

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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On Ireland's financial sovereignty and our "Gallant Allies in Europe"

Editorial

The 1916 Proclamation declared the establishment in arms of the Republic by the Irish Volunteers with the support of Ireland's "exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe". For Connolly, Casement and others, the world war had been engineered to destroy the threat to the British Empire represented by a new Europe with "German Socialism" at its core. Ireland's future would be secured through a close alignment with Europe.

The world financial crisis since 2008 has again forced the hand of Europe, and required it to develop along a new path by consolidating the Eurozone outside the structures of the increasingly marginalised and atrophied "European Union". The moment of truth came in November 2011 when Britain ensured that monetary consolidation could not occur through the EU structure.

Political conflict in Ireland towards resolution of the financial and European crisis reawakened the conflict of 1914 between the Irish Volunteer position of a Republic aligned with Europe versus the New Redmondism which proposed a partnership with Britain in running the Empire.

From 2008 a strong agitation developed proposing debt default and ultimately an Irish economic re-alignment close to Sterling. Proponents of this approach ranged from right wing commentators like Cormac Lucey (former adviser to Michael McDowell) and Morgan Kelly to left wing advocates of a false kind of financial Keynesianism like Fintan O'Toole. This agitation was reinforced centre stage by the *Financial Times* – the organ of the financial markets of the City of London – which became something of a household organ for the Dublin *commentariat*. The FT cynically advocated the flooding of debtor states with cheap money, which of course would have had the effect of weakening the Euro and fatally disabling the main power of the Eurozone, Germany, much to the benefit of City of London traders. The agitation was accompanied by a revival of crude wartime anti-German propaganda.

The alternative line was to maintain a close alignment with the Eurozone and, through its consolidation with monetary union, resolve the Irish crisis. This perspective must assume that the Eurozone project under its Franco-German leadership is a benign and positive development and promises in the long run to secure Europe against the depredations of global – or rather Anglo-American – finance capitalism. But the Anglification of public commentary in Ireland in recent decades meant that it was a perspective that was slow to find articulation. The case was forcefully put first only in the small circulation *Irish Political Review*, but Ireland's Europeans eventually found their feet, notably through the case being put by John Bruton and Lucinda Creighton in *The Irish Times* which dramatically made itself a vehicle for the message in a week long series on Germany and Ireland in August 2012. The general population, for its part, had retained its Republican instincts sufficiently to have ratified – however grumpily but decisively – the Fiscal Compact. As those *Irish Times* polls showed, they had also stubbornly maintained a fundamentally positive and benign view of German intent, despite what Stephen Collins described as "the anti-German rhetoric emanating from a range of politicians and high-profile media commentators" (*Irish Times*, 25th August).

The Euro crisis is well in hand and moving towards resolution through a radical deepening of European integration via its currency. The "EU" project had become derailed in the backwash of the collapse of Soviet communism and, under British influence, had indulged itself in a binge of mindless expansionism and free marketeerism in the 1990s. The federalist project was shelved. At the time Jacques Delors, who as Commission President had been the great architect of "Social Europe", convinced the then French socialist president Francois Mitterand that the project of European integration could only be saved by creating a fact on the ground – a common currency – whose eventual logical consequences would force the revival of a development towards economic integration. Mitterand convinced German Christian democrat chancellor Helmut Kohl – in fact making it a condition of French support for German reunification – and thus the Euro project was born.

The Germans are slow and reluctant leaders of Europe. Recently in *Die Zeit* Richard Sulik, leader of the Slovak neo-liberal 'Freedom and Solidarity' Party, chided Germany for its continued self-restraint due to its war crimes in the Second World War. He argued that German "guilt" had been resolved and that Germany should *not* go down the road of financing a European recovery and ruin itself in the process from a sense of historic duty ('Deutschland ruiniert sich', *Die Zeit*, 19th August). The Polish Prime Minister on the other hand appealed last year for the opposite, saying what Poland feared more than German power was German inactivity, and calling for Germany to push ahead with the Fiscal Compact. Probably more than any other factor, voices such as these from Eastern Europe have galvanised the German will to see the Euro project through to success, and *Irish Foreign Affairs* congratulates them on this.

There is an uncanny resonance in the current process of resolving the crisis to what happened in Europe and Ireland in the late 1970s when then too international markets were threatening to destroy the European project.

There is much nonsense spoken at the moment about "restoring Ireland's financial sovereignty." This is a hangover from the 2010 election campaign when the then opposition parties claimed they would "restore Ireland's economic sovereignty" – which Fianna Fáil had lost – by renegotiating the agreement with the Troika. This useful lie remains a fundamental part of the mythology of the current Government, repeated *ad nauseum* by the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste and various Ministers.

But the financial history of Ireland shows that since independence was declared in January 1919 the state has ever been engaged in seeking to expand its very narrow "financial sovereignty". The first Dáil established a Department of Finance and planned an independent currency but following the Treaty the finances of the Free State remained both *de jure* and *de facto* subservient to the Bank of England. The Cosgrave Governments of the 1920s sought with some limited success to loosen this financial bondage.

The economic war with Britain in the 1930s, which culminated in the qualified Irish victory of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938 (facilitated by the British turn to "appeasement" of its enemies and colonies), established a further degree of economic

independence, or sovereignty. The Irish Pound, however, remained linked and subservient to Sterling – i.e. to the Bank of England – despite the formal break established in 1937 in Bunreacht na hÉireann.

In a proverbial “little known incident of the Second World War”, Churchill launched what might be called a “dirty” financial war designed to wreck the Irish economy. This major assault on Irish sovereignty is only a “little known incident” because the Irish school of “historiography” that has developed since the 1970s portrays Irish neutrality in WW2 as either, at best, a clever sham (Ryle-Dwyer), a mere matter of “security cooperation” (O’Halpin of TCD), or, at worst, in the words of current Minister of Defence, Alan Shatter, a declaration of “moral bankruptcy”. In such a view of things, the actual history of the war must be disregarded and written out of the record, as during its first two years British strategy had been to spread the conflict as far and wide as possible (including to Ireland) while Irish strategy revolved around an assumption that the prime threat to its neutrality came from a potential British invasion and re-occupation. (The story of Churchill’s economic war against Ireland within the wider war against Germany was last recounted, as far as we are aware, in Robert Fisk’s magisterial 1970s book *In Time of War*).

The Fianna Fáil governments of the 1960s had little perspective on issues of financial sovereignty. Their primary concern, as expressed by Seán Lemass, was to achieve a standard of living for Irish workers that approximated to that of British workers. When Britain applied for membership of the European Common Market in 1964, Lemass followed suit because he believed Ireland had no other choice in the matter. In 1969, over 95% of Irish exports – mostly in the form of unprocessed agricultural produce – was still to the British market.

When in the 1970s a financial crisis in Britain led to the IMF being called in, Irish politicians began for the first time to seriously consider breaking with Sterling. The true extent of Ireland’s “financial sovereignty” at the time was well described

by the then Governor of the Central Bank, T.K. Whittaker, who wrote: “*no small country dependent on international trade can defend itself in the end from the inflation prevailing in its main trading partners*”. He further pointed out that as long as a sterling link was in effect, control of Ireland’s inflation would depend on that of Britain. In a moment strong with resonances for today’s readers, Britain’s financial predicament coincided with an initiative of the then German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, backed by the French President, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing (but opposed by the Bundesbank), to create a “zone of financial stability” for EEC member states through what was to become the European Monetary System (EMS), a move that had the ambition to be the first step on the path to a full monetary union.

The negotiations in this process were highly secret, and at the crucial moment, when Britain – then as again in 2011 – sought to scuttle the project by withdrawing from it in April 1978, Ireland was excluded from the talks because, in the words of Patrick Honohan, there was a general “*perception that Ireland was, for monetary purposes, an adjunct of the UK*.” It was in reaction to this exclusion, and particularly to Giscard’s statements reflecting European views of Ireland as an adjunct of the UK, that the Fianna Fáil government of the time announced that Ireland would break definitively with Sterling and join the proposed Exchange Rate Mechanism, with the somewhat reluctant Irish Central Bank and even more reluctant Department of Finance having to be dragged along in the process.

These developments – outlined in 2010 in an in-depth paper by Patrick Honohan and Gavin Murphy – form the start of Ireland’s deeper integration into Europe, as the EMS was accompanied by the programmes of Structural Funding intended to even out economic imbalances between central and peripheral regions of the Union as part of the process of monetary integration. (See Patrick Honohan and Gavin Murphy, ‘Breaking the Sterling Link: Ireland’s Decision to Enter the EMS’, IIIS Discussion Paper No. 317, February 2010.)

The break with Sterling was seen as the starting point for an industrial and economic take off, or, as the then Department of industry put it: to retain the fixed link with sterling would “*perpetuate our trade dependence on the UK and tie Ireland to the high inflation, historically slow and uncertain growth of the UK economy*.” This strategy largely worked, and by the late 1990s, the economy had expanded massively and trade with Britain had declined to less than 30% of all Irish exports. And even these exports were now more industrial in content and, where agricultural, processed prior to export. Of critical importance was the political nature of the break, with Government stressing the increased economic sovereignty that would accrue from a dramatic reduction in dependency on British markets.

The relationship with Europe was never perceived as an alternative dependency to that on Britain, but rather more of a set of relationships between equals, much as Connolly and Casement had seen it in 1914. As Honohan observed: “*On March 30, 1979, just over two weeks after the start of the ERM, the sterling link was broken forever*.”

We are at a similar moment again and, through the Fiscal Compact referendum, Ireland has taken the leap it needed to take and, in tune with the instincts of the population, has embarked on the historic project of European monetary union under a more assured Franco-German leadership than has been witnessed for decades.

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The Revolution in British Foreign Policy that Led to the Great War – The Thoughts of W.T. Stead

by Pat Walsh

In 1888 England looked out and saw a very different Europe than it was to see two decades later, in 1908. The map of Europe changed very little in that period but England's view of it changed radically. And because Europe could not escape being what England took it to be and what British activity began to make it into, its peace and security was undermined. So Europe was changed through a revolution conducted in British foreign policy that led to the Great War of 1914-?

That revolution involved a great turnabout in British Foreign Policy. In the 19th century Britain's traditional enemy in Europe had been France and her traditional enemy in Asia had been Russia. However, in the early years of the 20th century England gradually decided in weighing up the Balance of Power that Germany was the coming power to be opposed. Therefore, it was decided to overturn the Foreign Policy of a century and to establish alliances with its traditional enemies, France (1904) and Russia (1907), so that Germany could be encircled and then when war came about Britain would join the conflict and destroy her as a commercial rival.

Without that revolution in British Foreign Policy there might still have been a European war at some point that adjusted the map of the continent but it is very unlikely that there would have been a Great War—certainly not of the character and scale of that which came about from 1914.

William Thomas Stead was the man who called for that revolution in British Foreign Policy and who campaigned for it in books, newspapers and periodicals for twenty years. But when it was achieved he began to notice something had changed that threatened the peace, stability and security of the world which he also campaigned for as a good Liberal. He described it, started to expose it and tried to campaign against it without quite putting his finger on it. And then he embarked on the Titanic, bound for a speaking tour to the U.S.

W.T. Stead was the famous journalist who went down with the Titanic a hundred years ago. It is said that he was the originator of the sensationalist campaigning that characterises modern journalism.

In the 1880s Stead was assistant editor of the famous Liberal periodical *The Pall Mall Gazette*, which was under the editorship of John Morley. After Morley was elected to Parliament Stead was appointed editor and over the next seven years developed the 'New Journalism' of exposés which campaigned for various causes. The most famous incident in Stead's campaigns was his 'procurement of a virgin'—when he bought a child to show the ease with which child prostitution could be arranged in Victorian England. He caused a sensation, sold a massive amount of newspapers and went to jail for a time for this stunt. Stead tired of daily journalism in 1890 and left *The Pall Mall Gazette* to found the *Review of Reviews*, another famous Liberal publication.

The Truth about Russia

W.T. Stead's main political ambition was to bring about an alliance between England and Russia—which he felt was the only way of securing the future peace of Europe and Asia, and copper-fasten the Indian Empire. When he began writing about the subject in the 1880s Russia was Britain's number 1 global enemy (France was not such a threat to the British Empire because it had been largely seen off in America and Asia and did not have the population size that could potentially threaten Britain in the world).

'The Great Game' was the British term for the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia in the nineteenth century. It stemmed from the fear in London that the Russian civilizing mission in Central Asia would extend eventually into India—the jewel in the crown of the British Empire. The dangerous situation was that Britain, which was mainly a sea power, might easily come off second best in a conflict in the interior of Asia with the vast amount of manpower that could be marshalled there by Russia.

Since the time of Peter the Great Russia had sought to obtain a sea route from the Black Sea to the Aegean and Mediterranean. Russia's northern coast was icebound, its Baltic Coast was difficult to emerge from, due to the length of passage and possible interference from other Powers, and its Siberian seacoast was too far from the important part of Russia to make it valuable as a trade route.

The Great Game emanated from Britain's insistence at blocking Russia's need for port facilities to ensure its economic development through maritime trade.

Russia was severely impeded in its industrial and commercial development at a time when Britain was developing the global market through its navy. In a world that was being globalized by the Royal Navy, to be a world power Russia had to become a sea power. And it was impossible to be a sea power with only one port and with the rest of the country's vast territory hemmed in by ice and a hostile foreign navy.

Russia, in the British view, was a sleeping giant and England was determined to prevent this giant exercising its potential influence by boxing it in everywhere it sought to emerge into the world—whether it be in the Balkans, South-East Asia or at the Straits of Constantinople/Istanbul.

On the opening pages of his 1888 book, *The Truth about Russia* Stead described the view from England of a Europe on the brink of war, with great fears in England that Russia (in conjunction with Britain's other traditional enemy, France) would launch an attack on Germany and Austria:

"Russia holds in her hands the balance of power in Europe. The other states are either paralysed by internal dissensions, or

foreign vendettas, or entangling alliances. Russia alone of the great military Powers is self-contained and self-sufficing, free alike from embarrassing alliances and paralysing antagonisms.

According to popular prejudice in England, the Czar is the great disturber of the peace alike of Europe and of Asia. This is the root idea of the so-called traditional policy of the British Empire, and this largely influences the attitude of the Salisbury Government in its Continental policies.

Briefly stated, the Ministerial idea in foreign policy has been based upon the following conception of the situation. The disturbing forces in the European situation are France and Russia. France avowedly is in training for an attack upon Germany; Russia is her natural, her only ally. Russia, moreover, has designs of her own on the Balkan Peninsula and Constantinople, which render her of necessity a menace to the *status quo*. To keep the peace, it is necessary to form a League of Peace, of which Germany, from position and necessity, would form the nucleus. Germany and Austria made an alliance for defensive purposes, and to this alliance Italy was subsequently admitted.” (pp.1-2)

That was an accurate description of how Europe was, from the point of view of England in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Russia was seen as the free weight in the continental Balance of Power. It was seen as the variable that a state might enter into relations with that would alter everything. A Franco-Russian relationship was immensely threatening to Germany and Austria and conversely a Russo-German relationship made for great security on the continent because it could prevent the possibility of an encircling alliance of Russia and France.

In this period Bismarck had taken care of Germany’s security by making a series of arrangements with Russia. He realised that there would be no general war in Europe as long as Germany and Russia maintained good relations. France had no longer the will to launch a European war by herself, having tried and failed in 1870. And England, primarily a naval power, could do nothing substantial to threaten Germany on the Continent without hired help.

Bismarck’s wise policy gave time for the new German State to bed in and develop over three or four decades. And he maintained this situation into the mid-1880s through the alliance of the Three Emperors—*Dreikaiserbund*—and then the Reinsurance Treaties. But when Bismarck was forced out and Kaiser Wilhelm II took over the reins of state things started to go wrong. Von Holstein, a key advisor to the Kaiser, failed to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in the late 1880s and this allowed France to make an alliance with Russia in 1894, ironically due to fear of a developing German-British understanding, under Lord Salisbury.

Stead correctly notes that the German-Austrian alliance that subsequently admitted Italy (which he calls the “*Peace League*”) was a fundamentally defensive one to counter any potential Franco-Russian one.

But Germany’s development within the protection of the *Dreikaiserbund* and the Reinsurance Treaties was the thing that became problematic for Britain.

France and Germany

Stead believed that all this talk of a Russian (and French) threat to England and impending war on the continent was illusory and he determined to travel across Europe to show that he was correct.

He believed that the traditional British antipathy to Russia and the view that it was a force for war was mistaken and the assumptions behind it were false. Instead, he thought that an alliance between Russia and England—and including Germany—would be a great force for the peace and stability of Europe. Stead wrote: “*If my conclusions are sound, then the foreign policy of England should be revolutionised.*”

And revolutionised it was—but with the polar opposite consequence of what Stead anticipated.

In 1888 Stead set off for St Petersburg, determined to get a personal audience with the Czar. He was accompanied by Olga Novikoff, an influential Russian living in London who was reputedly the illegitimate daughter of Czar Nicholas I (Stead later wrote a two-volume memoir of her called *The MP for Russia* after the triumph of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 which both Stead and Olga worked for).

Stead and Novikoff were pursued by Maud Gonne, who seems to have had a mission to Russia as an agent of the French irredentists, carrying documents sewn into her undergarments that made overtures to Russia for an alliance against Germany. Gonne was accompanied by Catherine Radziwill, a Russian spy, and the two women attempted to court Stead at the Grand Hotel in St Petersburg. Stead was taken by the enticing of Gonne and wrote her a suggestive letter that was found by Novikoff, who was also keen on Stead, and this led to a brief falling out between them all. But Stead still got his audience with Czar Alexander III—which features prominently in his book, *The Truth about Russia*.

On his way to St Petersburg Stead visited the German and French capitals and talked to the leading political and military figures of the two states. He described a Europe that was not on the brink of war but actually in the process of settling down in the face of the post-war (1870-1) realities of the situation.

