

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

Three Myths About WW1

This is the centenary year of the First World War. In August 1914 war started between several European countries. Turkey was not amongst them. Britain was not overtly involved in any way. There was no attack on Britain or any of its possessions and none of its vital interests were threatened. It could have stayed out of the European War, indeed prominent mainstream politicians fought to keep her out. But the British ruling elite had strategic objectives which could only be served by war. They ensured that the British Empire joined the European War, proceeded to force Turkey into it, and expanded a localised conflict into a World War.

Because there was no vital British interest to defend against external threat, the ruling elite had to use propaganda to convince the population of the necessity of a war that was a war of choice. The Redmondites were to the fore in the media offensive. An outpouring of hate spread from government agencies.

It has never become possible to undo the propaganda. Some lies have been quietly admitted, for example scholars have found that atrocity stories about the Germans in Belgium contained inventions.

But on the whole the propaganda of the time has never been disowned. Jeremy Paxman ended his TV programme on WW1 (Britain's Great War) in a small English village, in front of the cutest little thatched cottage, and said that the war had perhaps 'saved villages like this one from invasion'.

The story still is that 'German militarism' and the German navy threatened Britain and the world, and that the defence of Belgium was the cause of Britain entering the war. All three are lies.

Three myths of WW1:

1. German militarism threatened Europe
2. Germany threatened England on the seas.
3. The war was fought for Belgium

1. On Britain's war record vs Germany:

Germany was situated at the heart of Europe, with no natural frontiers, and was very prone to be the main battleground of European war. France, alone, invaded Germany at least thirty times since the Middle Ages. When one takes into account these geographical and historical factors the expectation should have been that Germany would have been involved in the majority of European wars. An examination of the available statistical evidence on the comparative militarism of the European powers since the end of the Middle Ages reveals that, far from being an aggressively military entity, Prussia/Germany was one of the most peaceful nations in Europe.

From 1480 until 1940 the relative percentages of participation by the principal European states in wars, as estimated by the

American Professor Quincy Wright in his 1952 book, *A Study Of War*, was England 28%, France 26%, Spain 23%, Russia 22%, Austria 19%, Turkey 15%, Poland 11%, Sweden 9%, Netherlands 8%, Italy 9%, and Germany/Prussia 8%.

The Russian historian and sociologist, Pitirim A. Sorokin, in his monumental study, *Social And Cultural Dynamics*, undertook an investigation of assembled data and proved that historically, of all the nations of Europe, Germany had the lowest percentage of years with war. England, Spain, Poland, Lithuania, Greece, France, Russia, Holland, Austria, and Italy all exceeded Germany in time spent on martial pursuits.

F. Cowell published some of Sorokin's findings in *A History Of Civilisation And Culture* in 1953. In his book England is credited with 176 wars. Prussia/Germany, which British propaganda depicted as an essentially militarist state, is credited with a mere 24 wars. The British military and naval historian, Captain Russell Grenfell, made a statistical analysis of the numerical involvement in wars by the major European powers in the century between Waterloo and the Great War. He credited Britain with involvement in ten wars, Russia in seven, France in five, Austria in three, and Prussia/Germany in three. Frederick the Great's attack on Austria in 1756 was perhaps an aggressive war.

But since then Germany's wars had been, on the whole, defensive wars. And that was recognised by the great English historians and thinkers such as Carlyle, Freeman, Arnold, Stubbs, Acton and Maitland. Bismarck's 'small wars' of 1864 and 1866 pulled together the fragmented German states under pressure from the surrounding European Imperialist nation-states.

They were limited in scale and definite in purpose as essential defence for survival in nationalistic Europe. When the requirement had been achieved and Germany had been defended in 1870/1 it settled into peaceful co-existence with its neighbours and Bismarck famously said that the Balkans were not worth the life of a single Prussian Grenadier. Prussia's peculiar geographical position gave its government a more overtly military character than England's. The Prussian military spirit had its origins in the task that was set Prussia by history. Without the development of a military spirit, made orderly through discipline and tradition, Prussia could not have fulfilled its historical mission of uniting and consolidating Germany. England's history was determined by her separation from, yet close proximity to, the European Continent. The determining peculiarities of Prussia's position, on the other hand, was in the fact that she had neighbours and rivals who were immensely superior and more powerful to her and from whom she was only separated by boundaries which she had herself created.

As a result of this the activity of the government in Prussia took in a much wider sphere than in England or America. The primary instinct of a state is self-preservation and this factor

determines the character of a state to a larger extent than any other factor. England required no great governmental exertion being an island and being safe from invasion through the strongest navy in the world. America similarly. But Prussia needed as much government as possible on account of the extraordinary difficulty of protecting itself. And because of this, Prussian government always had something of a military character. The system of government peculiar to Prussia developed out of the requirements of the Prussian State, and was thereafter supported by the tradition of the dynasty.

2. On the Royal Navy versus the world:

In 1910 Germany had the smallest navy of any of the great powers and only half the number of dreadnoughts that England, Japan, or the United States possessed. Between 1900 and 1913 England spent £481,505,000 on her navy; France spent £197,612,000; Russia spent £173,449,000 and Germany spent £248,757,000. (See Charles James O'Donnell, *The Irish Future With The Lordship Of The World*, pp. 186-201, for a good analysis of the respective strengths of the navies of the great Powers.) Although Germany was building warships at a rate no faster than laid down in the Naval Law of 1900/1 the Liberal Imperialists kept up a barrage of propaganda about the danger from German naval expansion.

The naval scares and panics induced a general fear across the country about Germany invasion. And in this climate Grey and his colleagues bullied the Gladstonian section of the Party, which was anti-war and anti-spending, into agreeing to pay for the arms race. As the *Times* said in 1924, when it was safe to tell the truth:

“The responsibility for the consequent increase in the British fleet was ascribed solely to the German armaments. In reality, however, Germany was building no faster than the rate laid down in the Naval Law of 1900. The Liberal Cabinet of Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey painted the German danger in the blackest colours, in order to goad their unwilling followers into increased sacrifices. It was the year of the Navy Scare, the fleet panic. British newspapers, theatres, cinemas, scared ‘the man in the street’ with the bogey of a German invasion.” (*The Times*, 23 October, 1924.)

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3. On Belgium:

The man who had created Belgium, Lord Palmerston, had said:

“It has been agreed by treaty that Belgium and Switzerland should be declared neutral but I am not disposed to attach very much importance to such engagements, for the history of the world shows that when a quarrel arises and a nation makes war and thinks it advantageous to traverse with its army such neutral territory, the declarations of neutrality are not apt to be very religiously respected.” (Cited in *Playing The Game*, p.169.)

Belgium had been constructed by Britain to curb French power on the other side of the English Channel. Now its time had come to do its work with regard to Germany. The German defensive sweep into Belgium was the *casus belli* in England, when in reality it was merely the pretext for war, from Britain's point of view.

France proposed to send five army corps into Belgium to confront Germany, despite her ‘neutrality’. And Lord Grey saw nothing wrong in that, in principle (although it was very inadvisable from Grey's objective that Belgium should accept this offer, as it would negate propaganda of a German violation of Belgian neutrality.) It was well known in Belgian governing circles that England was pursuing a secret policy of war against Germany. Belgium was part of the political front against Germany and a kind of unofficial member of the entente. Belgium had its own war aims of an Imperial kind - and subsequently did very well out of the spoils in 1919. Prior to 1909, the Belgian army numbered 100,000 men recruited by voluntary investment. In 1912 Belgium adopted a military programme raising the war strength of its army to 340,000.

In 1913 the Belgian Parliament introduced the principle of universal compulsory service, in preparation to meet her obligations and responsibilities to her ‘allies.’ In August 1914, Belgium was able to put a larger army in the field than Britain - despite, in theory, being a neutral country. Churchill, with greater honesty, made it clear in his account in *The World Crisis: 1911-1914* that Belgium was only a secondary consideration in the overall calculation:

“I saw in Belgium a country with whom we had many differences over the Congo and other subjects.

I had not discerned in Belgium of the late king Leopold the heroic nation of King Albert. But whatever happened to Belgium, there was France whose very life was at stake, whose armies in my judgement were definitely weaker than those by whom they would be assailed, whose ruin would leave us face to face alone with triumphant Germany... Only Britain could redress the balance, or could defend the fair play of the world. Whatever else failed, we must be there, and we must be there in time.

A week later every British heart burned for little Belgium... But at this time it was not Belgium one thought of, but France. Still, Belgium and the Treaties were indisputably an obligation of honour binding upon the British State such as British governments have always accepted; and it was on that ground that I personally, with others, took my stand.” (pp. 202-3.)

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EUkraine EUmania at the EESC

A report by Manus O’Riordan from the European Economic and Social Committee

An unusually frank meeting of the EESC’s External Relations Section took place on February 4. A draft opinion on EU-Morocco trade relations was adopted, which had been jointly authored by Pedro Narro of the Spanish Farmers’ Union and Juan Moreno Preciado of the Spanish Workers’ Commissions. It posed a direct challenge to simplistic neo-liberal dogmas:

“The EESC notes Moroccan concerns that the new EU-Morocco trade agreements will continue to have a negative impact on its trade balance. Faced with growing scepticism within Moroccan civil society, the EU needs to respond with a trade strategy that not only promotes trade in goods, but also lays the foundations for creating decent skilled jobs, promoting the voluntary sector, consolidating labour rights and protecting the environment.... Morocco relies on agriculture as one of the main drivers of its economy. New opportunities for Moroccan farming in the EU market should not result in the country’s external dependence for basic raw materials, biodiversity loss and the disappearance of family farms. Morocco and the EU should cooperate to ensure food security... Morocco’s trade deficit with the EU has increased in recent years, partly as a consequence of trade liberalisation agreements, and has generated a degree of scepticism in Morocco about the “opportunities” of the new agreement... A flagship sector such as agriculture shows signs of growing Moroccan dependence on the importation of basic raw materials like milk and cereals, which undermines its food sovereignty. The trade strategy between the two parties must promote production diversification... The economic benefits of free trade with Morocco have often been concentrated in specific sectors or areas of the country, which has contributed to the marginalisation of the most disadvantaged areas. Impact assessments should make it a priority to analyse the advantages and risks for local and regional communities.”

Yet even more thought-provoking was the presence at the meeting of Patrice Bergamini, Head of the Directorate for the Middle East, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula with the European External Action Services. In July 2010 Bergamini, formerly a French diplomat, had been appointed Head of SitCen, the Joint Situation Centre, otherwise known as the EU Intelligence Agency. Now, governments can receive either good or bad intelligence, and can also act badly by flying in the face of good intelligence. In the case of Iraq, the US had acted on the basis of bad, concocted intelligence from the CIA. In the case of the EU, member states only slowly woke up to the realistic intelligence assessments being provided by Bergamini. Indeed, in an interview with the Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbar* on 17 August 2012 Bergamini had gone public to highlight the important role played by the jihadists at the level of the Syrian conflict, stressing that the Western public was now aware of the threat they represented.

Bergamini was therefore a man worth listening to, as he gave our meeting his assessment of North Africa. He was most optimistic about Morocco, but was also impressed by political developments in Tunisia, where both government and opposition proved amenable to, and capable of agreeing on, compromise solutions to conflict. Egypt, however, was not only

experiencing a political crisis but a deep-seated economic one as well, and the Egyptian regime was not amenable to hearing any advice from any quarter. But what he said of Libya was even more enlightening. He had been the EU’s first envoy to Gaddafi’s Libya and had been present during the August 2011 Battle of Tripoli that would end in Gaddafi’s overthrow and death. As an eyewitness on the ground, Bergamini stated that his analysis of the Libyan situation differed from that of the USA, but he did not elaborate. He, however, despaired of seeing any light at the end of the tunnel, and did not think that an exercise in elections would make any difference. In all his life he had never seen anything as bad as Libya. He feared it would become yet another Somalia.

In the ensuing discussion I stated that it had been the best External Relations Section meeting I had attended in a long time. The consequences of regime change in Libya had been realistically discussed. A draft opinion on Morocco had expressed sensitivity and respect for all sections of Moroccan society and understood the need for balanced economic development. I went on to comment that it was a pity that the EU, and the EESC in particular, had not learned from the mistakes of the past and had not applied those lessons to Ukraine. To have pushed for an EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, in the absence of an EU-Russia Trade Agreement, was to totally disregard the interests of existing industries in Eastern Ukraine and threaten that region with economic devastation. Had a more generous EU approach prevailed, the crisis in Ukraine would not have erupted and we would have been spared the motion adopted by the plenary session of the EESC on January 21, at which I had been denied the opportunity to speak in opposition.

That motion had read:

“The EESC expresses its concern at the announcement of the Ukrainian parliament’s decision to beef up ‘anti-demonstration’ laws. We cannot fail to be concerned by such a decision as the country is shaken by a wave of protests for independence and democracy. In any democracy, the voice of civil society plays a key role. An EESC delegation visited Kiev on 23 and 24 December to meet and listen to the people protesting on Maidan Square. The Committee has also invited the singer Ruslana to its plenary session on 21 January in order to bring the demonstrators’ message to the heart of Brussels. The Ukrainian people’s protests in and around Maidan Square are both crucial and historic. Civil society wants modernisation and reform: it wants transparency in the way the country is governed, and it wants to rid itself of the heavy burden of the Soviet and post-Soviet legacy which has been marked by corruption and violence. The focus now must be on supporting in any way possible those who are demonstrating peacefully and who are asking for an urgent resolution to the crisis that is afflicting the country. European civil society organisations are committed to vigilance to ensure that these laws do not justify the repression by the police and the courts. The EESC will continue to support civil society in Ukraine through a deepening of relations and dialogue. The EESC is also committed to assisting in any way possible all efforts aimed at finding a solution to the current crisis.”

This was no civil rights motion. It was blatantly both anti-Soviet historically and anti-Russian currently, and by speaking of the Maidan protestors as “the Ukrainian people” gave them a legitimacy that encouraged a regime-change *coup*. On the morning of January 21 it had been presented as a *fait accompli*, agreed by the EESC Bureau, to separate meetings of the EESC’s three groups: the Employers’ Group, the Workers’ Group and the Other Interests’ Group (agriculture, environment etc.). It was clear at the Workers’ Group meeting that one of the driving forces behind the motion had been Andrzej Adamczyk, Director of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Polish Trade Union Confederation, Solidarność. But the motion was not received without opposition. A Cypriot delegate, Andreas Pavlikkas, Research Head of the Pancyprian Federation of Labour, pointed out how the resolution totally disregarded the dependence of Ukrainian industry on good economic relations with Russia. Pierre Jean Coulon, International Secretary of the French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC), questioned the reference to “the Ukrainian people”. He had never made the mistake of confusing Paris with France, and neither would he assume that Kiev represented the whole of the Ukraine. From his own discussions with Ukrainian trade unionists, they were favourable to good relations with the EU, but considered it far too soon to have an Association Agreement. The Workers’ Group President, the Greek trade unionist George Dassis, did emphasise the need to avoid EU promises to Ukraine that could not be delivered and, in particular, to be conscious of the dangers of civil war. It was, however, quite clear that Adamczyk was still calling the shots. He insisted that the resolution was not over the top and he was surprised at the discussion, since the Maidan demonstrations were for democracy and independence.

When it came to the plenary session that afternoon, I was horrified to find the atmosphere far worse than even that signalled by the wording of the motion itself. An inflammatory EESC document, entitled “Briefing Note: EuroMaidan, Ukraine” and authored by a Professor Violetta Moskalu of the University of Lorraine, was placed on all members’ desks. It called for a permanent street “revolution”, proclaiming, *inter alia*:

“The most active of the activists today in Ukraine believe that they are partly to blame for the failure of the former President Yushenko following the orange revolution of 2004, which was also the result of the immaturity of civil society at that time, which dispersed after the orange revolution as a result of the feeling that the follow-up no longer depended on activists, but rather on the politicians. They therefore know that, in order to prevent the ‘gangrene’ of Belarus, the country’s process of democratic transformation must be total, because if Ukraine continues along the path of dictatorship it will have repercussions for all of the countries of the former-USSR area. Maidan is a phenomenon that goes beyond the current situation in Ukraine. This protest against the ‘godless and lawless’ system of clan-based oligarchy operating in the majority of former Soviet republics has taken more than 20 years to explode, and it is no accident that it has exploded in Ukraine. The determination of the Ukrainians has impressed the entire world. **Mobilisation is therefore needed in order to prevent a defeat of this democratic ideal in that part of the world. This is obvious, given that the geopolitical stakes are so high.** (All emphases here are the Moskalu’s own – MO’R). In this context, the ‘SVOI’ collective defence system has been created by the Ukrainian activists as **a kind of inoculation against the ‘Minsk syndrome’**. If the Ukrainians have been able to prevent the ‘Ceausescu’ scenario, it is our duty to help them prevent the ‘Lukashenko’ syndrome by taking a firm stance towards the Ukrainian government, since there is only one worthy and

defensible scenario in the democratic and global world of the 21st century – to help Ukrainian civil society to establish the rule of law in Ukraine.”

Yet still worse was to come. A totalitarian rally had been organised by EESC President Henri Malosse, a Corsican representative of the French Chambers of Commerce. Guest of honour, as a representative of the Maidan protestors, was Ruslana, Ukrainian winner of the Eurovision song contest in 2004. Members’ eardrums were blasted by a high volume broadcast of Ruslana’s song before the rally got down to the agenda of fuelling the flames in Kiev, a day after the attempted murder, by the protestors’ paramilitary Right Sector wing, of policemen whose clothes they had set aflame with petrol bombs. A slide show of Malosse participating in the Kiev protests was screened, and then the speeches commenced. Ruslana proclaimed President Yanukovich to be a continuation of the Stalin regime; that Yanukovich wanted blood, that evil should be stopped and sanctions imposed; that Ukraine was Europe. Whereupon Malosse embraced Ruslana and waved the Ukrainian flag with her. I sought to point out that such an inflammatory rally might contribute to developments resulting in civil war or partition, or indeed both. I pressed the button to request permission to speak, only to receive an on-screen response that the speakers’ list was closed! It was all a stitch-up. Not a single dissenting voice was allowed.

Speaker after speaker raised the temperature. An Estonian member said that Yanukovich laws came straight out of a printer in the Kremlin, that now there was the opportunity to finish what had been started, to break completely free of the Soviet legacy. Solidarność’s Adamczyk acclaimed the EU interventions in Ukraine by Ireland’s Pat Cox and Poland’s Kwasniewski, and then echoed Ruslana: Ukraine is Europe. Malosse proceeded to take the vote on the resolution, by calling on all to remember that Ukrainian blood was now being shed for the EU flag. There were 256 votes for, 13 abstentions, and just 6 votes against.

Five of the six dissenters were trade union colleagues: Pavlikkas from Cyprus, Coulon and another French trade unionist, myself and another Irish trade unionist.

There was then the attempt to reinforce the totalitarian character of the rally with a standing ovation for Ruslana and her Ukrainian flag. This did not quite go according to plan. About a quarter of the members remained seated, in effect, a quarter of those who had voted for the resolution but then further voted, with bums on seats, to say to Malosse: thus far and no further. One would not, of course, discern any of this from the EESC President’s official video of the proceedings – at <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=president.en.my-news.30579> – which shows nobody at all remaining seated, most already enthusiastically standing, and others rising to their feet as soon as the camera turns towards them. The video also shows the concluding part of the stage-managed proceedings. The next item on the agenda of that EESC plenary session was to be a presentation by the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, on EU economic and social issues. And – surprise, surprise! – Barroso arrived on the platform in the very middle of that standing ovation, to enthusiastically embrace Ruslana and wave the Ukrainian flag with her. And all this in the very same week that Barroso decided to play the role of Eurobully of small nations, by threatening Scotland with expulsion from the EU if that nation ever votes for independence from the UK, adding that it would never have a hope of getting back in, being vetoed by Spain, which fate of irretrievable expulsion would, of course, also befall Catalunya and the Basque Country, if they ever voted for independence from Spain.

In the wake of that dangerously delusional EESC pantomime (by giving the Maidan protestors false hopes that, no matter what, the EU – in the shape of Barroso and Malosse – would unconditionally ride to the rescue of Ruslana), it was surprisingly refreshing to read a realistic London *Times* editorial on the following day, January 22. True, it was subtitled “Fears are growing of civil war in Ukraine. To avoid such a catastrophe, President Yanukovich should reverse oppressive laws and engage with the opposition.” But it also wisely cautioned: “It would be a mistake to regard Mr Yanukovich as a Russian-backed tyrant. He has been elected and there is scant sympathy among Ukraine’s substantial provincial populations for the demonstrators.” Malosse would not, of course, have been the first Corsican to overextend himself towards the East. There was growing unease at the direction Malosse was taking the EESC. An Irish member who had missed that plenary vote, Séamus Boland of Irish Rural Link, emailed Malosse on January 30:

“Dear Henri, I think it is important that you visit Ukraine. Equally given the grave situation developing there and the possible threat of civil war, I would believe that Europe’s role has got to be based on an understanding of the beliefs of all sides of civil society. While our resolution is strongly supportive of the current protest movement, which is largely viewed from a pro European angle; we need also to be conscious that the Government were elected and as I understand still command a majority. There is a huge danger that the pro EU view, if insisted on may not be the democratic wish of the Ukrainian people. Clearly the Ukraine government cannot be free to suppress opposition by violent means. However the need for the people of Ukraine to express as a democracy their view on the way forward is now paramount.”

By the time of the next EESC meeting on February 26, however, Malosse once more felt he had the bit between the teeth. The Ukrainian President had been overthrown by a Maidan *coup d’état*. The proceedings began with a gory video from Kiev, alternating heavy rock music with highly nationalistic and religious hymns. It was but the other side of the coin from all that had been objectionable in Soviet propaganda films exposing the “enemy”. Then Malosse called on members to stand for a minute’s silence in honour of the victims killed by the regime. This posed a dilemma for me, for it is a natural human reflex to sympathise with families in mourning their dead. But this seemed to me to be an even more totalitarian exercise than what had occurred previously, and was not an expression of sympathy for all who had been killed during the crisis. It would have been hypocritical of me to rise to my feet for such a partisan display, although I risked widespread misinterpretation as being insensitive to the dead by remaining seated. I had been in a minority of 6 just one month previously, but now, for all I knew then, and still know, I may well have been in a minority of only one by not rising to my feet for that minute’s silence. I certainly felt completely alone and could see Malosse’s eyes taking note. But then Malosse surprised me. In contrast with the previous month’s plenary session, he now asked if anybody wished to speak. Before I could raise my hand, the Cypriot trade unionist Andreas Pavlikkas was there before me. Who had authored the right-wing video we had just seen? Yanukovich had indeed been corrupt, but so had been the opponent he had defeated in free Presidential elections, the “gas princess”, Yulia Tymoshenko. What, he asked, was www.RadioSvoboda.org whom we had seen credited throughout the video?

In my own contribution I explained why I had not stood. Of course I sympathised with the bereaved families of the dead. But in the wake of the film’s allegations and President Malosse’s call

on us to honour all those killed by the regime, those who had been killed by armed protestors were thereby being excluded. Was Radio Svoboda the voice of the Svoboda party that had honoured the memory of Bandera whose movement had killed not just Russians, but Jews and Poles as well, when allied with the Nazis during the Second World War? I deplored any EESC fanning the flames of bloody conflict in Ukraine from the safe distance of the EU. I came from a country that had witnessed a 30 year war in Northern Ireland, with cheerleaders in the USA urging the IRA to fight on for a United Ireland, while there were cheerleaders in Britain who applauded the British Army’s 1972 massacre of unarmed civilians on Derry’s Bloody Sunday. From the outset of that war I had been opposed to any fanning of the flames of my own people’s nationalism, arguing that there could never be a United Ireland without the freely given consent of the Northern Ireland majority. Ultimately, that was what formed the basis of the 1998 peace agreement, equality of treatment for both communities in Northern Ireland and acceptance of the principle of consent for any change to its constitutional status.

I was no pro-Soviet apologist. Not only had I supported Poland’s *Solidarność* movement from the outset in 1980; a decade previously I had also supported Edmund Baluka’s Workers’ Commission in his 1971 confrontation with Polish Communist leader Edward Gierrek. But the Ukraine was not Poland. Poland was a nation unified in the direction it wished to go, whereas Ukraine was a divided society. The EU should not be rubberstamping Ukrainian nationalism. We should be in favour of compromise agreements that would meet the needs and interests of all people in the Ukraine, whether West, Central, East or South. Having felt myself a minority of one not many minutes beforehand, I was surprised that my contribution was now met by strong applause from, admittedly, a minority of members present. There was, of course, some applause, although not quite as strong, for some other speakers, particularly Eastern European, who disagreed with me. And Andrzej Adamczyk also corrected me: Radio Svoboda was not connected to the Svoboda party. But then, later, I did check out what exactly it was, to discover that it was the Ukrainian language branch of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty that had been founded and funded by the CIA in 1949, and that in 1956 had exhorted the Hungarians to rise up against the Soviet Union, only to leave them crushed and massacred by Khrushchev’s tanks.

