NGO and official figures.

Systematically extracted details about deadly incidents and the individuals killed in them are stored with every entry in the database. The minimum details always extracted are the number killed, where, and when.

Confusion about the numbers produced by the project can be avoided by bearing in mind that *IBC's figures are not 'estimates' but a record of actual, documented deaths. *IBC records solely violent deaths.* IBC records solely civilian (strictly, 'non-combatant') deaths. * IBC's figures are constantly updated and revised as new data comes in, and frequent consultation is advised.

Rationale

1. The human cost of war must be recorded

1.1 War is an abomination whose defining characteristic is the organised killing of humans.

War's very existence shames humanity. It causes every imaginable injury and insult to the human body and spirit, every variety of suffering and loss — physical and mental, individual and social, immediate and prolonged. The core and most irreparable effect of war is its planned and efficient destruction of life. Human lives lost to war cannot be balanced by "lives saved," nor adequately recompensed, because each of us is unique and irreplaceable, and the value of our lives immeasurable.

1.2 Our common humanity demands the recording of war deaths.

There can be no justification for insulating ourselves from knowledge of war's effects, and it is a matter of simple humanity to record the dead. This means, as a minimum, establishing the basic facts about who was killed, where they were killed, and when they were killed.

1.3 Every individual killed must be identified.

The very minimum level of recording is the confirmation of a person or persons killed at a particular time and place. However we should not be satisfied with that. Each untimely death resulting from war is a profoundly private tragedy, and no collection of facts can ever do it justice. Even so, we must make every effort to obtain as much detail as possible about each person killed, establish beyond doubt his or her identity, and understand the precise circumstances of his or her death. It is our shared responsibility to preserve a historical record of war, and priority should be given to knowledge of its casualties.

1.4 We must use every available means to record and preserve knowledge of the dead.

Whatever the practical barriers there can be no moral justification for refusing to record war deaths by every available means, except where doing so risks further loss of life. An immediate responsibility is to preserve knowledge of those deaths already verified but lost from view because their publication has been piecemeal and highly dispersed.

2. Knowledge of war deaths must be available to all

2.1 The record of a war's casualties must be made public.

It is our firm belief that all information about war related deaths belongs in the public domain. Only when people fully understand the consequences of war, assisted by detailed information of high quality, can they make informed decisions about the use of military force. There is no more serious consequence of war than the killing of civilians, and the public deserves to know all it can about it. Making information accessible on the internet is currently the most cost-effective way of providing global public access. Resources permitting, all of the output from IBC's work is intended for such access.

2.2 Knowledge of war's casualties promotes a human-centred approach to conflict.

Recent decades have seen the growth of a new human-centred understanding of conflict which places the security needs of ordinary people above the interests of regimes or state powers. The UN-sponsored Commission on Human Security with its focus on "protecting and empowering people" gave official voice to this approach. (Now the Human Security Unit at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)).

The Iraq Body Count project is an application of this human-centred ethic to Iraq, using methods which have the potential to be applied to other conflicts. It gathers information about the price exacted on ordinary people by the ravages of war, and makes this information as available as possible to ordinary people.

4. Documenting violent civilian deaths is our current focus

4.1 Violent deaths are war's first and most unambiguous lethal outcome.

Immediate deaths and injuries caused by violence happen at a specific place and time, and such factual circumstances have the potential to be fully documented. These facts provide the basis of a documentary record of the most unambiguous human impact of war. Other war-related outcomes such as disease and malnutrition may cause many further deaths. However, documenting and assigning responsibility for such delayed outcomes requires appropriately postponed studies and commonly entails a depersonalised, purely statistical approach. For these reasons IBC records violent deaths and not deaths from other causes.

4.2 The systematic recording of civilian deaths is neglected, when it should be a priority.