Stead could not see France and Germany resuming hostilities in the foreseeable future:

“... if the only danger of war in Europe arose from the danger of an immediate collision between the French and the Germans, I would have returned to London at once... I am inclined to risk the prediction that, so far as the two great antagonists are concerned, there has never been a time since peace was signed when there seemed less human probability of a renewal of hostilities... The French have not abandoned their desire to recover their lost provinces; but the very intensity of their desire makes them resolute not to sacrifice them for ever by making a premature plunge into a war in which they would have no allies and for which they are not prepared. France will not make the war of revenue this year, if for no other reason than this that she is not ready, that she has no allies, and, what is much more serious, she has for offensive purposes practically no army... the French are no more prepared to attempt the operation than we are prepared to attempt the colonisation of the moon.” (p.29)

Stead observed in 1888 that France was beginning to get over its defeat by Germany, and its loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and was about to come to terms with the existence of the German State to its east.

If this process had continued for a couple of generations (through a French impotence to do anything about the lost Provinces by themselves) then things might have turned out very differently in Europe. This was because without a substantial ally France—which Stead saw as the loose cannon of Europe—could do nothing to disturb the peace of the continent.

But the revolution in Britain's Foreign Policy, which Stead advocated, and its allying to its traditional enemy in Europe in 1904 prevented the dying out of French irredentism over its lost Provinces and preserved the French spirit of *revanche*. Roger Casement noted this in his article 'The Enemy of Peace' in 1913: "Were it not for British policy, and the unhealthy hope it proffers, France would... have resigned herself, as the two Provinces have done, to the solution imposed by the war of 1870." (*The Crime Against Europe*, p. 17)

At the same time it may be presumed that British Imperial strategists noticed that France's colonial rivalry with England resulted in its eyes being turned away from its lost Provinces. And the conclusion would have been drawn that the effect of a clearing of the slate with France with the 1904 *Entente* would have been to refocus French eyes again on the lost Provinces.

England must have calculated that providing the French with an ally of the calibre of the British Empire would have the effect of producing a massive boost to French military confidence so that the impossible would be seen as being practical. Since the war of 1870-1 Germany had grown stronger in terms of population, commerce, industry and military capacity, whilst France had largely stagnated. If those in France who adhered to the *revanche* ever wanted to get back the lost Provinces they had to do business with England within a common war against Germany.

Poor little Belgium

Stead also visited Belgium, presuming it would be implicated in any future European conflict—despite its supposed neutrality.

He described not the "poor little Belgium" of future British war propaganda but a highly militarised society at the centre of the world's arms industry.

Stead made it clear that if there ever was a war between France and Germany an attack by either nation would have to cross Belgian territory if it wished for success:

"The road from Paris to Berlin lies through Belgium... In war time this through route is blocked by the neutrality of Belgium, a neutrality which it is erroneously supposed England is under treaty obligation to defend by force of arms. But the temptation to break through Belgium despite its neutrality will be almost overwhelming, if either Germany or France seriously desires to invade the other. For this reason: —ever since the great war (i.e. the Franco-Prussian War) the two Powers have been busily engaged in rendering their respective frontiers impassable, by constructing lines of fortresses against which an invading army from the other side will break its head in vain. France glares at Germany and Germany glares at France from behind a *chevaux de frise* of fortresses bristling with cannon and crammed with soldiers armed with repeating rifles beneath the hail of which no troops can live. But while the immediately adjacent frontiers are thus rendered inaccessible, immediately to the North lies

the direct road—at present the open road—through Belgium, by which either combatant could march his forces into the enemy's country." (p.2)

Belgium was an unlikely future ally of the British Liberal conscience. It was one of the most brutal and reactionary of the Imperialist powers. One of its possessions in Africa was referred to, before the war in Britain, as "*The Congo Slave State*", where ten million natives were worked to death. Lord Cromer had been loud in his denunciations of Belgian atrocities in the Congo but Edward Grey, seeing the pivotal importance of Belgium to the British Balance of Power strategy, smoothed things over in the background. The French historian Elie Halevy had noted before the Great War:

"If the English were disposed to regard the independence of Belgium as the keystone of the European balance of power, it was because its very existence was in a sense a masterpiece of British diplomacy. By creating Belgium England had intended to make it finally impossible for the greatest European power—France formerly, Germany at present—to occupy Antwerp and thus permanently threaten the mouth of the Thames with its navy." (*A History of the English People*, p.664.)

Belgium had been artificially constructed by Britain to curb French influence on the other side of the English Channel. In 1914 its time came 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 and the device that would deliver the Liberal backbenchers to the war effort.

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." (E.G. Jellicoe, *Playing the Game*, p.169.)

Interestingly, in 1888 Stead made the following estimation after talking to Belgian officials:

"There seems to be some reason to believe—although the defence of Belgium is being conducted equally against both her neighbours—that the only enemy which is really feared is France. And they do not fear France very much. The French could only break through Belgium into Germany by exposing themselves to great danger of a flank attack, which the Germans are very conveniently placed to deliver... and of course, in case of war, Belgium might see her way to enter into an arrangement by which she threw in her lot with Germany in exchange for an adequate quid pro quo of guaranteed security. If France were to triumph, the Belgians believe she would annex them without scruple. They have no such fear as to Germany." (p.25)

This information sits very awkwardly with British war propaganda in relation to German intentions with regard to Belgium in 1914. If any power were to absorb Belgium or part of it surely it would be France, which had unified French-speaking Belgium at the time of the Revolution and absorbed it under Napoleon. There were extensive patterns of inter-

marriage between France and Belgium and the form of French spoken by Belgians was actually closer to standard French than that spoken in the south of France.

So there would have been much greater legitimacy in France taking Belgium in hand, or at least the Southern French part of it, than the Germans.

But, of course, when England allied with France the ‘threat’ to Belgium automatically transferred to the Germans. That just seems to be the way of things!

Libya and the Tripolitan War

In 1907 Stead got his heart’s desire with the Anglo-Russian agreement. But no sooner had it been signed that strange things began to happen.

In 1911 Stead published *Tripoli and the Treaties; or Britain’s Duty in this War*. This was a book protesting against Italy’s invasion of Ottoman Libya and asking why Britain was not lifting a finger to protest or prevent it.

Stead was outraged that Britain was unprepared to defend the International Treaties it had signed up to in 1856, 1871 and 1878 which guaranteed the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and failed to follow through on its pledges to go to war to defend it.

Stead was no sympathiser with the Ottomans and described himself as having written more against the Ottoman Turks than any man alive. He had always seen the British defence of the Ottoman Empire as a hypocrisy founded on primarily an anti-Russian position and as a Gladstonian Liberal he had been in favour of a “*bag and baggage*” policy toward them.

Stead was also aware of the other hypocrisy he was himself engaging in—as a Briton criticising other nations for seizing foreign peoples’ territories. But he saw something very momentous in Edward Grey’s ‘appeasement’ of the Italians when previous British Foreign Secretaries had so often threatened war with much greater Powers for the same principles in foreign affairs.

Stead smelt a rat and instinctively knew that something that really threatened the peace and stability of Europe was afoot.

The following passage is lengthy but it is an argument that I have not come across expressed elsewhere. I think that although Stead could not see the real reason behind Grey’s actions in relation to the Ottoman Empire he was observing the momentous revolution in British Foreign Policy that was tearing up the treaties on which the peace of Europe and beyond rested and which ultimately led to the Great War on Germany and Ottoman Turkey:

“‘The Treaty of Paris, of 1856,’ said Mr. Gladstone, ‘is the public law of Europe.’ That law was reaffirmed at the Conference of London in 1871, and again re-enacted at the Berlin Congress of 1878.

Great Britain took a leading part in 1856, in 1871, and in 1878 in defining and in defending this public law of Europe. It has been invoked time and again by successive Foreign Ministers

of both parties to resist the isolated action of any Power in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. It has been used repeatedly to silence the repeated demands made by the friends of Humanity in this country that something drastic should be done to suppress anarchy in Macedonia or to punish massacre in Armenia.

The doctrine of the European Concert formally embodied in the Treaty of Paris is that each of the great Powers binds itself to abstain from isolated action in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Any intervention must be collective. The Powers constituted themselves a Board of Trustees for the protection of the Sick Man’s estate, and bound themselves by a solemn treaty to abstain from any isolated action. That remains to this day the recognised public law of Europe on which the peace and security of the modern State system depends.

...It absolutely forbids any isolated action by any single Power in any part of the Ottoman dominions, it guarantees the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and it expressly prescribes that in the case of any dispute arising between any of the signatories and the Ottoman Government, no recourse shall be had to arms until the other signatory Powers have had an opportunity to compose the quarrel by peaceable mediation.

The action of the Italian Government in suddenly launching an expedition to seize Tripoli, which is part and parcel of the Ottoman Empire, without offering any of the other signatories of the Treaty of Paris an opportunity to compose the dispute by mediation, was not only a gross breach of treaty faith, it was a deliberate violation of the public law of Europe.

How was it met by the British Government? By protest, by warning, by remonstrance, by a declaration that Great Britain would not tolerate this breach of the public law of Europe?

Lord Granville in 1871, and Lord Salisbury in 1879 had confronted a much mightier Power than Italy, and that in a much more questionable quarrel, with the resolute statement that Great Britain was not prepared to tolerate the trampling under foot of the public law of Europe and the contemptuous tearing up of treaties to which the signature of Great Britain was attached.

But we are living in other days, when the spirit of Gladstone and Salisbury no longer inspires our Foreign Office. The action of our present Government appears to have been limited to issuing a Declaration of Neutrality!

Is this an adequate discharge of the duties and obligations of Great Britain in the present crisis?

That we have a duty need not be argued, because it has not been and cannot be disputed. Great Britain is one of the great Powers of Europe which has taken a leading part in the past — perhaps the leading part — in framing the treaties which embody the public law of Europe with regard to the Ottoman Empire of which Tripoli is an integral part. We have fought in one great war to secure the right to an equal voice in the settlement of all Turkish questions, and we have faced without flinching the possibility of having to wage war single-handed in defence of that right.” (pp.9-11)

Britain’s Reorientation

What Stead was describing—although he could not see it himself—was Britain preparing the way for the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the presenting of the great prize of

Constantinople to the Czar in return for an alliance ultimately aimed at destroying Germany.

England's objective in fighting the Crimean War (1854-56) had been to preserve the Ottoman Empire in order to prevent Russia from becoming a naval power in the Mediterranean after gaining Constantinople. The Dardanelles was strategically important for Britain because it controlled the East-West passage between Europe and Asia and the North-South passage between the Black Sea (which is really a lake) and the Mediterranean. The war in the Crimea ended, as Britain desired, in a treaty that banned passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to all naval units—which for all practical purposes meant Russian naval units. That effectively bottled up the Russian Southern fleet in the Black Sea.

The Peace of Paris of 1856 that England insisted upon guaranteed the political integrity of Turkey and forced Russia to remove her claim to be sole protector of the Slavs in the Balkans, conferring it instead on a combination involving the French, British and Sardinians and extending it into the Ottoman territories in Asia.

In 1871, during the Franco-Prussian War, Russia intimated that she no longer felt bound by the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris but Lord Granville, Foreign Minister in Gladstone's Government, threatened Russia with war and forced her to sign up to the Treaty of London of that year where the principle was established that no nation could contract out of a treaty without the agreement of the other contracting parties to that arrangement.

Britain nearly went to war again with Russia in 1877 when it looked like the Czar was going to take Constantinople. Stead describes these events contrasting the position taken by Britain with Edward Grey's appeasement in 1911. According to Stead:

“Russia then made the cause of the Bulgarians her own. The justice of their claims has been admitted by Europe, but Lord Beaconsfield's refusal to agree to a collective coercion of the Porte left them without redress. But even in this extreme case, when the justice of the *casus belli* was certified by all the Powers, Russia showed so scrupulous a regard to the spirit and the letter of the Treaty of Paris, that before declaring war upon the Turks, she sent General Ignatieff round Europe to make one last despairing effort to secure the collective action of the signatory Powers. The result was the Protocol of 1877, which represented the last effort of collective Europe to settle the dispute by friendly mediation. The Turks rejected the Protocol, and the war began, with the approval of some Powers and without the active opposition of any. But even when it broke out, Russia was sharply reminded that no arrangements which she might impose upon the Turks as the result of successful war would be regarded as having any validity unless they secured the sanction of the signatory Powers.

The war ran its course. The Turkish armies in Europe and in Asia were defeated, and the victorious Russians only halted at the gates of Constantinople. Before the Russians imposed their treaty of peace upon the vanquished Turks, although the British Government had declared its neutrality, it did not hesitate to intervene.

On January 14, in view of the reports which had reached her Majesty's Government as to the negotiations for peace which

were about to be opened between the Russian Government and the Porte, and in order to avoid any possible misconception, her Majesty's Government instructed Lord A. Loftus to state to Prince Gortschakoff that, in the opinion of her Majesty's Government, any treaty concluded between the Government of Russia and the Porte affecting the Treaties of 1856 and 1871 must be a European treaty, and would not be valid without the assent of the Powers who were parties to those treaties.

With this warning before them the Russians concluded the preliminary Treaty of San Stefano, and sent it round to the other Powers with an intimation that portions of it affecting the general interests of Europe could not be regarded as definitive without general concurrence. But this did not satisfy the British Government. They insisted that every single article of the new treaty must be submitted to the Powers for their approval.

As Russia appeared to hesitate, the British Government beat the war-drum with vigour. The Reserves were called out, the Sepoys were brought from India; six millions were voted for military preparations; the British fleet was ordered to force the Dardanelles and anchor in the Sea of Marmora. Lord Salisbury, on April 1, issued his famous Circular, in which, after citing the Protocol of 1871, he declared in the most categorical fashion:

“It is impossible for her Majesty's Government, without violating the spirit of this Declaration, to acquiesce in the withdrawal from the cognisance of the Powers of articles in the new treaty which are modifications of existing treaty engagements, and inconsistent with them.”

Threatened in Europe and in Asia with war by sea and land, and menaced also by Austria, Russia consented to recognise this extreme interpretation of the Treaty of Paris, and submitted her treaty, lock, stock and barrel, to be revised, mutilated, and transformed by the Congress of Berlin.

At Berlin the representatives of the Powers converted the Treaty of San Stefano into the Treaty of Berlin, and while doing so they expressly re-enacted the articles of the Treaty of Paris which were not affected by the articles in the new treaty. Among these re-enacted and doubly confirmed articles are Seven and Eight, which assert the principle of collective dealing with the Porte, which guarantee the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and which bind each of the contracting Powers to afford the co-signatories an opportunity of mediation before having recourse to force.

Here we have the plain, straightforward story of the public law of Europe as it was made in the first instance, and then emphasized and insisted upon by the British Government. We see how that the essential principle of the law of nations was formulated by a British Government in our own capital and accepted by all the Powers, including Italy. We see how, on the only two occasions on which their authority was threatened British Governments, one Liberal, the other Conservative, instantly asserted their authority and proclaimed their readiness to defend it by arms, with or without allies. In deference to the energetic action of these British Governments, the principle has been unanimously accepted by all the Governments of Europe. Here, if anywhere, is the traditional policy of Great Britain. Here, if anywhere, we may expect to find applied the principle of continuity which has been proclaimed by successive Administrations of both parties.

We come, therefore, to the examination of the action of our present rulers with no room for uncertainty as to the principles upon which they were expected to act.

The public law of Europe specifically sets forth (1) that no Power having a dispute with the Porte shall have recourse to arms until after it has invoked the friendly mediation of its co-signatories; and (2) that no modification whatever of the existing arrangements of the Ottoman Empire shall be made without the concurrence of all the signatory powers.

How, then, has Sir Edward Grey applied these principles when he was suddenly faced with the intimation that Italy was going to war with the Turks for the purpose of seizing Tripoli?

We are, of course, left in the dark as to the action of the Foreign Office, and we can only infer what has been done or what has been left undone by the evidence of known facts, and the meagre admissions of the Foreign Secretary. What everyone would have expected would have been done if the Foreign Office had been occupied by Lord Palmerston, Lord Granville, or Lord Salisbury would have been a sharp unmistakable public intimation to the Italian Government (1) that her proposed action was a flagrant violation of the public law of Europe (Article 7 & 8) of the Treaty of Paris; and (2) that whatever arrangements she might attempt to carry out by force of arms in Tripoli would have no validity until they had received the concurrence of the signatory Powers. That much, at least, might have been regarded as certain. But Lord Palmerston or even Mr. Gladstone might have gone further and have intimated that if the Italian Government persisted in so high-handed a defiance of the essential principle of the law of nations Great Britain would be compelled to consider the necessity of intervening to defend the public law of Europe.

That was what might have been done. If even the first stern warning had not been backed up by an unmistakable intimation that Italy might have to reckon with the British fleet, everyone knows the invasion of Tripoli would never have taken place.

But Sir Edward Grey did none of these things. He, the custodian of British honour, the keeper of the great trust which we have inherited from our fathers, does not appear to have uttered one word of protest, of remonstrance, or of warning.

Neither does he appear to have offered his services as mediator between Italy and Turkey. For a whole month the nation waited in vain for a single word of information as to what he was doing to protect the public law of Europe from this insolent and defiant assault.