Back home, there have been two noteworthy Irish responses, for either peace or war. See <http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/columnists/victoria-white/victoria-white-we-already-paid-the-ultimate-price-in-crimea-we-must-not-do-so-again-260197.html> for the excellent article by *Irish Examiner* columnist Victoria White on February 27: “We already paid the ultimate price in Crimea – we must not do so again.” And then there was our own Pat Cox, the former President of the European Parliament who, along with former Polish Prime Minister Aleksander Kwasniewski, had been appointed EU envoy to Ukraine in June 2012. Pat Cox had gone on to simultaneously participate in anti-government demonstrations – see <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/eu-s-irish-envoy-laments-ukraine-s-sudden-rejection-of-landmark-deal-1.1610702> - while, as an EU “negotiator”, he had been a catalyst for the eruption of the crisis by trying to pressurise the Ukrainian government into an Association Agreement inimical to Ukraine’s economic interests. Confusing Austria and Czechoslovakia, and the fact that their fate had not been the product of any phase of the Second World War, but of Britain’s “peace in our time” with Hitler, while the actual Anti-Fascist War was underway in Spain (where the democratic Republic was being assisted by the USSR but betrayed by Britain), Cox

proceeded to further fan the flames by fulminating on RTÉ Radio on March 3: “This has deeply unhappy echoes of the early phases of the Second World War: the excuses given by Hitler for the *Anschluss*, or the annexation of Czechoslovakia, that the Sudeten *Deutsch* were not receiving their due respect in terms of their rights.” Cox went on to demand that NATO confront Russia: “I also think that NATO needs to seriously consider dispatching military observers (not armed troops), if they are invited by the Ukrainian authorities or Kiev authorities (a Freudian slip? – MO’R), to observe on the ground outside Crimea and on the borders with Crimea.” NATO Pat’s short steps road to war would even frighten the living daylights out of the veteran US warlord Henry Kissinger, who pointed out on March 5: “The European Union must recognise that its bureaucratic dilatoriness and subordination of the strategic element to domestic politics in negotiating Ukraine’s relationship to Europe contributed to turning a negotiation into a crisis... Ukraine should not join NATO, a position I took seven years ago, when it last came up.”

Crimean developments had, however, a somewhat sobering effect when Ukraine was next discussed at a meeting of the EESC’s External Relations Section on March 4. On the previous day EESC President Malosse had issued the following statement: “The entry of the Russian army in the Crimea can only be seen as a *de facto* annexation of this region. Thus, we strongly condemn such a military intervention in Ukraine, which is an act of international banditry. European civil society remains committed to the necessity for Ukraine to conduct real reforms to establish a Rule of Law, fight against existing corruption and strengthen the role of organised civil society. It reiterates the importance of European values such as tolerance and the respect for the right of minorities to their cultural identity and their language. In this respect, the vote of the Ukrainian Parliament putting an end to the co-official status of other languages such as Hungarian, Polish or Russian is an unreasonable decision, which, in our opinion, should be revised. We are asking for an immediate mobilisation of an extraordinary European Council, to which the Ukrainian Prime Minister would be invited, in order to formally mark the determination and commitment of Europe to stand beside the new government. We call on the Russian civil society and government to accept to dialogue in order to peacefully resolve the current tensions. In the recent weeks, compatibility between the process of rapprochement with the European Union and the maintenance of historic, economic and cultural ties with the Russian Federation has proved possible. It would thus be possible to adapt the partnership agreements and provide a genuine European perspective to our neighbours. In this regard, civil society can play a fundamental role in building a peaceful and balanced dialogue. To this end, we ask that observers from civil society be sent without delay to Ukraine, especially in the East and in the Crimea, to bring to fruition the commitment to dialogue. European civil society has indeed demonstrated in the past, as in Northern Ireland, its ability to play a key role in the outcome of the crisis.”

Malosse’s reference to “international banditry” was, of course, par for the course. But there was an otherwise remarkable change in tone from his previous utterances. If Napoleon Bonaparte had gone to Moscow in 1812 to freeze in the Russian winter, Henri Malosse had got cold feet in mid-spring. At long last there was a recognition of the fact that Ukraine was a divided society, as well as some appreciation of Russian interests. Indeed, Malosse’s contribution to this March 4 meeting was a model of moderate speaking. He now emphasised the complexity of the Ukrainian problem; one

Ukrainian party should not have been allowed to dragoon the others in voting to discriminate against the Russian language; there should not be any question of Ukraine having to choose between the EU and Russia; there should not be a new Iron Curtain. The demagoguery at this meeting came from without the EESC, in the shape of Elmar Brok, the German Christian Democratic Chairperson of the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee. Brok bravely wrestled with the shadow of Yanukovich. “Quisling” was the term of abuse he hurled at the Ukrainian President, denouncing him as a creature of Russia, like those in Budapest in 1956 who had called on “Big Brother” for help to shoot down their own people. Brok ranted that the whole of Ukraine now needed to be defended by the EU against “Big Brother”.

Happily, there was a more sensible German contribution at this meeting, in the person of EESC member Arno Metzler, Chief Executive of the German Association of Consultant Engineers. Metzler said that he understood the validity of much of Russia’s concerns because the EU had deliberately sidelined its relations with Russia as it pursued an agreement with Ukraine. He stated that it was quite wrong for EU civil society to be working with any Ukrainian extremists. Poland’s Andrzej Adamczyk now publicly admitted, for the first time in these debates, that in his meetings with Ukrainian civil society he had been informed that the representative bodies of **both** Ukrainian trade unions and employers had petitioned President Yanukovich to postpone signing the EU –Ukraine Association Agreement as being far too premature. He acknowledged that it was now necessary for EU civil society to engage in far more intensive and meaningful dialogue with **all** sections of Ukrainian civil society, from West to East. By the time I myself had been reached on the speakers’ list, second last, the time allotted for speakers had been cut from three to two minutes, so I had to ration my contribution. I welcomed the sober realism that predominated at this meeting, in sharp contrast to the January plenary which had irresponsibly fanned the flames of conflict. We should remember that one hundred years ago a local conflict had developed into a World War. Some have written that Europe had sleepwalked into war, but when Britain declared war on both Germany and Austria-Hungary, one of its declared war aims was to uphold Serbia’s claim to Kosovo. Indeed, in 1916 Prime Minister Asquith had decreed that “Kosovo Day” should be marked throughout the UK, to emphasise the British demand that Kosovo should remain forever Serbian. Nowadays, of course, a different view of Kosovo predominated in the EU, but it was worth reflecting on the Kosovo question before rushing to judgement on Crimea. It was also necessary to reflect on the mistakes made in the EU approach to Ukraine, whose original form could only have spelt economic devastation for Eastern Ukraine. The EU should recognise the need to have proper representation of all sections of Ukrainian society. In particular, it should take up German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s call to have the Russian-speaking Eastern Ukraine represented in the interim government, not only for the purpose of securing some internal legitimacy in the East, but also to merit some external credibility in addressing its conflict with Russia and in pursuing a solution to that conflict.

The Ukrainian crisis is changing day by day. I am not a soothsayer. This article has been written prior to the Crimean referendum scheduled for March 16 and I cannot predict what its consequences will be. Regrettably, however, the fears and foreboding which I had unsuccessfully sought to express at the January 21 plenary session of the EESC have proved to have been all too realistic. □

The Ukrainian Regime is Illegitimate – but the EU Backs it to the Hilt

by David Morrison

The Ukrainian regime that came into existence after President Yanukovich was removed from power on 22 February 2014 is illegitimate.

It is illegitimate because the Ukrainian parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, did not follow the procedure to impeach and remove a president from power set out in the [Ukrainian constitution](#).

Impeachment procedure

Article 108 of the constitution specifies four circumstances in which a president may cease to exercise power before the end of his term. Those are:

- resignation;
- inability to exercise his or her powers for reasons of health;
- removal from office by the procedure of impeachment;
- death.

The procedure for removal from office by impeachment is laid down in Article 111. It is not unlike that required for the impeachment and removal from power of a US president, which could take months. This makes sense, since it would be absurd to allow a parliament to remove a popularly elected president on a whim without proper consideration.

Thus, Article 111 obliges the Rada to establish a special investigatory commission to formulate charges against the president, seek evidence to justify the charges and come to conclusions about the president's guilt for the Rada to consider. To find the president guilty, at least two-thirds of Rada members must assent.

Prior to a final vote to remove the president from power, the procedure requires

- the Constitutional Court of Ukraine to review the case and certify that the constitutional procedure of investigation and consideration has been followed, and
- the Supreme Court of Ukraine to certify that the acts of which the President is accused are worthy of impeachment.

To remove the president from power, at least three-quarters of Rada members must assent.

The Rada didn't follow this procedure at all. No investigatory commission was established and the Courts were not involved. On 22 February, the Rada simply passed a bill removing President Yanukovich from office.

Furthermore, the bill wasn't even supported by three-quarters of Rada members as required by Article 111 – it was supported by 328 members, when it required 338 (since the Rada has 450 members).

According to Article 94 of the constitution, laws passed by the Rada require the signature of the President to come into force, so no law passed by the Rada since 22 February has been properly enacted.

Putin on legitimacy of Kiev authorities

President Putin questioned the legitimacy of the authorities in Kiev at his [press conference](#) on 4 March:

“Are the current authorities legitimate? The Parliament is partially, but all the others are not. The current Acting President is definitely not legitimate. There is only one legitimate President, from a legal standpoint. Clearly, he has no power. However, as I have already said, and will repeat: Yanukovich is the only undoubtedly legitimate President.

“There are three ways of removing a President under Ukrainian law: one is his death, the other is when he personally steps down, and the third is impeachment. The latter is a well-deliberated constitutional norm. It has to involve the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and the Rada. This is a complicated and lengthy procedure. It was not carried out. Therefore, from a legal perspective this is an undisputed fact.”

There is a fourth way – ill health – but, aside from that, Putin is undoubtedly correct.

Acting president not constitutional

The constitution was also breached when it came to the appointment of an Acting President. Article 112 specifies that “the execution of duties of the President of Ukraine, for the period pending the elections and the assumption of office of the new President of Ukraine, is vested in the Prime Minister of Ukraine”.

On 22 February, there was no prime minister – Mykola Azarov had resigned as prime minister on 28 January 2014 (when efforts were being made by Yanukovich to bring the opposition into government) and he hadn't been replaced. Instead, the speaker of the Rada, Olexander Turchynov (a close ally of opposition leader and former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko) was appointed as Acting President on 23 February. He had become speaker the day before, upon the resignation of Volodymyr Rybak, an ally of Yanukovich, who resigned that morning because of ill health. The BBC [reported](#) that, according to Yanukovich, Rybak “was forced to resign because he had been physically beaten”. Whatever about that, Turchynov became speaker one day and Acting President the next, thereby securing the presidency for the opposition.

Government not representative of the east and southeast

The opposition then proceeded to set up a “government” which is not representative of the east and southeast of Ukraine.

What is more, the government contains five ministers, including the deputy prime minister, from the Svoboda (Freedom) party, led by Oleh Tyahnybok, which was described by the European Parliament as holding “racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic views” that “go against the EU’s fundamental values and principles”. It seems to believe that Ukraine would be a better place without Russians and Jews. According to the BBC, in 2005 its leader signed an open letter to Ukrainian leaders calling for the government to halt the “criminal activities” of “organised Jewry”, which, the letter said, ... ultimately wanted to commit “genocide” against the Ukrainian people (see *Svoboda: The rise of Ukraine’s ultra-nationalists*, 26 December 2012).

21 February agreement

Despite its illegitimacy and the ultra-nationalist credentials of some of its ministers, and the fact that it is not representative of the east and south-east of Ukraine, the EU (and the US) has backed the new authorities in Kiev wholeheartedly and the “prime minister”, Arseney Yatsenyuk, has been feted in Brussels (and Washington).

It is now virtually forgotten that on 21 February, the day before the President was overthrown, the foreign ministers of France, Germany and Poland (Laurent Fabius, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Radoslaw Sikorski) acting on behalf of EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton (who was in Iran) had brokered an agreement which provided for very different governing arrangements for Ukraine. These arrangements included:

- Within 48 hours, re-introduction of 2004 constitution thereby reducing presidential powers
- Within 10 days, creation of a “national unity government”
- Constitutional reform “balancing the powers of the President, the government and parliament” to be completed in September 2014
- Presidential elections, once a new constitution is agreed
- A 3rd amnesty for participants in the recent disturbances

The implementation of these arrangements would not have involved any action in breach of the Ukrainian constitution, unlike the removal from power of the President on 22 February.

This agreement was signed by President Yanukovich and three opposition leaders and supported by Russia – and it was wholeheartedly endorsed by Catherine Ashton on behalf of the EU:

“I welcome the agreement reached today by the President and the opposition leaders. This agreement opens the way for a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. A democratic and peaceful solution is the only way forward. The EU has been very much engaged in all the efforts that led to this important breakthrough. I particularly commend the important work on my behalf of the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and Poland who facilitated this agreement. Implementation is now key. I call upon all signatories to respect the agreement and recall full Ukrainian ownership and responsibility for its immediate implementation.”

EU backs illegitimate regime

The opposition signatories did not honour the agreement and proceed to its immediate implementation. Instead, the day after they signed it, they reneged on it and backed the unconstitutional overthrow of a co-signatory to the agreement, President Yanukovich, and the establishment of a “government” representative of the opposition, and not a “national unity government” provided for in the agreement.

And what did the EU do then? It backed the new authorities, led by people who had made a deal on 21 February and reneged on it a day later. In a press conference, on a visit to Ukraine on 25 February, Catherine Ashton never mentioned the EU brokered deal of 4 days earlier in her opening statement, a deal which 4 days earlier she had said “opens the way for a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine”.

When she was asked about the deal, she muttered that “the situation has moved on”. Indeed it had, a President had been overthrown by unconstitutional means, which had it happened in other parts of the world the EU would most likely have condemned. When asked if she agreed with the Russian government that “the situation in Ukraine is illegal”, she avoided answering the question.

Putin raises interesting questions

At his press conference on 4 March, President Putin queried why the 21 February agreement hadn’t been implemented:

“I would like to draw your attention to the fact that President Yanukovich, through the mediation of the Foreign Ministers of three European countries – Poland, Germany and France – and in the presence of my representative (this was the Russian Human Rights Commissioner Vladimir Lukin) signed an agreement with the opposition on February 21.

“I would like to stress that under that agreement (I am not saying this was good or bad, just stating the fact) Mr Yanukovich actually handed over power. He agreed to all the opposition’s demands: he agreed to early parliamentary elections, to early presidential elections, and to return to the 2004 Constitution, as demanded by the opposition. He gave a positive response to our request, the request of western countries and, first of all, of the opposition not to use force. He did not issue a single illegal order to shoot at the poor demonstrators. Moreover, he issued orders to withdraw all police forces from the capital, and they complied. He went to Kharkov to attend an event, and as soon as he left, instead of releasing the occupied administrative buildings, they immediately occupied the President’s residence and the Government building – all that instead of acting on the agreement.

“I ask myself, what was the purpose of all this? I want to understand why this was done. He had in fact given up his power already, and as I believe, as I told him, he had no chance of being re-elected. Everybody agrees on this, everyone I have been speaking to on the telephone these past few days. What was the purpose of all those illegal, unconstitutional actions, why did they have to create this chaos in the country? Armed and masked militants are still roaming the streets of Kiev. This is a question to which there is no answer. Did they wish to humiliate someone and show their power? I think these actions are absolutely foolish. The result is the absolute opposite of what they expected, because their actions have significantly destabilised the east and southeast of Ukraine.”

President Putin raises interesting questions. □

Central America's Protestant Reformation?

By Jenny O'Connor

During the second half of the 20th Century the rate of Protestant conversion in Latin America surpassed that of the European Reformation [1]. The majority of this shift, however, has actually occurred in recent years and it has been particularly acute in the Central American region. Between 1996 and 2011, according to surveys administered by Chile's *Latinobarometro*, the population proportion self-identifying as evangelical Protestant (without denominational distinction) doubled in Guatemala; tripled in El Salvador; quadrupled in Cost Rica; quintupled in Nicaragua and sextupled in Honduras [2].

Evangelicalism in Central America

Ultra-conservative evangelicals came to prominence in the U.S. during the Cold War due to their staunch anti-communist and nationalist orientation; their religious legitimization of free-market capitalism and the international scope of their proselytizing mission [3]. Evangelical leaders such as Billy Graham helped frame the Cold War as an epic religious battle of good versus evil and U.S. evangelical churches gained a foothold in Central America through two particularly intense and politicised anti-communist missionary waves. The first of these began following the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the second, with particular focus on the Central American region, began with the success of Nicaragua's Sandinista Revolution in 1979 and Ronald Regan's election to the presidency in 1980 [4].

The Second Vatican Council of 1962 and the subsequent reorientation of the Catholic hierarchy towards 'a preferential option for the poor' inspired a generation of Latin American priests. Based on a radical reinterpretation of the bible these clergymen developed liberation theology which expanded the notion of sin beyond individual culpability to include economic and political structures which benefit the powerful at the expense of the oppressed [5]. In 1969, one year after the Medellín Conference and the Latin American Catholic bishops' acceptance of the theological reality of structural sin, Nelson Rockefeller travelled to Latin America as special envoy for President Nixon. His resultant *Rockefeller Report on the Americas* highlighted the threat radicalised elements of the Catholic Church posed to U.S. interests in the region.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s liberation theologian Catholic priests founded CEBs (Ecclesiastic Base Communities) across Central America. The CEBs became schools of critical social analysis and popular mobilisation and they were intimately linked to the emergence of left-wing revolutionary movements in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Alarmed at Catholic Church support for these 'communist' guerrilla movements some members of Central America's economic elite converted to Protestantism. Incumbent regimes labelled the Catholic Church as a subversive organisation and, particularly in Guatemala and El Salvador, they unleashed a wave of violent anti-Catholic repression. The success of Nicaragua's Sandinista revolution in 1979 simultaneously focused the proselytizing mission of American anti-communist evangelicals and the U.S. government's Cold War interventionism on the Central American isthmus.

Writing in 1980, the same year he was assassinated by death squad, liberation theologian and popular Archbishop Oscar Romero denounced the persecution of members of the Catholic Church at the hands of the El Salvadorian military regime [6]:

"In less than three years over fifty priests have been attacked, threatened, calumniated...Some have been tortured and others expelled. Nuns have also been persecuted. The archdiocesan radio station and educational institutions that are Catholic or of a Christian inspiration have been attacked, threatened, intimidated, even bombed...It is, then, an indisputable fact that, over the last three years, our church has been persecuted."

In Guatemala, under the successive regimes of Generals Lucas García and evangelical convert Ríos Montt, Catholics (mostly of indigenous Maya ethnicity) were targeted for assassination and murdered en masse; Catholic social organisations were banned and priests were barred from giving sermons [7]. Such was the brutality of Ríos Montt's short-lived rule that, in 2013, he became the first former head of state to face genocide charges in a court in his own country.

Appeals in the name of the fight against communism allowed U.S. based evangelical groups to raise significant sums of money for their missionary activities and, with U.S. government support, these groups provided aid to the U.S. backed Contra insurgency in Nicaragua and the military regimes of El Salvador and Guatemala [8]. One well publicised example of such activity occurred in 1982 when U.S. evangelical leader Pat Robinson organised a multimillion dollar airlift – named 'Operation LoveLift' – in support of the counterinsurgency effort of Ríos Montt. More recently, talking on the Christian Broadcast Network's 'The 700 Club' in 2005, Pat Robinson suggested that U.S. operatives assassinate then President Hugo Chavez in order to stop Venezuela from becoming "a *launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism*." "We have the ability to take him out" Robinson stated live on-air "and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability" [9].

In the context of Catholic Church repression evangelical conversion efforts during the 1970s and 1980s had some success. In Guatemala, it is said, the pervasive culture of fear and repression caused indigenous Catholics to convert to evangelicalism en masse simply to save their own lives [10]. These effects were somewhat mitigated in Nicaragua because of the multi-class nature of the Sandinista revolution and its seizure of the state apparatus in 1979 but anti-communist evangelical missionaries had some success in converting Contra fighters and indigenous peoples affected by the conflict. Citing a statement by Theodore Roosevelt –

"I believe that the assimilation of the Latin-American countries to the United States will be long and difficult as long as these countries remain Catholic"

– Benedict XVI (then Cardinal Ratzinger) wrote in 1986 that Nelson Rockefeller's alleged recommendation that the U.S. act to replace Latin American Catholics with other Christians was an undertaking which was "in full swing" [11].

The Recent Rise

Anti-Catholic repression in coordination with U.S. Cold War policy and missionary activity may explain why Guatemala and, to a lesser extent El Salvador, are the only Central American countries that already had a relatively sizeable proportion of evangelicals in 1996. It does not, however, explain the very recent and dramatic rise. As illustrated in the table below, between 2000 and 2001, nearly every Central American nation experienced an exponential rise the proportion of their population who identify as evangelical Protestant.

Evangelical Self-Identification in Central America as Percentage of Population 1996 – 2011							
	1996	1997	1998	2000*	2001*	2002	2003
Nicaragua	6.1	8.8	5.8	8.8	16.7	19.9	N/A
El Salvador	9.2	14.4	13.7	10.9	22.1	27.6	26.1
Honduras	5.2	18.1	18.2	23.2	25.6	30.1	31.8
Costa Rica	4.3	6.0	5.2	8.9	15.2	15.7	17.6
Guatemala	18.1	15.9	18.2	18.6	29.1	29.0	24.0

Evangelical Self-Identification in Central America as Percentage of Population 1996 – 2011								
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Nicaragua	25.7	25.9	27.7	30.6	27.5	31.0	34.2	31.8
El Salvador	28.5	28.1	24.2	26.1	31.4	29.2	31.5	26.6
Honduras	29.7	31.2	32.5	36.7	33.1	39.7	31.7	39.6
Costa Rica	20.7	19.9	20.4	16.7	20.4	21.7	19.6	18.0
Guatemala	31.8	32.8	30.6	34.2	36.2	35.9	33.9	38.4

Source: *Latinobarometro*

The election of Hugo Chavez in 1999 coordinates Central America's sudden evangelical rise with the beginning of Latin America's so called 'pink tide' or 'move to the left'. It also coordinates with the election of evangelical Christian and neo-conservative George W. Bush to the American Presidency.

At the turn of the millennium many Central American nations were still rebuilding from bloody conflict and the devastating effects of Hurricane Mitch (1998) – the second most destructive Atlantic storm on record. Mitch caused utter devastation in Nicaragua and Honduras and gravely affected agricultural production across the region. This disaster was directly followed by a global collapse in Coffee prices; Central America's most economically important export commodity.

Such a succession of crises could easily inspire apocalyptic notions among the more religiously inclined. This scenario also provided pre-existing evangelical churches, U.S. based evangelical missionaries and conversion oriented Christian relief agencies an opportunity to market their mix of divine salvation, reconstruction and emergency aid to populations in turmoil. These evangelising aid missions were bolstered by George W. Bush's "faith-based" initiative which included executive actions aimed at encouraging religious groups to apply for billions in government contracts and directing the Federal Emergency Management Agency to allow religious non-profits to apply for disaster relief. Also included in this initiative was Executive Order 13,280 requiring the U.S. Agency for International Development to set up faith-based offices [12].

Pastoral Failure of the Catholic Church?

History teaches us to view with caution any sweeping trend which aligns U.S. interests with those of Central America's domestic elite. To explain the evangelical rise solely in terms of top-down neo-colonialism, however, disregards the agency and motivations of Central American populations among whom these conversions have occurred.

A 1986 Vatican Report on this issue entitled 'Sects or New Religious Movements: A Pastoral Challenge' stated: "we

suspect, and in some cases know, that powerful ideological forces, as well as economic and political interests, are at work through the sects." The report further acknowledged, however, that among the reasons for evangelical churches' success among Catholics was the fact that they were fulfilling "needs and aspirations which are seemingly not being met in the mainline Churches" [13].

One of the most obvious failures of the Catholic Church in Central America has been its inability to serve

remote areas due to a chronic shortage of priests. This shortage has also caused the Church to lose its footing in Latin America's burgeoning cities where socially dislocated rural migrants have created a demand for religious solace that the Catholic Church simply does not have the capacity to meet [14]. A long-standing component of this problem has been the Catholic Church's consistent failure to fill its Latin American ranks with native people. Attempts were made to rectify this situation in the 1970s and 80s by training local laypeople through the CEBs but this effort collapsed as the Catholic hierarchy began to view the CEBs as a threat to the traditional parish structure [15].

Within the evangelical churches, however, there is absolutely no shortage. Evangelical preachers are not required to complete years of seminary training or take vows of celibacy; charisma and strong communication skills are all that is necessary. Evangelical religious leadership positions are more accessible to the poor and uneducated and thus evangelical churches across Latin America tend to be led by local people many of whom are, or once were, poor themselves [16].

One consequence of this organisational structure is that evangelical churches have the capacity to reproduce at a rapid rate [17]. Evangelical preachers are expected to found their own church after a relatively short training period compared to their Catholic counterparts and, while Catholic churches require some sort of building of worship, an evangelical church may be operated out of the spare room of somebody's house or an empty car garage. All that is required is a sign to welcome worshippers at the door. This organisational structure gives evangelical churches the capacity to spread, with relative ease, into remote and urban areas underserved by overwhelmed

Catholic parishes. Their rapid proliferation has also allowed these churches to administer a more direct and personal approach than their Catholic counterparts. This approach, which certainly adds to their appeal, includes home visits and direct interventions on issues such as alcoholism and domestic violence, both of which are major issues to Central America's urban and rural poor.