...Unless our traditional policy was thrown to the winds and the principle of continuity abandoned, we had a right to expect from the British Foreign Secretary the very next day a declaration couched in the spirit, if not in the actual words, of his predecessors to the effect that the status of the African provinces of the Ottoman Empire is by the Treaties of Paris and Berlin a matter which must be dealt with by the signatories of those treaties acting in concert, and that until their consent was duly had and obtained any alleged or attempted alteration of the *status quo* in Tripoli was *ipso facto* null and void." (pp.13-17)

On top of these international treaties there was also the Cyprus Convention of 1878. Justin McCarthy (the nineteenth

century Irish historian) describes the arrangement made between Britain and the Turks in his *History of Our Own Times, Vol. IV*:

"The English Government undertook to guarantee to Turkey her Asiatic possessions against all invasion on condition that Turkey handed over to England the island of Cyprus for her occupation... Lord Beaconsfield now declared it to be the cardinal principle of his policy that England specially, England above all, was concerned to maintain the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire; that in fact the security of Turkey was as much a part of the duty of English statesmanship as the security of the Channel Islands or Malta." (p.486-7)

Stead unsteadied

For twenty years Stead had urged on Britain a revolution in its Foreign Policy. He believed that a settlement with Russia was indispensable to peace in Europe. In 1907 that agreement had taken shape with a settling of accounts in the Great Game and the partition of Persia between England and Russia. Edward Grey sold the agreement in England as a peace policy and that was music to the ears of the Liberal backbenchers, who despite their detestation of 'Russian autocracy' were prepared to celebrate the agreement as securing the peace of the world. Stead was well-pleased.

In 1911 Stead could not connect Grey's activity, or lack of it, in relation to Libya to this policy because how could his heart's desire be producing something altogether different?

But the ripping up of International Treaties on which the peace and stability of Europe and Eurasia rested was indicative of the revolution in British Foreign Policy that prepared the way for the Great War to come.

Needless to say nobody in England produced the same argument as Stead's when Britain went to war against the Ottomans in November 1914—despite the fact that the notion of breaking of treaties was very much in the air in relation to Germany, Belgium and the British declaration of war.

Stead went down with the Titanic and never saw what became of his heart's desire just two years later.

By Pat Walsh

Ireland's Great War On Turkey, 1914 - 24
Athol Books 2009

Ireland's Great War on Turkey is largely a forgotten event in Irish history. That is despite the fact that it was probably the most significant thing Ireland ever did in the world. That war lasted from 1914 until 1924—when the Irish Free State ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and finally, along with the rest of the British Empire, made peace with the Turks. It made the Middle East (including Palestine and Iraq) what it is today, and had the catastrophic effects on the Moslem world that persist to the present.

The Patriotism of Frank Ryan

by Manus O'Riordan

I have previously discussed the film *The Enigma of Frank Ryan* (see www.qub.ac.uk/sites/media/Media.295581.en.pdf for the full film script) in the March and June 2012 issues of *Irish Foreign Affairs*. The film's historical consultant was Fearghal McGarry of Queen's University Belfast's History Department, whose 2002 biographical study, *Frank Ryan*, had been twice reviewed by me during the following year. My shorter review - "Frank Ryan: Patriot or Collaborator?" - available online at www.historyireland.com/volumes/volume11/issue1/reviews/?id=113643 - was published in the Spring 2003 issue of *History Ireland*. My more extensive review, which is reproduced below, was published in the Fall 2003 issue of *Irish Literary Supplement* (Boston), under the heading "Was Frank Ryan a Collaborator?" At the launch of his next book, *Eoin O'Duffy: A Self-made Hero* (2005), McGarry began: "I want to thank Manus - I mean Maurice - for launching this book." It had in fact been launched by the former Fine Gael politician Maurice Manning, author of the soft-focused apologia *The Blueshirts* (1970), but I don't know why my mere presence at the event should have led to such a slip of the tongue. I have no axe to grind when McGarry chooses to act as a good historian, and readers can freely download from www.atholbooks.org my very favourable review of his O'Duffy biography in the May 2006 issue of *Irish Political Review*.

The fact remains, however, that McGarry chose to respond to neither of my reviews of his *Frank Ryan*. The *History Ireland* "Hedge School" that followed the film screening this past February was the first occasion McGarry was willing to debate his decade-old Ryan thesis with me. In that debate I welcomed the fact that the film had retreated from what its advance publicity had originally said it was setting out to do, namely, "show how Ryan ended up working for fascism". The film did indeed deal with the complexity of Ryan's period in Germany, even if not sufficiently so. I added that I was particularly pleased by the very honest depiction of the Irish Minister to Spain, Leopold H Kerney (so well portrayed by Niall Cusack). I pointed out that this represented a welcome rehabilitation of a patriotic diplomat made the victim of repeated character assassination by an Irish academic establishment far too heavily influenced by the libels penned by T. Desmond Williams, who had been made Professor of History at University College Dublin, following his acknowledged service in the ranks of British intelligence. The film, however, fell short of capturing the full intensity of the Ryan-Kerney relationship, as evidenced by their correspondence which demonstrated Ryan taking upon himself a *de facto* role of representing de Valera's interests in Berlin and supporting the policy of Irish neutrality to the hilt. (See the Kerney website www.leopoldhkerney.com - which I reviewed in April 2008 in the first issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*. See also the appendices to Seán Cronin's 1980 biography, *Frank Ryan - The Search for the Republic*, for the full texts of Ryan's letters to Kerney).

Although the film has retreated from the Fearghal McGarry charge that Ryan was one of Nazi Germany's Irish collaborators - and McGarry did not like me pointing out directly to him that filmmaker Des Bell has failed to stand by him in that regard

- he himself nonetheless stuck to that hobby horse of his in responding to my opening remarks at this "Hedge School" debate. While acknowledging that Ryan "was clearly not a willing collaborator in any ideological sense", McGarry nonetheless argued that "Kerney, when he is debriefed back in Dublin some time later, said that Ryan returned to Germany to engage in some kind of *collaboration*; strangely enough, he uses the word *collaborate*." However, McGarry's fellow-panellist, David O'Donoghue, sought to establish some linguistic difference with McGarry: "I am sort of reluctant to get into an argy-bargy and point the finger; I am very reluctant to point the finger and say: Frank Ryan, oh yes, Nazi collaborator! I think that would be a gross over-simplification." But then O'Donoghue proceeded to once more regurgitate Francis Stuart's 'Quisling' slander of Ryan with which I had already taken issue in my book review hereunder. Speaking from the floor, Maeve Clissmann stated that she had come to the film a bit apprehensive as to how her parents - Budge and Helmut Clissmann - would be portrayed, and had been pleasantly surprised, adding that "it was obvious that Frank Ryan never supported the German system". In my riposte to both McGarry and O'Donoghue, I argued that the only term one could use to describe someone like Frank Ryan - who was defending his own country's interests - was *patriot*. I concluded by saying that it was only from a Stalinist or Churchillian perspective on the Second World War that one could ever use the term *collaborator* to describe Frank Ryan. See www.qub.ac.uk/sites/frankryan/NewsEvents/ to access an audio recording of the full 1 hour and 15 minutes of this debate.

O'Donoghue was being shamelessly disingenuous. In his most recent book, *The Devil's Deal: The IRA, Nazi Germany and the Double Life of Jim Donovan* (2010), he regurgitated the following fantasy: "If, indeed, (the Nazi German agent) Görtz had planned to install a 'quisling' Taoiseach in Dublin, it is tempting to speculate on the possible candidates. The IRA men Seán Russell and Frank Ryan come to mind since both were alive when Görtz began his mission to Ireland on 5 May 1940." (p. 221). He added, for good measure: "A mid-1945 MI5 file records that 'in August of that year (1942) he (Frank Ryan) is said to have been received by Hitler'." (p. 308). McGarry, however, did not engage with such O'Donoghue claims in this February 26th debate, even though we know that he regards them as nonsensical. Less than three weeks later, on March 17th, the *Irish Times* published a review of *The Fighting Irish* by Tim Newark, in which McGarry complained of the "finds" cited by that writer: "The chapter on Irish republican involvement with Nazi Germany draws heavily on British military intelligence files without differentiating the occasional factual nugget from the rumours and gossip that comprise most of what is recorded by contemporaneous intelligence sources. Frank Ryan, for example, was not, as described here, a Tipperary journalist, a machine-gun officer, a fervent communist or a Nazi prisoner, and it's highly unlikely that he met Hitler in August 1941." But Newark was only following where O'Donoghue had led. Yet not alone did McGarry prove unwilling to challenge O'Donoghue himself face-to-face on such nonsense, McGarry reproduced it when placing, without comment, O'Donoghue's March/April 2011 *History Ireland* article - inclusive of that same "Frank meets Adolf" yarn - up on the Queen's University Frank Ryan

website as an “Interpretative Source”! To borrow the language of the Romans as they marvelled at the early Christians: See these Irish historians – how they love one another! So, it is Newark - the stranger on the shore - who is instead singled out for ridicule.

McGarry, of course, has added insult to injury by trying to associate Kerney’s good name with the labeling of Ryan as a *collaborator*. The term *collaborator* –or, alternatively, *collaborationist* – when infused with political meaning, is intended to convey the charge of *treason against one’s own country*. It was first deployed with that loaded meaning by the French Resistance, but it only achieved such usage outside France in the post-War era, along with the term *Quisling*, derived from the name of the Nazi puppet ruler of Norway. When Irish military intelligence used the word “collaborate” regarding Ryan in 1941, it had no such treasonous connotation – quite the contrary – and, since there was no direct quote from Kerney, there is no evidence that he himself ever used the word at all, even with its original non-pejorative meaning of “cooperate”. In his book, Mc Garry quoted a G2 (Irish military intelligence) report, dated 20 October 1941, of their interview with Kerney: “The Minister (Kerney) formed a very favourable opinion of Ryan, he was an idealist and a man of very high principles... The Minister had no doubt that Frank Ryan went willingly to Germany and was apparently anxious to collaborate with the Germans on some basis... He did not believe that Ryan would ever do anything underhand but would be inspired by his desire for the return of the Six Counties as part of the national territory.” (p. 64). The only letter Kerney had received by the time that gave any indication of Ryan’s hopes and intentions, was a 10 months old one dated 11 December 1940, in which Ryan expressed the hope that the Germans might cooperate – or collaborate, if you wish – in getting him to the USA. There he would have campaigned among the Irish-American *diaspora* in support of Irish wartime neutrality – to the satisfaction of Germany, no doubt, but from Ireland’s point of view, positioning Ryan himself very definitely as the Irish patriot that Minister Kerney declared him to be.

David O’Donoghue, as quoted earlier, has not been the only player in the disinformation game to blur the distinction between Seán Russell and Frank Ryan. Sixteen months after my oration – available in full online at www.irelandscw.com/org-RyanComm.htm – at a 2005 International Brigade Memorial Trust commemoration of Frank Ryan, Harris wrote in the *Sunday Independent* on February 11, 2007: “Back home my European euphoria soon subsides at the sight (to borrow from Churchill) of the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone, aka, the national question, in the guise of a long letter from Manus O’Riordan to this newspaper (February 4, 2007). O’Riordan charges Cathal Goulding of the then Sinn Fein the Workers’ Party, with allegedly ignoring information from Manus O’Riordan’s father, Michael O’Riordan of the Communist Party, that a SFWP member, Staf van Velthoven, was a former member of the Flemish Waffen SS.... In a letter to this newspaper (January 5, 2005) he (O’Riordan) has defended Seán Russell, the IRA leader with fascist leanings... In this regard let me remind O’Riordan of the widely circulated oration which he gave at a memorial to Frank Ryan in Glasnevin Cemetery on October 25, 2005, in the course of which he made a number of revealing references... O’Riordan came down hard on the *Irish Times* and Peter Hart, the Canadian historian: ‘And last week it was again the *Irish Times* that published the sneering reference by Newfoundland academic Peter Hart to ‘Frank Ryan, the republican saint/Nazi collaborator’.’ Like myself and Kevin Myers, Hart is regularly attacked by O’Riordan in publications of the Aubane Society.”

What my *Sunday Independent* letter said of Seán Russell was no different from what I had previously written in a letter in the *Irish Times* on September 12, 2003:

“Seán Russell was a man whom de Valera once considered worth making the effort to save from himself. Russell had given sterling service in the 20th century’s first war for democracy – the Irish War of Independence, fought to give effect to the democratic mandate of the 1918 elections. When de Valera failed to persuade Russell to accept the democratic mandate of his later Republican election victories of the 1930s, he was left with no option but to act ruthlessly and with resolve against Russell and his followers. By all means condemn Russell, as I do, for his actions in defiance of de Valera, specifically his 1939 bombing campaign in England, followed by his request for Nazi German aid to mount an IRA invasion of the North. If Russell’s plan had materialised it would have led to either a German or British invasion and occupation of Southern Ireland, bringing to naught de Valera’s skilful safeguarding of this State from both war and fascism.”

“But condemnation of Russell is one thing; character assassination is another. Russell was not the Holocaust-champion that Kevin Myers caricatures in his ‘Irishman’s Diary’ of September 5th. The UK Public Records Office has released files which show that, after intensive post-war interrogation of German intelligence agents at the highest level, British intelligence itself concluded in 1946 that ‘Russell throughout his stay in Germany had shown considerable reticence towards the Germans and plainly did not regard himself as a German agent’. In his 1958 novel *Victors and Vanquished*, Francis Stuart observed of the Russell-based character’s outspokenness in Berlin: ‘Pro-German when it comes to the English, and pro-Jew when it’s a question of the Germans’. One might dismiss this as another of Stuart’s literary inventions were it not that this assessment was corroborated by a more significant witness – Erwin Lahousen, the first and most important witness for the prosecution at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials in 1945. Lahousen had been head of the second bureau of the German Intelligence Service (Abwehr) from 1939 to 1943. An Austrian clerico-fascist by conviction, Lahousen loathed Nazism and had been the key figure in an aborted pre-war plot to assassinate Hitler. By common consent, it was Lahousen’s evidence at Nuremberg that ensured that Hitler’s foreign minister Ribbentrop would be sentenced to death.”

“It is true that Lahousen’s own ideological prejudices led him to make another set of wild and unfounded allegations, such as that Frank Ryan, whom he described as ‘a ruffian of a distinctly red complexion’, had actually murdered Russell. But it is less easy to dismiss what that Nuremberg star witness said of Russell himself. Under the heading of ‘No Nazi’, Lahousen’s character reference on behalf of Russell was published as follows by *The Irish Times* on June 6th, 1958:

“The Irishman was a hyper-sensitive Celt who, however willing he might be to use the Germans for his own political ends, regarded the Nazi philosophy as anathema. To the Austrian Catholic Lahousen, whom he found much more congenial, Russell poured out his private views of the Nazis, their attempts to convert him. . .Lahousen was sympathetic and took a strong and personal liking to the curious Irishman. . .He admired his integrity and honesty.’ Lahousen said that ‘Russell was the only one of the IRA with whom I dealt who was a real Irish Republican of the old school’. After what Lahousen described as ‘one of Russell’s fiery denunciations of the Nazi attempts to indoctrinate him’, the IRA leader further proclaimed: ‘I am not a Nazi. I’m not even pro-German. I am an Irishman fighting for the independence of Ireland. The British have been our enemies for hundreds of years. They are the enemies of

Germany today. If it suits Germany to give us help to achieve independence I am willing to accept it, but no more, and there must be no strings to the help.’

This was extremely naïve. As regards his dealings with Nazi Germany, Russell is to be condemned more as a fool than a knave. But notwithstanding that condemnation, Seán Russell is still entitled to the integrity of his reputation, in death no less than in life.”

There was, however, a fundamental difference between the respective positions of Russell and Ryan. On 14 May 1942 Frank Ryan in Berlin wrote to Leopold Kerney in Madrid:

“England will hang on, fighting to the last Russian and Chinaman, losing all the battles, in the hope of winning the peace... Meanwhile, the attitude of strict (German) respect for (Irish) neutrality continues. Here the policy is one thing at a time; for a year past the West is not mentioned – all attention is concentrated in the opposite direction. The campaign which is now beginning is expected to be decisive. After that? – we’ll wait and see.”

Ryan had already assured Kerney on 6 November 1941:

“My status – that of a non-party neutral – is established... I am not working for – nor even in communication with – any (IRA) organisation at home... There might be a situation in which I might go as a liaison to your boss (Dev)!!! There might also be a situation – I was always a pessimist – in which I might be asked to do something I don’t like. Such a situation is – soberly speaking – highly improbable. But if the unlikely should ever happen, sit yez down aisy! For - I won’t do the dirty. And when you plant my tombstone let it be of granite... Not for nothing did I earn the nickname of ‘The Mule’ in my school-days!”

On 14 January 1942 Ryan further assured Kerney (with one exception – Ryan’s reference to Berlin as “this place” - the explanatory inserts in brackets, both above and below, are all mine - MO’R):

“In time of national crisis like this, there must be unified command. The country comes before party. So, in his neutrality policy – which is the only sane policy under the circumstances – Dev should get 100% support... Because I know hundreds of good Republicans who are standing aloof today, I am fearful of what may happen if war reaches us. What is the reason for the aloofness of men with fine national records – men like (Ernie) O’Malley, (the former IRA chief-of-staff, Moss) Twomey (and the Kerry IRA leader, John Joe) Sheehy ... to name but a few? Why aren’t they leaders in the (State’s) Defence Forces? (Ryan was unaware that Sheehy was actually a Curragh Camp internee at that time)... As for me – I don’t mind the world knowing that here (in this place)(Ryan was referring to Berlin) I do not work for any party or (IRA) organisation, nor am I the successor to any one who has passed away (Seán Russell). I don’t mind all this being known, provided at the same time it is known that I’m not either for the Fianna Fáil party.”

Yes, indeed, the essential patriotism of Frank Ryan shines through!

WAS FRANK RYAN A COLLABORATOR?

Frank Ryan by Fearghal McGarry (2002), reviewed by Manus O’Riordan in the Fall 2003 issue of *Irish Literary Supplement* (Boston):

No researcher can control how, once published, the results of such research may be used or abused by others – even when employed as character assassination to suggest guilt by association. In 1979 I had been the first to publish (in *The Irish Communist*, theoretical journal of the British and Irish Communist organisation – MO’R) a study of the anti-Semitic writings of the first President of Sinn Féin, Arthur Griffith, followed in 1980 by an exposé of the anti-Semitism of a 1930s Sinn Féin President, J.J. O’Kelly. In his 1983 book *In Time of War* Robert Fisk made balanced use of such research, with due acknowledgement, and proceeded himself to bring to light the anti-Semitism of a one-time Irish Free State Minister, J.J. Walsh. (pp. 372 and 528). In a 1989 essay, republished in his 1993 book *Paddy and Mr. Punch*, Roy Foster showed how the revisionist school of Irish “history” went on to make use of such research. Acclaimed on the covers of his books as “our cleverest Irish historian”, “one of Ireland’s greatest historians” and “the most brilliant and courageous Irish historian of his generation”, Foster made reference (without acknowledgement to either Fisk or myself) to the “anti-Semitic ravings” of Arthur Griffith and the “more virulent anti-Semites still”, O’Kelly and Walsh. Without pausing for breath, Foster proceeded in the very next sentence to pronounce that “the influence of Germany on the careers of Frank Ryan or Francis Stuart cannot be taken as a particularly encouraging precedent”. (p. 32).

The implication that Frank Ryan ended up as some kind of crypto-Nazi was, of course, intended to shock those who revere him as an Irish Republican leader of the 1920s and 1930s and, more importantly, as leader of Ireland’s International Brigade volunteers in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War. Such character-assassination would have been easily countered had Seán Cronin’s pioneering 1980 biography, *Frank Ryan – the Search for the Republic*, been still in print. In its absence, however, the past year had held out the prospect that a new biography of Ryan by Fearghal McGarry would be no less effective a response. This prospect was all the more promising, because in 1999 McGarry had authored *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, which compares most favourably with the book by Robert Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, also published the same year and reviewed by me in the Spring 2001 issue of *Irish Literary Supplement*. More skilful PR marketing of Stradling’s biased account has overshadowed the recognition that ought to have come to McGarry’s *tour-de-force*. Hopefully his work will yet be regarded as the definitive textbook on that subject.

What was most impressive about McGarry’s earlier book was the manner in which it constituted a model of objective presentation and analysis of the full - if conflicting - evidence in respect of the Irishmen on both sides of that Spanish War, a presentation whose fairness nobody could question. What a pity, therefore, that McGarry departs from that highway of objectivity for the sensationalist approach adopted in his second book, simply entitled *Frank Ryan*. This review’s criticism will primarily focus on the penultimate chapter, but there are also some reservations about the earlier chapters, all of which are given a heading which seeks to classify Ryan politically for each period under discussion. The chapter on Ryan the Republican is perhaps the best developed. It complements the earlier work of Cronin by drawing on extracts from the diaries of Rosamund Jacob, a Quaker Republican and one-time lover of Ryan. So, alongside what we already knew of the editorials written by Ryan in the late 1920s for the IRA newspaper *An Phoblacht*, we now know how his fulminations against Trinity College Union Jackery on Armistice Day were translated into street-

fighting action, thanks to Jacob's vivid accounts. Her diaries also offer another attraction for McGarry, insofar as they allow him to introduce racy descriptions of the sex-life of Ryan, the "black panther" of Jacob's passion. In a full-scale biography this would have been a valid subject for exploration. Here, however, an imbalance is introduced into what is essentially a slim 90 page political biography designed, according to the publishers, for Leaving Certificate students of history no less than university undergraduates. And this is only one of the problems that arise with McGarry's preoccupation with the Jacob diaries. The chapter headings themselves nail down Ryan's life into distinct political compartments, but one loses a sense of development when themes detailed in one chapter are abandoned in others. Jacob must have had nothing of dramatic interest to write on the very different approach to Armistice Day which Ryan the Social Republican adopted following the formation of the Republican Congress in 1934. Ryan had grown up politically and had found a social programme to make common cause with the British Legion's Irish rank-and-file. "Why Republican Dublin Cheered Ex-Soldiers" was the heading to the account Ryan wrote of that year's Armistice Day, and yet McGarry makes no mention of it at all.

One would expect McGarry's chapter on Ryan the anti-Fascist in Spain to be more solidly based than any other, given the achievement of his earlier book. For the most part it is, but there is one particular issue where McGarry seriously undermines his own previous high standards as a painstakingly objective historian. He now writes: "Volunteers who clashed with the communists – some in good conscience – were discreetly imprisoned and in some cases (including Irishmen) executed." (p. 55). Who were the "good conscience" Irishmen murdered by the communists in Spain? McGarry does not say, but he cites two sources. The first is the 1998 book by James K. Hopkins entitled *Into the Heat of the Fire – the British in the Spanish Civil War*, and checking this out we find Hopkins writing: "William Meeke had been in Spain since October 1937. He was twenty-eight, Irish, and judged an 'incorrigible, useless type'. In his file the commissariat noted tersely that Meeke was shot while attempting to escape." (p. 268). However, what Hopkins left unmentioned was that Meeke's file also reveals that this man from Bushmills, Co Antrim had served four years in the British Army before coming to Spain and behaving in such a manner that the International Brigades found him to be an "undisciplined, incorrigible, useless type". He had indeed been shot at, but most certainly was not killed, while attempting to escape from Castledelfels prison in mid-September 1938. He was evacuated to France by the Spanish Republic at the end of that year, and brought to the notice of the British Foreign Office in a French refugee camp in January 1939. So now we are down to the possibility that there might have been a single "good conscience" Irishman executed by the International Brigades, and for this reference McGarry cites his own earlier book. Accounts of the execution of the Irish volunteer Maurice Ryan (who was not related to Frank) had first been published by Ian Mac Dougall in his 1986 book *Voices from the Spanish Civil War*. Ryan, already under some suspicion as a possible 'fifth columnist', had been shot for being drunk in charge of a machine-gun during the Ebro offensive and for firing in the direction of his own men, thereby further threatening their lives as they fought the enemy. Stradling concluded that "Ryan, indeed, may have been a fascist saboteur". (p. 192). In his earlier book, however, McGarry carefully presented and conscientiously weighed all the evidence, pro and con, and more reasonably concluded that "some form of personality dysfunction rather than fascism was the cause of Ryan's behaviour". (p. 79). All a

far cry, however, from now suggesting that he had been shot for holding non-communist beliefs "in good conscience".

It is regrettable that McGarry also lends credence to a "communist conspiracy" description of Frank Ryan's funeral ceremonies on the occasion of his re-burial in Ireland in 1979. A serious historical work should not accept at face value the type of reminiscences that have come to be described as "oral history", without first seeing if they can be cross-checked with the documentary record of the event being described. McGarry presents as Gospel the elderly Éilís Ryan's faulty recollection, a decade and a half after her brother's re-burial, that "the Communist Party took control when we got the coffin and marched in front of the television". (p. 77). If McGarry had bothered to check the evidence he would have seen that the three Communists shouldering Ryan's coffin at Dublin Airport – Frank Edwards, Peter O'Connor and Michael O'Riordan – were there in one capacity only, that of International Brigade veterans, and that the fourth such veteran heading up that guard-of-honour, Terry Flanagan, had never been a Communist at all. Instead of recognising the validity of war veterans following the time-honoured custom of shouldering the coffin of their commander-in-chief, McGarry substitutes false memory for historical fact.

Such departures by McGarry from his own previously established high standards of scholarship are compounded in his treatment of the last period of Ryan's life entitled, without qualification, "Collaborator 1938-44". "Collaborator" is here used solely as a political classification in the same way as all other chapter-headings preceding it – "Republican", "Social Republican" and "Anti-Fascist". And "collaborator" in the political sense is given only one definition in all of the leading English-language dictionaries, from Oxford to Collins. A "collaborator" is defined as one who cooperates traitorously with an enemy of one's own country, especially with an enemy occupying or seeking to occupy that country. The dictionary definition of "Quisling" is also given as a synonym for "collaborator", particularly a traitor collaborating with an occupying enemy force. That is not to deny the fact that there were indeed a number of Irish Quislings prepared to subvert Ireland's sovereignty in the interests of Nazi Germany. There most certainly were. Chief among them was Charles Bewley, former Irish Minister to Germany, who, following his dismissal by de Valera on the eve of the Second World War, went into exile in Rome and proceeded to urge Berlin to conspire for the overthrow of Dev. One writer who generously shared his research with McGarry has also suggested that Frank Ryan was not all that different a Quisling. In his 1998 book, *Hitler's Irish Voices*, David O'Donoghue quite specifically charges Ryan with having been engaged in a Nazi *coup d'état* plot to topple de Valera in 1940. (p. 52).

On the issue of Ryan and Germany, there can certainly be an argument for a new biography that will supplement the path-breaking groundwork of Cronin with data from more recently-released official documents from Britain and Ireland. But it is more a case of adding detail to Cronin than differing with him to any great degree as to the substance of relevant material. There also remains, of course, an argument for a more opinionated evaluation of the evidence which Cronin conscientiously presented but from which he was not always prepared to draw political conclusions. This I once attempted to do myself in a 1981 review of Cronin's biography, which I entitled "Frank Ryan: Anti-Fascist Hero?" (published as a series of articles

in *The Irish Communist* – MO'R). The question-mark was important, as Cronin's evidence had left me in no doubt that by no stretch of the imagination could Ryan's actual activities in wartime Germany be considered as a continuation of his previous anti-fascist resistance struggle, even though his inner beliefs remained as before. Writing from a point of view which regarded as valid the Soviet denunciation of Irish wartime neutrality that had resulted in the USSR veto on Ireland joining the UN for the first decade of its existence, I regarded Ryan's championing of de Valera's neutrality as being "objectively" anti-Soviet. I no longer hold that view of Irish history. It was all very well more than two decades ago to use such a question mark in order to demythologise Ryan as a Socialist Republican icon. But I failed to follow through to examine in an unbiased fashion the full meaning of Ryan's activities during his German period. The more I have since read of Ryan, the more I appreciate how answering the question of what Ryan was, and not just what he wasn't, is indeed a major challenge for any biographer.

Was Ryan therefore functioning in Germany as some sort of a Quisling, as O'Donoghue has suggested, a collaborator as McGarry now proclaims, part of some secret anti-fascist conspiracy as many on the left still seek to maintain, or a true Irish patriot as some others have argued on his behalf? Here again, McGarry's politically-compartmentalised chapters allow for no analysis of Ryan's evolving perspective on foreign policy. McGarry quotes Ryan as saying in August 1931 that in another great war England's difficulty would once again be Ireland's opportunity, and he argues that there is little reason to think that Ryan's views in this regard changed significantly over the course of the remaining dozen years of his life. But Ryan had in fact proceeded from that earlier simplistic viewpoint to develop quite a sophisticated analysis of foreign affairs. McGarry makes no mention of the fact that Ryan also used the "England's difficulty" mantra in 1933 on the occasion of Hitler coming to power. Ah ha! But in fact his use of that slogan in this instance runs counter to the "collaborator" thesis. Ryan had been sufficiently astute to observe that at this juncture Britain was encouraging Germany against France, so that this "Ireland's opportunity" perspective was as much anti-Nazi as it was anti-British. Later still, Ryan appropriated the "We Serve neither King nor Kaiser" slogan in order to counter any Republican temptation to adopt a pro-German position. Finally, yet another detail left completely unmentioned by McGarry, is the fact that in 1937 Ryan completely disavowed all simplistic sloganeering when he concluded that the fate of the Wild Geese "should have forever killed the slogan: 'England's enemy is Ireland's friend'."

Ryan's sojourn in Germany must be examined in the circumstances under which it actually unfolded, rather than on the basis of a pre-determined outcome. McGarry's chapter-heading of "Collaborator" requires him to adopt a teleological approach that dismisses any evidence that would challenge that verdict. In the only sense in which it remains valid for the term to be used in respect of Ireland, a collaborator can only mean a person who conspired on behalf of Germany against de Valera. No less a witness, however, than the wartime deputy head of Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs, Frederick Boland, stated quite unequivocally that de Valera himself had indeed sanctioned the release of Ryan in July 1940 from life-threatening prison conditions in Franco's Spain into the hands of personal friends of Ryan in the German intelligence agency Abwehr, the former left-wing activists Helmut Clissmann and Jupp Hoven. McGarry nonetheless tries to dismiss such an authoritative source as Boland with the following rather weak line of argument: "It has been claimed that de Valera approved

Ryan's release, but – at a time when the Irish Government was executing republicans owing to the danger of the IRA collaboration with Germany – this seems unlikely." (p. 63). But at no point did de Valera ever execute any Republicans for such a reason, and none had been executed for any other reason at this juncture. Those he would later execute (after Ryan's release) were to be convicted of murder. Prior to Ryan's release, one IRA leader in Cork, Tomás MacCurtain, had been sentenced to death in June 1940 for the murder of a detective during a shoot-out that January, but he had been reprieved a few weeks later. Far from being some sort of crypto-Nazi, this son and namesake of the Cork Lord Mayor murdered by the Black and Tans during the War of Independence had been the most forceful opponent of Fine Gael anti-Semitism during the 1930s. Indeed, the future Jewish Lord Mayor of Cork, Gerald Goldberg, has given eloquent testimony as to the actions taken by MacCurtain during this period to protect and defend him from the anti-Semitism of the Free State elite governing University College Cork. Moreover, in the case of Frank Ryan, de Valera had already been made aware in Spring 1940, from the Dublin visit of his recently-released Welsh fellow-prisoner Tom Jones, how bitterly opposed Ryan was to the IRA bombing campaign in England that had been initiated by Seán Russell in 1939. Although never at any point in his life a Communist (he once described his political perspective as lying at some mid-point between the Communist Party and Fianna Fáil), Ryan had nonetheless also been shocked by the 1939 Non-aggression Pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. This made him all the more determined to ensure that Ireland would safeguard its own interests in the coming War by a policy of neutrality. But was there even more involved?

McGarry dismisses the following argument that is sometimes advanced to suggest that Ryan's purpose in Germany was part of some mysterious anti-fascist conspiracy: "It has been argued that Ryan's presence in Germany was not as anomalous as might seem, since, under the leadership of Admiral Canaris, Abwehr was one of the few pockets of anti-Nazi sentiment. But for most of Ryan's time in Germany, all Irish operations – Abwehr and Foreign Office – were directed by a special department run by Dr. Veessenmayer, an SS Officer on secondment to the Foreign Office." (p. 67). On that point I quite agree with McGarry's own response, but only insofar as the 1941-44 period is concerned. However, his overall conclusion leads him to write quite confusingly about the earlier period of 1940. The significance which he attaches to a recently-released British intelligence report on the interrogation of Ryan's German handler Kurt Haller is more preoccupied with formal categorisation than with substance. He quotes not Haller himself, but the language chosen by his interrogator, to sum up for his superiors the following British overview: "By sending Ryan (with Seán Russell by submarine to Ireland in August 1940) Abwehr II felt that their own interests would be better safeguarded, as Ryan accepted more easily his position as a German agent." McGarry then asks: "Why did Ryan, Ireland's most celebrated anti-fascist, agree to such a course of action?" (p. 65).

[Note by MO'R: Following the publication of this review, further British Intelligence files, released in November 2003, contained the January 1946 interrogation of Madrid Abwehr agent Wolfgang Blaum, wherein it was reported: "In May 1940 Blaum was instructed to contact Frank Ryan ... who had commanded an Irish volunteer brigade with the Loyalist (Republican) forces in the Spanish Civil War until his capture and imprisonment ... With the aid of Champourcin, Ryan's lawyer, Blaum was able to see Ryan in the prison and he persuaded Ryan to go to Germany if he were released. Blaum agreed to Ryan's stipulation that he go to Germany as a free man, and not as a paid German agent. His release was obtained

through Admiral Canaris, who saw high Spanish authorities while visiting Spain in Summer 1940. The Spanish officials, however, insisted that Ryan's release be disguised as a prison break.”]

At this point McGarry overlooks the fact that while the Russell mission had indeed been taken over by Veesenmayer, and while the Abwehr had as a result been completely excluded from any contact with the IRA leader, Abwehr was still responsible for the care of Ryan. Through his personal friendship with Clissmann and Hoven, Ryan remained the only channel of communication by which the Abwehr might possibly find out at a later stage what the Veesenmayer-Russell mission was all about. At the same time, the British intelligence report makes clear that Ryan had not been briefed by anybody as to the details of Russell's mission. He had only been hesitatingly accepted by Russell as a fellow-passenger. McGarry makes no reference to this hesitation, nor to the fact that two very different sources – the unrepentant Nazi Veesenmayer who was convicted of war crimes at Nuremberg, and Canaris's right-hand man Lahousen who appeared as a witness for the prosecution at those same Nuremberg trials – both testified that, notwithstanding the warmth of Ryan's and Russell's personal affection for each other, they had in fact quarrelled politically during their brief German encounter and had been at cross purposes with one another. When Russell died on board the submarine Ryan returned to Germany rather than land in Ireland. Ryan's own explanation was that he could not bring himself to land in Ireland and tell a reluctant and suspicious IRA that Russell had mysteriously died in his arms. McGarry thinks otherwise of Ryan's decision to return to Germany: “It was this decision which marked a crucial shift in Ryan's attitude ... to a conscious determination to collaborate with Nazi Germany ... The real question is: why, by returning to Germany, did Ryan support republican collaboration with Germany?” (p. 66).