Political Implications

The flat rather than hierarchal structure of the evangelical church, the presence of Latin Americans amongst its religious leadership and the benefits of its direct pastoral approach have caused a large number of commentators to view the evangelical spread in a celebratory light and everything from democratic consolidation and decreased corruption to economic growth and female empowerment have been cited as potential outcomes of this trend.

We should not immediately assume, however, that these churches are always independent of their North American counterparts. A U.S. embassy cable from July 2006 referring to a meeting between embassy staff and Nicaraguan evangelical Pastor Espinoza, for example, states that "*He [Espinoza] acknowledged that evangelical groups in Nicaragua receive substantial financial and other support from U.S. evangelical churches*" [20].

The disparate nature of Central America's evangelical churches and their prolific spread into geographically remote areas could, in principle, provide an educational and organisational base for populations politically distant from state institutions. The form such organisation would take, however, depends on how far local preachers stray from the original U.S. import and how financially independent they remain from U.S. based churches. The original U.S. evangelical import stresses individual rather than societal transformation; it teaches that individuals have the power to overcome poverty by embracing God and a strong work ethic and, for these reasons, it was encouraged by early American industrialists in order to instil in their workers "*Christian discipline and respect for the processes of early capitalism*" [18]. By preaching that wealth is God's reward for hard work this form of Christianity provides religious legitimacy for obscene wealth accumulation while dissuading critical analysis of unequal social, political and economic structures. It is for these reasons that some critics have claimed it to be a vehicle for promoting neoliberal capitalist values; a tool of the rich for both the moral legitimization of their own wealth and to pacify popular resistance against structural poverty [19]. On the other hand, however, their native preachers and dissemination into very isolated areas could just as easily result in the formation of absolutely distinct religious forms which respond to the needs of the local populations they serve.

As Central America's evangelical churches become more prominent and gradually insert themselves into the political realm, the importance of assessing the socio-political implications of this process become more apparent. To claim that such implications are obvious, however, would be presumptuous and inaccurate.

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A Brief Comment on QC Geoffrey Robertson's Comment by "Someone Called Dr. Pat Walsh"

By Pat Walsh

I was recently in London at Queen Mary University, Lincoln's Inn, to launch a small book by Sükrü Server Aya entitled 'Twisted Law versus Proven Facts.'

A minute before the start of the launch I was handed a statement issued by Mr Geoffrey Robertson QC from doughty street chambers. In this statement, handed to me by his assistant, Mr. Robertson accused me of being someone "who invents facts about other people's work."

Having quickly scanned Mr. Robertson's statement I read the section concerning me to the audience at the start of my talk to let him have his say. I then proceeded to give the talk and let the audience judge the validity of the accusation. It was too late to alter the talk at that juncture to reconcile Mr Robertson's comment with the speech but I informed the audience that this was Mr Robertson's clarification of his position and said it was welcome.

The relevant passage within an 8 page "Brief comment from Geoffrey Robertson QC" comes after a sentence in which the author states "Any who value their scholarly reputation should be very careful about promoting a person who invents facts about other people's work." It continues:

"Someone called Dr Pat Walsh also does this. He claims that I have stated that 'historians have no business in interfering in history. History should be the business of lawyers'. This is untrue. What I have said, time and again, is that judgments on what constitutes torture or genocide or crimes against humanity must be made by judges, applying the law to facts established by historians. Dr Pat Walsh should stop attributing to me quotes that he knows I have never given (like urging "an end of history" and "case closed")"

To take the last part first: On the matter of my description of Mr Robertson urging "an end of history" and saying that the issue of the tragic events of 1915 was, for him, "case closed" these phrases were my interpretation of Mr. Robertson's views placed in a short piece advertising the launch. They were not attributed to him in quotation marks as Mr. Robertson subsequently placed them, as if he had used these expressions. They were placed in inverted commas, the usual way of expressing a conceptual idea that sums up a wider amount of work. So they were not "quotes attributed" to Mr Robertson that I knew he "had never given." I knew he had not given them and I therefore did not place them in quotation marks. They were merely my personal understanding of the meaning of his general position with regard to the 'Armenian genocide' in relation to history and law.

They represented what I understood he was saying from what he was quoted as saying by the Armenian media in Yerevan and which is widely reported on the internet. For example:

"Human Rights Lawyer Geoffrey Robertson Speaks at AUA

"By Laura Boghosian

"YEREVAN—In a wide-ranging lecture at the American University of Armenia, international human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson QC accused Turkey's Minister for European Union Affairs of lying, endorsed Armenian calls for reparations and restitution, and declared that the Armenian Genocide is not a subject for historians, but a matter for legal judgment. . . Governments like that of Turkey, the United States, and the United Kingdom that call for the matter to be decided by historians are wrong, stated Robertson. 'They say this is a matter for historians. It's not. Historians. . .are utterly ignorant of what genocide is in law. It's not a matter for historians. Genocide is a matter for judges. But we hear time and again, this is a matter for historians.'

"The Armenian government is right to reject calls for the genocide to be studied by a panel of historians as described in the protocols, said Robertson. 'The issue of the Armenian Genocide can no longer be left to history. It certainly can't be left to historians,' he concluded. 'It is a matter for judgment, applying the developed law of genocide to the evidence. And in my judgment, there can only be one outcome.' (Armenian Weekly 15 June 2012)

And another report:

'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 for historians but judges.' (Gagrule.net – Exposing Turkish Crime Against Humanity, 'Judges to deal with Genocide to demand for proper compensation – British lawyer'

April 25, 2012)

So the facts I "invented" were not about "other people's work" at all. They were, in fact, based on Armenian press reports compiled on Mr Robertson's visit to Yerevan by people sympathetic to his position.

I don't know for sure if these Armenian reports are accurate about what Mr Robertson said on his visit to Yerevan. Perhaps the Armenians have misrepresented Mr Robertson and I have placed too much faith in the Armenians. Who knows? Perhaps Mr Robertson could clarify whether the Armenians have misrepresented his views.

These statements of Mr Robertson contained in the Armenian media seemed provocative to me and I presume they would be provocative to historians. And they provoked me into taking it

that Mr Robertson was wishing to call time on historical debate and close the case on the tragic events in Anatolia in 1915 with legal deliberation and judgment.

It might be argued that I was suggesting that this was Mr Robertson's general position on history and law. However, I was clearly not since it was contained within a specific invitation to a book launch of a reply to Mr Robertson's 'Opinion on the Armenian Genocide.' I was also aware that Mr Robertson himself is a historian of the Cromwellian period, including the events in Ireland, that he does not, unlike the Anatolian affair, describe as a 'genocide.'

It is useful therefore that Mr Robertson has clarified what he understands as the relationship between history and law on these matters. What he is saying, if my interpretation is correct, this time, is that historians can establish facts but the final judgments on these things (issues like 'genocide' or 'crimes against humanity') lie within the authority of the law, alone.

Presumably, historians can continue to debate the events that occurred in Anatolia in 1915 in order to provide lawyers with the facts that will enable them to make a legal judgement on the issue. A court may be assembled of appropriate jurists, appropriate evidence may be selected from appropriate historians and a verdict may be come to at the end. And that would be that.

Afterwards historians may presumably continue with their work even though judgment has been passed (I write this hesitantly lest I be accused of "inventing facts about other people's work" when the intention is merely to extract the logical meaning. And Mr Robertson can correct me if I am again misrepresenting him).

I take it also that Mr Robertson is saying that historians can discuss general historical matters that do not come under the auspices of law to their heart's content until courts decide to take them up, for whatever reason.

I would also like to comment on Mr. Robertson's jibe about Athol Books not valuing "their scholarly reputation" by promoting Mr. Aya's work. If Mr. Robertson knew anything about Athol Books he would know it has no "scholarly reputation" nor does it seek one. Its main publishing came about through necessity within the experience got in the raw facts of existence in Belfast during the recent War. Those connected with it played a small part in the resistance to the pogrom launched against the Catholic community by the local forces of the British State in August 1969. It then published material for over two decades aimed at bringing the War that developed to a close on the basis of a functional settlement between Irish and British, Catholic and Protestant.

The scholars and academics contributed little or nothing to bringing that War to a close. In their ivory towers they made themselves irrelevant to 'Northern Ireland' and a political settlement there. Athol Books published a great multitude of material which was read by the working-class of both communities and it had an effect on the situation far beyond the size and resources of those who published it from Athol Street.

Scholarly reputations are not something that is greatly respected where Athol Books originated. The scholars disgraced themselves through their conduct during the War. They became propagandists for the government and when some took the ideas of Athol Street, they never attributed them, and they turned them into academic nonsense, making them useless. They built their academic careers while people died on the streets. And it was those who fought the War who finally ended it without reference to the academics and scholars.

I would therefore like to thank Mr. Robertson for his not attributing a scholarly reputation to Athol Books. He is too kind!

In conclusion, it is my opinion, (for what it is worth) that Mr. Robertson's clarified position is no less antithetical to historical debate than the one I took it to be. There is still the shadow of the legal guillotine upon it with the prospect that a single case will decide an issue which has been greatly contributed to by historians. That seems to be very much a case of an end to history from my perception of things and I do not think it to be a healthy development. □

(Continued from p.39)

61. On these bitter divisions among former SPD leaders in the USA, see the comprehensive report for the OSS compiled by Walter Dorn – himself formerly a German socialist – 'German Political Emigration', reprinted in full in Ulrich Borsdorf and Lutz Niethammer (eds.), *Zwischen Befreiung und Besatzung, Analysen des US-Geheimdienstes über Positionen und Strukturen deutscher Politik 1945, 1976*, pp. 73 ff. and also the later reports to Hans Vogel by the former Prussian SPD Minister Albert Grzesinski of 29.7.1945 and 16.12.1945 in AsD-SoPaDe-Emig., Mapped 46. Stampfer had been the editor of the SPD newspaper *Vorwärts* and Katz For an overview also the account in Radkau, *Emigration in den USA*, pp. 144 ff.
- 62 Hagen to Rolnald Byrnes, 16.5.1942 and to Arthur Goldberg, 10.6.1942, and Hagen, 'Autobiographical Data' to Hoover, July 1942, IfZ ED 213 (NL Frank), Ordner 11. See also the copy report of the Overseas Branch, German Department, Office of War Information, n.d., including the German Labor Delegation denunciations of August 1943 in *ibid.*, Ordner 12. Ruth Fischer, former KPD leader who had sided publicly against Stalin with Trotsky, filed similar reports to US Intelligence branding Hagen as a "Stalin agent" – see POLAD, Ffm. To Sec. State, No. A-10, 20.3.1948, in IfZ OMGUS-POLAD 797-21 and copies of Fischer denunciations in IfZ ED 213 (NL Frank), Ordner 14, Hagen's appeals in *ibid.*, Ordner 11, and Paul Hertz to Hagen despairing that "the English regard us as Stalin's agents in the US" (Hagen correspondence, AsD NL Hertz, Mapped 43). The London SoPaDe kept a file on "the activities of P. Hagen" (which is at AsD-SoPaDe-Emig., Mapped 44) and both Heine and Ollenhauer distrusted and "thoroughly disliked him" (POLAD report above). On the sympathy of the OSS Research and Analysis Section (R&A) with the *Neubeginnen* people in the 3 US, see Dorn, 'German Political Emigration', and also Hagen correspondence with Dorn in IfZ ED 213 (NL Frank), Ordner 15.
- 63 Erich Ollenhauer to Fritz Tarnow (the German trade union leader in Sweden), 19.2.45, AsD SoPaDe-Emig., Mapped 84.
- 64 Dorn, 'German Political Emigration', p. 79 f.
- 65 Grzesinski to Vogel, 16.12.1945, AsD SoPaDe-Emig., Mapped 46. For a substantially similar ISK assessment of the situation of the German left in US exile, see Erma Blancke's later letter to Willy Eichler, 26.12.1946, in AsD NL Eichler, Mapped ISK-Korr. 1946-1952, A-BI. Max Brauer had been a model social democratic mayor of Altona (in Hamburg) in the Weimar period, a pioneer of socialist urban planning and workers housing. In US exile he returned to his Lutheran roots and, following a delay before being allowed return to Germany, re-emerged in the 1950s as a leading social democrat senator in Hamburg. □

Starving The Germans: The Evolution of Britain's Strategy of Economic Warfare During The First World War—The French Connection Part 6

By Eamon Dyas

The fall of Clemenceau.

The situation in France after February 1909 could not last. The Franco-German Agreement was in fact the pivot on which was balanced the future of Europe. If the momentum had been allowed to continue there would not have been a war as the direction of events would have ensured a diminution of the *Entente Cordiale* between France and England and a strengthening of Franco-German relations. In military terms, after 1905 Russia was effectively out of the equation until 1912 and by then, if it had the time to develop, the Franco-German agreement would have only strengthened while the Triple *Entente* would not have had the same vigour as previously. But this momentum was effectively stopped and the stopping began through the invigoration of the French colonialists. Since the 1907 Casablanca affair Clemenceau had been determined to rein in the maverick army and government officials in Morocco and it was proving very effective. Consequently, it was imperative that the colonialists do all in their power to weaken that policy as much as possible. It is within that context that the fall of Clemenceau's Ministry in July 1909 (a mere six months after the Franco-German agreement) has to be seen. The circumstances of Clemenceau's fall were described in the newspapers at the time in terms that did not challenge the received wisdom. Perish the thought that Clemenceau's fall had anything to do with a clash between him and that great friend of Britain and supporter of the *Entente Cordiale*, Théophile Delcassé, and worse still that it related to differences between the two on the issue of the French colonialists' actions in Morocco. This is how Clemenceau's fall was described in *The Times*: -

“Paris, July 21.

The fall of the Clemenceau Ministry has surprised every one, and given unmixed satisfaction only in the offices of the General Confederation of Labour. In the Paris Press today and in the lobbies of the Chamber of Deputies every shade of surprise is manifested, ranging from the comic consternation of the supporters of the Government to the disinterested curiosity of M. Clemenceau's political foes, who are still asking themselves how this fall occurred. As one of the leading members of the Opposition remarked, ‘M. Clemenceau did not fall; he plunged out of office.’ *The Petit Parisien*, which has the widest circulation of any Republican organ in France, says: -

‘A sally by M. Clemenceau in his mood of polemic, a sally as futile as it was unjust and imprudent, swept away within a few brief minutes the Ministerial skiff which had kept the seas for 33 months [the period Clemenceau had been in office –ED]. The disaster was sudden and overwhelming. The Chamber, which was solely preoccupied with the naval debate, was thinking only of the vote which it was presumably about to record in favour of M. Alfred Picard, and that, too, in spite of M. Delcassé's motion of censure. It was expecting merely a brief reply from the Prime Minister bearing directly upon the matter in hand. At half-past 7 o'clock, in fact, there was complete calm. An instant later what a change, what a storm!

Within several minutes the majority were seen to be hesitating, shifting, and finally divided, and we heard the fatal cry, ‘Resign, resign.’

“The *Petite République*, a no less important organ of Republicanism as far as Paris is concerned, observes: -

‘It is absolutely inconceivable that M. Clemenceau should have changed the direction of the naval debate by introducing the question of M. Delcassé's foreign policy. That was an extraordinary blunder on the part of so clear an intelligence as that of the Prime Minister. . . . If M. Clemenceau had not indulged in these unfortunate *mots*, if he had merely defended himself by discussing the facts, there could have been no doubt as to the issue of the debate. The Chamber had no intention of upsetting the Government, and an hour earlier, in fact had loudly cheered the Minister of Marine, M. Picard.’

(*The Cabinet Crisis in France: Opinion on M. Clemenceau's Fall*, *The Times*, 22 July 1909, p.3).

But what was it in Clemenceau's ‘sally’, which proved to be so incendiary? You look in vain in the reports in *The Times* for an explanation of the issue that provoked his ire and the opposition's indignation. You also look in vain for an account of the role of Delcassé in the incident as he is barely mentioned. However, the issue is gone into (albeit from the British post-war perspective) in a biography of Clemenceau by the socialist imperialist H.M. Hyndman published in 1919: -

“During his tenure of the office of Minister for Foreign Affairs, a position which he had held for several years, in successive Administrations of widely different character, M. Delcassé had been subjected to vehement attacks by the leader of the Radical Left. His policy in relation to Morocco had been specially obnoxious to M. Clemenceau. That policy M. Clemenceau had most severely criticised at the time when M. Delcassé was stoutly resisting that extension of German influence in Morocco that led to the Foreign Minister's downfall and the Conference of Algeciras, which M. Delcassé had refused to accept. The relations between the two statesmen could scarcely have been worse, but hitherto the Radical leader had carried all before him.

Now came a dramatic climax to the long struggle. A debate arose in the French Assembly on the condition of the navy. It was admittedly not what it ought to have been. M. Picard, the Minister of Marine, made a conciliatory reply to interpellations on the subject of promised immediate reforms and even complete reconstitution. But this was not enough for M. Delcassé. The Assembly was not hostile to M. Clemenceau, and certainly had no desire to oust his Administration. Yet M. Delcassé's direct attack upon the Premier brought the whole debate down to the level of a personal question. Nevertheless,

what he said was quite legitimate criticism. M. Clemenceau had been a member of the Commission of Inquiry on the Navy, and could not get rid of his responsibility for the present state of things. The great critic of everybody and everything was open to exposure himself. He who had enjoyed twenty-five years of running amuck at the whole political world was not being called to account in person as an administrator. So far M. Delcassé. Clemenceau retorted that M. Delcassé had himself been on the Naval Commission in 1904. He was full of great policies here, there and everywhere. What had they resulted in? The humiliation of France and the Conference of Algeciras. Clemenceau was evidently much incensed. The fact that he had been obliged, as he thought, by Germany's action to follow M. Delcassé's Moroccan tactics rendered the position exceptionally awkward. It raised the whole question of M. Delcassé's foreign policy. This gave him a great advantage when it came to direct political warfare. For M. Delcassé was considered, even by those who opposed him, as the victim of German hatred, since he had refused to surrender to German threats and was sacrificed simply because France dared not face a war. So when he recounted his agreement with Spain, his agreement with Italy, his agreement – 'too long delayed' – with England, his mediation in the Spanish-American War and his Treaties of Arbitration, the Assembly went with him. . . .

Very good sword-play. But had Clemenceau kept cool, as he certainly would have done on the duel ground, there might have been no harm done. However, he burst out into furious denunciation, exasperated by the ringing cheers, which greeted his opponent's conclusion. It was M. Delcassé's fault that France had to go to Algeciras. M. Delcassé would have carried things with a high hand. 'But the army was not ready, the navy was not ready. I have not humiliated France: M. Delcassé has humiliated her.' A purely personal note, disclosing facts that were the more bitter to the Assembly inasmuch that they were true. It was indecent – that was the sensation that ran round the House – for a Premier thus to expose the weakness of his country on a personal issue, no matter what the provocation he may have received. The hostile vote, therefore, was given against Clemenceau himself, not against his Government, and he promptly resigned. (*Clemenceau: the man and his time*, by Henry Mayers Hyndman. Published Grant Richards Ltd., London, 1919, pp.229-232).

Yet, after reading this admittedly restricted and angled account of the incident, one is left asking if this is all there is to the story. Surely, what Clemenceau said in the above account was not worthy of the level of indignation unleashed by the Right opposition in response. The feeling one is left with is that they were prepared to meet indignation more than half way – their sensitivity to indignation must have been very delicate indeed and the incident bears all the hallmarks of a political ambush. Although it offers no explanation of what was said during the debate, the report in *The Times* quoted earlier does provide a more convincing argument as to why Clemenceau lost the vote of confidence at this particular time.

According to the report, it seems that the previous week the practice of using the proxy votes of absent Deputies had been abolished and because the remaining Parliamentary business was deemed to be the usual mundane eve-of-recess stuff many Deputies had taken the opportunity to leave early to attend an Inter-Parliamentary Pacifist event on the Scandinavian Peninsula while many others decided to go on holiday a few days early. Consequently, at the time of the vote a total of 175 Deputies were absent, most of whom would have supported Clemenceau in the opposition's vote of confidence. In such

circumstances there has to be a suspicion, despite the tone of the above reports, that the opposition (led by the Delcassé colonialists) took advantage of Clemenceau's short temper (he had fought many duels in his day and was renowned for his tetchiness) and the absence of so many of his followers from the Chamber to do as much damage as possible. The actual vote that compelled him to resign was 212 for the opposition and 176 in support of Clemenceau – a majority for the opposition of 36 and in such a situation the absent 175 Deputies proved fatal for Clemenceau.

The road to Agadir.

Because Clemenceau was brought down by the use of parliamentary opportunism and not by any principled opposition to his policies, the victory of the colonialist/imperialists was transitory. There was no election and the government appointed by the President to succeed Clemenceau's Ministry was one formed under Aristide Briand. In many ways Briand's Government was more or less a continuation of Clemenceau's Ministry. It contained no fewer than six members of his earlier cabinet with the most significant retention being that of Pichon as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Four months later Briand won the General Election in November 1910 but with a reduced majority and was finally forced to resign in March 1911 in the face of a combined attack from the left and the right.

However, although it did not lead directly to a replacement opposition administration at the time, the resurgence of the colonialists can be traced to the downfall of Clemenceau. It gave them a renewed confidence and it also meant that Clemenceau's personal oversight of the behaviour of the French colonialists in Morocco (resulting from their role in the first Moroccan crisis) was replaced by Briand's pre-occupation with domestic issues. Provocative incidents caused by militant colonialists in Morocco increased, leading to a renewed sense of instability and in Paris the newfound confidence of the 'bureaux' enabled it to take the political initiative. The consequence of this was a gradual decline in Franco-German relations:

"By the end of 1910 Franco-German relations had worsened. German hopes for joint ventures in Central Africa and the Ottoman Empire (strongly encouraged by Cambon) had not materialized. In Morocco things were turning sour, largely as a result of overzealous French officials, eager to control not only administration and government but also economic and financial affairs. Meanwhile, administrative disorganization in the foreign ministry at the beginning of 1911 had multiplied the intrigues of the 'bureaux'. Cambon was a prime target. He repeatedly complained of the leaks and obstructions from within the Quai d'Orsay. Worse still, on 2 March 1911 the Briand government fell and Pichon's run as foreign minister ended. Jean Cruppi, his successor, had no experience of foreign affairs and could be influenced by the anti-German 'bureaux'. And it was on the shoulders of these officials that Cambon placed the Agadir crisis." (Keiger, op. cit., pp.644-645).

But, although it was undoubtedly the main reason, the resurgence of the colonialists was not just down to the fall of Clemenceau. What was happening with regards to the policies of the British Liberal Imperialists also had a bearing. From their point of view anything which compromised, diminished, restricted or deflected the ability of the French militant colonialist/imperialist block to influence French politics was something that had to be countered. The curtailment of this block by the policies of Clemenceau and Pichon opened up the

prospect of France, at the very least, opting out of a provocative role against Germany and the very worst, the emergence of a significant Franco-German agreement. This is the wider French context in which the developments initiated by the British Liberal Imperialists at this time have to be considered.

In 1909-10 the deliberately engineered anti-German hysteria generated by the invasion scare left Britain primed for a war-footing; the propagation by Liberal Imperialists of the exaggeration of German shipbuilding plans (admitted to have been 'based on mistaken figures' by McKenna, the First Lord of the Admiralty the following year) left Parliament providing an open door for a significant expansion of military spending; the effective neutralisation of the anti-war lobby by the recruitment of Lloyd George and Winston Churchill into the Liberal Imperialist war circle; and the reinforcement of the perception of the commitment to war by the appointment of the Francophile Sir Henry Wilson as Director of Military Operations all happened between 1909 and 1910 – a seminal period in the British road to war. This is how Arthur J. Marder, the historian of the Royal Navy describes the significance of 1909 anti-German scare:

“There were several very important by-products of the 1909 scare: (1) the beginnings of an Imperial Fleet, originating in the offer of dreadnoughts by some of the Dominions; (2) a hardening of the feeling of the inevitability of a war with Germany; (3) the policy of naval limitation by agreement was henceforth regarded in all but the Radical section of the Liberal Party as chimerical; (4) the virtual, though undeclared, scrapping of the traditional two-power standard [which stipulated that the British Navy should retain a superiority over the combined size of the Fleets of the next two largest navies. Instead the British Navy was to have a 60 per cent superiority in dreadnoughts over the German Navy alone – ED]; (5) the intensification of the anti-Fisher campaign.” (Marder, op. cit., p.179).

The departure of Sir John Fisher as First Sea Lord in November 1909 was viewed by the French as evidence of an increased British commitment to the land war. Although, as has already been argued, Fisher's Schleswig-Holstein plan had quickly evolved into something that was claimed to complement the involvement of British troops in a land war in France – albeit a limited involvement. The argument being that the landing of British troops in northern Germany would tie up sufficient numbers of the German Army to equalise the numbers facing the French Army further south and thereby reduce the requirement for a large number of British troops in France. However, this strategy was a source of suspicion for the French and they regularly expressed the view that the Schleswig-Holstein plan was a waste of British troops who would be better used alongside the French Army. Consequently, although the plan was kept alive by his successor for a short while, Fisher's departure was seen as the beginning of the end of that strategy. But it was in 1910 that a more important event occurred which was to have most significance in terms of what it communicated to the militant French colonial imperialists at a time when it was important for Britain to inject some confidence into their cause. In June 1910, Haldane appointed General Sir Henry Hugh Wilson as Director of Military Operations (DMO) at the War Office. In the light of subsequent events the timing of this appointment was surely more than coincidental, Wilson (not to be confused with First Sea Lord Sir Arthur K. Wilson of whom he was no relation), was an Irish unionist Francophile (he had been educated as a child in Longford by a succession of French governesses) and was strongly committed to the cause of an

Anglo-French land war on Germany. As evidenced by the way in which Wilson was later implicated in the Curragh Mutiny he was also a military man who, in any conflict between military expediency and legal imperatives, could be relied upon to come down on the side of military expediency – in other words, the ideal candidate for convincing the French colonialists that a man after their own heart was now DMO at the heart of the British War Office. At the same time as the developments in Liberal Imperialist circles between 1909 and 1910 we see the resurgence of confidence among the French colonialists and an increase in their efficacy and confidence in pushing their agenda on French politics.