McGarry does not consider that there may well have been a more human if less heroic reason for Ryan's decision on the submarine – that the trauma of Russell's death had resulted in a breakdown accompanied by a belief that he would only feel safe again in the care of Clissmann, who had looked after him when he had crossed the Spanish frontier some weeks previously. For there is parallel evidence from both British and Irish fellow-prisoners that Ryan had previously experienced a similar nervous breakdown shortly after his imprisonment in the Spanish Fascist Concentration Camp of San Pedro de Cardeña in 1938. Whether his return to Germany initially resulted from such a breakdown, or was more politically purposeful from the very outset, we nevertheless have to critically evaluate what it was he was actually doing during the subsequent years spent in that country. McGarry quotes (p. 71) from O'Donoghue's 1989 interview with Francis Stuart concerning the latter's “recall” of a supposed incident in Berlin during 1940: “I never liked Ryan, we didn't really get on ... I remember one day ... we disagreed over something. He said to me, ‘When’ – not ‘if’, mind you – ‘Germany wins the war I will be a minister in the Irish Government’. I took this as some sort of threat to me to keep in with him. I took that very much amiss. I didn't like this ‘When Germany wins the war’.” This, in turn, led O'Donoghue to conclude: “Ryan's comment about becoming a member of the Dublin Government is the clearest indication that what Veesenmayer had in mind was, in fact, a *coup d'etat* against de Valera.” (p 58). A Quisling indeed. Unless, of course, we come to the more reasonable conclusion that – in the case of this statement of Stuart's – we are here dealing with a self-serving venomous old viper anxious to foist his own sins on Ryan. For the documentary evidence shows that in 1940 it was not Ryan but Stuart himself who was triumphantly proclaiming in his Berlin book on Roger Casement that “the German victory ... is, at the

moment I am writing these words, almost complete”. (as quoted by Brendan Barrington, editor of *The Wartime Broadcasts of Francis Stuart*, 2000, p 37). O'Donoghue's soft interview of Stuart amazingly failed to confront him with the fact that what he was now alleging against Ryan was in direct contradiction with everything else he had written about him over the previous forty years. McGarry leaves Stuart's slander hanging there. While he questions Stuart's general credibility, he does not even allude to the earlier Stuart statements that comprehensively refute that slander. He also fails in the responsibility of a biographer to cross-check with other evidence regarding Ryan's position (and condition) upon his return to Germany in August 1940. In particular, he makes no mention whatsoever of a central eyewitness account, that of the unreconstructed Nazi Róisín Ní Mheara, in her 1992 Irish-language autobiography *Cé hí seo amuigh?* She had been Francis Stuart's Berlin mistress during 1940. Due to Helmut Clissmann's absence from Berlin for a period following Ryan's return, Stuart and Ní Mheara were the couple initially charged by the Germans with responsibility for looking after him. Ní Mheara's account remains bitterly antagonistic towards Ryan, as “that hero of Communism who had been sentenced to life imprisonment by Franco as a result of the crimes he had been found guilty of during the Spanish Civil War”. She nonetheless recalls just how ill he had been in 1940 and how that illness had been made far worse by the sheer horror of the trauma of experiencing Russell's excruciatingly painful death in his arms under such claustrophobic submarine conditions. Ryan refused to eat. He barely deigned to converse with Stuart. He manifested total distrust of any Germans who came near him and in fact used his deafness as an excuse to avoid communication with them. And both Stuart and his Nazi mistress made fun of Ryan's refusal to eat her food, with Stuart sneering: “It's not so much the spy as the fry he is fearing!” (pp. 159-171).

By the end of 1940 Ryan's health had recovered to the extent that he became functional again. If Veesenmayer had any hopes of sending Ryan as a liaison to Ireland in the winter of 1940, before the plans for an invasion of Britain had been completely shelved, the character of the role that Ryan might have played was quite different from that of Russell. It is strange how McGarry omits the evidence that shows this clearly to have been the case – the post-war British interrogation of Kurt Haller. For Ryan had indeed decided to become an agent – not, however, on behalf of Germany, but on behalf of Ireland itself. Whereas Russell had asked for German support for an IRA invasion of Northern Ireland (and damn the consequences for de Valera and Southern Ireland), the version of ‘Operation Dove’ that envisaged a role for Ryan was totally different. McGarry himself writes that, in the event of a German invasion of Britain, the status of Northern Ireland would have been up for grabs. It would have made perfect sense for de Valera to assert his claim to the North with the assistance of German arms rather than accept either a continuing British rule that threatened to invade the South itself, or an extension of German occupation from Britain to Northern Ireland. However, the Haller interrogation reveals that Ryan had completely subverted Russell's own strategy, with the stipulation that there could be no question of any such German assistance being given without the expressed approval of de Valera himself; and that the IRA should in the meantime desist from sabotage operations and confine its activities to agitation and propaganda. Following Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, which led to Ryan bluntly telling Veesenmayer that this action had ensured that Germany would lose the War, the threat of a German invasion of either Britain or Ireland receded. Much more threatening was the prospect of an Anglo-American invasion of Southern Ireland. In such an eventuality the de Valera Government itself (including,

expressedly so, Gerald Boland, the very same Minister for Justice who had interned the IRA) made it quite clear that it would accept German assistance to repel such an invasion. And it would be with de Valera himself that Ryan would liaise.

Cronin's pioneering biography had already demonstrated from the correspondence between Ryan and Leopold Kerney, the Irish Minister to Spain, that Ryan unequivocally pledged his loyalty to de Valera's leadership for the duration of the War. And the Kerney correspondence was the means by which he maintained communication with that leadership. Ryan was Dev's *de facto* and effective Ambassador in Berlin, vitally needed by Dev in that role, not least because of the ineptitude of the official *chargé d'affaires*, William Warnock. In undertaking that role Ryan necessarily supped with the Devil, found himself in compromising situations and had to engage in varying degrees of dissimulation. In my 1981 review of Cronin I had pointed out that the relatively trivial correspondence concerning the wine that Veesenmayer had sent to Ryan as a Christmas gift would have been sufficient to hang him had he lived to experience the post-war Eastern European show trials of former International Brigaders. But at times he found that chalice too much to bear. However, as soon as Ryan enquired if he might be discharged from that duty so that he might return to Ireland, de Valera insisted that he stay at his post.

And how did Ryan discharge his duties? Ryan reported to de Valera via Kerney on how he had protested to Veesenmayer every time there had been a German outrage against Ireland, whether it be the blitz bombing of Belfast, or the more mysterious bombing of Dublin's North Strand, or the sinking of the Irish ship the "City of Bremen". But Ryan found his protests being skilfully deflected by Veesenmayer, who knew how obsequious Warnock had been in undermining the original Irish Government protests. And Ryan also worked particularly effectively in Berlin against the machinations of the would-be Irish Quisling Charles Bewley. Ryan countered Bewley's character-assassination of de Valera and insisted that Dev would remain neutral but fight any invading force, thereby minimising any temptation in German circles to consider offensive action against Ireland.

The unsupportable chapter-heading of "Collaborator" is what more than anything else makes McGarry's biography a particularly disappointing one. Hopefully its publication will have two effects on readers. Firstly, it should build up a demand to have Cronin's pioneering 1980 biography reprinted. Secondly, if more readers proceed to also read McGarry's earlier work on the Spanish Civil War they will learn what a fine historian he has already been, with such high standards of scholarship, balanced presentation and conscientious evaluation, that one hopes will once again feature in future works of his. Frank Ryan in Germany was neither the anti-fascist conspirator and martyr of Socialist Republican iconography nor the collaborator with the Nazis as portrayed by McGarry. Even Haller's British intelligence interrogator at one point observed of Ryan: "Regarding himself as an Irish patriot and not a creature of the Germans, he refused to associate himself in any way with Hartmann's Irish broadcasts." "Patriot" might well indeed have been the appropriate chapter heading to have used in respect of the final four years of Ryan's life. Patriotism can, of course, also be the last refuge of the scoundrel. But Ryan was no scoundrel. Undoubtedly he fails to pass the Stalinist test of unconditional loyalty to the interests of the Soviet Union, as he also fails to pass the Churchillian test of loyalty to the British Empire. He would have been a prime candidate for a show trial under either regime. But perhaps an admittedly more insular standard of patriotism will allow us to acknowledge the integrity of the role he played. If he had been a collaborator, de Valera would have been his target. All the more remarkable then

that McGarry, while making a passing dismissive reference to Michael McNerney's 1979 biographical study, *The Enigma of Frank Ryan* (republished in full in the March and June 2012 issues of *Irish Foreign Affairs*), makes no mention at all of the one scoop of McNerney's that had eluded Cronin, a 1975 interview with de Valera himself. And in that interview, shortly before his own death, de Valera pronounced: "*I am very pleased that you are writing the biography of this great Irishman. Frank Ryan always put Ireland first in everything he did or said, at home or abroad. He has earned his place in history.*" Ryan had, of course, made clear over the course of his political life that what was good enough for Dev was not good enough for him. But might not what had been good enough for Dev about Ryan himself been also good enough for Ireland? Dev knew how vitally important and essential Ryan's role had been in successfully pursuing his own strategy of safeguarding Ireland from both war and fascism. And yet the German writer Enno Stephan was surely justified, in his 1961 pioneering work *Spies in Ireland*, when he observed: "*It seems astounding that the Irish Government has up to now done nothing to rehabilitate Franco's one time prisoner, although it could have contributed something to this theme.*" Only at the end of his own life did the ever-secretive de Valera finally discharge his own duty to do right by Frank Ryan and vindicate his role in Irish history.

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The US War on Communism, Drugs and Terrorism in Colombia.

by Jenny O'Connor

On Thursday last (6th September 2012) the President of Colombia – Juan Manuel Santos – rejected a proposed bilateral ceasefire by FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) rebels aimed at bringing an end to Colombia's armed conflict. He declared that he had asked operations to be intensified and stated that “*there will be no ceasefire of any kind.*”[1] These comments bear reflection upon Colombia's half-century dirty war, the actors involved and the motives behind U.S. policies.

Today Colombia is one of the largest recipients of U.S. military training and aid in the world. Although the U.S. was involved in counterinsurgency operations in Colombia during the Cold War the continued flow of military funding and training occurred as a result of Bill Clinton's “Plan Colombia” (2000 – 2006) and George W Bush's “Andean Regional Initiative” (2008 – 2010) both of which were aimed at the forced eradication of coca and the fight against Colombia's left-wing guerrillas, due to their involvement in terrorism and the international drugs trade. Through these initiatives billions of dollars have been spent fighting a war on drugs followed by a war on terror. Coca production in Colombia, however, has increased, as has the intensity of the internal armed conflict with both FARC and right-wing paramilitary groups growing in size and strength.

Despite numerous studies concluding that the cheapest and most effective way to deal with the drug situation is to redirect funds from law enforcement and forced eradication into treatment and prevention,[2] the U.S. government has maintained its militaristic approach to the so called ‘war on drugs’ both at home and abroad. Given the resounding failure to achieve the stated objectives of these initiatives one must ask: is there an alternative objective, one that the current strategy achieves sufficiently?

Coca not Cocaine

U.S. anti-drug policy disproportionately targets the cultivation of the coca leaf thus blurring the line between coca (the natural raw material) and cocaine (the processed illegal drug). Coca has always been grown by the indigenous people of the Andean region. It is drunk in tea, used for medicinal purposes and people chew on the leaves of the plant to provide a mild stimulant similar to caffeine. The plant was sacred to the Incas and is an important part of the indigenous cultures of the region. The Colombian government do not distinguish between large-scale industrial coca farms and peasants growing the crop to survive. In Bolivia and Peru this lack of distinction and the subsequent negative effects forced eradication policies had on indigenous peasants resulted in the formation a syndicate of coca growers known as the cocaleros. It was through this movement that Bolivia's current president and former Bolivian cocalero leader, Evo Morales, ascended to the presidency. Coca consumption and cultivation is now legal in Bolivia under the policy: “Yes to Coca, No to Cocaine” (*Coca Sí, Cocaína No*). Despite the fact that coca is now legal, and its cultivation for legal purposes expanded, illicit cocaine production in Bolivia has not increased[3].

The Neo-Liberal Effect

The U.S. has long held a policy of pushing neoliberal economic policies in Latin America. This has been achieved through NGO activity, strategically allocated aid, coercive interventions, conditions attached to IMF and World Bank loans and bi-lateral and multi-lateral free trade agreements. There is a substantial literature exposing the resultant social stratification these policies have caused in Latin America[4] but there is one particular effect of neoliberalism that has directly resulted in increased cultivation of coca for export.

While the neoliberal model aims to re-orientate peasant agricultural production to the export market and remove protective tariff barriers on agricultural goods, subsidised U.S. agricultural imports undermine the price received for locally produced crops. Larger farms and ranches with sufficient resources can move into growing export crops such as coffee but these crops are more labour intensive, require more land and cost more to transport. Many small farmers and peasants therefore find that the only area in which they can maintain a competitive advantage is in the cultivation of coca. This was evident in Mexico after the signing of NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement). U.S. subsidised corn imports destroyed Mexico's domestic production and those who could not afford to invest in the production of other export crops either switched to cultivating illicit drugs or left their land for the city where a lack of employment opportunities pushed many rural immigrants into other elements of the drug trade.

It is clear that if the U.S. wished to reduce the cultivation of coca in Colombia the most effective policy would be to redirect military aid into funding government subsidisation of legal crops. Yet the US-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement actually prohibits such action. Under the agreement, that was signed in 2006 and came into affect in May of this year, Colombia is obliged to dismantle all of her domestic protections while the U.S. is permitted to maintain her own agricultural subsidies and thus an unfair advantage in the trade of agricultural produce. In 2010 Oxfam International commissioned a study which revealed the unequal terms of this trade agreement. It demonstrated that the agreement would lower the prices local farmers would receive for major crops such as corn and beans which, in turn, would reduce domestic cultivation of these crops and substantially impact the income and livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Colombia's peasant farmers.[5]

Biological warfare

One major part of both Plan Colombia and the Merida initiative has been the destruction of coca fields by aerial chemical spraying thus impacting the cocaine trade at its source. Glyphosate, the chemical substance used to spray illicit crops and known by its brand name Roundup, was originally patented and produced by the most notorious of US agricultural corporations, Monsanto. Glyphosate is classified by Monsanto as a “mild” herbicide but by the World Health Organisation as “extremely

poisonous”. [6] Roundup is sold over the counter in the US as a herbicide and there it carries these warnings; "Roundup will kill almost any green plant that is actively growing. Roundup should not be applied to bodies of water such as ponds, lakes or streams.... After an area has been sprayed with Roundup, people and pets (such as cats and dogs) should stay out of the area until it is thoroughly dry...If Roundup is used to control undesirable plants around fruit or nut trees, or grapevines, allow twenty-one days before eating the fruits or nuts." [7]

In Colombia however, two additives - Cosmo-Flux 411 and Cosmo InD - are added increasing the toxicity four-fold and producing what is known as Roundup Ultra, or as some call it; "Colombia's Agent Orange" [8]*. In addition, the concentrations in the mixtures prepared by the Colombian military (under the guidance of their US colleagues) are five times higher than is recognised as safe for aerial application by the US Environmental Protection Agency [9]. This product is regularly sprayed over inhabited areas, farmland, livestock and areas of invaluable biodiversity [10]. The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, a Federal Advisory Committee to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, issued a letter on July 19 2001 stating that; "*Aerial spraying of the herbicide has caused eye, respiratory, skin and digestive ailments; destroyed subsistence crops; sickened domestic animals; and contaminated water supplies* [11]. Even anti-drug development projects, including ones funded by U.S. Aid, the UN, the Colombian government and international NGOs, have been destroyed by spraying. One of many examples is that of CORCUSA, an organic coffee cooperative founded to provide peasant farmers with an alternative to coca cultivation, was sprayed in 2005 and in 2007 destroying the coffee crop and the project's organic certification for future crops. [12]

As well as the clear human health, food security and environmental risks involved in the spraying campaign, it has also been a massive failure in achieving its stated goal: the eradication of the coca crop. Coca, unlike most other food crops, is actually quite resistant to aerial spraying of Glyphosate. Many farmers who have their food crops destroyed are left with few options when coca is all that will grow on their land after the spraying of Glyphosate so the result of the spraying campaign has been a marked increase in coca cultivation. [13]

Militarisation of the War on Drugs

The militaristic approach to fighting the drug war has intensified the conflict in Colombia. The result has been mass displacement and disenfranchisement of people which, in turn, has pushed more people into some area of the drug trade. What's more, numerous studies dating back to the 1980's have mutually concluded that militarising the drug war would have little to no effect on the consumption of illicit drugs in the United States [14]. The effect of the militarised strategy has been a marked increase in drug related violence wherever it is initiated and there is not a more clear-cut example of this than Mexico. Before Calderon militarised Mexico's drug war the violent crime rate was actually falling. Since this approach has been adopted, with avid U.S. support including the allocation of 1.4 billion dollars over a three year period (2008 – 2010) through the Mérida Initiative, the homicide rate has more than doubled, the violent crime rate has increased by more than 200% and the number of human rights abuses committed by the military in their attempts to rein in the drugs cartels have increased six-fold. [15]

In terms of preventing the flow of drugs into the U.S. the militarised approach has one simple economic paradox at its core: by disproportionately tackling production and distribution (the supply side of the equation) without equally tackling consumption (the demand side of the equation), the price of the product is increased thus providing a greater profit incentive for people to take the involved risks in trafficking and producing illicit drugs.

War on Narcoguerrillas?

As previously stated, Plan Colombia's original objective was the eradication of coca plantations by targeting left-wing 'narcoguerrillas' (FARC) who, it was explicitly claimed, were directly involved in the drug trade. Evidence of a direct link between the FARC and the illicit drug trade, however, did not emerge until the early 2000s after Plan Colombia had been instigated. In fact, into the late 1990s, there was little evidence to suggest that the FARC's involvement in the production and distribution of drugs extended beyond the taxation of coca cultivation in the regions it controlled. In 1997 Donnie Marshall, Chief of Operations for the Drug Enforcement admitted this in a DEA congressional testimony stating that "*there is little to indicate the insurgent groups are trafficking in cocaine themselves, either by producing cocaine HCL and selling it to Mexican syndicates, or by establishing their own distribution networks in the United States.*"

Plan Colombia, while stating the pursuit of left-wing 'narcoguerrillas' as an objective, did not equally target right-wing Colombian paramilitaries. While a few high profile cases of paramilitaries being tried and convicted on drug trafficking charges have occurred, on the whole, the focus remains principally on the FARC. This is despite the fact that at least as early as 1997 the DEA were aware of their involvement in narcotics trafficking. In the same congressional testimony mentioned above Marshall stated that the AUC (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia), the largest Colombian right-wing paramilitary group, has been "*closely linked*" to the Henao Montoya organisation; "*the most powerful of the various independent trafficking groups that comprise the North Valle drug mafia*" and that the AUC's leader, Carlos Castano, is "*a major cocaine trafficker in his own right.*" [16] Spraying too has been concentrated mainly in FARC strongholds in the South East despite the fact that right-wing paramilitaries are known to be involved in cocaine production and trafficking in the north of the country. Suspicions have thus emerged that the real aim of the spraying campaign is to remove one of the FARC's key revenue streams (the taxation of coca cultivation in areas they control) rather than coca cultivation in general.