Having succeeded in manoeuvring the Clemenceau government from office in July 1909 the militant French colonial imperialists began the process which ended in the formation two years later in the government of Ernest Monis – a government that despite having elements from the left, proved to be more amenable to the ambitions of the militant colonial imperialists. Although Monis does not appear to have been a conviction politician and his Cabinet was a reflection of the balance of opinion in the French Parliament at that time (including as it did moderate people like Joseph Caillaux) it was nonetheless dominated by the perspective of the colonialists and anti-German lobby – an indication of the extent of their resurgence since the fall of Clemenceau. It was notable for the rehabilitation of Théophile Delcassé in government. Much to the delight of his supporters Delcassé was made Minister for Marine – an important Cabinet position as it gave him control of the Navy and his first government post since his forced resignation as Foreign Minister in 1905. But the most significant change was the replacement of the long-standing Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stéphen Pichon by Jean Cruppi, an avowed anti-German. Although the new government only lasted less than four months (until 27 June), it was responsible for provoking the crisis between France and Germany, which provided the British Liberal Imperialists with their first serious excuse for war. In the meantime, Cruppi lost no time in putting his provocatively anti-German agenda into effect:

“Pichon, pressed by Jules Cambon [French ambassador to Germany - ED], had been willing to respect the letter of the law concerning Franco-German co-operation in Morocco. Cruppi, dominated by the 'bureaux', refused. His first move was to break an agreement with Germany for the construction of a Moroccan railway, negotiated under Pichon's ministry and ready for signature. He blocked all Franco-German co-operation without formally denouncing it. Cambon warned that the Moroccan question was about to flare up . . . On 17 April Cruppi ordered French troops to march on Fez under the pretext of putting down a rebellion in the town. This policy contradicted all that Jules Cambon had been working for.” (Keiger, op. cit., p.645).

When things started to happen in Morocco the redoubtable Etienne was never too far away and so it turned out with the 1911 occupation of Fez by French troops.

Etienne and the French occupation of Fez.

It is easy to underestimate what Etienne and the French colonialists achieved in the decade before the First World War. In the world of French politics the *parti colonial* was viewed as slightly unsavoury and there was a feeling both in Parliament and in the country that colonial affairs were inherently disreputable. Most of this of course was caused

by the tendency of the colonial military and administrators in Algeria and Morocco to act outside the norms of legality and acceptable behaviour. However, despite the air of unrespectability that surrounded them the respectable Right needed them. The French colonialists supplied the *causes célèbres* which underpinned ideas of French honour and French ambitions in the world and this extended beyond the Right and embraced elements of the Radical party as well. In the world of French politics, which was based more on blocs than political parties in the British sense, the colonialists supplied the most effective focus around which the Right as well as parts of the Radicals could unite. In 1909, before the fall of Clemenceau, the fortunes of the colonialists were at a low ebb. A particularly scandalous senatorial election in French India in 1909 resulted in calls for the abandonment of colonial representation (though not Algerian) in Parliament. The calls become so insistent that the *Comité d'action républicaine* felt it necessary to launch its own campaign for retaining colonial representation.

The fortunes of the *parti colonial* began to be revived in the aftermath of the fall of Clemenceau and later, in June 1910 by the occupation of parts of the Shawia region of Morocco by French troops under General Moinier (coincidentally at the same time that the anti-German Francophile, General Sir Henry Hugh Wilson was appointed Director of Military Operations at the British War Office). The Moinier expedition was supported by Britain but denounced in no uncertain terms by the French Socialists (see: *France and Morocco: General Moinier's Operations*, The Times, 1 July 1910, p.5). Then,

“Probably because of the situation in Morocco, Etienne was able to revive the *groupe colonial* in December 1910, although it now gained the support of only forty deputies. Most of these were hard-core activists; the more passive sympathisers did not join the group as they had done in previous years. The reunification of the *parti colonial* was further marked by Etienne's first appearance, in 1911 at the annual banquet of the *Comité d'action républicaine*.

Happily, from a colonialist point of view, the height of the Moroccan rebellion in the spring of 1911 coincided with the establishment in France of the weakest Government for more than twenty years, and one particularly vulnerable to colonialist pressure. The three key figures were: Monis, the Prime Minister, a nonentity . . . ; Cruppi, the Foreign Minister [a novice in colonial affairs]; and Berteaux, the Minister of War, a man consumed by the ambition to become the next President of the Republic. The weakness of Monis, the inexperience of Cruppi and the ambition of Berteaux were all essential elements in the success of Etienne's pressure for the creation of a French Morocco.

It was clear that, however serious the rebellion in Morocco became, the *groupe colonial* had no immediate prospect of persuading the Chamber to approve the establishment of a French protectorate. But Etienne calculated that, by acting on the Cabinet instead, he could present Parliament with a *fait accompli*. A protectorate did not have to be imposed at a stroke. It was necessary only to persuade the Monis Government to send a military expedition to Fez, ostensibly as a temporary protection of French nationals. Its continued presence could then be shown as necessary, and its successive reinforcement would gradually amount to a military occupation. . . .

The Fez expedition was ordered during the Easter recess, when only three ministers – Monis, Cruppi, and Berteaux –

remained in Paris. Messimy and Caillaux, the only ministers to have left accounts of the incident, both agree that the decision was taken by Cruppi and Berteaux, and then approved without discussion by Monis.” (Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, op. cit., pp.122-124).

The excuse which the French colonialist gave for the occupation of Fez was the threat to Europeans in the city arising from native unrest but doubts were very quickly expressed as to the veracity of this claim (see letters to *The Times* 22 June 1911 and 24 July 1911) and of course the occupation has to be viewed in the light of the previous behaviour of the colonialists: -

“During the five years between 1906 and 1911, France had been continually doing little things in Morocco, which, by a fair interpretation of the Algeciras Convention, were stretches of the powers conferred upon her, and doing them under pretexts which she herself had created, as for example in the Casablanca affair, where the French officials excited the Moors by desecrating one of their cemeteries and then shelled the town from a warship in order to quell the riot.

Finally, in 1911, France proclaimed that the foreign residents of Fez were in great danger and sent an army of sixteen thousand men to occupy the capital of Morocco. There was nothing wrong in Fez except the French military occupation of it. That was nothing more or less than the conquest of Morocco in the face of the Algeciras Convention forbidding it. Spain, one of the signatories of it, immediately occupied a position on the west coast of Morocco, and Germany, another signatory, sent *The Panther*, a little warship, to another place, Agadir, not far away from the position of the Spaniards. Great Britain immediately espoused the French cause, although she herself was one of the signatories of the ruptured Algeciras Convention, and almost threatened Germany with war. The British justified themselves for this apparently strange position of upholding the violator of a compact, to which she herself was a signatory, against the protest of another signatory by representing that Germany was seeking at Agadir a naval base for interfering with the trade between Great Britain and South America. But this was only the pretext. The real reason for the British attitude lay a great deal deeper. It was to secure the compensation to France for the French withdrawal of rights in Egypt and the French approval of the British plan for annexing to Egypt the regions between Egypt and Persia. The Germans knew this well enough then, and there were many among them who thought that Germany should have assumed the risk of war at that juncture under the issue of upholding the Algeciras Convention, but the Emperor would have none of it. His diplomats succeeded in settling the matter peaceably by accepting from France a concession which was barely sufficient to save Germany from humiliation. (*The European War of 1914: its causes, purposes, and probable results*, by John William Burgess. Published by A.C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1915, pp.72-74).

But it was not the French Parliament or even the French Cabinet who authorised the occupation. This was done by the French colonialists and three Cabinet Ministers with the intent of forcing their own Parliament into a *de facto* recognition of a French occupation. The 1911 events progressed in an almost mirror image as the earlier 1905 attempt by the colonialists to seize control of Morocco. In the middle of the crisis the Monis Government resigned and the President of France replaced it on 27 June by one more in tune with the needs of peace under Joseph Caillaux. On the basis of keeping your enemies close to you Caillaux kept Delcassé in his Cabinet while he played

Etienne at his own game by negotiating for peace with Germany in secret without informing some members of his Cabinet:

“Negotiations began on 9 July with Germany demanding the whole of the French Congo and France refusing. The French cabinet was split between the Prime Minister, Joseph Caillaux, who favoured a conciliatory attitude in negotiations, and Justin de Selves, the inexperienced foreign minister, firmly in the grip of officials at the Quai. . .

Caillaux’s secret and unofficial negotiations with Germany circumvented both the ‘bureaux’ and the foreign minister, and allowed an agreement to be reached with Berlin. The Franco-German treaty of 4 November 1911 was the logical follow-up to the 9 February 1909 agreement. It gave France the right to establish a protectorate over Morocco, on condition that German economic interests be respected, and that part of the French Congo be ceded to her. Though the treaty ended the immediate threat of war between the two countries it excited nationalist feeling on both sides of the Rhine. In France, the revelation of Caillaux’s secret negotiations, discovered by the foreign ministry’s interception of German diplomatic communications, opened him to charges of seeking rapprochement with Germany behind the back of his foreign minister and brought the ministry down. His successor Poincaré, who assumed both the premiership and the foreign ministry, was resolved to restore discipline to the Quai d’Orsay, rid it of its obstructive elements and replace them with men in whom Jules Cambon had confidence. Cambon saw the opportunity for renewing attempts at détente. (Keiger, op. cit., pp.646-647).

[Incidentally, Caillaux’s opposition to the First World War led to him being arrested and tried for treason in 1918].

As far as the French colonialists were concerned, the similarities between the outcomes of their adventure in 1905 and that of 1911 ended however at this point. Whereas the 1905 adventure was viewed as a defeat for their interests in that it resulted in the independence of Morocco being guaranteed by an international agreement – the Act of Algeciras – the outcome of the 1911 adventure was quite the opposite as it resulted in a free hand for France to declare the country a French protectorate. But more significantly, the 1911 Franco-German agreement on Morocco had a profound, and from Britain’s point of view, unforeseen, effect on the dynamics of the relationship between Britain and France. The removal of Germany from the Moroccan equation exposed the deeper stresses that lay behind the ambition of the French imperialists for control over Spanish Morocco and the defence by Britain of the continuing role of Spain in administering the coastal region of Morocco – Britain being determined to keep any major naval power be it Germany or France from occupation of the coast of Morocco for fear of threatening her base in Gibraltar and her Atlantic sea lines to Africa.

Caillaux’s Government fell on 21 January 1912 and was replaced by Raymond Poincaré’s right-leaning Government (although it included the left of centre Briand as well as the colonialist Delcassé). But before we deal with the fall of Caillaux we need to see it in the wider context in which it occurred. □

JFK Conspiracy Theories Part 5: Review of *Not In Your Lifetime* by Anthony Summers

By John Martin

The conspiracy writer Josiah Thompson once expressed the view that the JFK assassination was like a jigsaw puzzle, which was made more difficult by having pieces from another puzzle thrown into the box.

As part of this series on JFK conspiracy theories Anthony Summers’ acclaimed 1980 book *Conspiracy: who killed President Kennedy* was reviewed. The book has gone through numerous editions since then and the title has changed to *Not in your lifetime: the assassination of JFK*, reflecting the author’s reluctance to commit to a conspiracy thesis.

Since 1980 our knowledge of the assassination has increased to such an extent that many of the extraneous jigsaw pieces can be safely discarded.

To Summers’ credit his 2013 book shows that he has not been impervious to research in the last thirty years. The main text of the book is shorter, but the footnotes are longer. However, in this reviewer’s opinion, he has retained far too many errant pieces of the puzzle.

While some of the dubious grassy knoll witnesses are retained in the 2013 book he spares the reader New Orleans attorney Jim Garrison’s wild goose chase in Clinton Louisiana.

His handling of the murder of Officer JD Tippit is much more succinct. Drawing on research from Dale Myers, he concludes:

“The bulk of the evidence – and common sense – suggest that Oswald killed Officer Tippit on his own” (p. 107),

If Oswald killed Tippit “on his own” can there be any doubt that he was also responsible for the assassination of JFK?

The account of Oswald’s attempted assassination of the right wing General Edwin Walker is also pruned. There is nothing about the photograph with the licence plate cut out which received detailed treatment in the original book.

Although the 2013 book has benefited from editing there is still far too much clutter. This is particularly evident in his treatment of Oswald’s stay in Mexico in late September and early October 1963 when he visited the Cuban and Soviet Embassies. Summers returns to one of his favourite themes: that there was an Oswald imposter.

Unbelievably, he concludes:

“...Lee Oswald - and at some stage apparently an Oswald imposter - had badgered Cuban and Soviet diplomats in Mexico City to grant him visas” (page 370).

The evidence that Oswald was in Mexico is overwhelming. It is highly unlikely that there was an imposter. But the idea that Oswald was in Mexico *and* there was an imposter is plain silly. It doesn't seem credible that Oswald was in Mexico proclaiming his Marxist allegiances while an imposter was acting in a similar way. The imposter would not only have been superfluous to the requirement of portraying Oswald as a Marxist, but would also have run the risk of exposing himself and his controllers.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of Oswald's visit to Mexico that are shrouded in controversy. Despite extensive CIA surveillance of the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico, no audio recording or photograph of Oswald in Mexico survives.

However, two Warren Commission Attorneys, David Slawson and William Coleman, claim to have heard tapes of Oswald in Mexico months after the assassination.

The fact that the tapes were eventually destroyed months after the assassination, when they had become historic artefacts, suggests that there was something very embarrassing about their content.

What could that have been? It seems clear that Oswald was trying to present himself as a Marxist revolutionary in order to ingratiate himself to officials in the Cuban Embassy. He had newspaper cuttings of his *Fair Play for Cuba* activities in New Orleans as proof of his credentials. But the New Orleans caper was a piece of street theatre. By the time he visited Mexico his most significant revolutionary act had been the attempted assassination of General Edwin Walker. What if Oswald mentioned this unsolved crime and it found its way on to CIA surveillance tapes? That would have been an explosive revelation which would have seriously damaged the reputation of the CIA in the aftermath of the assassination.

Of course, the foregoing is speculation. But it at least has the merit of fitting into a coherent narrative.

In his 2013 book *Summers* is more critical of Kennedy's foreign policy. In particular, while Kennedy was making discreet diplomatic overtures to Castro, he had not called off his assassination plots against the Cuban leader. Summers also notes that Kennedy in a vitriolic speech in Miami on 18th of November (4 days before the assassination) called for a coup d'état against Castro. It is worth quoting an extract from that speech:

“...a small band of conspirators has stripped the Cuban people of their freedom and handed over the independence and sovereignty of the Cuban nation to forces beyond the hemisphere. They have made Cuba a victim of foreign imperialism ... a weapon in an effort dictated by external powers to subvert the other American republics. This, and this alone, divides us. As long as this is true, nothing is possible. Without it, everything is possible... Once Cuban sovereignty has been restored we will extend the hand of friendship and assistance” (page 373).

In conclusion, Summers' book on the JFK assassination has not aged well. This may not be the author's fault. The evidence that has emerged since his 1980 book has not tended to support his tentative thesis “that a renegade element in U.S. intelligence

conspired with its pawns in the Mafia and the anti-Castro movement to murder the President and to execute Oswald”. The thesis has stalled and in some respects has been in retreat. On the other hand, while the Warren Commission Report has endured relentless attacks over a period of almost half a century, its main conclusions – that Oswald assassinated JFK and there was no evidence of a conspiracy – have not been disproved. □

Reply to Tim O'Sullivan

It is a little surprising that Tim O'Sullivan in his article in the December 2013 issue of this magazine seems to believe some of the silliest conspiracy theories concerning the JFK assassination.

One of the oldest urban myths is that witnesses and others privy to secret information were routinely bumped off to conceal from the world the true identity of the real culprits. The only example Tim gives of the existence of this “murder incorporated” group is the case of Dorothy Kilgallen, a celebrated gossip columnist, who had a brief conversation with Jack Ruby. But the cause of her death was a drug overdose. There was no evidence of foul play. Her death occurred more than a year after she spoke to Ruby. Tim is asking us to believe that this gossip columnist and game show participant with ready access to the media kept quiet about the scoop of the century until her death.

There are numerous conspiracy theorists with far more detailed knowledge of the JFK assassination who have managed to dodge bullets for more than 50 years. These include Mark Lane and Josiah Thompson who are still alive. Jim Garrison died of cancer in 1992.

Amazingly, Tim seems to take the statements of Madeleine Brown seriously. There is no evidence whatsoever that she had an affair with Lyndon Johnson. But let's look at her other claims. She asserts that not only did she have an affair, but that Johnson brought her to Jack Ruby's club. Not only did he bring her to the club but he played cards with her there and shared some of the details of the conspiracy to kill JFK. Think about that for a fraction of a second. Is it likely that this leading political figure would darken the door of Ruby's down at heel establishment (never mind bring his mistress there)? Needless to say there is no corroboration that Johnson ever attended this place.

Tim may be right on the shortcomings of the JFK autopsy. But who was responsible for this? Not the CIA or the military industrial complex. It was the Kennedy entourage who insisted on JFK's body being flown back to Washington, flouting Texan law. Jackie Kennedy took the decision to have the autopsy at Bethesda and it was performed under the close supervision of Robert Kennedy in order to prevent public knowledge of Kennedy's ailments such as Addison's disease.

But notwithstanding the shortcomings of the autopsy the House Select Committee on Assassinations (1979) was able to conclude that the bullets that hit JFK all came from the back (the Texas School Depository). Although it concluded that there was a shot fired from the grassy knoll (relying on acoustic evidence that has since been discredited) it was forced to admit that this shot had missed.

Finally, there is no evidence that Kennedy abandoned the operations against Castro. They were in place up until his death.

John Martin

The Virgin Lands by Leonid Brezhnev, 1978, Progress Publishers Book Review

By John Martin

In the light of the current conflict in Ukraine it is interesting to note that in the decades following the death of Stalin the Soviet Union was dominated by leaders with close connections with that unfortunate country. The man who was to succeed Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, was born on the Ukraine-Russian border and as a teenager his family moved to Yuzovka (now called Donetsk in Eastern Ukraine). His parents were of Russian and Ukrainian origin. Khrushchev's protégé and nemesis, Leonid Brezhnev, was born in the Ukrainian city of Dniprodzerzhynsk.

The book begins with the Russian peasant phrase: "Only let there be grain and the songs will come of themselves". The author remarks that for all the great scientific achievements, grain remains a staple product. After the destruction wrought by the Second World War the most urgent task was for the Soviet people to feed themselves.

There were two elements to the strategy: firstly, to increase the yield from existing land; and secondly to cultivate land that had never been farmed before. The Communist Party calculated that the benefit to be gained from cultivating new or "virgin" land would far exceed any gains from increased productivity on existing farmland. From all over the Soviet Union young people inspired by patriotism and communist values volunteered to go to remote regions with inhospitable climates in order to conquer part of Nature's dominion for the benefit of man.

Although Brezhnev started his life and political career in the Ukraine, he later worked in Moldova, Belarus and Western Russia participating in the collectivisation of Soviet Agriculture. Such was the peripatetic lifestyle of an ambitious Soviet Communist! In 1954 he was ordered to move to Kazakhstan to implement the Virgin Lands policy. He notes that this policy had been tried before in Tsarist times, but failed. The paintings of Sergei Ivanov and the writings of Chekhov describe the epic disaster of the policy. The Communist Party realised that it could not rely on the enthusiasm of the masses. The revolutionary fervour had to be tempered by the application of science. Brezhnev was a land surveyor by profession and part of his job was to identify the appropriate crops to be grown in the different soil types. Often he had to curb the enthusiasm or "voluntarism" of local communist leaders who wanted to grow what they wanted regardless of the plan and objective environmental conditions.

One local communist wanted to sow his wheat earlier than everyone else, with disastrous consequences. From experience the technical experts knew that there was no point in sowing earlier than May in the particular region of Kazakhstan because wild oats would grow along with the wheat. The trick was to allow the wild oats to grow unimpeded until May and then eradicate them before sowing the wheat.

As well as the over enthusiasm of some communist pioneers, he had to combat the conservatism of the local population who did not realise the potential opened up by the application of new technology.

Some of the book reads like a modern management textbook. Brezhnev believed that an enterprise could not be run from the office. It is necessary to go out and talk to the people doing the work. The modern term for this is *Management By Walking About* (MBWA). He gives numerous examples of this. Talking to some workers he realised that in some regions the ploughshares were being broken by the unforgiving soil. The workers were able to design a new plough that would not break. Brezhnev ordered newly designed ploughs for the region, but they would not be available in time for that year's growing cycle. Accordingly, the workers and management had to improvise. They found that if the depth of the plough was reduced by a few centimetres the level of breakages was dramatically reduced with only a small reduction in yield.

Each problem solved gave rise to new problems. For example, the abundant harvest in 1954 gave rise to storage and transportation challenges. In this respect Brezhnev can't resist taking a swipe at Khrushchev who ordered the building of a narrow gauge railway for the transportation of the grain. This proved to be a disaster. Brezhnev stresses that he is not criticising his colleague for his lack of expertise in transport (or to use the modern term supply chain management) but his failure to seek advice. He comments as follows:

"Modern economics, politics, the life of society are so complex that they will yield only to powerful collective reasoning. One must listen to all that the experts and scientists have to say, and not only to those of one trend or school. One must be able to consult the people, so as to avoid any chopping and changing, hasty ill considered, voluntaristic decisions."

The Virgin Lands policy was a great success, but it was achieved with great effort and personal sacrifice. In the book Brezhnev briefly hints at the toll on his health of the long hours and stressful challenges. It was an important step in his rise to the most powerful position in the Soviet Union, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

It is unfortunate that when we in the West think of Brezhnev it is not of the dynamic and competent technocrat from his days in Kazakhstan but his final years as the personification of the Soviet Gerontocracy in its death throes.

The Soviet Union had tremendous achievements to her credit. Up until the early 1970s it was closing the gap between her living standards and that of the United States. It would be interesting to know why her amazing progress stalled and then began to unravel. The Gorbachev reforms proved not to be the solution, but a harbinger of collapse and capitulation to capitalist values. □

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Cork Evening Echo – Exchange of Letters

[We reprint below the exchange of correspondence in the *Cork Evening Echo* on the subject of the First World War, starting December 2012.

Writers who think WW1 was fought ‘for justice’ speak of a ‘tragedy of immense proportions that should never have happened’ and say that such remembrance will make it more likely that ‘this will never happen again’ and this ‘enormous sacrifice will not have been in vain’.

These writers say BOTH that war ‘should not happen again’ AND that it was right to go to war. But if it was right to go to war, then surely it should be done again, given similar circumstances.

This contradiction is the same as the one about British soldiers in Iraq.

There are public doubts today about the Iraq war. The war in Iraq has caused more harm than good to Iraq and the world, even though the main target was killed. It is publicly admitted that the reason given at the time was a lie (that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction).

Nevertheless, British soldiers in Iraq are honoured as ‘heroes’, in particular at Remembrance ceremonies. How can fighting in an immoral war be honoured?

This justification of all Britain’s wars, combined with fine words about the ‘horrors of war’, ensures that its people are happy with war, past and present. Fed war propaganda again, it will follow its government into war, and young men will entertain the idea of going off to kill, whatever the war aims, with the approval of government and with a supportive public opinion.

This is what we see in Britain and its allies: government and population have really no qualms about killing, since they agree to solve problems by means of war. If they had qualms about killing they would use all possible other means to solve problems. Yet they don’t. There are many examples of this in recent years. Hate propaganda against Saddam Hussein and Gaddafi led to acceptance and even support for atrocious bloodshed and the ruin of their countries. Ireland has tail-ended the Great Powers in their wars, giving moral support and some military assistance.

We should look at WW1 critically. Britain joining the European war, and in the process turning it into a world war, in 1914 was not ‘the last available option’. War happened because part of the government decided it should; a propaganda storm was then let loose. The editorials of newspapers of the Liberal Party said forcefully up to the beginning of August 1914 that war would be a catastrophe and that it could and should be avoided. If these *Cork Evening Echo* writers were genuine in their anti-war feelings (‘tragedy of immense proportions that should never have happened’), they would find out who decided on the war when they could have chosen otherwise. They would explain that intense propaganda was unleashed precisely because the reason for war was so flimsy; the case for war had to be bolstered by invented ‘good versus evil’ arguments. With that knowledge, and with this new way of considering war, populations could look critically at the reasons given today for war and stand firm for an alternative solution. There might be a chance then that war might not ‘happen’, that is, be chosen, again.

For the text of the 1914 Liberal editorials, go to ‘atholbooks.org’, click on ‘more free downloads’; the pamphlet is called ‘August 1914’.]

Poppy is in honour of our war dead - Evening Echo 11/12/12

WITH the recent refusal by Sunderland footballer James McClean to wear a commemorative poppy, this contentious issue has once again come to the fore in Ireland.