The disparity in treatment between right and left-wing groups has also led many critics to suggest that the U.S. tolerate and even support right-wing paramilitary activities due to their ideological alliance with U.S. economic interests in the country. In 2001 an investigation by Amnesty International led to a lawsuit to obtain CIA records of 'Los Pepes', a vigilante organisation set up by Carlos Castano. Its findings revealed "*an extremely suspect relationship between the U.S. government and the Castano family – at a time when the U.S. Government was well aware of that family's involvement with paramilitary violence and narcotics trafficking.*" [17]

War on Drugs/War on Terror

Colombia was one of the largest recipients of U.S. military aid and training throughout the Cold War. In the Cold War era the communist threat was used to justify counterinsurgency

operations against the FARC rebels whose communist/socialist roots posed a particular threat to U.S. economic interests due to Colombia's extensive natural resources and strategic geographical location. Today, even if the idea of the FARC gaining control over the Colombian state has diminished in credibility, the rebels regularly attack U.S. interests including the infrastructure (railways, pipelines etc.) of U.S. energy and mining multinationals in Colombia. As Marc Grossman, former U.S. Undersecretary of state for political affairs put it; *"[Colombian insurgents] represent a danger to the \$4.3 billion in direct U.S. investment in Colombia....Colombia supplied three per cent of U.S. oil imports in 2001, and possesses substantial potential oil and natural gas reserves."*[18]

After the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union the communist threat no longer justified U.S. counterinsurgency operations in Colombia or elsewhere in Latin America. The US Military's Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) therefore welcomed the drug war as a new justification for maintaining the same levels of military spending and counterinsurgency training of Latin American militaries and *"low intensity warfare strategies employed in Central America were easily adopted to fight a war on drugs."*[19] In Colombia, the FARC, previously labelled "Communist" became "narcoguerrillas" and, post-9/11, this morphed again into "terrorists". President Bush utilised the war on terror to redefine the Colombian conflict and continue counter-insurgency operations against the FARC. Again, the target of this campaign remained the FARC despite the fact that the Colombian Army and closely linked armed right-wing paramilitary groups have been responsible for countless grave human rights abuses[20].

The Historic Importance of Military Training to U.S. Foreign Policy

Military training and the cultivation of allied militaries whose interests and ideologies would reflect those of Washington has, historically, been one of the main methods of U.S. control in Latin America. Several Spanish language schools were established specifically for training Latin American officers including the notorious School of the Americas (SOA) which trained nearly every officer involved in the 1973 Chilean coup and where many members of the Colombian Army continue to train today. As well as training these officers in counter-insurgency, counter terrorism and unconventional warfare (among other forms of attack) the SOA intentionally cultivates a glorified image of "privileged capitalist modernity and a strong belief in the right-wing capitalist model"[21].

What resulted from such instruction in the past was the creation of highly politicised right-wing military entities which remained allied to the state only insofar as the government in power reflected a similar ideology. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s this resulted in military coups overthrowing leftwing governments throughout Latin American and the Caribbean. As Latin American states transitioned to democracy the strength of these staunchly right-wing militaries (as well as well-grounded fears of U.S. military intervention) led to the establishment of 'pacted democracies' whereby elite and military support for the democratic transition was conditioned on the formation of certain economic parameters to be enshrined into the constitution. Despite the fact that many democratic movements mobilised on the basis of wealth redistribution these pacts generally guaranteed the continued presence of foreign multinationals in the extractive industries as well as ruling out the nationalisation of resources and the socialisation of land as policy options regardless of electoral outcomes[22]. Where specific pacts did not exist left leaning elected governments

remained very wary of their right-wing militaries when making policy decisions. In Chile, one of the more modern examples, even though the Concertación (Chile's democratic movement) opposed neoliberalism, the intimidating power of the right-wing military caused them to accept a moderately reformed version of Pinochet's 1980 constitution which enshrined the neoliberal model as well as a number of authoritarian enclaves with a bias to the political right[23].

This is also the reason why very few Latin American countries, with the notable exception of Argentina, have managed to hold military personal accountable for atrocities of the past. Indeed, in many places, army personnel who took part in grave atrocities continue to hold high-ranking positions in the military. In Colombia this is particularly so and, as military abuses continue to this day, a culture of impunity has been created which remains a hindering factor to any potential for peace and reconciliation[24]. What's more, many high ranking members of the Colombian military trained in the U.S. as counter-insurgents during the Cold War, were thought to define a number of activities associated with a healthy democratic as *"Insurgent Activity Indicators"*. Such 'indicators' listed in Manuals used by U.S. trainees included; *"Characterization of the armed forces as the enemy of the people...Increased unrest amongst labourers...Increased number of articles or advertisements in newspapers criticizing the government. Strikes or work stoppages...Increase of petitions demanding government redress of grievance" and "Initiation of letter-writing campaigns to newspapers and government officials deploring undesirable conditions and blaming individuals in power."*[25]

The more recent move to the left in Latin America has been a success, in part, because the new generation of left wing leaders are acutely aware of the dangers the military pose. In Bolivia one of Morales' acts as President was to raise military wages and the recent police strikes (so severe some called them a police mutiny) were partly based on the fact that police wages were roughly half those received by similar ranking military officers. In Venezuela, Chavez holds tight to his military image and many critics have used this to claim he is merely another 'generalissimo'. This criticism fails to realise, however, the great political importance in Chavez's realignment of the Venezuelan military with the democratically elected government of the state rather than outside forces and ideologies. His success in this endeavour was demonstrated when soldiers loyal to him reversed a military coup that displaced him briefly from power in 2002. Both Chavez and Morales, due to their opposition to drug war policies and the imperialist undertones they carry, have driven the DEA out of their respective countries.

The stability of instability

It is clear that the war on drugs and the subsequent war on terror in Colombia have been used as fronts to justify the continued counterinsurgency war against the FARC. Or, as Stan Goff – a retired US Army Special Forces officer for counterinsurgency operations and former military advisor to Colombia – put it; *"the 'war on drugs' is simply a propaganda ploy...We were briefed by the Public Affairs Officers that counter-narcotics was a cover story...that our mission, in fact, was to further develop Colombians' capacity for counterinsurgency operations"*. [26]

U.S. and Colombian government anti-terror and anti-drug policy, however, has actually swelled the ranks of the FARC. Peasant farmers who depend on coca for their livelihoods are forced to rely on the armed guerrillas to protect their crop from

planes spraying chemicals. The displacement and terrorising of people and the destruction of subsistence crops in rural areas due to spraying and military and paramilitary activity have created a large amount of unemployed, disenfranchised and angry young people who gravitate towards the guerrilla movement due to the impunity of the armed forces and the perceived inability of the Colombian justice and democratic political systems to hear their grievances or reflect their interests. The fact that the Colombian army and paramilitary groups continue to see coca growing peasants as guerrilla collaborators and therefore legitimate military targets (due to the taxes they are forced to pay the FARC on their coca crops) merely exacerbates the divide between the military and the peasantry.

Some have been led to argue that the real aim in Colombia is, in fact, to maintain a state of constant conflict. One in which there is sufficient order to protect investments and transport links but, also, sufficient disorder and terror so as to maintain a subservient and flexible workforce and an economic system which allows only a small local elite and foreign multinationals to benefit from the country's resources[27]. The official military protect investments and transport links important to the extractive industries while paramilitaries closely linked to the official army, and revealed to be linked to the U.S. government, sufficiently intimidate any move towards reform of the system. This is achieved through a policy of assassination, suppression and terrorising of the political left, human rights activists, trade unionists and peasant and indigenous movements.

Economic Imperialism

In 1996 four years before Plan Colombia was passed by Congress, the U.S.- Colombia Business Partnership, representing U.S. companies with interests in Colombia, was founded. This organisation launched a well-financed lobbying effort for U.S. intervention in the resource rich Andean state. Among the companies represented in this Business Partnership were Occidental Petroleum, Enron, Texaco and BP[28]. A survey released just months prior to the passage of Plan Colombia in the U.S. congress indicated that there were a large number of commercially viable and unexploited oil fields in the Putumayo region of Colombia[29], incidentally, the same area that experiences the highest intensity of paramilitary activity and aerial spraying.

This correlation has aroused suspicion that these policies are actually aimed at displacing local people from their land in order to open it up to speculation by foreign multinationals[30] while simultaneously clearing the dense rainforest that makes identifying and pinpointing the location of oilfields difficult. [31]. This seems to be a recurrent theme in local impressions of the U.S. war on drugs in a number of different countries. In Guatemala, for example, locals have criticised militarisation of the resource-rich north-eastern province of Peten. While it is known that this area is used to transport drugs to Mexico, locals suspect the heavy military presence is more to do with oil interests in the region.[32]. Similar complaints have emerged from the Moskitia region of eastern Honduras which has experienced increased militarisation, particularly so since the 2009 coup. According to Norvin Goff Salinas, president of an indigenous Miskitu federation: *"More than anything else, they're militarizing because of the natural resources that are in the Moskitia, especially the strategic spots where there is oil."*[33]

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows into Colombia rose from \$2.4 billion at the outset of Plan Colombia to \$14.4 billion by 2011.[34] In the mid 90s oil and gas constituted only 10% of all FDI in Colombia but by 2010 this had increased to almost one third.[35] Colombia, however, remains the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist and one of the most unequal countries in the world with the top 10% of the population controlling nearly half of the country's wealth.[36]

Conclusions

It is evident that in the stated objective of eradicating coca cultivation and narcotrafficking in Colombia the U.S.' anti-drug strategy has been a resounding failure. From the perspective of the U.S. State Department, however, Plan Colombia was not a failure at all but instead *"allowed for the creation of an effective new model for U.S. intervention"*. [37] As the U.S. Government Accountability Office's director of international affairs and trade put it; *"international programs face significant challenges reducing the supply of illegal drugs but support broad US foreign policy objectives."* [38] These objectives, throughout the period of U.S. hegemony, have remained the same. U.S. imperialism is not based on territorial control but on economic control. The adoption of the neoliberal capitalist model across Latin America greatly benefited U.S. companies by making resource extraction cheaper (due to reduced corporate tax), labour cheaper (due to labour flexibilisation practices) and domestic markets easier to dominate (due to the removal of all state subsidies and the break-up of state owned companies). The last point holds a particular level of hypocrisy because, while other countries must abandon all state subsidies, the U.S. maintains high levels of protectionism in the one area that developing countries would hold a competitive advantage in a free market system: agriculture.

The difficult task lies in maintaining a system in which the main beneficiaries of economic production in a country are a tiny local elite and foreign multinationals and this, historically, has been achieved through substantial repression. Throughout the Cold War such repression was justified by labelling as communist any movement or political party whose views fell outside of radical right-wing capitalism. One crucial method of ensuring the maintenance of this economic model in Latin America has always been the cultivation of allied militaries whose ideological beliefs fall exactly in line with those of Washington. The end of the Cold war necessitated a new justification for the continuation of this practice and thus, the war on drugs was born. After the 9/11 attacks this evolved into a war on terrorism.

It is established that U.S. 'war on terrorism' policies, in Colombia and beyond, further alienate the populations of countries where they are implemented and swell the ranks of the militarised 'terrorist' forces the U.S. claims to be fighting. The purpose of this war however, like the war on drugs and the war on communism before it, is the creation of a façade that justifies U.S. economic imperialism. The 'terrorists' therefore, like the 'narcoguerrillas', play a crucial role in maintaining this façade. While the U.S.' Colombia policy is certainly aimed at making sure the FARC never gain the strength or political unity necessary to overthrow the state, the FARC are also a necessary enemy, just as the continuation of the internal conflict is necessary, to justify continued U.S. military training, aid and intrusion in the affairs of the strategically located oil and resource rich Andean state.

Notes

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- *This nickname no doubt originates from the fact that Monsanto produced the chemical Agent Orange which was used for aerial spraying during the Vietnam War to destroy crops, resulting in birth defects, poisoning of land and outbreaks of cancer. After the war it emerged that Monsanto had known of its toxicity years before but had tried to cover it up. Due to the side effects seen in Colombian's living in areas that have been sprayed with Roundup Ultra, and Monsanto's appalling record, many fear that, like Agent Orange, Roundup Ultra holds health implications yet unknown.
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- [13] U.S. based NGO *Witness for Peace* http://witnessforpeace.org/downloads/Col_Spraying_factsheet.pdf
- [14] See for example: *RAND Corporation*, Sealing the Borders; The Effects of Increased Military Participation in Drug Interdiction, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R3594.html>. The study also noted that seven prior studies on the same topic over the preceding nine years had resulted in similar conclusions,

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JFK Conspiracy Theories

by John Martin

In 1980 *Conspiracy: who killed President Kennedy* by British author Anthony Summers was published. The high water mark of conspiracy theories concerning the assassination of John F. Kennedy had been reached. The previous year the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) found that two gunmen fired shots at the President. The Watergate scandal of the early 1970s had engendered public scepticism of State institutions. It appeared that the Warren Commission report of 1964 would be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Summers' book came with the imprimatur of some distinguished personages. The historian Hugh Trevor-Roper proclaimed the book "a brilliant investigation". Arthur Schlesinger, a special assistant to President Kennedy and author of *A Thousand Days* wrote:

"One does not have to accept Mr Summers' conclusions to recognise the significance of the questions raised in this careful and disquieting analysis of the mysteries of Dallas."

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Summers' book was the definitive work on the subject in the early 1980s. Certainly, he had no serious rivals on this side of the Atlantic. The book has the appearance of a reasoned analysis and dismisses some of the outlandish theories about the JFK assassination.

It is generally the case that an author of a non-fiction work has an advantage: he knows far more about the subject than most of his readers. However, with the passing of time the balance of advantage narrows. New information may emerge which undermines the author's thesis.

The strongest case for a conspiracy was the acoustic evidence for two gunmen that was presented to the HSCA in 1979 at a late stage in its proceedings. The expert witnesses claimed that there was a 96% probability that four shots were fired: three from the Texas School Book Depository where Lee Harvey Oswald was located; and one shot from the Grassy Knoll area. The difficulty that HSCA members had was that there was no corroborating evidence. All the other evidence confirmed the findings of the Warren Report. In order to fit this piece into the jigsaw the HSCA had to conclude that the Grassy Knoll bullet had missed.

In the years following the HSCA report the acoustic evidence has been discredited, but Summers was not to know that in 1980. He assumes that since there is acoustic evidence supporting a gunman in the Grassy Knoll, witness statements which support that thesis *must be* credible! One of the witnesses he tracks down is a person called Gordon Arnold. Arnold certainly has a sensational story to tell. He claims that he was in the Grassy Knoll area on the fateful day; that a bullet whizzed by his shoulder; he dropped to the ground; was booted to his feet by a policeman; another policeman toting a shotgun demanded and obtained the film from Arnold's camera.

Summers admits that there is no photographic evidence on the day to confirm Arnold's presence. He does not dwell on the fact that no witness has ever confirmed the dramatic altercation Arnold had with the policemen; an incident that would have been difficult to miss. And, of course there is no discussion of why someone with such a dramatic story took 15 years to notify the authorities.

Another witness Summers produces is Police Officer Tom Tilson (Summers thinks his name is "John"). Tilson was off duty, but claims to have seen a man slipping and sliding down a railway embankment, not far from the grassy knoll; going away from the scene of the crime whereas everyone else was running in the opposite direction. The man threw something (a rifle perhaps!) into the back seat of the car and drove off. Tilson then followed the car and took its registration number, but unfortunately disposed of the piece of paper the number was written on years later! Such a valuable artefact lost to history! There were numerous people in the area that Tilson describes and yet there is no independent corroboration for Tilson's story. Unfortunately for Tilson's story there are photographs from a photographer called Mel McIntyre moments after the assassination which show that there was no car parked in the place where Tilson said there was (<http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/tilson.htm>).

One of the most famous vignettes in the JFK assassination saga is the backyard photo of Lee Harvey Oswald complete with rifle, revolver and left wing magazines. The American lawyer and early Warren Report critic Mark Lane claimed that the photograph was a forgery with the purpose of incriminating Oswald.

Summers rather half-heartedly accepts that the photographs are genuine. He cites contradictory expert evidence on this issue, but admits that common sense suggests that they are authentic. Firstly, there are a number of different photographs of Oswald in a similar pose. Why would the forger increase the risk of detection by producing more than one photograph? Also, Oswald's wife Marina testified to having taken such a photograph and his mother Marguerite testified to having destroyed a similar photograph.

But Summers can't leave it at that. He asks why the photograph was taken. The obvious reason was bravado on the part of Oswald, but Summers suggests it was part of a plot to discredit the left; that Oswald was really working for some security service such as the FBI or CIA. Summers argues that no genuine leftist would have posed with both a Trotskyist and Stalinist publication. While this point would have a certain validity for a European reader, Oswald's pose is not so far fetched when the very different political environment of Dallas is considered.

Dallas was a deeply reactionary city. When Kennedy arrived there on that fateful day he was greeted with

on lookers carrying the confederate flag. Also, one of Oswald's acquaintances in 1963, Michael Paine, the son of a famous American Trotskyist (George Lyman Paine) testified to the Warren Commission that Oswald had become a Marxist without ever having met a genuine American Marxist. It is plausible that an isolated individual living in such a hostile environment to the left would not have considered the differences between Trotskyism and Stalinism very important.