McClean is entitled to do as he wishes but surely there is a huge misconception why the poppy is worn. It has nothing to do with the British army. This war was the greatest tragedy in history. Residents of countries all over the world, including Ireland, joined up in the fight for justice.

In this country this was encouraged by certain Republican sections in the hope that it would help in achieving a 32-county Ireland.

Another tragedy was that the advent of the war put a stop to the quest for Home Rule. Cork was especially hit because all the enlisting Irish arrived in Cork to be prepared and trained for combat before sailing off to battle. Sadly, some never returned and even more came back in boxes. Almost 50,000 Irish lost their lives.

The wearing of the poppy is to remember all those, including Irish, who died. Ironically, the Easter Lily is worn with pride, although it can be said that it is stained by the blood of the many victims of IRA atrocities. I once asked a man who was selling the lily where does the money go. He winked and told me it was for guns for the boys.

Maybe there should be a compromise; a red poppy on a green harp. That should keep everyone happy.

James McKeon, Halldene Way, Cork.

Poppycock - Evening Echo 31/12/12

James McKeon says the wearing of the poppy is to remember all those, including the Irish, who died in World War I. He says it has nothing to do with the British army, and that the 50,000 Irish who died were fighting for justice.

Assuming a one for one kill ratio, the Irish in World War I must have killed about 50,000 men from the opposing countries – Austrians, Turks, Germans, Hungarians and others. If Mr. McKeon is right, then the young men killed by the Irish soldiers were fighting AGAINST justice. Does the poppy commemorate these as well?

Why were these men fighting and killing each other? Why did they not just stay at home and live in peace? In fact, would it not be better to commemorate and honour the people who refused to get involved in the slaughter? The world would now be a better place if everybody had stayed at home in 1914.

So why did these young Irishmen leave their homes and travel to other countries to slaughter other young men? Was it for justice? None of the countries they were fighting against had invaded or attacked them. What was it all for?

In his 1914 speeches, John Redmond urged them not to “confine their efforts to remaining at home to defend the shores of Ireland from an unlikely invasion” but to go “wherever the fighting line extends, in defence of right, of freedom, and religion in this war”.

One of the places where Irish soldiers defended “right, freedom, religion” was in Gallipoli. In alliance with Russian armies, Irish soldiers invaded Turkey. Turkish soldiers defended their country bravely against overwhelming forces and fought

on until all invading troops were finally expelled in 1922. Which side was fighting for justice?

What about justice and religion for “poor little Catholic Belgium”? This is the Belgium that was exposed by Roger Casement for the central African holocaust of millions of slave labourers. And nearly fifty years later Irish soldiers still had to die in the Congo trying to clean up Belgium’s mess.

Unlike the soldiers of other countries, the Irish soldiers were not conscripted. They chose to fight, they were not forced to the slaughter. Why did they do it?

It is common knowledge that many of them were poor, and signed up for the pay. In other words, they killed for money. Others are said to have signed up out of a spirit of adventure. So they killed for pleasure. Should mercenaries and psychopaths be honoured, commemorated, and held up as an example to follow?

It is quite possible that some of them actually believed Redmond and thought they were fighting for “justice, freedom and religion”. If that is the case they should be, not honoured, but pitied for their gullibility.

Certainly we should remember the Great War deaths – as a horrific warning of the harm that is done by war-mongering propaganda. But I don’t think that is what Mr. McKeon has in mind.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

Irishmen died for cause they believed in – Evening Echo 5/1/13

While the anti-war sentiments contained in Pat Maloney’s response to James McKeon are admirable, he makes some assertions about Ireland’s involvement in the First World War which are open to question.

By applying something he calls a one-to-one kill ratio he states that the Irishmen who died while fighting for the British armed forces “must have killed about 50,000 from the opposing countries”.

This simplifies the situation. Many of the Irish who died had non-combatant roles, others lost their lives when their ship struck a mine or were sunk by a German U-boat, while more were killed in the trenches before ever they had an opportunity to fire a shot in anger.

Mr Maloney also states that the world would have been a better place if those who fought in the war had stayed at home and lived their lives in peace. And so it would – but somebody should have told that to the Kaiser before he decided to invade France and Belgium.

Ireland’s involvement in the war must also be looked at in the context of the time. In 1914 this country was part of the United Kingdom, therefore when the British government declared war on Germany Ireland also found itself at war.

Turkey subsequently chose to enter the war on the side of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Once it did so it would have considered Ireland its enemy.

When the war broke out, thousands of Irishmen volunteered to join the British armed forces. Mr Maloney stated that it was common knowledge that many did so because they were poor. If that is the case it begs the question – how many of these men only became poverty-stricken in August 1914?

His use of words like ‘mercenaries’ and ‘psychopaths’ to describe those who enlisted is unfortunate to say the least, as is his contention that more were ‘gullible’ because they followed the advice of their political leaders.

More than 200,000 Irishmen of all classes and creeds enlisted in the British armed forces during the war. Thousands

more supported the war effort at home. In the light of this, is it possible that Ireland was a nation of gullible misfits at the time?

I don’t believe that this was the case. I do, however, believe that the vast majority of those who volunteered for the British armed forces did so out of a sense of patriotism. These men lived in a pre-independence Ireland.

In 1914, their country found itself at war and they saw it as their duty to enlist.

Unfortunately thousands never came home, and these men deserve better than to be labelled ‘mercenaries’ or ‘psychopaths’.

As the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War approaches, they, and the hundreds of Irishmen who died fighting for the other allied nations, deserve to be remembered – not only for their enormous sacrifice, but also as a reminder of the horror of war.

Gerry White

Chairman, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

Harbour View Road, Cork

Letters, Evening Echo 18/1/2013

The Great War of 1914-18 poses many questions and problems. For instance, why was Ireland as a country involved in it?

And since no individual Irish person was personally forced to participate, why did individual Irishmen freely make the personal and private decision to leave their homes and travel overseas to kill people who had never attacked, invaded, or occupied their country, stolen their towns, livelihoods and farms, enslaved them, or caused millions of them to starve?

John Redmond said the Great War was for “right, freedom, and religion”. James McKeon (Letters, Evening Echo, 11/12/2012) says the Irish soldiers fought for “justice”.

Western Front Chairman Gerry White (5/1/2013) says that Ireland “found itself at war” in 1914, and that Irish soldiers enlisted in the British army as a “patriotic duty” because Ireland was governed by Britain at that time.

Pouring cold water on reasons which are sometimes put forward to explain why Irishmen voluntarily chose to leave their own country and go off to kill other young men, Mr White doubts whether the pay or the excitement motivated any of them to start killing people. In fact he questions whether some of them ever got the opportunity to kill anybody at all. He says they were orderlies, sailors, non-combatants, not killers.

Well, if the Irish soldiers who enlisted voluntarily were not much use for killing their “enemies”, I wonder why, in March 1918 at the most critical point of its war, the British government was prepared to send over its former Army Commander-in-Chief, the “Irishman” Lord French, to govern Ireland with war planes and an army of 50,000 desperately needed soldiers{ I wonder why he did this}^1 in order to enforce at gunpoint the conscription of 100,000 young Irishmen, who French famously described as “useless and idle youths ... between 18 and ... 25”, to force them into the killing fields, and to shoot them dead if they refused to kill other young men who had never done them any harm? If Lord French’s criminal plan had succeeded there would now be a good case for commemorating such “useless and idle youths”, and perhaps wearing a flower in memory of the involuntary sacrifice, or murder, of innocent young lives.

Killing people is a very serious matter. There have to be very good reasons for doing it. How does one “find oneself at war”? {“Your Honour, here was I, walking down the street, just minding my own business, when suddenly I found myself robbing the Post Office at gunpoint!”}^2 But it seems that the decision of “our” government to go to war in 1914 is good enough for Mr White. In other words “my” country, right or

wrong. The war-aims of “our” government do not matter. This is the mindless militarism which causes such destruction and suffering to mankind.

I wonder where does Mr White stand on the thorny old question of invading Poland? Or what if, as in 1807, “our” government decided to bomb Denmark? Or if it decided to seize those juicy fishing grounds off Iceland? Or to go after weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? Or if it decreed that it was going to devour large chunks of Africa, India, or China? (Oh! wait – I’m afraid “we” actually did most of that stuff!)

Does Mr White believe that uninvolved civilians would be morally justified in enlisting voluntarily to go on a killing spree to implement such criminal decisions? And now that we know better, should we be commemorating and honouring such killing-sprees?

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

¹ inserted by E.Echo

² deleted by E. Echo

Evening Echo, January 24, 2013

Why it’s right to honour 200,000 Irish

IN his latest letter on the subject of Ireland and the Great War of 1914-18 (Evening Echo, January 18) Pat Maloney said that the war “poses many questions and problems” and that killing people is “a very serious matter.”

I agree with him on both counts. The Great War was one of the most catastrophic events of the 20th Century and it should never have happened. It resulted in the deaths of millions of people and its causes are still debated by historians all over the world.

I also agree with his condemnation of militarism. In fact, it was precisely the kind of militarism that he mentions that led Germany to invade neutral Belgium in 1914, to initiate a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare and to launch Zeppelin raids on Britain — actions which resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians.

However, when questioning why so many Irishmen chose to leave their homes and attack people who had never done them any harm, Mr Maloney should remember that Germany had absolutely no difficulty attacking Irish targets.

During the war German U-boats sank a total of 13 ships belonging to the City of Cork Steampacket Company — some without warning. Four other ships belonging to this Cork firm were sunk by German mines. Altogether, a total of 157 passengers and crew lost their lives in these incidents.

Mr Maloney also questioned my belief (Evening Echo letters, January 5) that the majority of those Irishmen who fought in the war did so for ‘patriotic’ reasons.

Whether he likes it or not, during the war more than 200,000 Irishmen voluntarily enlisted in the British armed forces and countless others volunteered to serve with the armed forces of the other allied nations.

Their decision to do so must be looked at in the context of the time and not with the wisdom of hindsight or through the lens of an independent Ireland.

In this respect, perhaps it might be worth looking at what those who actually did the fighting believed.

In a letter entitled ‘Why we fought’ that was published in December 1918, Mr J O’Flynn the Secretary of the Cork Branch of the Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers Federation, wrote: “At the outbreak of the War we, as plain men, felt that it was our duty to stand against the threat to civilisation. Were we right? Was it an honourable thing to do? Had we any doubts about our duty to Christianity and to our country? The leaders of our Church agreed that we were right.

“We found our Nationalist leaders, though opposed in politics, agreed that we were right. We have since been told that our leaders should have made some sort of a political bargain for Ireland first. Our answer to that is that you cannot bargain with a nation’s honour.

“We went into the War in the name of Ireland, with clean hands and a pure heart, and we came out with a reputation that did not disgrace the name of Ireland.”

I will leave it to the people of Ireland to judge if these men were either ‘mercenaries,’ ‘gullible’ or ‘psychopaths’ as Mr Maloney stated in his original letter. I for one still don’t believe they were.

Gerry White, Chairman, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

Letters, Evening Echo, 4 February 2013

According to Gerry White of the Western Front Association (Letters, January 24 2013), the Irish soldiers of the Great War killed, not for money, nor for excitement, nor because they were duped by war propaganda. Instead they killed as a Christian duty, for the honour of Ireland, in defence of civilisation. He says that Irish sailors and civilians were killed by German U-boats; and militarist Germany invaded neutral Belgium causing thousands of civilian deaths.

It is true that a ruthless genocidal power “found itself at war” in 1914. It is also true that a neutral country which struggled desperately to stay out of the conflict was savagely invaded, occupied, and forced into the slaughter.

The genocidal power was Belgium, which was guilty of the brutal holocaust of untold millions of slave labourers in the Congo. The innocent, peaceful neutral was Greece which was invaded, conquered and occupied by Ireland.

By us? Well, by Britain actually. But according to Mr White, the British government was “our” government, and Britain’s Great War was Our War. By Mr White’s reasoning Ireland was a superpower which owned most of the surface of the earth, extracting untold wealth from the greatest empire the world had ever seen.

Ireland was not attacked, invaded or occupied by Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria-Hungary or Germany. Neither was Britain — which is more to the point. Nevertheless, “we” declared war on Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria-Hungary and Germany. “We” embarked on this orgy of slaughter by choice, not necessity. “We” could easily have stayed out of it. Therefore Ireland has no reasonable cause for complaint if the peoples we attacked carried out counter-measures against us.

So how and why, in Mr White’s words, did we “find ourselves at war”? Mr White, who celebrates and honours Our War, offers no plausible answer to this crucial question. But at least, according to the veteran’s letter quoted by Mr White, we conducted the slaughter “with clean hands and a pure heart”, so perhaps we should now be bursting with pride, even though we cannot explain how or why we “found ourselves” engaging in this unspeakable brutality.

A major element of “our” Great War strategy was starvation of civilian populations by means of naval blockade. Should we also be proud of our despicable war on innocent civilians?

An armistice took place on November 11, 1918. Germany had already offered an armistice on December 12, 1916; a cessation of the slaughter by all sides, with all sides returning home and giving up all Great War conquests. But this offer was rejected by “us”, as were several other such proposals, including one by Pope Benedict XV on August 1, 1917. How many more millions of lives were thus destroyed by “our” insatiable blood-lust?

And even our 1918 “armistice” was a fraud, because instead of terminating the brutal slaughter we continued our barbaric war of starvation against innocent civilians. Hundreds of thousands of helpless innocents were starved to death by us during the months following our so-called armistice. And far from giving up our conquests, in 1918 we expanded “our” Empire with vast new acquisitions in Africa and the Middle East. I wonder if this had anything to do with why we “found ourselves at war” in the first place?

Was there a psychopathic aspect in Our War? Did some of us go to war simply for the pleasure of violence and killing? When Corkman Michael O’Leary was awarded the Victoria Cross for killing eight Germans, his father said: “I am surprised he didn’t do more. I often laid out 20 men myself with a stick coming from Macroom Fair, and it is a bad trial of Mick that he could kill only eight, and he having a rifle and bayonet.”

This mentality was present at all levels: “I think a curse should rest upon me, because I love this war. I know it is smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment, and yet, I can’t help it. I enjoy every second of it” (– Winston Churchill to the British Prime Minister’s wife Violet Asquith on February 22, 1915. Churchill’s other psychopathic exploits include the consignment of millions of Bengali civilians to death by starvation in 1943.)

Perhaps Mr White can take some comfort from the famous recruiting speech of Michael O’Leary’s father at Inchigeela: “If you don’t enlist, the Germans will come here and will do to you what the English have been doing for the last seven hundred years.”

Mr White says that, whether I like it or not, during the war more than 200,000 Irishmen voluntarily enlisted in the British armed forces. Involvement of large numbers makes it worse, not better. There are probably more than 200,000 Irishmen abusing drugs and alcohol at this moment. The fact that there are so many wrong-doers does not mean I should respect them and honour them for committing a crime which causes harm to themselves and others.

We should be careful what we give approval and remembrance to, as there are consequences.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

Evening Echo Thursday, November 7, 2013 Article by Gerry White. (extracts)

Chairman of the Cork Branch of the Western Front Association, GERRY WHITE, calls on the people of Cork to remember the fallen of the Great War this weekend.

Each day hundreds of people walk past the war memorial on Cork’s South Mall without giving it as much as second glance. The overwhelming majority of these people probably have no idea of its history or what it represents.

The memorial was paid for by public subscription and was erected by the Cork Independent Ex-Servicemen’s Club. This organisation consisted, for the most part, of nationalist-minded ex-servicemen who served in the British armed forces during the Great War of 1914-18 and who joined the Cork branch of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers (NFDDSS) when they returned home.

When the NFDDSS was amalgamated into the British Legion in May 1921, many ex-servicemen in the Cork branch decided not to join this new organisation and instead established the Cork Independent Ex-Servicemen’s Club.

[...] As the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War in August 2014 approaches, there is something else the people

of Cork can do to —they can complete the work undertaken by the Cork Independent Ex-Servicemen’s Club by erecting a memorial wall at a suitable location containing the names of all those with connections to the city and county of Cork who fell in the war.

[...] At 11am on Saturday, the Western Front Association will hold its annual Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial on the South Mall. Among those in attendance will be the Lord Mayor of Cork, the Mayor of Cork county, members of the diplomatic corps, veteran’s organisations and local historical societies. Members of the general public are also welcome to attend and lay a floral tribute to family members or people from their locality killed in the War.

As we remember those Corkmen who fell in the war this weekend, their deaths should remind us of the pain and suffering caused by conflict. If such memory serves to remind us of the need for nations to live in peace, perhaps their enormous sacrifice may not have been in vain.

Echo Letters Nov 12, 2013:

In his article (Echo, November 7 2013) Mr Gerry White of the Western Front Association says that “the overwhelming majority of [the people who daily pass by Cork’s Great War Memorial] probably have no idea of its history or what it represents.”

If this is really the case, then it is a truly deplorable state of affairs. Mr White says that about 4,000 Cork fighters died in the four years of the war. This averages about 20 per week. But these are the casualties of one side only. The job of soldiers at war is, not to die, but to kill. Famously, Michael O’Leary’s father expressed disappointment at his son’s performance when the latter was awarded the Victoria Cross for killing a measly eight Germans.

Assuming a one-for-one kill ratio, it is not unreasonable to deduce that Cork’s participation in the Great War resulted in 40 deaths per week, on average, for four years. By participating freely and voluntarily in the massacre Cork brought about the deaths of 40 young men every week. Young men from Bremen, from Bavaria, from Ulm, from Istanbul, from Gurrenabraham, from Inchigeela. Why?

Slaughter on such a scale cries out for explanation, understanding and meaning. Instead we are given dangerous platitudes about heroism, sacrifice and “remembrance”.

Mr White say 4,000 Cork people died. The 30-year war in Northern Ireland also resulted in about 4,000 deaths, on average less than 3 per week – for the conflict as a whole, and for all sides. It would rightly be considered narrowly prejudicial to count only the deaths of one side of that conflict. Likewise, it is narrowly prejudicial to spout platitudes about the heroism, sacrifice and “remembrance” of one side only without considering the true causes of the conflict, the rights and wrongs of it.

Why did it actually happen? Who or what was responsible?

If the real causes are not addressed, explained and understood then, lulled by one-sided platitudes about heroism, sacrifice and “remembrance” we are guilty of trivialising such tragedies, and in grave danger of repeating them.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

Echo Nov 21, 2013

We must remember all Great War victims

IN his comments (‘War reason’, Nov 12) on my article about the importance of remembering the 4,000 servicemen with Cork connections who died in the Great War, Pat Maloney correctly

identified that the slaughter which occurred during that conflict ‘cries out for explanation, understanding and meaning’ and that it would be ‘narrowly prejudicial to sprout platitudes about the heroism, sacrifice and remembrance of one side only’.

I am in complete agreement with him.

The Western Front Association is strictly non-political and is certainly not one-sided. It does not seek to justify or glorify the Great War but to study it, and remember those from all countries who died in that conflict.

If Mr Maloney was present at the association’s evening of remembrance at the Triskel Arts Centre on November 8, he would have seen a German and Turkish national remember the people from those countries who died in the war. He would have also heard both myself and the Deputy Lord Mayor speak about the horror of war and our wish the world should never experience it again.

If he were present at the association’s service of remembrance the following day he would have heard both the Lord Mayor of Cork and the Mayor of Cork County express similar sentiments. He would have also seen diplomatic representatives from Belgium, Poland, Australia, Britain and the Russian Federation lay wreaths in memory of the people from those countries who fell in the war.

He would also see people from Cork who lost a relative in the war, and who never got the opportunity to visit their grave or memorial, place a floral tribute at the memorial.

Finally, at the end of the service, he would have seen a small child lay flowers at the memorial to those who lost their lives at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in memory of the innocent victims of all wars.

The fact that the Great War happened is a tragic historical fact. There is no doubt in my mind that the overwhelming majority of Cork men who fought and died in the war believed they were doing the right thing.

It is only right that we remember them each November, and in doing so we should again remind ourselves of the horror and high human cost of war.

Gerry White, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

Evening Echo 2 Dec 2013

War debate

MR Gerry White of the Western Front Association (Letters, Nov 21) touched on a key issue of the Great War

Remembrance controversy. He says he believes that “the overwhelming majority of Corkmen who fought and died in the war believed they were doing the right thing”. In other words, the killing they did was honourable, praiseworthy and morally justifiable. He also says that a German and a Turk turned up at one of the numerous Remembrance events.

Do these individuals believe that when their countrymen killed their Cork enemies it was praiseworthy, just and moral? Do they believe “the overwhelming majority of Germans and Turks who killed their enemies from Cork and elsewhere believed they were doing the right thing”?

Is it the case that the killing by BOTH sides was praiseworthy and morally justifiable? If so, killing must be a good thing in all circumstances. What a horrible thought! Or was one side right and the other side wrong in the Great War? If that is the case, at least some of the participants in Mr White’s Remembrance ceremonies were honouring evil as well as good. So they must be either deluded or hypocritical.

Mr White says: “The fact that the Great War happened is a tragic historical fact.” Earthquakes “happen”, but wars don’t just “happen”. Wars are caused by people.

Just like the Iraq War, the sheer scale of criminality in the Great War allows no room for furtive evasiveness about this issue. This is the point that Mr White must deal with if he wants the citizens of Cork to join him in his British Army Great War Remembrance crusade.

In fact, in an *Evening Echo* letter of January 24, 2013, Mr White momentarily dropped the fluffy rhetoric of tragedy, sacrifice and heroism when he attempted to justify World War I as a necessary action against a brutal, militarist power which invaded a neutral country and criminally used sea-power against civilians.

But he was NOT referring to the invasion of neutral Greece by Britain (and, in his logic, by Ireland). Nor was Mr White referring to the policy of a British (and Irish) total naval blockade to prevent food from reaching German women, children, sick and aged; a policy it continued after the 1918 Armistice, causing the further deaths of several hundred thousand more defenceless civilians — crimes committed AFTER the war itself was over and done with.

Mr White is active in the promotion of Remembrance. Therefore he is under some obligation to set aside empty platitudes, and explain why this criminality should be publicly honoured.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment.

Evening Echo, Cork—11.12.2013

IN his letter of December 2, Pat Maloney, the editor of Labour Comment, again takes issue with my views on the matter of remembering those who died in the Great War of 1914-18 and also the war itself.

If the reader is still sceptical about the view that a war was required to bring about British commercial supremacy over Germany, when economic competition was going against the Empire, this record of a 1910 conversation between Arthur Balfour and Henry White, the United States Ambassador in London, should be considered. It is taken from a book of White’s experiences written in 1930. White, a strong Anglophile, treats the conversation as a humorous aside. But, as they say, many a true word spoken in jest:

“**Balfour** (somewhat lightly): We are probably fools not to find a reason for declaring war on Germany before she builds too many ships and takes away our trade.

White: You are a very high-minded man in private life. How can you possibly contemplate anything so politically immoral as provoking a war against a harmless nation which has as good a right to a navy as you have? If you wish to compete with German trade, work harder.

Balfour: That would mean lowering our standard of living. Perhaps it would be simpler for us to have a war.

White: I am shocked that you of all men should enunciate such principles.

Balfour (again lightly): Is it a question of right or wrong? Maybe it is just a question of keeping our supremacy.” (Henry White and Allan Nevins, *Thirty Years Of American Diplomacy*, p.257-8.)

Over the course of numerous letters I have made my position on these issues quite clear and they are now a matter for the public record. However, lest there be ANY misunderstanding, I will again say that I think the war was a tragedy of immense proportions that should never have happened and that it is also right to remember those from all countries who died in the conflict.

In his last letter, Mr. Maloney also referred to my 'British Army Great War Remembrance Crusade'. I must say I have absolutely NO idea what he is talking about. The Western Front Association is not a British Army regimental or veterans' association. It is a historical association that has members all over the world and endeavours to remember those from ALL countries who fell in the war.

In his letter of December 27, 2012, Mr Maloney stated that the Irishmen who fought in the Great War were either 'psychopaths', 'mercenaries' or 'gullible'. Thousands of people living in Ireland today had a relative who fought and possibly died in that war and I would be interested to know how many of them would agree with Mr Maloney's words.

In his last letter, Mr Maloney went on to state that at least some people who attend remembrance ceremonies MUST be either 'deluded or hypocritical'. I must say I find his words unfortunate to say the least. The human impulse to remember deceased relatives is as old as history itself and I'm surprised and disappointed that Mr Maloney finds it so difficult to accept that the people of Cork would attend remembrance services to do just that.

Next year, many countries that took part in the Great War will mark the centenary of its outbreak and remember their people who died in the war. Personally, I think it is good that people from those countries can now stand side by side at remembrance ceremonies. I would, however, be interested to find out if Mr Maloney thinks that the servicemen from those countries were also 'psychopaths', 'mercenaries' and 'gullible' — or does he just reserve these words for the Irishmen who fought in the war?

Over the coming years, millions of people all over the world will remember a relative who fell in the war and thousands more will attend a remembrance ceremony. Does Mr Maloney also believe that some of these people are either 'deluded or hypocritical' — or does he only reserve that description for his fellow countrymen?

I have always said that the Great War must be examined in the context of its time. In this regard I stand by my belief that those Irishmen who fought in the war genuinely believed that they were doing the right thing at the time. I also stand by my belief that it is right to remember those from ALL countries who died as this provides a stark reminder of the high human cost of war. Finally, I do not believe that those who attend remembrance services or ceremonies are either 'deluded or hypocritical' as Mr Maloney suggests.

Gerry White, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

Evening Echo, Cork—13.12.2013 Article by Gerry White on creation of the Irish Volunteers (short extracts)

On the evening of December 14, 1913, the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers took place amid violent scenes at the old City Hall in Cork. A century on, GERRY WHITE recalls the historic formation of the new movement.

[...] The Irish Volunteers had been established at a public meeting in Dublin on November 25, 1913, in response to the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force the previous January. Its stated aim was to 'preserve the right and liberties common to all the people of Ireland' and all shades of nationalist opinion were represented within its ranks.

The leadership included moderate nationalists such as Professor Eoin MacNeill of University College, Dublin, who first mooted the idea for such a force in an article for the journal of the Gaelic League, and more radical separatists such as Patrick Pearse and Bulmer Hobson, members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB).

[...] MacNeill began by declaring that "the right and duty of National Defence applies to every free people in the world." He asked if those present considered themselves "free people" or not, and explained the inequity of a situation whereby all other nationalities within the UK had their own territorial force — except the Irish.

Referring to the formation of the Ulster Volunteers, he said that at a meeting he addressed in Galway the previous Wednesday many people had stood up and cheered when he mentioned the Ulster group's name. While MacNeill's mention of the UVF might have been welcomed in Galway, in Cork it had the opposite effect. Many in the hall booed and hissed and one man in the balcony stood up and shouted: "We're not for England!"

[...] Casement assured the crowd that the Volunteer movement had his full support and ended by describing Ireland as a "mother whose sons should unite to protect her." De Róiste thanked Casement and asked that the organisers be given authority to form a Volunteer corps in the city.

[...] That night more than 500 men joined the new Cork City Corps of Irish Volunteers. When the meeting ended they stepped out into the cold night air and escorted Casement to Turner's Hotel, singing Rory of the Gael as they made their way through the streets.

Although undoubtedly proud of their achievement, few of these men could have imagined the road ahead. In September 1914, the Irish Volunteers would split over Redmond's call to participate in the First World War.

Evening Echo, Cork 16.12.2013 (article/extract)

ALMOST 40 soldiers graduated from the rank of private to corporal at a passing out parade in Collins' Barracks.

Three individuals on the course had family connections with the defence forces, including Gunner White, whose father is CQMS Gerry White, a well known military historian based in Collins Barracks.

Evening Echo, Cork 16.12.2013

War tragedy

I WOULD like to congratulate Gerry White on his excellent letter on remembering not just the Irish but all those who died in the tragic First World War (Dec 11).

It is only right and proper to attend services for all those brave young men. Many Cork families lost relatives in that awful campaign. They should never be forgotten.

I find Mr White's opinion on this matter extremely fair-minded, objective and knowledgeable.

Unfortunately, there are still some one-dimensional, narrow-minded people blowing their green, white and yellow trumpet in Cork. After a century, isn't it about time they removed their heads from the sand?

The thousands of young men from many countries who gave their lives should never be forgotten and it is good to have people like Gerry White to remind us every year.

Jim McKeon, Bishopstown

Evening Echo, Cork 28.12.13:

In his letters to your newspaper Mr Gerry White of the Western Front Association says that the Great War "happened",

and that it “should not have happened”. Since millions died, including thousands of Irish people, it is irresponsible of Mr. White not to explain to us WHY it happened.

Britain was not attacked or invaded by Germany, or Austria, or Hungary, or Bulgaria, or Turkey. Neither was Ireland. Yet Britain declared war on these countries and Ireland blindly followed. Why? They could have stayed out of it. If they had stayed out of it, around four thousand Cork people might have lived peaceful, blameless and constructive lives. And many of the people they killed might have done the same. So why did they not stay out of it? This is the question Mr. White will not answer. If this is a stupid question, unworthy of a straight answer, will Mr. White please explain to us WHY it is stupid?

The recent war in Iraq “happened” and hundreds of thousands died. Why and how did it “happen”? Well, the British Prime Minister told his people they were in immediate danger of destruction, with as little as thirty minutes’ warning, and to remove this danger to their lives they had to invade Iraq and set it free from its evil government.

This was a lie, and hundreds of thousands died because of it. In 1914 Britain declared it was going to fight a war for the freedom of small nations. John Redmond gave his assurance that this promise of freedom included us, and we joined in the war. That is how and why Ireland’s Great War “happened”. Millions died, but when it was all over Ireland got, not freedom, but the Black and Tans. And instead of freedom many more peoples became captive in a vast expansion of the British Empire into Africa and the Middle East. Like the Iraq War, Ireland’s Great War was a Great Fraud.

The Great Crime of Iraq was brought about by a government lie. But the actual physical destruction of the country and thousands of deaths were the work of the young men of the invasion force itself. Without them there would have been no bombing and killing. Only the willfully blind can be ignorant of their many atrocities. They were not forced to go, they could have stayed at home. Like the Irish in 1914 they went there for the money, for the excitement, or because they believed they were “serving their country”. Did they believe they were, as Mr. White puts it, “doing the right thing” in Iraq? Of course they did. Otherwise they would have just stayed at home.

Should “the fallen” of Iraq be remembered? Certainly the crimes of the invaders should never be forgotten. But should “the fallen” be “Remembered”? The Remembrance ceremonies honour the soldiers of all the British wars: the Great War, the Black and Tan war, Palestine, Kenya, Aden, Bloody Sunday, Iraq, and all the rest. Official Remembrance ceremonials bestow on these crimes a solemn and uncritical aura of respect, dignity and veneration in which their country honours all those who serve it in arms, no matter what they did or why they did it. Whatever the real reason for the killing, in the words of Mr. White they “did the right thing”.

So instead of evaluation, criticism and understanding to prevent war, these public and religious ceremonials provide protection, cover and justification for killing. Remembrance and poppy-mania nurture a public tolerance and appetite for war, future as well as past.

Mr. White claims his Western Front Association has nothing to do with the British Army. But it is an integral part of the annual November 11 Remembrance ceremonies at London’s Cenotaph. Its emblem consists of poppies. Its list of luminaries includes names like Kitchener, Haig and Farrar-Hockley.

The Irishmen who enlisted for the Great War to bring about freedom of small nations were lied to and betrayed. The British imperial militarists who deceived and betrayed them have never admitted or apologised for their lies and betrayal.

It is an insult to the memory of those who were so shamefully betrayed to join in the imperial militarist ceremonies which commemorate and sanctify the crimes of the Great War, the Black and Tan war, Iraq, and all the rest.

Evening Echo, January 3, 2014:

IN his most recent letter on the Great War (Dec 28) Pat Maloney raised a number of issues which I would like to address.

Firstly, he seems to take issue with my stating that the Great War ‘happened’. Unfortunately, the war is not a figment of my historical imagination and it did indeed ‘happen’.

He also said it is ‘irresponsible’ of me not to explain ‘why it happened’. I think the answer to that can be found in the large number of books and articles on the war. The precise causes are complex but it can be attributed to the imperialism, nationalism and militarism in Europe at that time and the alliances that bound the major powers. However, it is also true that if the governments of the countries that eventually went to war acted differently in the ‘July Crisis’ after the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, then the conflict could have been avoided.

Mr Maloney also challenged me to state why Britain entered the war and why Ireland ‘blindly’ followed. No- where have I said that this question was not worthy of an answer, nor did I describe it as ‘stupid’ as he suggested. While Britain ostensibly went to war to honour its obligation to Belgium under the 1839 Treaty of London, there can be no doubt it was also concerned about the threat posed by Germany to its naval supremacy and imperial interests. When Britain declared war it wasn’t a case that Ireland ‘blindly’ followed. Unfortunately, in August 1914 Ireland was not an independent country but part of the United Kingdom. While republicans such as Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney correctly identified that Ireland’s participation in the war would only serve Britain’s interest, the fact is that in 1914 Ireland’s democratically elected representatives, the vast majority of the Irish Volunteers and people all over the country supported the war effort.

There can be no argument that Ireland was treated appallingly by the British Government after the war. Despite the overwhelming victory of Sinn Féin in the 1918 General Election and the establishment of Dáil Éireann, this ‘small nation’ wasn’t granted its freedom or even a place at the Paris Peace Conference — but it did get the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, and outrages such as the Burning of Cork were inflicted on its population. While this is true, it must be remembered that the Irishmen who fought in the war didn’t do so with this objective in mind. I believe they acted in what they thought was in the best interest of their country and they, not the war, are worthy of remembrance.

Mr Maloney drew comparisons with the Great War and later conflicts. I respect his right to do so but, as my sole interest in this debate is the Great War, I have no comment to make regarding same. In relation to my statement that the Western Front Association has no connection to the British Army, Mr. Maloney said it takes part in the Remembrance ceremonies at the Cenotaph in London. So it does, but members also take part in similar ceremonies in Belgium, France, the U.S, Ireland and other countries.

Mr Maloney stated that the emblem of the association contains poppies. So it does, and while I understand why Mr Maloney and others in Ireland may have concerns about the British Legion poppy, I’m sure he knows that many countries, including Canada, France, Belgium and the U.S also use it as a symbol of remembering those who fell in the Great War.

I’m also sure he knows that the idea behind a remembrance poppy actually came from an American woman, Moina Belle

Michael, inspired by the poem *In Flanders Field*, written by a Canadian, Colonel John McCrae.

Unfortunately, Mr Maloney hasn't replied to the questions I asked (Dec 11): does he consider those from all countries who fought in the war to be 'psychopaths', 'mercenaries' or 'gullible' and does he consider some of the people from all the countries who attend remembrance ceremonies to be 'deluded' or 'hypocritical' as he said — or does he reserve those words for his fellow countrymen?

One of the objectives of the Western Front Association is to remember those from all countries who fell in the Great War — not those who lost their lives in other wars. Its members will continue to remember those from Ireland who fell in that war — not to justify or glorify the conflict but to remind people of the horror of war. For me, 'remembrance' is about remembering and can take many forms. Mr Maloney and I disagree about many aspects of the Great War, however, if our correspondence focuses people's minds on the thousands of Irishmen who fell in the war then I feel that it too serves as an act of remembrance.

Gerry White, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

Echo, 16 Jan 2014

Why did 4,000 young men from Cork City and County lose their lives in the Great War of 1914-18? Mr Gerry White of the Western Front Association (Letters, 3 January 2014) gives several reasons, such as preservation of the British Empire's control of the seas, and Germany's breach of the 1839 Treaty of London.

Was Inchigeelagh greatly exercised about whether or not Britannia ruled the waves? Or had Blarney Street ever even heard of the Treaty of London? Evening Echo readers will make their own judgement on this. So why did they join up in 1914? Officially, Britain's war aims included securing the freedom of small nations. Egged on by certain Irish political leaders, some people foolishly believed this British imperialist war propaganda. But in 1919 Ireland got, not freedom, but the Black and Tans. And many more small nations came under the control of the British Empire.

The Irish who joined the British Army in order to serve their country were cruelly duped by this deliberate imperialist lie, for which no apology has ever been given. Therefore it is a gross insult to commemorate them in the imperialist manner with poppies, Remembrance, and "the going down of the sun".

It is either naive or disingenuous to dispute the involvement of psychopaths in militarism. I do not think Mr. White is naive. I do not believe he has never heard of Captain Bowen-Colthurst from Dripsey, relative of the Cork writer Elizabeth Bowen, who in the course of a few hours murdered a 17-year-old boy coming from church, two unarmed civilian loyalist journalists, and the prominent pacifist Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. And I do not believe Mr. White has never heard of Colonel Dyer, who went to school in Midleton, and who murdered a thousand or so defenceless civilians participating in a religious festival in Amritsar in India, 1919. The list of such psychopathic military atrocities is endless.

Mr White seeks to distance his Western Front Association from its Kitchener, Haig, Farrar-Hockley and other imperial connections, and instead he appeals to John McCrae's poem "Flanders Fields" as the source of his rhetoric, symbols and traditions. This poem ends as follows:

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Is this psychopathic? Is it concerned about restoring the 1839 Treaty of London? It is certainly a morbid, vengeful, fanatical piece of warmongering in which the dead call on the living to continue the killing which the dead can no longer do for themselves. Can this really be Mr White's true position on the Great War?

Pat Maloney

Echo 16.1.14

Dear Letters Editor:

Re the Great War and the Irish volunteers in Britain's army: why such shameful neglect of the "gallantry, sacrifice and heroism" of our fallen Irish EMIGRANT "heroes?"

My Uncle Martin Fogarty, Ex-Cloncourse, Mountrath, Co. Laois was a private in the British Empire Army when he was killed on August 25, 1918 east of Arras, France. He and his unit had departed Monchy-Le-Preu and were trying to break through the Hindenberg Line to Boiry-Notre-Dame.

His body was never found. His comrades told his parents that he had been hit by a cannon-shell. His name is carved into the British Empire Great War memorial on nearby Vimy Ridge.

Martin's brothers never spoke of his "sacrifice." Instead, they tried to rationalize his having volunteered in that war. The story was that he so wished to see his parents again that he enlisted in the Canadian army from his new home in Chicago. (The U.S. was not yet involved.)

I and his other nephews and nieces are acutely aware that he fought for the British empire while that same empire was visiting death and destruction on his Irish homeland. We don't welcome any further attempts to glorify that squalid war or its gullible enlistees, especially its Irish ones like our uncle Martin.

Chris Fogarty

900 N. Lake Shore Dr.; #1507 Chicago, IL 60611

Evening Echo, 22.1.2014

DURING the Great War, more than 200,000 Irishmen fought with the British armed forces and countless more fought with the other Allied nations.

At the beginning of our ongoing correspondence about the war, Pat Maloney, editor of *Labour Comment*, stated that these men were either 'mercenaries', 'gullible' or 'psychopaths'. He later went on to say that the Irish who attended remembrance ceremonies were either 'deluded' or 'hypocritical'. Readers of the *Echo* will know that I disagree with these descriptions.

In his most recent letter (Jan 16) Mr Maloney suggested that Corkmen who fought and died in the war were not aware of the reasons why the United Kingdom went to war. I suspect many would not have known, but others would have been well informed from reading the detailed reports carried in papers such as the *Cork Examiner*. However, I believe that when war broke out, many Corkmen felt it was their patriotic duty to defend their country. The fact 700 Corkmen enlisted in the British Army in August 1914 alone would support my belief.

Mr Maloney stated that those who joined the British armed forces were 'egged on' by certain Irish political leaders who were 'duped' by the British. The reality is that in 1914, Ireland's political leaders sat in the House of Commons and were part of Britain's political decision-making process. They, along with many other prominent people throughout Ireland, supported

the war from the beginning. Therefore, when Mr Maloney asks for an apology, who is he suggesting should make it? John Redmond? William O'Brien? Members of the Irish Parliamentary Party? Herbert Asquith? That the war happened and thousands of Irishmen died is a historical fact and nothing Mr Maloney or I might say can change that.

The deaths of over 50,000 Irish servicemen was a tragedy of immense proportions for this country and THAT is the main reason they deserve to be remembered. Just as it is right to remember those who died in tragedies such as the Famine or the sinking of the Titanic.

Mr Maloney believes these men should not be remembered in an 'imperialist manner'. I'm not exactly sure what he means by that as I thought the British Empire had vanished years ago. He also incorrectly stated that I appealed to John McCrea's poem *In Flanders Fields* as a source for my 'rhetoric'. I only said the poem inspired the American Moina Belle Michael to use the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. I have no intention of engaging in 'poppy politics', other than to say I fully understand why many Irish people would not wear one — equally I understand why others have no problem with wearing a poppy.

To support his contention that many Irish who fought in the war were psychopaths, Mr Maloney mentioned the murders committed by Captain J.C. Bowen-Colthurst in the 1916 Rising and the Amritsar Massacre committed by British troops in Punjab under the command of Col. Reginald Dyer on April 13, 1919. While appalling crimes, I think it is grossly unfair to use them to tarnish the memory of the Irish who fought in the Great War. However, since he chooses to do so, I would be most grateful if Mr Maloney will give me his thoughts on another Irishman who fought in the war and went on to play a major part in Ireland's fight for freedom: Commandant-General Tom Barry. Writing about his reason for enlisting in the British Army in his book *Guerrilla Days In Ireland*, Barry stated: "I decided to see what this Great War was like. I cannot plead I went on the advice of John Redmond or any other politician, that if we fought for the British we would secure Home Rule for Ireland, nor could I say what Home Rule meant. I was not influenced by the lurid appeal to fight to save Belgium or small nations. I knew nothing about nations, large or small. I went to war for no other reason than I wanted to see what war was like, to get a gun, to see new countries, and to feel a grown man."

As a gunner with the Royal Field Artillery in Mesopotamia, it is highly probable that Barry was responsible for the deaths of large numbers of Turkish soldiers. Does Mr Maloney think Tom Barry was also a psychopath? Unfortunately, unlike Barry, those Irishmen who died in the war never had the opportunity to come home and fight for a new Ireland.

As we approach the anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War, we should respect the memory of those Irish who lost their lives in that horrific conflict, not label or denigrate them. Their memory should not be used to support current political debates. They were our people and they deserve better.

Gerry White, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

ROYAL CORK Strikes Back:

Evening Echo, 28.1.2014

Gerry right!

I WOULD like to compliment Gerry White on his excellent letter (Jan 22) about Ireland's part in World War I.

His summing up and conclusions are fair and balanced. Those brave, young men who died in this tragedy should never be forgotten.

I cannot understand Mr Maloney, editor of *Labour Comment*. His attitude is so one-dimensional, like a broken record.

Many young Cork men had no jobs or education and joined the army for a bit of excitement.

It must be remembered in 1914 we had a very different Cork. Most Irish politicians and republican volunteers were in favour of our young men aiding the war effort, including John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

In hindsight, Redmond has been criticised for having encouraged so many Irish to fight in World War I. However, Irish historian, J.J. Lee wrote: "Redmond could have tactically done nothing other than support the British war campaign; nobody committed to Irish unity could have behaved other than Redmond did at the time. Otherwise, there would be no chance whatever of a united Ireland, in which Redmond passionately believed."

At that time, Cork was an extremely royal city, one of the most prominent in Ireland or the UK. The British Union Jack was a common sight on many buildings and street names, still present today, were a constant reminder of past ties with Britain: Marlboro Street, Albert Road, Princes Street, Victoria Road, Balmoral Place, Windsor Terrace, Georges Quay, Queen Street, York Hill, Waterloo Place, Trafalgar Hill, Wellesley Terrace, Grosvenor Place.

UCC was called Queen's College until 1908, and Cobh was Queenstown up to 1922.

The imposing Victoria Barracks (now Collins Barracks), marching bands, and army personnel were an integral part of everyday life in Cork city.

The 1916 Rising had nothing to do with the Great War. Black and Tans appeared in Cork on March 25, 1920, five days after Tomas MacCurtain's death. No doubt the Lord Mayor's murder triggered off their arrival.

By then, Cork was a hotbed of political passion, a completely different city.

Again, all this had nothing to do with young men going off to fight in World War I.

It was a great tragedy. All who perished in this war should never be forgotten. Cork needs people like Gerry White.

Jim McKeon, Halldene Way, Bishopstown

Echo 30 Jan 2014

MR Gerry White (Jan 22) says the Irish Great War dead — the "fallen" — were our people, and should not be denigrated or tarnished. But we do nobody any favours if we whitewash and cover up the reality of how and why they "fell".

Mr White has suggested they "fell" in order to restore the 1839 Treaty of London and in order to help Britannia to rule the waves. Most of them would probably have dismissed this explanation as having nothing to do with their actual motivation.

In his most recent letter, Mr White falls back on his original explanation, that they fell while doing "their patriotic duty to defend their country".

Would this explanation have been accepted by these unfortunate men? What was the country they were dutifully obligated to defend when they volunteered themselves to the killing fields of Flanders, Gallipoli and the Middle East? Was it Ireland, or was it Britain, or was it the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland?

Well, nobody from those faraway lands had attacked or invaded Ireland, or Britain (though the Middle East just happened to be coveted by the British Empire. How convenient!) So how could this be a war of self-defence? If it was not self-defence, the British-Irish involvement can only be understood as war of aggression. British participants were mostly conscripted. Irish

participants were unforced volunteers. This is not something to be proud of.

How can this Irish aggression be understood? Ireland was not threatened by the people we attacked in 1914. But there was an occupying power which held Ireland by force of arms, a military occupation to which Irish people submitted from time to time without ever giving it their consent, and from which they sought liberation by all and every means available. Because of this military conquest and occupation, most of the representatives elected in Ireland, including John Redmond, refused to participate in the government of the United Kingdom. Those representatives from Ireland who participated in government were the Unionists who advocated and supported the permanent military subjugation and occupation of Ireland by Britain.

Redmond and other trusted leaders gave their word that British propaganda about freedom for small nations was sincere. Taking him at his word, thousands of Irish volunteers believed that in signing up to make war on Germany and various other countries they were serving Ireland.

Germany had not attacked or threatened Ireland. Its influence here was entirely benign. In the 19th century German scholars had salvaged the remnants of Irish culture from the ruin to which it had been reduced by centuries of British military conquest. Bavarian Aloys Fleischman founded a distinguished Cork musical dynasty. The Freedom of the City of Cork was bestowed on Kuno Meyer.

But Aloys Fleischmann was interned in 1914, and the Freedom of Cork was stripped from Meyer. Strange as it may seem, thousands of Irish believed that, by joining the occupation army and attacking other countries which had never harmed them, they were “defending their country” as Mr White puts it. He objects to describing this behaviour as gullibility, which is probably the kindest, most merciful way of describing it. He objects to plain speaking about those who enrolled in the slaughter for money, or simply because they enjoyed it.

Mr White tells us that many thousands of Corkmen joined up, of whom about 4,000 “fell”.

In the course of this debate, only four of these thousands of individuals linked to Cork have actually been personally identified: Captain Bowen-Colthurst, Colonel Reginald Dyer, Lance-Corporal Michael O’Leary and Sergeant Tom Barry. The first two were psychopaths whose crimes went unpunished by the British Army. O’Leary was awarded the Victoria Cross for killing eight people.

Even though it contradicts his argument that the Irish joined up to “defend their country”, Mr White mentioned Barry, whose real claim to fame is his activity as an Irish soldier. Contrary to Mr White’s thesis, Barry said he joined the British army not for Irish freedom or to “defend his country”, but to get a gun and visit foreign lands. In other words, he participated in the Great War slaughter because, at age 17, he thought it was a fun thing to do.

Barry is rightly honoured, respected and commemorated for his military achievements in a different war — a just war, not of aggression but of self-defence against the army he joined in 1915. On the other hand, Mr White wants us to give honour, respect and remembrance to every Great War soldier without regard to what they did, or why they did it, in this criminal war of aggression.

Though Bowen-Colthurst, Dyer, O’Leary and Barry are now dead, in Flanders Fields hate-speech they are probably not actually “fallen”. Could Mr White please enlighten us as to which, if any, of these four Great War veterans his Western Front Association chooses to honour with poppies, Remembrance, and “the going down of the sun”?

And does he also honour those Great War veterans, from both Ireland and Britain, who were the backbone of the Black and Tans?

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

John Dolan, Evening Echo Feb. 2, 2014. Article (extracts)

FOR an entire generation, the folly of World War I has been encapsulated by the brilliant TV show *Blackadder Goes Forth*, [...]

Nobody is denying that Captain Blackadder hit a few well-chosen targets with glib remarks such as “This war would have been a damn sight simpler if we’d just stayed in England and shot 50,000 of our men a week.”

But my hope for this centenary year is that people take time to revisit the horrors of World War I and make up their own minds about what happened, and more importantly, why.

[...] I really feel we need to get our heads around some pertinent truths about World War I. In a nutshell...

Britain didn’t start the war:

[...] Britain had no claim to any of the lands fought over. Moreover, their army was miniscule, less than a few hundred thousand strong — hardly the army of a sabre-rattling, war-hungry nation.

[...] The fact its main reason for joining the conflict was ‘to fight for smaller nations’ may sound trite and even a sick joke to the Irish, in retrospect, but it doesn’t make it any less true.

Britain had no choice but to join the war: Standing on the sidelines in 1914 was simply not an option. Brits had sat on their hands as Germany had amassed an army of two million, but when the Kaiser began to invade foreign territories, Britain feared a resulting German superpower stretching from a conquered Russia in the east to the shores of the English Channel.

The British had to join the fight alongside France and Russia, or face a future where they were left isolated and highly vulnerable.

For centuries, Britain had been in glorious isolation from Europe’s squabbles, while keeping an eye out for any dangerous power vacuums that might arise. For a British politician not to declare war on Germany in August 1914 would have been treasonous.[...]

Echo 6 February 2014

IN his novel, *The Go Between*, E.P. Hartley wrote ‘The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there’. Unfortunately, in his correspondence on the Great War, this is something Mr Pat Maloney, editor of Labour Comment, has failed to grasp.

When war broke out in 1914, Ireland WAS a very different country from the one we know today. The 1916 Rising, War of Independence and Black and Tans were part of an unknown future. The war was a harsh reality and, despite what Mr Maloney says, I firmly believe those Irishmen who fought in it acted in what they believed was in the best interest of their country.

Throughout my correspondence, I have endeavoured to put forward my views from a historical perspective in an objective manner. Mr Maloney, however, appears to be writing from a purely political perspective. In this regard, I agree with Canadian historian Margaret McMillian, who recently wrote “The First World War centenary should be about shared understanding, not political point-scoring.”