Another reason for Summers' scepticism of Oswald's left wing credentials is the latter's activities in New Orleans in the summer of 1963. The author claims that Oswald managed to discredit a pro Castro organisation on a radio broadcast. Oswald's radio interviews can be heard on the internet. There are two separate interviews: one broadcast on 17/8/63; the other on 21/8/63. The first broadcast is a searching (almost hostile) interview by William Stuckey. Oswald's performance in defence of Castro's Cuba is very impressive. In my opinion the anti Castro side would have been furious. The second broadcast had no pretence of balance. Oswald was up against an anti-Castroite, Carlos Bringuier, and a professional anti communist Ed Butler. Oswald is ambushed with the information about his time in the Soviet Union.

However, Oswald maintains his composure. He denies that he renounced his US citizenship and claims as "proof" of this the fact that he was allowed to return to the US. Even if it is accepted that Oswald's credibility was undermined by the 21/8/63 broadcast, that most certainly could not be said of the 17/8/63 broadcast. It is very possible that many people who heard the first broadcast did not tune in for the second.

Summers accepts there is strong evidence that Oswald brought his rifle into work on the day of the assassination. But then questions if Oswald fired the three shots from the Texas School Book Depository. Yet again he relies on his old friend "uncorroborated witness statements" to support his theory. However, the person in question (Carolyn Arnold) only claims to have seen Oswald on the first floor (the shots were fired on the sixth floor) fifteen minutes before the assassination. None of Oswald's work colleagues claims to have seen him at the time of the assassination. But why would Oswald need an accomplice? He was a competent marksman and the shot was not too difficult. Why would it have been necessary for one person to smuggle in the rifle and another to pull the trigger? Was the accomplice another employee of the TSBD or someone else? If such an accomplice was not an employee is it not likely that he would have been noticed? Summers' theory is speculation and not very plausible speculation at that.

There is a big problem on relying solely on uncorroborated witness statements in any high profile case. In Britain, for example, the police investigation of the "Yorkshire Ripper" was completely undermined by a hoax caller. But such high profile cases also attract numerous well meaning people anxious to help but whose memory is faulty. Warren Commission witnesses admitted that they found it difficult to distinguish between what they actually saw or heard and what they read in newspapers or magazines. It is noticeable that many witnesses changed their stories with the passage of time. Finally, it should be borne in mind that statements to an author may not be as reliable as statements under oath to a Commission of Inquiry. Even if the author gives an

accurate representation of what the witness has said, the responsibility of the witness is far less than in the case of testimony under oath.

The second part of this article will review Summers' handling of the JD Tippit murder, which occurred 45 minutes after the assassination of President Kennedy; the assassination attempt on General Edwin Walker; possible mafia involvement; and the murder of Oswald by Jack Ruby.

New Book published by the Aubane Historical Society:

The Bard* *Seán Riobaird O Súilleabháin

By Barry Keane

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About The Author

Barry Keane is a History and Geography teacher and the author of a number of books and articles across many subjects including Protestant decline in post-independence Ireland. He is also a mountaineer and has authored a series of five hill-walking and rock-scrambling guidebooks for the South of Ireland. Most importantly for this book he is the great grandson of the Bard.

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On “dealing with Iran”

by David Morrison

US antagonism towards Iran does NOT stem from a conviction that Iran is developing nuclear weapons or may do so in future.

Anybody who believes that should read President George Bush’s memoir *Decision Points*, which was published in November 2010, two years after he left office.

To be specific, they should read his account of how he reacted when the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) *Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities* landed on his desk in November 2007. This concluded that Iran hadn’t got an active nuclear weapons programme – which was a very awkward conclusion for him, so awkward that it made him “angry”.

NIEs are formal assessments on specific national security issues, expressing the consensus view of the 16 US intelligence agencies, which are signed off by the Director of National Intelligence. NIEs are typically requested by senior civilian and military policymakers or by Congressional leaders.

This one was requested by Congress. Key judgments of it were made public and they stated, inter alia:

“We judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program ... We assess with moderate confidence Tehran had not restarted its nuclear weapons program as of mid-2007 ...” [1]

The reaction of President Bush to this extraordinarily good news is instructive. One might have thought that a President, who was ostensibly dedicated to preventing Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, would have been very pleased to receive intelligence that Iran hadn’t got an active nuclear weapons programme.

But instead he was “angry” – because it cut the ground from under his efforts to gain and maintain international support for what he termed “dealing with Iran”, which clearly went beyond ensuring that it did not possess nuclear weapons. In January 2008, he took a trip to the Middle East, where according to his memoir he “tried to reassure leaders that we remained committed to dealing with Iran”.

Crucially, the NIE made it impossible for him to take military action against Iran:

“The NIE didn’t just undermine diplomacy. It also tied my hands on the military side. There were many reasons I was concerned about undertaking a military strike on Iran, including its uncertain effectiveness and the serious problems it would create for Iraq’s fragile young democracy. But after the NIE, how could I possibly explain using the military to destroy the nuclear facilities of a country the intelligence community said had no active nuclear weapons program?”

He concluded:

“I don’t know why the NIE was written the way it was. I wondered if the intelligence community was trying so hard to avoid repeating its mistake on Iraq, that it had underestimated the threat from Iran. I certainly hoped that intelligence analysts weren’t trying to influence policy. Whatever the explanation, the NIE had a big impact – and not a good one.”

(The full text of the President’s comments on the NIE can be read at [2]).

Iran has not made a decision, says Clapper

So, it was the judgement of the US intelligence community in 2007 that at that time Iran wasn’t actively trying to build nuclear weapons. At the time of writing (September 2012), that is still the judgement of the US intelligence community – successive annual reports to Congress by the Director of the National Intelligence Agency on threats to the US have restated the judgement that Iran hasn’t got an active nuclear weapons programme.

On 16 February 2012, the present Director, James Clapper, reported as follows to the Senate Armed Services Committee:

“We assess Iran is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons ... We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons.” [3]

That was in the Director’s prepared statement. During the taking of oral evidence, the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Carl Levin, asked:

“Director Clapper, I understand then that what you have said ... is that they have, that Iran has not yet decided to develop nuclear weapons. Is that correct? Is that still your assessment?” [4]

The Director replied unequivocally:

“That is the intelligence community’s assessment ...”

Iran has not made a decision, says Panetta

On the same day, 16 February 2012, US Defense Secretary, Leon Panetta, gave the same assessment to another Congressional committee, saying that Iran has not made a decision on whether to proceed with development of an atomic bomb. See Washington Post report headed *Panetta says Iran enriching uranium but no decision yet on proceeding with a nuclear weapon* [5].

A month earlier, on 8 January 2012, Panetta was asked about Iran’s nuclear programme on *Face the Nation* on CBS. He replied:

“Are they [the Iranians] trying to develop a nuclear weapon? No.” [6]

Israeli intelligence “largely agree”, say Clapper and Burgess

Do the Israeli intelligence services disagree with this assessment? Not significantly, judging by other oral evidence given to the Committee by Director Clapper and by General Ronald Burgess, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, who also appeared before the Committee.

Asked by Senator Richard Blumenthal

“whether there are differences from our threat assessments of Iran’s nuclear capability and the potential response to Israeli intervention there and the Israelis’ intelligence assessments?” [7]

Clapper replied:

“If your question is: do we and the Israelis largely agree then the answer’s yes”.

Senator Blumenthal asked General Burgess if he agreed. The General’s reply was as follows:

“Sir, I do. And we’ve been in these discussions for many years. I personally have been involved in them in both my previous life and in this life and generally speaking our assessments track with one another, they comport.”

This was confirmed by the Israeli Chief of Staff, General Benny Gantz, in an interview with Haaretz on 25 April 2012 [8], who expressed the view that Iran hadn’t decided to develop nuclear weapons and probably wouldn’t decide to do so. The Haaretz report of the interview was headed *IDF chief to Haaretz: I do not believe Iran will decide to develop nuclear weapons*.

A Reuters Special Report, dated 23 March 2012, entitled *Intel shows Iran nuclear threat not imminent* [9], came to the following conclusions:

“The United States, European allies and even Israel generally agree on three things about Iran’s nuclear program: Tehran does not have a bomb, has not decided to build one, and is probably years away from having a deliverable nuclear warhead.”

No diversion of nuclear material, says IAEA

Unlike Israel, Iran has signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) [10]. As a “non-nuclear-weapon” state party to the Treaty, Iran is obliged under Article II “not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons” – which it hasn’t done – and, under Article III, to subject its nuclear facilities to IAEA inspection to ensure that nuclear material is not diverted for the production of weapons – which it has done.

As regards the latter, Iran has declared to the IAEA 15 nuclear facilities, including its uranium enrichment plants at Natanz and Fordow, and 9 other locations (LOFs) where nuclear material is customarily used. All these sites are being monitored by the IAEA. In his latest report to the IAEA Board

on 30 August 2012 [11], the IAEA Director General confirmed for the umpteenth time that there was no diversion of nuclear material from these facilities:

“... the Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of declared material at these facilities and LOFs.” (Paragraph 9)

The IAEA has never found any evidence of a nuclear weapons programme in Iran.

US antagonism towards Iran

US antagonism towards Iran does not stem from a conviction that Iran is developing nuclear weapons or may do so in future. It is about the US determination to prevent Iran becoming a major power in the Middle East in opposition to the US. A change in regime to one that is prepared to do US bidding would be ideal, but that is probably outside the realms of possibility.

For now, the name of the game is to keep the pressure on Iran by ferocious economic sanctions and other means, leaving open the option of military action, justified as a measure to prevent Iran developing nuclear weapons.

To construct and maintain a coalition for this purpose, Iran has been portrayed as a dangerously aggressive state, despite the fact it hasn’t started a war in the past 200 years, has no nuclear weapons and has only modest conventional military capacity.

Iran spends perhaps \$10 billion on arms annually; the US spends \$700 billion, about 40% of the total world expenditure on arms [12]. According to a Washington Post article of 4 June 2010 [13], at that time the US had special forces deployed in 75 countries and in August 2011 the Pentagon said that this number was likely to go up to 120, that is, 60% of the states in this world [14]. Iran has no special forces deployed outside its territory.

Iran open to unconditional talks

As we will see, for a decade or more, Iran has been open to unconditional talks with the US to normalise relations between them. The specific issue of Iran’s nuclear activities could have been resolved in 2005 when Iran offered to provide unprecedented guarantees that its nuclear activities had no military purpose – the US refusal to countenance Iran having any uranium enrichment at all on its own soil prevented the issue being resolved.

Since the Islamic revolution in 1979 and the seizure of US embassy staff in Tehran, the US has had no diplomatic relations with it and has applied rigorous economic sanctions against it. The US did sell Iran military equipment in 1985, in exchange for Iran’s help in freeing American hostages in Lebanon (and the funds so generated were used to supply the right-wing Contra guerrillas in Nicaragua with arms, contrary to US law).

In the late 90s, at the end of the Clinton administration, there was a degree of diplomatic contact between them about Afghanistan through the UN-sponsored Six Plus Two group – the six states bordering Afghanistan, one of which is Iran, plus the US and Russia. In September 2010, US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, met the Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharazi, in this forum [15].

Contact continued in the early Bush years. A series of secret meetings took place at the UN in New York beginning in early 2001. The US representative at these meetings was Hillary Mann, who eventually resigned from US government service over US policy on Iran, having served from 2001 to 2003 on the US National Security Council as an adviser on Iran to Condoleezza Rice.

In an interview with Esquire magazine in October 2007 [16], she recalled how at one of these meetings her Iranian counterpart offered “unconditional talks” with the US, which the US had been demanding for official diplomatic contact between the US and Iran. The Bush administration didn’t take it up.

In the wake of 9/11 and the US invasion of Afghanistan, Iran co-operated extensively with the US. Mann was the lead person for the US in facilitating this co-operation. Here’s an account from the Esquire article on the extent of the co-operation:

“A few weeks later, after signing on to Condoleezza Rice’s staff as the new Iran expert in the National Security Council, Mann flew to Europe with Ryan Crocker -- then a deputy assistant secretary of state -- to hold talks with a team of Iranian diplomats. Meeting in a light-filled conference room at the old UN building in Geneva, they hammered out plans for Iranian help in the war against the Taliban. The Iranians agreed to provide assistance if any American was shot down near their territory, agreed to let the U.S. send food in through their border, and even agreed to restrain some ‘really bad Afghanis’, like a rabidly anti-American warlord named Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, quietly putting him under house arrest in Tehran. These were significant concessions. At the same time, special envoy James Dobbins was having very public and warm discussions in Bonn with the Iranian deputy foreign minister as they worked together to set up a new government for Afghanistan. And the Iranians seemed eager to help in more tactical ways as well. They had intimate knowledge of Taliban strategic capabilities and they wanted to share it with the Americans.

“One day during the U.S. bombing campaign, Mann and her Iranian counterparts were sitting around the wooden conference table speculating about the future Afghan constitution. Suddenly the Iranian who knew so much about intelligence matters started pounding on the table. “Enough of that!” he shouted, unfurling a map of Afghanistan. Here was a place the Americans needed to bomb. And *here*, and *here*, he angrily jabbed his finger at the map.”

This was in late 2001. Then, out of the blue, in his State of the Union address in January 2002, President Bush linked Iran to Iraq and North Korea with the famous line:

“States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.” [17]

This was an extraordinary remark for a US president given that Iran had been co-operating with the US over Afghanistan. Despite this, after an initial break, diplomatic contacts continued for over a year.

Mann returned to the State Department in early 2003. In April, about 4 weeks after the US/UK invasion of Iraq had started, a fax from the Swiss ambassador to Iran arrived on her desk. This wasn’t unusual, since the Swiss ambassador represented

American interests in Iran and often faxed over updates on what he was doing. The Esquire account continues:

“This time he’d met with Sa-deq Kharrazi, a well-connected Iranian who was the nephew of the foreign minister and son-in-law to the supreme leader. Amazingly, Kharrazi had presented the ambassador with a detailed proposal for peace in the Middle East, approved at the highest levels in Tehran.

“A two-page summary was attached. Scanning it, Mann was startled by one dramatic concession after another – ‘decisive action’ against all terrorists in Iran, an end of support for Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, a promise to cease its nuclear program, and also an agreement to recognize Israel.”

This was an extraordinary offer. But the White House ignored it. Its only response was to lodge a formal complaint with the Swiss government about their ambassador’s meddling.

Had the US wished to settle its differences with Iran in the early Bush years, there is little doubt that it could have done so. But it is clear that the Bush administration had other ideas for “dealing with Iran”.

(Hillary Mann and Flynt Leverett, who also served on US National Security Council around the same period and also resigned, contribute to the website Race for Iran [18], which provides interesting information and analysis about Iran and the Middle East in general today).

European negotiations with Iran (2003-5)

In 2002, the fact that Iran was constructing a uranium enrichment plant at Natanz became public knowledge. Under the terms of Iran’s safeguards agreement with the IAEA, Iran was under no obligation to report the plant’s existence to the IAEA until 6 months before it planned to introduce nuclear material into it.

In October 2003, Iran agreed to begin discussions on a broad range of issues, including its nuclear programme, with the UK, France and Germany. In a statement issued along with Iran after the initial meeting, the three EU states said:

“Their governments recognise the right of Iran to enjoy peaceful use of nuclear energy in accordance with the NPT.” [19]

This was a clear statement that these EU states accepted that Iran had a right to uranium enrichment on its own soil like other parties to the NPT.

Article IV(1) of the NPT states:

“Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty.” [10]

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Netherlands and South Korea, which like Iran are “non-nuclear-weapon” state parties to the NPT, possess uranium enrichment facilities [20].

This clear statement of Iran's right to uranium enrichment was repeated in the later Paris Agreement signed by Iran and the three EU states (aka E3/EU) on 15 November 2004 [21]. This said:

“The E3/EU recognise Iran's rights under the NPT exercised in conformity with its obligations under the Treaty, without discrimination.”

The Paris Agreement set the scene for negotiations between the E3/EU and Iran, which were supposed to lead to a long term comprehensive agreement.

In the Paris Agreement, Iran agreed “on a voluntary basis” to suspend “all enrichment related and reprocessing activities”. In turn, the E3/EU recognized that “this suspension is a voluntary confidence building measure and not a legal obligation”.

The final agreement was supposed to “provide objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes”, that is, arrangements over and above the requirements of the NPT for monitoring Iran's nuclear activities in order to give confidence to the outside world that they are not for military purposes.

The UK, France and Germany published proposals for a final agreement on 5 August 2005 [22]. These demanded that Iran make “a binding commitment not to pursue fuel cycle activities other than the construction and operation of light water power and research reactors”, in other words, all enrichment and related activities on Iranian soil had to cease for good. Iran was required to make permanent its voluntary suspension of these activities.

The UK, France and Germany had negotiated in bad faith and broken their commitment at the outset to “recognise the right of Iran to enjoy peaceful use of nuclear energy in accordance with the NPT”. Iran was to be the only party to the NPT that was forbidden to have uranium enrichment on its own soil.

The EU states made no attempt to devise “objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes”, as required by the Paris Agreement. In the course of the negotiations, Iran made a number of proposals in this regard [23], for example,

- immediate conversion of all enriched uranium to fuel rods to preclude the possibility of further enrichment
- continuous on-site presence of IAEA inspectors at the conversion and enrichment facilities to provide unprecedented added guarantees.

Iran also suggested that the IAEA be asked to devise appropriate “objective guarantees”. All of these suggestions were ignored by the EU states.

In a speech at the UN on 17 September 2005, President Ahmadinejad made a further proposal:

“As a further confidence building measure and in order to provide the greatest degree of transparency, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran. This represents the most far reaching step, outside all requirements of the NPT, being proposed by Iran as a further confidence building measure.” [24]

This offer by Iran to have its enrichment programme managed by an international consortium was also ignored. US Under Secretary of State, Nicholas Burns, went so far as to describe Ahmadinejad's speech as “excessively harsh and uncompromising” [25].

The EU states (and the US) were not interested in “objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes”. Their goal was to halt permanently the core elements of the programme – uranium enrichment and related activities.