Echo 7.2.2014

John Dolan encourages people to participate in the very interesting debate on WWI in your pages and I agree with him when he says that “I really feel we need to get our heads around some pertinent truths about World War I.” (2 February 2014).

However when he goes on to say that “In a nutshell...Britain didn't start the war” I must beg to differ. He must surely know that it was Britain that declared war on Germany not the other way round. There was a European conflict caused by an expansionist and aggressive Czarist Russia and a France that wanted to enforce an irredentist claim on a part of the German state - Alsace Lorraine. These conflicts would not and could not of themselves lead to a world war. The only power in the world that could cause a world war was a world power and that was the largest Empire in the world, the British Empire, which also had the greatest military force in the world in the Royal Navy. The Navy had ensured victory in earlier world conflicts.

Its decision to enter the European conflicts in 1914 turned those European conflicts into a world war and only Britain could and did start a world war in that year.

He says: “Britain had no claim to any of the lands fought over. Moreover, their army was miniscule, less than a few hundred thousand strong — hardly the army of a sabre-rattling, war-hungry nation.”

Mr. Dolan must surely be aware of the Committee of Imperial Defence that, headed by Asquith, planned for war on Germany in secret and in great detail since 1906. The fighting was to be done essentially by the French and the Russians so Britain only needed a home army sufficient to get the ball rolling in Europe. This army had been remade for this purpose by Haldane, another member of the Committee, and was ready to go at a moment's notice in August 1914. Britain had huge armies across the Empire that were used when and where necessary.

He says “The fact its main reason for joining the conflict was ‘to fight for smaller nations’ may sound trite and even a sick joke to the Irish, in retrospect, but it doesn't make it any less true.”

It is reassuring to see that he acknowledges that the ‘the fight for the freedom of small nations’ was a sick joke as regards Ireland. But the other ‘small nation’ on whose behalf it is claimed the war was fought, Belgium, was in fact an Empire that, according to the latest estimate, had killed 10 million people in the Congo. Was it true in that case?

“Britain had no choice but to join the war: Standing on the sidelines in 1914 was simply not an option. Brits had sat on their hands as Germany had amassed an army of two million, but when the Kaiser began to invade foreign territories, Britain feared a resulting German superpower stretching from a conquered Russia in the east to the shores of the English Channel.”

Germany was surrounded by two hostile powers who challenged its very existence. Germany had an army for defensive purposes and it had not fought a war against any other state since the formation of the German state itself decades earlier. It had no intention whatever of going to war with Britain. Prussia and Britain had been allies for centuries. The states that threatened Germany had fought several wars in the same period. Britain was permanently at war in one part or another of its Empire during the same period.

He says: “For centuries, Britain had been in glorious isolation from Europe's squabbles, while keeping an eye out for any dangerous power vacuums that might arise. For a British politician not to declare war on Germany in August 1914 would have been treasonous.”

While I believe it is important to study the cause and course of the war, I also believe it is not necessary to denigrate Irishmen who fought in it with the Allied armed forces. About 50,000 Irish died in the war, 4,000 had Cork city and county connections, and many of their relatives live among us today. Unfortunately, Mr Maloney saw fit to label those who died ‘gullible’, ‘mercenaries’ and ‘psychopaths’. He described Irish people who take part in remembrance ceremonies as ‘deluded’ and ‘hypocrites’.

In 1934, Kemal Mustafa Atatürk, president of Turkey, wrote a tribute to Allied soldiers who died at Gallipoli: “Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. There- fore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours... you, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.”

These fine words are inscribed in stone on memorials at Gallipoli and Canberra, and demonstrate a generosity of spirit by a man who fought against Allied soldiers that invaded his country. I think it is unfortunate that Mr Maloney can't find it within his heart to show that same generosity of spirit to 50,000 of his fellow countrymen and their relatives.

In his last letter, Mr Maloney referred to four soldiers mentioned in this correspondence: Captain J. C. Bowen-Colthurst, Colonel Reginald Dyer, Lance-Corporal Michael O'Leary and Gunner Tom Barry. I have already commented on the appalling crimes committed by Bowen-Colthurst and Dyer. However, I also said it was grossly unfair to use these crimes to tarnish the reputations of over 200,000 other Irish servicemen. Mr Maloney mentioned Lance-Corporal O'Leary was awarded a Victoria Cross for killing eight German soldiers manning two machine-gun positions. In doing so he neglected to say that by his action, O'Leary probably saved countless Irishmen. Perhaps Mr Maloney thinks it would have been better if O'Leary simply stood up and let himself be killed?

Mr Maloney went on to say Tom Barry should be remembered for the major part he played in the fight for Irish freedom. I am in complete agreement. He also stated that Barry joined the British Army at 17 because he thought it was a ‘fun’ thing to do. According to the criteria previously set out by Mr Maloney, this clearly would have made Barry a ‘psychopath’. I don't believe he was but when I asked Mr Maloney this question he failed to answer. Maybe he thinks all the other young men who joined for ‘fun’ or adventure were psychopaths except Tom Barry? Perhaps he might clarify this.

Unlike thousands of other young Irishmen, Tom Barry was fortunate to return home to fight for a new Ireland. However, before he joined the IRA he was an active member of the Bandon Branch of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, where he advocated better conditions for Irish war veterans, the very men Mr Maloney labelled ‘gullible’, ‘mercenaries’ and ‘psychopaths’, Was Barry wrong to do so? I don't believe he was.

In his last letter, Mr Maloney also asked if I think we should honour the Black and Tans. That is a ridiculous suggestion, and he should know that.

The story of Ireland and the Great War should always be examined in the context of its own time, not with the benefit of hindsight. I believe as we commemorate the historical events of 1912-1922 we as a nation are mature enough that we can remember the honourable men and women who gave their lives for Irish freedom in those tumultuous years — and also those who lost their lives in the Great War. They were all our people. Gerry White, Cork Branch, Western Front Association

What he is describing here is the British balance of power strategy that kept Europe divided and in internal conflict for centuries and which allowed Britain the freedom to build up its Empire in the rest of the world. Whenever a strong power emerged Britain joined with the others to curtail it and thereby kept the 'pot boiling' in Europe. That is why it declared war on Germany in 1914. And again it took advantage of the conflict among European states to kill two birds with one stone - destroy a new and winning commercial rival and extend its Empire by attacking Turkey and adding great chunks of territory to the Empire in the Middle East. And its method of acquiring and handling those territories is the root cause of the problems there today.

Jack Lane, Aubane, Millstreet Co. Cork

Evening Echo, Cork, 10.2.2014

Not Our War

ALTHOUGH the most celebrated recruiting posters of World War I featured the Listowel-born Herbert Kitchener, it seems they didn't feature prominently in Kerry or Ireland generally. It seems too that Kitchener did not regard the Irish as his countrymen and women.

From what I can gather, a different approach was adopted by the 'United Kingdom's' recruiting agents in Ireland.

God Save The King does not seem to have been widely featured on the posters. Trams in Dublin were festooned with the exhortation to fight for Ireland, a concept generally considered honourable then, and apparently consistent with slaughtering Turks, Austrians and Germans, people, who, whatever their faults, never harmed or intended to harm Ireland or her people. Truly, the past is another country!

The 'United Kingdom's' Irish agents conscripted or invoked all the heroes, legends, icons, sentiments, and, indeed, sentimentality of nationalist Ireland in pursuit of Imperial war. One poster boldly proclaimed that Robert Emmet died for Ireland and urged Irishmen to join the forces that killed him.

Another, inspired by the 'Nationalist' MP Joe Devlin of West Belfast, urged men to join an 'Irish Brigade' of the British Army to emulate the old Irish Brigade in the French Service, first recruited after the Treaty of Limerick.

Perhaps the most cruel, cynical and unforgivable recruiting propaganda was not that which distorted the past but that which distorted the future. One postcard risked giving Schmalz a bad name and looked like the cover of a chocolate box. It featured fresh-faced virgin Gossoons, marching in Khaki uniforms, cheered on by winsome, rosy-cheeked, virginal Colleens with a backdrop of the old Irish Parliament in College Green. The Gossoons were surely on more than one promise.

All they had to do was fight the Central Powers and they would return to claim the colleens and Ireland would again have her own Parliament.

But, as I said, the past is another country, entirely.

Not all the gossoons who so cheerfully flocked to the British colours returned to claim their colleens.

For some, "their lonely graves are by Suvla's waves and shores of the great North Sea".

But they played their part in the bloody collapse of three Empires, those of Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Turkey, and the acquisition by two Empires, those of Britain and France, of vast territories in the Middle East, east and south-west Africa, some of which haven't seen a day's peace since.

On November 11, 1919, one year after the signing of the Armistice in the Forest of Compiègne which brought an end to the Great War, the British Army celebrated its Empire's triumph

with a parade through Dublin. A saluting base was erected by the old Parliament Building and there trundled past it a phalanx of British tanks, as hard, cold and overbearing as the British Government itself.

On that very day, the Clerk of Dail Eireann and a number of TDs were arrested by British agents. They were subsequently sentenced to prison terms for conducting "an illegal assembly" — the first democratically elected Irish Parliament in history.

But that was long ago. Can anyone now living remember seeing British armour on Irish streets, witnessed the distortion of history by politicians, or the betrayal of promises made by them to generous, guileless and gullible youth?

Donal Kennedy, Belmont Ave, Palmers Green, London N13

Evening Echo, Cork — Feb. 15, 2014 —

IF I may weigh in on the recent debate regarding commemorations of World War I. On the one hand, there is the desire to recall to mind the Irishmen who enlisted and died, or came home injured and crippled during that tragic chapter of history.

My own grandfather was among them, though he made it safely in one piece or I would not be here today!

On the other hand, there is the difficulty in separating the men who fought in the war, from the war itself.

Gerry White is correct to say it is worthwhile to recall bravery, idealism and valour. But do we apply that standard universally?

There can be no question that some of the bravest and most ideologically-motivated fighting men of the 20th century were the German Wehrmacht of World War II. The men who fought for their beliefs and Fatherland at Stalingrad and the Ardennes were no cowards and even the Allies had to admit they faced one of the toughest, best trained and motivated armies fielded in the history of warfare.

Why, then, are the names of the several million men of the Wehrmacht so conspicuously absent from war memorials, why are there so few memorials to them at all? I'm aware it's a different war, despite the tendency of some people to conflate them, as though the ideals for which both world wars were fought were identical.

My point is, there are few memorials because of the sense of unease that would be generated around recalling their valour whilst trying to separate it from the ideals for which they fought. In other words, it is disingenuous to suggest we can commemorate World War I and the enlisted Irish, without association of the actual aims of that terrible war.

The argument was already eloquently made that World War I was not fought to liberate small nations or for democracy, but as a struggle for dominance in a European 'civil war'. Since we fought under the British flag, the aims were Britain's rather than ours, and Britain did rather well out of it, adding some million square miles to the world's largest-ever Empire.

Ireland had become disillusioned with World War I by 1917, a feeling that helped the cause of independence no small amount.

This sense of unease about the war's aims is compounded by the quasi-religious ceremonial that has grown up around commemoration of Armistice Day, with — literally — sacks of 'sacred soil' being conveyed in great pomp and solemnity from the battlefields of Ypres and Flanders to a memorial in London; with the wearing of the poppy now almost mandatory in British public life.

One is left with the sense that the principal aim is to groom a new generation of disaffected youth into a sense of willingness to die for *Patria e Gloria*; or to find some substitute in civil

life for the vacuum left by the fall-off from religious society. If we really wished to honour the dead of World War I, the best way would be to admit it was a terrible mistake that need never have happened, that millions of young people lost their lives needlessly, and try to ensure history is not repeated.

That would require exhausting every possible diplomatic avenue before ever again resorting to war. If we truly wished to commemorate the stated aims of World War I, we would be building monuments to the Pitstop Ploughshares and Raytheon Nine.

Nick Folley, Ard carrig, Carrigaline, Co.Cork

Evening Echo, Cork — Feb. 17, 2013 —

JOHN DOLAN (Feb 2) says that in 1914, Ireland was still practically the Ireland of 1814, not 1916 or 1921.

This is certainly true of Britain. In 1814, Britain was a militaristic, world- conquering, genocidal empire whose enormous forces across the globe were filled with cannon fodder from Ireland, India and other conquered countries.

A century later, Britain was still a war-mongering aggressive power which ruled much of the world as a master race, with armed forces which exceeded all other countries, and which waged more or less continuous warfare around the globe, often against defenceless farming, fishing and hunting peoples which it exterminated without mercy.

While we may feel sorry for the fate of the helpless cannon-fodder which served the British Empire, we should not at the same time pass over in silence the nefarious purposes they were engaged in. Because if we do, we are giving moral consent and approval to aggression, conquest and atrocity — past, present and future.

This is the problem with Mr Gerry White's "Western Front Association" and its Imperial-style symbols and rhetoric of remembrance and poppies.

For comparison, consider the Netherlands in the early 1940s. Like some other northern European countries, young men signed up in the occupation army and many sacrificed their lives fighting bravely on the Eastern Front.

It may be perfectly reasonable for great-uncle Willem to be privately remembered and honoured with love and respect by his still-grieving relatives and descendants. Or not, depending on Willem's character and record.

But would it be desirable now for some Dutch individuals to form an Eastern Front Association (such as *Verbond van Vlaamse Oud-Oostfrontstrijders*) for promoting public displays of honour and remembrance, using the symbols and rhetoric of the Dutch contingent of the *Waffen SS*?

Young men in Finland also fought on the Eastern Front in 1939-40. But for Finland, this was a war of defence of their country against an invading power which initiated the aggression. In other words, for Finland this was a just war.

So what should we do about great-uncle Finbarr, who was blown to pieces by high explosives in the sands of Mesopotamia in January 1916? After all, according to Mr White, the brave, gallant and heroic Finbarr "believed he was serving his country", even though neither Ireland nor Britain had been invaded, attacked or threatened by any of the countries he went to war against.

Well, if the country great-uncle Finbarr was serving was Britain, then he was quite successful, since Britain captured Mesopotamia for its Empire and, right up to the present, perpetrated many atrocities there.

So it is understandable that Britain should honour Finbarr with poppies and remembrance, along with the Black and Tans and similar terror forces in India, Kenya, Malaya, Aden and

other places across the globe, because that is what Britain has been doing for centuries.

But if great-uncle Finbarr thought he was serving Ireland he was very foolish indeed, and maybe we should feel sorry for him.

However, unless Finbarr's war was a just war it is morally problematic to grant it justification and respect in the form of Mr White's public displays of Imperial-style remembrance, complete with poppies and "the going down of the sun".

It is up to Mr White to convince us, firstly, that Britain's Great War was just, and secondly, that Ireland's Great War was just.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

Evening Echo, Cork—24.2.2014

I AM a PhD student at the University of Wolverhampton, whose research is concentrating primarily on the 16th (Irish) Division in the First World War. As a native of Cork, I saw Pat Maloney's letter 'For Ireland, Great War was not a just one' (Feb 17). I feel he does simplify some aspects of the approach to war, while he also needs to be corrected on others.

First, he suggests that in 1914 Britain was a "war-mongering aggressive power with armed forces which exceeded all other countries". This was certainly not the case. While Britain's Navy was greater than most, in total the Armed Forces did not exceed "all other countries". Prior to the outbreak of war in August 1914, the main protagonists' standing armies were:

Russia 5.9 million; Germany 4.5 million; France 4.0 million; Austria Hungary 3.5 million; Italy 1.2 million; Britain 975,000.

While, historically, Britain did exert influence across the globe, most aggression precluding the Great War was carried out by other countries, such as Germany against France in 1870 and German aggression in Morocco and Algiers from 1906, as well as the Russo-Japanese war 1904-1905. Mr Maloney suggests a country should be invaded to make a war 'just', such as Finland 1939-45. However, Serbia and Austria-Hungary declared war without invading each other. Russian mobilisation saw Germany declare war on Russia, without invasion.

On August 3, France and Germany declared war on each other, without either being invaded (France did not fight the Germans until August 7 at Alsace-Lorraine). Britain declared war on Germany only after Belgium was invaded, as was its obligation from the Treaty of London, 1839. A treaty also signed by France, Russia and the German Federation.

Germany's alliance with Austria-Hungary in 1879 also saw them declare war on Russia without any invasion. The question of a 'just war' for Britain can be answered by looking at its obligations and the consequences if they did not take part. We are lucky we can look back and answer, with the consequences of the Great War being available to us. This was not known to all the major powers in 1914. Britain was obliged to go to war to honour its treaty with Belgium as did France.

Was it a just war for Ireland? Mr Maloney asks what we should do about great-uncle Finbarr, blown to bits in Mesopotamia? Further, it is suggested that unless Finbarr's war is 'just' it is 'morally problematic to grant it justification and respect' in the manner Mr Gerry White and the Western Front Association currently do.

Kitchener's Armies were made up of volunteers that included volunteers into the 10th (Irish) Division, the 16th (Irish) Division and the 36th (Ulster) Division. Why these men joined up is of significance. There is evidence for a number of reasons. Tom Kettle MP was in Belgium and saw atrocities committed by Germans and was moved to join up, while also wishing to "help towards the Irish settlement". Others such as

Tom Barry wanted adventure “to see what war was like.”. Some joined to escape unemployment or social conditions. All felt these were ‘just’ reasons, as was the promise of Home Rule.

While the outcome of the Home Rule question is well known, this was not the case in 1914 when Ireland went to support ‘little Belgium’. The Great War for Ireland was ‘just’, even if to enhance the quest for Home Rule and the various individual causes as seen by those who joined up.

The justification of those going to war cannot be taken away by a sweeping statement that unless you’re invaded you have no justification. What would have happened if we let Germany dance through Europe and beyond in 1939? I am certain that surviving German and Polish Jews would have been pleased that no help was forthcoming.

Finally, the suggestion that Mr Maloney agrees that Britain should honour those Irish who died in the Great War along with the Black and Tans is completely disrespectful to those who fought in 1914-1918.

The context of Europe and Ireland in 1919 cannot be given the same significance as 1914-1918. There is no disagreement the Black and Tans was a group who intimidated and terrorised. However, those rightly remembered on November 11 fought within a British Army but as Irishmen for the support of freeing Belgium and creating Home Rule, as well as many individual causes.

The justification for the causes is best left to Captain Willie Redmond, who in 1922 said he hopes there will a “greater manifestation of devotion and reverence for the memories of our comrades of the days gone by”.

DenisMcCarthy, Wolverhampton, UK

Evening Echo, Cork—6.2.2014

DENIS McCarthy (Letters, Feb 24)) says that, just like the Black and Tans, many of the Irish Great War soldiers joined up for the money, or for the excitement, regardless of whether the actual war they participated in was itself honourable, moral and just.

He says they should be ceremonially honoured and remembered for this, because money and pleasure were sufficiently just reasons for these men to voluntarily leave their homes and participate in the slaughter.

Mr McCarthy says some of them thought they were fighting for Irish Home Rule — in Mesopotamia, Gallipoli and France! For the sake of argument, let us suppose that, in return for Irish participation in its Great War, the British promise of Irish Home Rule was actually sincere and binding. Well, if the cause Britain went to war for was simply a continuation of its policy of conquest, subjugation and imperial expansion, then any British gift of Irish Home Rule would have been a reward for Irish assistance in a criminal project, and there is nothing honourable or just about it.

In the 19th century, Sweden ruled Norway. But the Norwegians wanted to rule themselves. In 1905 they voted for independence. Sweden accepted this and departed. In Ireland, generation after generation had made it abundantly clear they did not want to be ruled by Britain. If Irish Home Rule was a good and worthy idea, then Britain should have granted it with no strings attached, not make it conditional on Irish participation in a criminal imperial war.

Mr McCarthy says Britain declared war because Germany invaded neutral Belgium. Perhaps we should agree with him that restoration of the freedom of a peaceful, neutral country like Belgium was a good, worthy cause to fight for. So maybe, after all, the Irish recruits were justified in engaging in this war even if, as Mr McCarthy suggests, the personal and private

motives of many of them were merely mercenary or thrill-seeking.

The problem is that Belgium was NOT some meek little neutral country that wouldn’t hurt a fly. It had a large army and was a grasping, imperial power, which had just lately exterminated millions of innocent people. Was Belgium a good enough reason for official Ireland to urge many thousands of uninvolved young Irishmen to take up arms and kill?

Anyway, if Britain was concerned about liberating Belgium, why did it send its army to France? And if Belgian liberty was its war aim, why did it scupper peace proposals, by Pope Benedict XV, and by Germany itself, which would have delivered this and averted the horrific slaughter of many further millions?

And if it was wrong for Germany to invade neutral Belgium, why was it right for Britain to invade neutral Greece — which was NOT an imperial power and which had struggled desperately to keep out of the war? Was Belgian freedom a greater good than Greek freedom? Where is the balance of merit or justice in Britain’s Great War?

The war waged by Britain against various countries obviously did not have the aim of achieving Irish Home Rule. And the argument that Britain’s war objective was Belgian freedom is equally implausible propaganda.

One of the outcomes of the war was a vast expansion of the already vast British empire. Was this just a stroke of good luck, or was it something that British imperial strategists had actually planned for? Was this the real reason why Britain declared war?

This is the elephant in the room, and it is grossly irresponsible to ignore it or deny it. Irish advocates of remembrance do not present any plausible case for the justice and morality of Britain’s Great War, or for Ireland’s involvement in it. The Irish soldiers who thought they were fighting for freedom and democracy were cruelly duped. The kind of lying propaganda that destroyed so many thousands of Irish lives is now, one hundred years later, still producing death and destruction in new wars across the globe.

The imperial propaganda, rhetoric and symbols of remembrance are the to create public acceptance and same now as they were a century ago, and they are used in the same way, justification of these cruel and unjust wars.

What is needed now is honest and fearless exposure of the propaganda. Whatever their personal motives might have been, it is an insult to the Irish Great War soldiers to commemorate them with remembrance and poppies in the imperial tradition which destroyed so many lives.

Pat Maloney, Editor, Labour Comment, Roman Street, Cork

Evening Echo, 11.3.2014

War myth

IN recent correspondence relating to World War I, much has been made of ‘Britain’s obligations to Belgium’ as a justification for entry into the war; and by extension, our own involvement. It is therefore worth revisiting this myth. The 1839 Treaty of London committed most major contemporary European powers to respecting the neutrality of the recently-created Belgium. In 1887, the possibility of an outbreak of hostilities between Germany and France arose, and *The Standard* — the mouthpiece of the UK government at the time — argued that the UK would not block the passage of German troops across Belgian soil. In other words, the UK government would not honour its obligations under the 1839 Treaty. Nor was the issue of neutrality sacrosanct — after all, Britain invaded the neutral Greece during World War I.

However, by 1914, Germany was not the weak patchwork of kingdoms it had been in the 1830s, but was a serious threat to British military and industrial hegemony. It proved its capabilities by trouncing France in the Franco-Prussian wars and was developing a navy to rival Britain's.

To prevent this, Britain conducted a series of pre-war treaties with France and Russia, known as the *Triple Entente*, the aim being to encircle Germany with nations friendly to Britain. Both German and French general staff had drawn up plans to violate Belgian neutrality in the event of a fresh outbreak of hostilities between them.

Luckily for Britain, Germany's pre-emptive invasion of Belgium provided the public excuse Britain needed to enter the war on France's side. Belgian neutrality is therefore an excuse, but not a justification.

Nick Folley, Ard carrig, Carrigaline, Co. Cork

Evening Echo, Cork 8.3.2014

MAY I comment on some of the points made by Denis McCarthy (Feb 24). As an instance of international war-mongering, he cites German aggression against France in 1870. But France declared war in 1870 and launched an invasion of German territory, but was defeated.

Though Paris was captured, the German army went home. Unlike for instance, the British conquest of Ireland, France did not have to wage a further war of liberation against German occupation forces. It had to pay reparations for its failed aggression, and the ethnically mixed Franco-German provinces of Alsace and Lorraine were transferred to Germany.

Germany instituted a system of devolved government for Alsace and Lorraine that was urged on the British Government as a model for Irish Home Rule. This proposal of the Irish Parliamentary Party failed. So in 1914 the Irish Party urged war against Britain — no, sorry, Germany

Mr McCarthy does not accept that Britain was the most aggressive of the great powers. But in his 1952 book, *A Study of War*, U.S. Professor Quincy Wright estimates the relative percentages of participation by the principal European states in wars from 1480 to 1940 as follows: England 28%, France 26%, Spain 23%, Russia 22%, Austria 19%, Turkey 15%, Poland 11%, Sweden 9%, Holland 8%, Italy 9%, Germany/Prussia 8%.

British violence did not fully get into its stride until after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and in the Great War era the figures demonstrate extreme levels of British war-mongering and aggression.

Mr McCarthy gives figures suggesting the British armed forces were inferior to those of other countries. For several centuries Britain was the world's superpower, with only an occasional challenge from France, and it constructed an empire which straddled the globe. Mr McCarthy cites the relative manpower of the various armies, showing relatively small numbers in the British armed forces. But the Great War was more than just a recurrence of the intermittent warfare between

France, Russia, Germany, and Balkan countries. It was a world war because one of the belligerents, Britain, was THE world power. Yet Mr McCarthy only gives the manpower tally of Britain's Home Army, excluding Indian, Canadian, Australian and South African armies, which were committed to war along with the British Empire.

Manpower is one of the lesser factors in determining military strength. For example, a relatively small force led by Kitchener (from Kerry) slaughtered a horde of native Sudanese in the 1889 Battle of Omdurman. Kitchener's well-trained, disciplined soldiers had Maxim guns, the Sudanese did not.

Some strategists of the Great War expected that, while German forces could be held down relatively cheaply by France and Britain on the Western Front, in the east they would be quickly overwhelmed by the vast numerical superiority of the 'Russian steamroller'. These were often poorly trained, poorly armed, ill-disciplined cannon fodder, conscripted unwillingly, forcefully herded into battle by officers who in some case could not even communicate in the men's native languages. The German victory in the August 1914 Battle of Tannenberg put paid to the steamroller theory, and the Great War got under way.

If the military strength of the British was inferior, how did they come to rule more of the globe than any other power? Was it their charming Hugh Grant-style manners? It is no secret that the key to Britain's global reach and power was the Royal Navy. By the late 19th century its strength matched the combined naval strength of the next two great powers.

Naval power was the nuclear missile system of that time. There is ample evidence that a major factor in Britain's decision to wage war on Germany in 1914 was because Britannia's rule of the waves was jeopardised by Germany's proposed construction of a railway to Baghdad. This offered a free, fair challenge to British control of the world's ocean trade routes.

British naval power caused the Great War defeat of Germany. Its Royal Navy blockade was essentially a starvation war against innocent German civilians. In its attempt to counter it, Germany resorted to submarine warfare which eventually brought in the U.S. on the Allied side.

After the Armistice, the Royal Navy starvation war continued for several more months, causing hundreds of thousands more deaths.

Mass murder by the Royal Navy converted the Armistice into a surrender by Germany.

Eamonn de Paor, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford



The illustration on this page is from the front cover of :

The Great Fraud of 1914-18

by Pat Walsh

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Social Democracy and the Shaping of Germany, 1945-49 Part 3

By Philip O'Connor

In previous extracts from this thesis we examined the break up of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) as the National Socialist regime was established in Germany in 1933. A small group of exiles maintained a much contested "mandate" as the official representative in exile of the old party Executive, despite being disowned by the Reichstag group and leadership elements within Germany before they were declared illegal and also by multiple defections from the "old party" by exiled socialists. The exile "Executive" – known as the SoPaDe – continued to be accepted, though often just about, by other European socialist parties and the British Labour Party. The hard line anti-Soviet views of the SoPaDe were not popular during the era of the Big Three Alliance and pro-Soviet sentiment among the Western Left. It was smaller groupings which had broken from the SPD before 1933 that achieved more influential roles in Britain and the US during the war. In late 1942 a series of dramatic developments changed the fortunes of the SoPaDe when, just as British Labour decided to break its relations with them, a new avenue of influence opened through the "Union of German Socialist Organisations in Britain", a body strongly influenced by the ISK and created in 1941 on the order of the British Government. The groupings composing the Union were examined in the last extract. SoPaDe accession to the Union came at a high political price, not least acceding to a platform of policies that reflected British Labour thinking on post-war Germany. Following the movements of small political groupings can be a tedious business for the reader, but we would ask you to persevere, as this aspect was to be of particular significance in post war affairs. In the next issue of Irish Foreign Affairs we will trace how the substantial role of the Union was subsequently developed under a deal - highly secret to this day – concluded with the military insurgency forces of the Western Allies.

3.2 British Wartime Policy, the SPD and the "Union of German Socialist Organisations"

The "Union of German Socialist Organisations" was thus a successful survival strategy on the part of the remnant of the exile SPD circle in Britain which remained loyal to the idea of reviving the traditional party. This necessitated far reaching concessions to the other small but much better connected exile left wing groups which joined in the formation of the 'Union'. But, as has been seen, the formation of the Union had occurred at the initiative of circles associated with the rising foreign policy elite in the British Labour Party, who had also insisted on the inclusion of the numerically large grouping of exile German trade unionists in Britain, the *Landesgruppe deutscher Gewerkschafter*, where the most prominent individuals were not former social democrats.

The British Labour Party had been transformed since the debacle of the MacDonald Government of 1931. It had entered the Churchill Government in 1940 with a will to resolutely prosecute the European war. One of the most influential voices in the wartime Government was the Minister for Labour, Ernest Bevin, the man who had led the formation and development of the most powerful trade union in Britain at the time, the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU). Bevin regarded liberal democracy as the means by which a social revolution could be brought about in Britain. He rejected the relevance of communist politics in Britain while

often expressing a sympathy for it in Russia, such as in 1931 when – in opposing a German-led trade union initiative at the International Transport Workers Federation to isolate the USSR – he applauded the "actual living instance of super-human effort to rebuild a state on socialistic lines."⁵¹ The TGWU in the Labour Party had militantly opposed disarmament and the 1930s Tory Government policy of supporting Nazi Germany as an anti-communist bulwark in Europe. It was the main grouping in the party to support joining the proposed Coalition Government in 1940. Under Bevin's influence, the TGWU was determined not only on a relentless prosecution of the war against Germany but also in waging that war to carry through a social revolution at home, establish the basis for a permanent alliance with the Soviet Union abroad and pursue a type of democratic imperialism in Europe. Bevin's view was that the power vacuum in a post-war Europe was to be resolved by a European federation bounded by a British-Soviet alliance. The party created an "International Advisory Committee" of émigré European socialists to assist it develop its policy in this area.⁵²

These were views which were antithetical to the traditional position of the SPD – a position maintained by the leadership remnant based in London. The SPD view of the Bolshevik Revolution was that it had aborted a social democratic development of Tsarist Russia and replaced it with a "terrorist state".⁵³ In London, its representatives refused to accommodate any notion of a British-Soviet post-war condominium over Europe. To the Labour Party leadership, this handful of old SPD leaders had become an irritant.

To deal with the question of the SPD, the Labour Party commissioned a number of papers in 1941-42 as a basis for a decision on whether to continue its support for the "SoPaDe". These were harshly critical of the domestic and foreign policy positions of the SPD and its allied social trade unions (the ADGB), especially during WW1 and again in 1932-33, which were described as capitulations to "Prussian militarism". The historical positions of the SPD were defended only by some rather lone voices on the right of the Party, notably the wealthy Catholic MP, Richard Stokes, and by some anti-Communist "democratic socialist" intellectuals, such as Harold Laski and Philip Noel-Baker. These argued that while a social revolution in Germany was essential to root out Nazism and militarism, Labour should "not view with confidence a triumph of the communist party" and therefore should support a revival of the SPD in post-war Germany.⁵⁴

With the block vote of the general unions, in 1942 the issue was decisively resolved, with Labour adopting a policy demanding Germany's total defeat and its transformation through an imposed social and political "revolution". Its military-industrial capacity was to be dismantled and its society "democratised". The key to its democratisation was to be a new trade union movement, described as an "indispensable condition for the untrammelled growth of democratic institutions". This new trade union base – "independent of governments" – would be the foundation for a new labour movement, without any reference to any role for old SPD circles. These reforms "should lead to the eventual emergence of a Germany governed by a political system whose aims and needs run parallel to ours".⁵⁵

The abandonment by the Labour leadership in 1942 of its previous protection of the exile SPD leaders and support for their claim to be the legitimate leaders of German socialism was given dramatic expression in the appointment as sole German representatives to the Labour "International

Advisory Committee” of members of the “Fight for Freedom” Group rather than the SoPaDe. The leading figure in “Fight for Freedom” was Curt Geyer, a former left wing militant SPD leader from Saxony who had become prominent in the 1930s exile SPD Executive. Fight for Freedom broke with the SoPaDe and rejected Marxist interpretations of the rise of German fascism. Instead, they embraced the essentially racist analysis expounded by the influential Foreign Office diplomat, Lord Vansittart, in his pamphlet, *Dark Record*. In this analysis Nazism was simply a further and ultimate stage in German militarism which in turn was rooted in German character traits going back beyond Roman times. The German people themselves were the problem and guilt for the war could only be a collective one of the “German race”. The failure of Germany to be conquered by Rome was its historical debilitation and this could only be rectified by a reconstruction of German society under British guidance. Geyer, who was of Jewish background, adopted an ever more extreme form of this view, particularly after hearing of the first reports of the organised Nazi mass killings of the Jews. Geyer’s group was championed by the Foreign Office and its views and publications were given widespread circulation during the war.⁵⁶

But the Labour Party was not alone in discarding the SoPaDe. The nature of the Nazi war – particularly after the invasion of Russia - led to a breakdown in the identification of many German socialist exiles with the SPD and its plans for a restoration of the “old party”. In the most important centres of the German social democratic emigration outside Britain – Switzerland, Sweden and the USA – individuals and groups remaining loyal to the London SoPaDe leaders became besieged minorities, rejected even by most former SPD members. This was compounded by the breaking of the London SoPaDe’s last links to old SPD contacts in Germany and occupied Europe when southern France was occupied in November 1942.⁵⁷ It was thus hardly surprising that the Labour Party leadership felt under little pressure to maintain its sponsorship of an increasingly difficult group of individuals of apparently declining relevance to events. On October 2, 1942, the party officially informed the London SoPaDe of the end of Labour’s endorsement and funding of it. Hans Vogel, the SoPaDe chairman, protested, vainly pointing out the vital role of the SoPaDe in keeping the SPD alive in exile so as to be able to lead the revival of democratic labour politics in post-war Germany. But this, of course, was precisely the perspective the Labour Party had abandoned.⁵⁸

If the wartime Labour policy towards a post-war Europe made it convenient to abandon and marginalise the remnant of the old SPD leadership based in London, the Labour Party in government, as has been seen, continued to maintain close relations with other elements of the “Union of German Socialist Organisations” and these individuals and groups were later to play a vital role in realising British policy in Germany.

3.4 Cold War: U.S. Wartime Policy and the disintegration of the SPD in US exile

In 1942-3 American war aims in Europe were also gradually clarified. The Atlantic Charter and later the Casablanca Declaration established the goal of a German “unconditional surrender” and a revival of sovereign European states on liberal democratic lines. These were the aims around which the otherwise antagonistic Allied powers could form a consensus. But in US leadership circles distrust of Soviet intentions was acute from the start, particularly in the State and War Department establishments. First they suspected the Soviet Union of manoeuvring for a “separate peace” with Germany and later, especially following the establishment in Moscow in July 1943 of the “Free Germany Committee”, suspected

it of developing a grand plan for controlling Central Europe through the establishment of a “National-Bolshevik” regime in Germany. But the Roosevelt Government itself remained committed to a strategy of a post-war order “policed” by a consortium of the world powers and it led the way in bringing about the stabilisation of its alliance with Britain and the USSR by late 1943 in the ‘Big Three’ framework.⁵⁹

In this context, leading State Department officials from 1943 worried at the opinions among German social democratic circles both in the European underground and in American exile (as opposed to the western emigration) towards restoring the German state and seeking a new relationship with the Soviet Union. The main State Department figures influential in US German policy, Murphy and Morris, followed Soviet and “Free Germany” activity with increasing anxiety as the major focus of US policy concern, and the influential US ambassador in Moscow, George Kennan, warned in a cable of July 1945 of a Soviet offensive against Europe through the “Comintern” (sic) which “the western democracies are ill-prepared to meet”.⁶⁰

Against this background of Great Power politics and paranoia, German social democratic exiles in the US – many of whom had escaped through Marseilles with the assistance of US Jewish networks before the German invasion of southern France at the end of 1942 – were powerless. The SoPaDe grouping in New York, prohibited from public political engagement, was restricted to humanitarian rescue work. Called the “German Labor Delegation”, its patrons were the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC) and the older, more conservative wing of the trade union movement, the American Federation of Labor (AFL). But through these channels, and the strong influence of US trade unions in Roosevelt “New Deal” governments, figures such as the formerly prominent German social democrats Siegfried Stampfer and Otto Katz had some access to Government and boasted of their “influence” on US policy. But New Deal radicals had little sympathy for the Weimar restorationist solutions they offered. As in Britain, many leading German socialist exiles, notably prominent former figures of Jewish background from the Weimar period, like Aufhäuser, Sollmann and Grzesinski, split altogether from the German Labor Delegation for reasons not very far from those of Geyer’s Fight for Freedom grouping in London.⁶¹

Apart from these former SPD politicians, the most influential grouping of non-communist German left wing activists in US exile were former members of *Neubeginnen*. This group initially enjoyed a prestige and influence in the US not dissimilar to that of Willi Eichler’s ISK in Britain. *Neubeginnen* effectively dissolved in the US and its leading members abandoned the old aim of creating a revolutionary force from cadres of the SPD and KPD. The circle in the US, headed by Paul Hertz and Paul Hagen (aka Kurt Schmidt), developed a political position very similar to that of the ISK, advocating an ethically based democratic revival in post-war Germany under Allied tutelage. This grouping was held in high regard by some in the State Department and the OSS, the US intelligence and insurgency directorate, but lost its influence following a hectic campaign to discredit it by the German Labor Delegation. The accusations centred on denunciations of Paul Hagen – a former KPD member – as a “Stalinist spy” and a “paid agent of the GPU” (the Soviet political police). Despite Hagen’s desperate protestations of his anti-communism and loyalty to the US interest, the AFL connections of the German Labor Delegation and the distrust of both the London “Union of Socialist Organisations” and British Intelligence ended the tentative alliance between the OSS and the Hagen circle in the US, beyond the routine provision of information and political analyses.⁶²

Despite these machinations, a broadly based “Council for a Democratic Germany” was nevertheless established in the US in March 1944 on the model of the London “Union of German Socialist Organisations”. It even included the Hagen circle of distrusted former *Neubeginnen* members, as well as three former SoPaDe executive members and a trade union committee formed along similar lines to the London *Landesgruppe deutscher Gewerkschafter*. But the initiative was crippled from the start due to the hostility of the German Labor Delegation - fully supported by the anti-communist AFL – because “leading members of the trade union committee were also prominent in the Council [for a Democratic Germany] ... which the GLD [= German Labor Delegation] and the AFoL regard as a disguised branch of the Moscow [Free Germany] Committee”.⁶³ The unequivocal support for the position of the German Labor Delegation provided by the Jewish Labour Committee and the AFL were factors in US domestic politics of such importance that neither the AFL foreign policy strategists nor the OSS could break the stalemate that this produced, despite their lamenting – internally at least – that the German Labor Delegation “represented only itself and its supporters in the *Neue Volkszeitung*” and, in contrast to the London *Union of German Socialist Organisations*, had produced “not a single serious study [of Germany] or a single document of any use”.⁶⁴

Albert Grzesinski, the Jewish former Prussian SPD Minister of the Interior, was scathing in his criticism of the German Labor Delegation: “Regarding the information and the connections which the comrades have”, he wrote to Hans Vogel in London, “it can only be said that they are worthless. In the English-language press, Katz, Brauer, Stampfer etc. and their opinions count for nothing. As regards German questions, they are seen as implicated, not in tune with the American mentality and are ... generally rejected.”⁶⁵

A unified and effective German socialist grouping closely linked to the US war effort was only to emerge later, after the major breakthrough in Britain related below, and in close relation to it. In both countries the SoPaDe contingent was kept at arm’s length by Government. Also, the non-traditional socialist groupings in both countries – notably the *Neubeginnen*, ISK and SAP (Socialist Workers Party) - had discarded their traditions. By 1943 groupings drawing adherents from all of them had begun to form, closely connected with Allied military planning circles and prepared to participate in a Western Allied reformation of German politics.

(Endnotes)

51 Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, vol. I, p. 508.

52 On Bevin’s foreign policy during the war, Bullock, *Bevin*, vols. 1 and 2. On Bevin’s views on combined Soviet and British labour interests, see also Jack Jones, ‘Ernest Bevin – Revolutionary by Consent’, *Employment Gazette*, March 1981, and Manus O’Riordan, ‘Bevin and the British Road - A Problem for Leninism’, *Problems of Communism*, Summer 1981.

53 See the Kautsky-Lenin polemics of 1917-22, frequently re-issued by the SPD (e.g. *Kautsky contra Lenin*, ed. Peter Lübke, JHW Dietz Nachf. Verlag, Berlin-Bonn, 1922, 1976). Exiled Mensheviks and Georgian social democrats were frequent contributors in the 1920s to the influential journal *Die Gesellschaft* edited by leading SPD theoretician and Weimar era Minister, Rudolf Hilferding, and also attended SPD conferences as guests.

54 On the Labour Party inquiry, William Gillies, ‘German Social Democracy. Notes on its Foreign Policy in World War One’, Labour Party International Department, ‘Private and Confidential’, October

1941, and other similar papers in AsD-SoPaDe-Emig., M. 191. Gillies was head of the “International Department” of the Labour Party. The debate on Germany in the Party leadership is recounted in Glees, *Exile Politics*, pp. 139 ff. and also in Röder, *Exilgruppen*, pp. 139 ff. On Stokes, see Farquharson, “‘Emotional but Influential’: Victor Gollancz, Richard Stokes and the British Zone of Germany, 1945-9”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 22 (1987), pp. 501-19 and the interesting assessment by the German exile socialist, Fritz Eberhard, ‘Überblick über die Kriegszieldebatte in den politischen Parteien Englands’, 7.2.[1942?], IfZ ED 117 (NL Eberhard), Bd. 1.

55 Material quoted in Glees, *Exile Politics*, p. 140.

56 Sir Robert Vansittart. *Dark Record. Germans Past and Present*, London, 1941, which insisted on the “collective guilt” of the Germans for Nazism and the war, supported the carpet bombing of German cities, and after the war complained vociferously at the failure to erect a monument to Air Marshall Harris. Geyer later complained to the Bavarian social democratic leader, Wilhelm Hoegner, with some justification, that he had been treated by the SoPaDe in London as “expelled” from the party since 1942 because of “the really outrageous German Nationalism of this group which it combined with a hatred for the country which had given it asylum” (Geyer to Hoegner, 15.12.1947. IfZ-ED 120 [NL Hoegner] 937.02). Other prominent figures in *Fight for Freedom* were Walther Loeb and Karl Höltermann. In *Gollancz in German Wonderland* (London, 1942), Geyer and Loeb delivered a powerful denunciation of left wing wishful thinking regarding an internal German socialist defeat of Hitler. Labour’s “International Advisory Committee” was chaired by Jan Huysmans, the Belgian socialist leader and last chairman of the pre-war Socialist International. See Glees, *Exile Politics*, pp. 135 ff. and Röder, *Exilgruppen*, pp. 139-171. *Dark Record* was a popular success, reprinting in numerous editions during the war and achieving a circulation of hundreds of thousands.

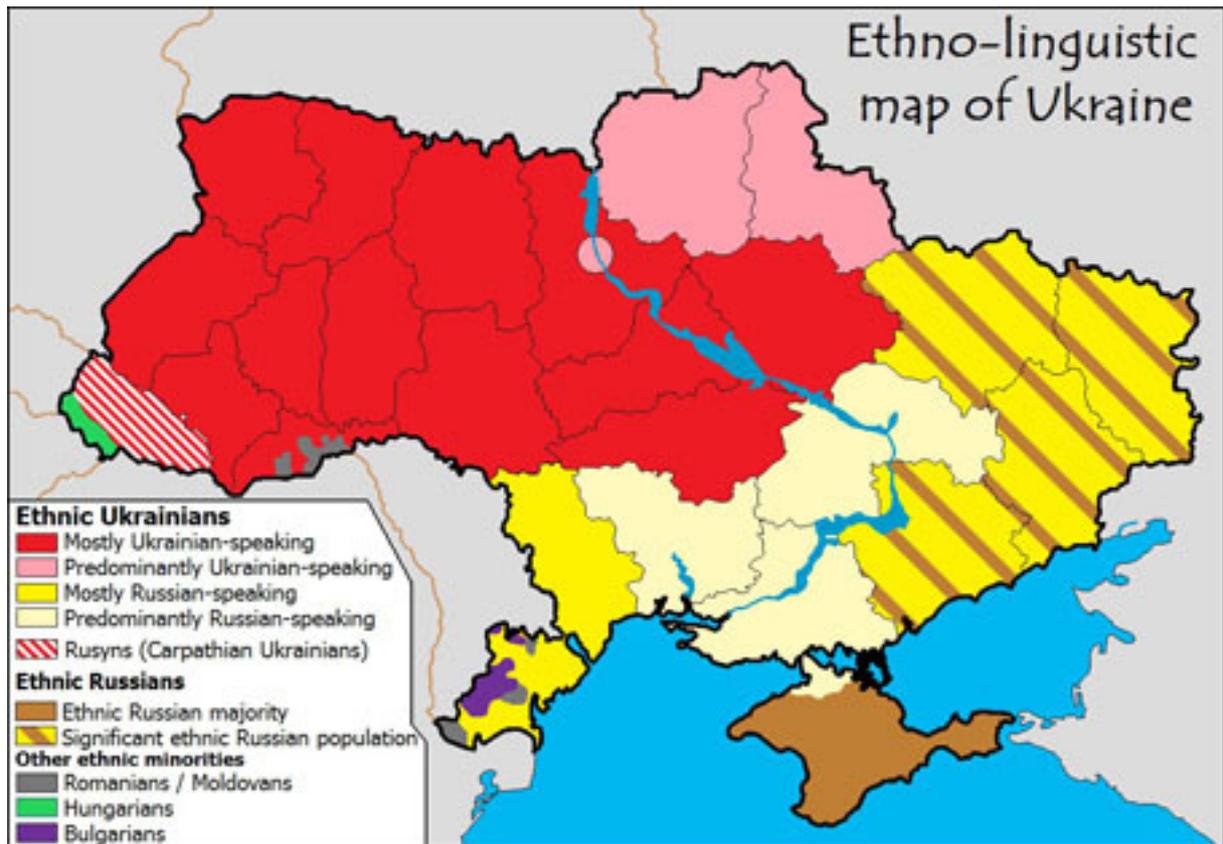
57 On the developments in other SPD émigré circles, see Radkau, *Emigration in den USA*, pp. 144 ff., Müssener, *Exil in Schweden* (1974), pp. 156 ff. and, for Switzerland, Kritzer, *Wilhelm Hoegner* (1979), pp. 135 ff. On British Labour Party “Vansittartism”, see Rolf Steininger, ‘British Labour, Deutschland und die SPD’, *Internationales Wissenschaftliches Korrespondenz*, 15 (1979), pp. 188-226, and Patterson, ‘The British Labour Party and the SPD 1945-52’, in Freidrich Ebert Stiftung (ed.), *Kurt Schumacher* (1988).

58 Vogel later wrote to a British Labour Party contact that the “bitterest disappointment” in Britain had been the curtailing of “our political effectiveness in this country” and the lack of “support from our friends”. Vogel to Middleton, 10.10.1942, AsD-Best. SoPaDe-Emig., Mappe 140. See also similarly Glees, *Exile Politics*, pp. 135 ff., and Vogel to Wilhelm Hoegner, 21.07.1945, AsD-Best. SoPaDe-Emig., Mappe 142.

59 See Niethammer, Sywotek, ‘Autonome politische Organisation in Deutschland in der Kriegszielpolitik der Anti-Hitler-Koalition’, *Arbeiterinitiative 1945* (1976), pp. 105-129, here p. 114 f.

60 Report of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) – forerunner of the CIA – ‘German Social Democrats and Soviet Russia’, 15.9.1943, IfZ OMGUS-POLAD 729/26 and the very cautious reports of the US “advisor” in the inter-Allied “European Advisory Committee”, IfZ OMGUS-AGTS 94/1-5. Murphy-Morris correspondence is in IfZ OMGUS-POLAD Ts 32/73 and the July 1945 Kennan cable is at IfZ OMGUS-POLAD 729/38. On official public US government policy at this time, see Graml, *Die Alliierten und die Teilung Deutschlands* (1985), pp. 21-60.

(Continued p. 14)



Ethno-linguistic map of Ukraine

This map shows the population of Ukraine and languages spoken. The West is and speaks mostly Ukrainian. The Crimean peninsula in the South is and speaks mostly Russian. The Eastern part of the country has Russian speakers and Ethnic Russians. Kiev is in the North, in the ‘mostly Ukrainy-speaking’ part. Kiev is ‘predominantly Ukrainian speaking’.

Here is Paul Craig Roberts’ view of what happened. <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article37856.htm>

Has Russia Invaded Ukraine? **Propaganda Rules The News**

By Paul Craig Roberts

(Extracts)

“The fact of the matter is that those 16,000 Russian troops have been in Crimea since the 1990s. Under the Russian-Ukrainian agreement, Russia has the right to base 25,000 troops in Crimea.

As I have written several times in my columns, Washington organized the coup in Ukraine in order to promote its world hegemony by capturing Ukraine for NATO and putting US missile bases on Russia’s

border in order to degrade Russia’s nuclear deterrent and force Russia to accept Washington’s hegemony.

Russia has done nothing but respond in a very low-key way to a major strategic threat orchestrated by Washington.

Putin has been granted authority by the Russian Duma to send troops to Ukraine, but Putin has stated publicly that sending troops would be a last resort to protect Crimean Russians from invasions by the ultra-nationalist neo-nazis who stole Washington’s coup and established themselves as the power in Kiev and western Ukraine. What has happened in Ukraine is that Washington plotted against and overthrew an elected legitimate government and then lost control to neo-nazis who are threatening the large Russian population in southern and eastern Ukraine, provinces that formerly were part of Russia. These threatened Russians have appealed for Russia’s help, and just like the Russians in South Ossetia, they will receive Russia’s help.”

See Manus O’Riordan on EU involvement (p. 4) and David Morrison on EU support for illegal government (p. 8).