Enrichment must be halted permanently, says US

That this was the goal of the US and its allies in 2005 was confirmed earlier this year by Peter Jenkins, who was the UK Ambassador to the IAEA from 2001 and 2006 and was involved in these negotiations. Looking back, he regrets that Iran's offer of additional safeguards was not taken up. Writing in the Daily Telegraph on 23 January 2012, he said:

“My hunch is that this gathering crisis could be avoided by a deal along the following lines: Iran would accept top-notch IAEA safeguards in return for being allowed to continue enriching uranium. In addition, Iran would volunteer some confidence-building measures to show that it has no intention of making nuclear weapons.

“This, essentially, is the deal that Iran offered the UK, France and Germany in 2005. With hindsight, that offer should have been snapped up. It wasn't, because our objective was to put a stop to all enrichment in Iran. That has remained the West's aim ever since, despite countless Iranian reminders that they are unwilling to be treated as a second-class party to the NPT – with fewer rights than other signatories – and despite all the evidence that the Iranian character is more inclined to defiance than buckling under pressure.

“But that missed opportunity need not prove lethal if the West can pull back now and join the rest of the world in seeing an agreement of this kind as the prudent way forward.” [26]

(A comprehensive account of these negotiations is given by Seyed Hossein Mousavian, who had led Iran's nuclear negotiating team in 2004-5, in his recently published book *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis*. See also Gareth Porter's article *US Rejected 2005 Iranian Offer Ensuring No Nuclear Weapons* [27].)

This is persuasive evidence that the obstacle to a settlement with Iran on the nuclear issue in 2005 was the refusal of the US and its allies to recognise Iran's right under the NPT to uranium enrichment on its own soil.

There is no reason to believe that this policy has changed.

Obama's bad faith

So far, I have described the Bush administration's failure to take up reasonable offers from Iran. Initially, Obama gave the impression that he was serious about reaching a settlement with Iran. In practice, he has not delivered.

It is true that a meeting took place between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council (plus Germany) in October 2009. At it, Iran agreed in principle to allow 1,200 kg of its low enriched uranium (LEU) – that is, around half of the LEU it had manufactured up to then – to be swapped for 120 kg of 20% enriched uranium fuel, which was needed for its Tehran Research Reactor (TRR). The latter is used for the manufacture of medical isotopes and the existing fuel, supplied by Argentina, was due to run out in a year or so.

This deal required that Iran export the LEU to a third country and get the fuel for its TRR in exchange later, perhaps a year later. The deal did not come to fruition because of domestic opposition in Iran (including from the Green movement), who suggested, not unreasonably, that powers unfriendly to Iran might see to it that the promised TRR fuel was never delivered.

So, an alternative plan was hatched, in which Turkey would act as middleman in the swap, holding on to the LEU until such times as the TRR fuel was available for transportation to Iran. Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey and President Lula of Brazil brokered a deal along these lines with Iran, which was signed in Tehran on 17 May 2010 [28].

Obama had encouraged Brazil and Turkey to broker the deal, writing a letter to President Lula a month earlier, the text of which is in the public domain [29]. The deal fulfilled the criteria set out by Obama in his letter. For example, Obama wrote:

“For us, Iran's agreement to transfer 1,200 kg of Iran's low enriched uranium (LEU) out of the country would build confidence and reduce regional tensions by substantially reducing Iran's LEU stockpile. I want to underscore that this element is of fundamental importance for the United States. For Iran, it would receive the nuclear fuel requested to ensure continued operation of the TRR to produce needed medical isotopes and, by using its own material, Iran would begin to demonstrate peaceful nuclear intent.”

The deal did all that. Iran had demonstrated its peaceful intent by agreeing to dispense with about half its stock of LEU in order to get TRR fuel.

But Obama rejected the deal, on the grounds that it did not require Iran to halt its enrichment programme, a requirement that was not present in Obama's letter. Quite the opposite: the letter had said:

“Notwithstanding Iran's continuing defiance of five United Nations Security Council resolutions mandating that it cease its enrichment of uranium, we were prepared to support and facilitate action on a proposal that would provide Iran nuclear fuel using uranium enriched by Iran — a demonstration of our willingness to be creative in pursuing a way to build mutual confidence.”

In other words, prior to the deal being signed, Obama was prepared to be “creative” and accept a deal without requiring

Iran to cease uranium enrichment. After it was signed, he rejected the deal on the grounds that it didn't require Iran to cease uranium enrichment.

Lula and Erdogan were furious at this bad faith on the part of Obama, who proceeded to promote a Security Council resolution imposing further economic sanctions on Iran. The resolution (1929) was passed on 10 June 2010, Brazil and Turkey voting against because, in the words of the Brazilian representative,

“the adoption of sanctions at this juncture runs counter to the successful efforts of Brazil and Turkey to engage Iran in a negotiated solution with regard to its nuclear programme.” [30]

For the next two years no negotiations took place. Since then, Iran enriched uranium to 20% and successfully manufactured fuel for the TRR.

US imposed economic sanctions

The economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council from 2006-10 were relatively mild, thanks to Russia and China. However, in December 2011, the US Congress passed legislation at the behest of the Israeli lobby, and it was accepted by President Obama, who dare not offend the Israeli lobby. The economic sanctions as a result of this legislation may do significant damage to the Iranian economy.

The legislation requires the Obama administration to bully other states around the world to stop trading with Iran, specifically, to stop buying Iranian oil, by threatening to cut off foreign financial institutions from the US financial system, if they conduct transactions with the Central Bank of Iran or other Iranian financial institutions. Its own trade with Iran will be unaffected since it has been negligible since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The EU followed the US lead with enthusiasm and EU states have ceased importing Iranian oil. And the US has managed to bully many other states into at least reducing their imports.

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 [30] www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/scact2010.htm

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friendly footing with the English people. It would be a crime to throw away this golden opportunity. Together, the two great kindred peoples could banish the fear of war from Europe (for who would dare to challenge such a concentration of power?) provide complete security for France [17] and the Low-lands, open the way to a colonial outlet for Germany, reduce the terrible burden of armaments, and promote a rapid revival of trade.

The path lies clear before us. It does not involve the serious risk of war inherent in the cast-iron universal pacts we have examined. It would be highly popular with the English people—if not in financial and Left-Wing circles.

NO POLITICAL FANATICISM

Leaders of the Popular Front and other Left movements declare from time to time that on no account must non-democratic nations (except Russia!) be permitted to share in the development of colonial lands. In other words, “the earth and the fullness thereof” is to be a *monopoly of the Left-Wing*.

Such action (need one say it?) leads inevitably to an intensification of nationalism and militarism. This sort of fanaticism is nothing but an inverted militarism, and we must not permit its advocates to sabotage the work of dynamic Peace, by which **all peoples, whatever their political colour, shall have their fair share of life and well-being**. For this is the only road to Peace.

These fanatics provide me, in advance, with my answer to those critics who may deny the “fixed” character of the “indivisible” system. It is true that certain more enlightened politicians suggest that the creation of opportunities for the “Have Nots” should form a part of the security system. *In practice this proposal would not work*. The cry, “No land for Fascists,” would infallibly destroy it.

ROOM FOR ALL

At this point a panic-stricken voice exclaims, “But, my dear sir if you allow these Fascist ruffians to expand they will end by destroying us.” Frankly, I do not think this sort of hysterical reaction worthy of serious argument. Are we really asked to believe that the mighty empires of Great Britain, France and Russia, with their hundred of millions, their immense lands, and their colossal resources, are in peril from nations relatively so small and poor? The combined wealth of these three Powers alone (without reckoning their allies) must be more than five times that of all the Fascist Powers put together. *I question seriously the sincerity of this attitude*. It smacks far too much of “rationalization”—the invention of reasons to justify instinctive reactions. Of the insolence which it reveals—since it implies a species of divine right on the part of the Land-Owning Powers, not only over their own territories but *over the whole universe*—I will say nothing.

In discussing these problems with German National Socialists, I have a dozen times been told: “Yes we do, it is true, want more land. But there is no need for war. There is room for all of us!”

GOOD WILL AND GOOD POLITICS

The crowning advantage of the course here put forward is that **it bridges the gulf between “Haves” and “Have Nots”, and seeks to secure Peace**, not by mechanical means, but by a **bold act of understanding and good-will**.

Great Britain, in place of supporting the Land-Owners in a desperate attempt to maintain a territorial system that will not *in any case* endure for another generation, thus adopts a wider, more generous and incomparably more realistic and far-seeing policy. Why not admit that the Proletarian Nations are justified in their demand for better conditions of life? Without “siding” with them against France or Russia (which is not suggested), what could be wiser than to win the friendship and support of the young and vigorous peoples, by helping forward, within just limits, the needful, and in the long run inevitable, political re-construction?

The English people, with its thousand-year tradition of fair-play, common-sense and inbred political wisdom, is peculiarly fitted to overcome the fatal division into “Haves” and “Have Nots”, Democrat-Communist and Fascist, which threatens to drown the world in blood. More than others we should be able to lift ourselves above the purblind fanaticism which sees all the right on one side and the wrong on the other; to perceive, with statesmanlike vision, that world-shaping principles and forces are at work, on both sides, in this vast and terrible conflict.

Political forms are not eternal truths. They are means to an end. It must be that much truth lies on each side of “The Great Fissure”. Has not the experience of history shown us that in the age-old conflict between Freedom and Authority, both these great principles are essential to human progress?

Notes

13. Let me give a small example: In the beginning of October, 1935, I was in Germany. A friend sent me a copy of one of the most widely circulated journals in England in which it was stated that the price of bread in Germany was 1/11 per 4lb loaf. On making inquiries, I found that the actual price of bred throughout Germany, at the time, varied between 75 and 90 pfennigs per 2 kilos. This works out at about 10d per 4lb. loaf.

14. Witness, for example, the dissolution by the Nazis of the University Corps, the last strongholds of German snobbishness and class spirit, and their replacement by student organizations which inscribe “comradeship” upon their banners. Writing in “The Times” (on Aug. 27th, 1936) Lord Mennel, who knows Germany intimately, goes so far as to say that the people “have become, in the best sense of the word, democratized, in an incredibly short time”, and we witness there a “rapid evolution of the community-spirit”.

Peace and Power – An Introduction (Part 2)

by Brendan Clifford

I can throw no more light on the identity of the author of the “Meyrick Cramb” articles published by Connolly in *The Workers’ Republic* of 1915-16 than I could three months ago. But it has been suggested to me that if the author of them was professor J.A. Cramb’s son, Meyrick, it would be surprising if the police had not taken an interest in them. Britain in wartime is not the kind of state in which support for the enemy can be freely expressed. And in the Great War there was little tolerance even of the expression of doubt about the advisability of the British decision to intervene in the European war and make it a World War in which everything was put in jeopardy.

Professor Cramb was a very popular lecturer and writer during the years before 1914. He was strongly Imperialist in outlook, as most writers were, but his argument for the British Empire was more thoughtful than most. If his son had written pro-German articles for an Irish revolutionary socialist paper one would expect the fact to have been noticed, and not only by the police. And if the son had not written the articles, the fact that they were published in his name would have been noticed. The police would have investigated, if nobody else did. But I have neither the means nor the time to search police files. I will therefore continue on the assumption that the writer was Meyrick Booth.

I know little about Meyrick Booth beyond his publications. What he published before 1914 wears a striking resemblance to what appears under the name Meyrick Cramb in *The Workers’ Republic*.

In the autumn of 1914 Connolly published an article on Karl Liebknecht, when it was rumoured that Liebknecht had been executed for his stand against the War. The rumour was false. The Marxist Socialist International collapsed in the face of the war. Liebknecht lived on, opposed to the war but disoriented by it. In 1919 he was killed in the chaos that followed the end of the war in Germany. In 1916 he sought to expose, in the German Parliament, the collaboration of the German government with the Irish revolutionaries represented by Roger Casement.

After the failure of the International to act against the War, Connolly’s political alignment was with the main body of the German Social Democratic party, which supported the German war effort.

Connolly’s only long-term support for a Continental party was for Joseph Pilsudski’s Polish Socialist Party. Pilsudski began his revolutionary activity during the Great War, which led to the formation of the Polish State, under German/Austrian auspices.

Pilsudski was a socialist on national grounds. His national socialism was condemned by Rosa Luxemburg who insisted that socialism in Poland should be entirely international and have no truck with nationalism. Lenin, though he did not reject nationalist action on principle, was also opposed to Pilsudski’s national socialism.

In the 1930s Pilsudski became the dictatorial governor of Poland in a crisis. He was generally described as a Fascist by the British Left. He made an agreement with Germany in 1934, ending the rancorous dispute about the borders laid down by Versailles, which the Weimar democracy had now reconciled itself to. But the issue of Danzig (a German city, adjacent to East Prussia, under notional Polish sovereignty, but under League of Nations authority) was left aside for future settlement. Pilsudski died in 1938. Early in 1939—following the dismantling of Czechoslovakia by the Munich Agreement—Germany proposed that Danzig be made part of East Prussia, and that there should be an extra-territorial road across the Polish Corridor to provide a land connection between the two geographically separated parts of the German state.

Poland had taken part of Czechoslovakia in 1938, so there could be no question for it of the inviolability in principle of Versailles frontiers. But Britain offered to put the British Army at the disposal of Poland, and France did likewise with the French Army, and the Polish Government absolutely refused to negotiate on the Danzig issue. Germany took it that Polish acceptance of the British and French military Guarantees constituted a breach of the 1934 Treaty, and amounted to a military encirclement. When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Britain and France did nothing to help it. But they declared war on Germany on their own behalf and proceeded to prosecute it at a leisurely pace, until Germany responded to the declaration of war on it eight months later.

Czechoslovakia, constituted by the Versailles Conference in response to no Czechoslovak national movement, was the unstable hub of Eastern Europe. It was a concoction of Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians, Poles and others under Czech hegemony. A large swathe of Hungarians were put under Czech rule for punitive reasons. The Irish home Rule Imperialist, T.P. O’Connor, rejoiced in the fact. He resented the fact that the Orangemen had been put under Irish rule, but somehow managed to see the Hungarians as vicarious Orangemen and took satisfaction in their subjugation to the Czechs.

Meyrick Booth says: “The Hungarians have, it is true, found a strong champion in England. But they did not find him *where they ought to have found him*, amongst the Democrats, but in the person of the “reactionary” Lord Rothermere!”

Rothermere was a press baron. He publicised the case of the Hungarians in his papers. And one of Baroness Orczy’s famous Scarlet Pimpernel novels was about the plight of the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia.

Booth’s pamphlet was published three years before the European situation, as shaped by the Versailles conference, was driven to catastrophe by British policy.

It was obviously unstable. It was Britain’s business to stabilise it. It was nobody else’s business. French policy in 1919 would at least have secured relative security in Western Europe. But Britain at Versailles disabled France and established

foreign policy hegemony over it. And then Britain collaborated with Nazi Germany for five years—it was collaboration, not “appeasement”—before deciding to make war on it.

Some of the issues raised by Meyrick Booth will be considered in a future issue. They have obvious relevance to present day affairs if a few names are changed.

I do not see how his assertion—that democracy as we know it is *not* “a system for translating the will of the people into political action” —can be disputed seriously, least of all in the field of foreign policy. The popular will is a product of Government management. The only case I can think of where the Government was confronted with a popular will which it had not managed was in Ireland in 1918. And then the first British Parliament elected on a democratic franchise set about suppressing it by force. □

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15. Far-reaching proposals for disarmaments were made by Mussolini in February, 1932.

16. The reader who wishes to pursue the matter of Communist military and political aims should consult the highly important articles by Lord Queenborough (for many years Treasurer of the League of Nations Union) in “The Nineteenth Century” (Aug., 1936) and “The English Review” (Aug., 1936), as well as the previously-mentioned work, “Left Wings over Europe”.

17. Every effort must, of course, be made to include France in an Anglo-German understanding. All the moderate elements in France would welcome a pact giving a far stronger security than that of Locarno.



Map of Eastern Europe 1925

Showing the states created by the Versailles Treaty. Poland was given territory occupied by a Polish majority and which gave it access to the Baltic Sea; this territory cut Germany in two, separating East Prussia with its capital Königsberg from Germany. This was accepted by Germany; what was demanded was that Danzig be reattached to East Prussia and a rail/road corridor be established connecting the two parts of Germany.

PEACE AND POWER (Part 2)

by Meyrick Booth — 1936, London

11. DEMOCRACY AND THE PEOPLE

“He (the citizen of to-day) does not feel that the power to vote gives him the power to govern.” – Mr. Vernon Bartlett (*The Listener*, August 2nd, 1933).

“Modern representative institutions do not represent, and their failure denies western European man his birthright at the height of his prosperity and opportunities.” – Douglas Jerrold (*They that Take the Sword*, p. 153).

“If Parliament cannot or will not function as an up-to-date institution for redressing social and industrial evils and maintaining good international relations, sooner or later the discontented masses will have to resort to other means of achieving their desires.” – Viscount Snowden (*The Daily Mail*, Nov. 7th, 1935).

“Democracy has everywhere failed to make good its promises. Everywhere it is the victim of demagogy!” – Sir Josiah Stamp (addressing the students of Aberystwyth University on Sept. 16th, 1935).

Emphatically all is not well within the democratic fold! People of the most diverse types are finding out that Democracy is far removed from being what it professes to be—a system for translating the will of the people into political action.

The crude antithesis: Here the Will of the People; there the Tyranny of Dictators, may serve as a good cliché for the unthinking public, but it utterly falsifies the problem of to-day.

It was precisely the profound discontent of the masses with Democracy which (together with the fear of Communism) led to the establishment of Fascism in the great nations of Central Europe.

A “democratic” politician receives, perhaps, 51 per cent of the votes given in a constituency where only 40 per cent of the electorate go to the poll; he represents barely 20 per cent of the people. On the other hand, the “Dictator” Adolf Hitler, in any average German electoral district (in the *complete* absence of any species of pressure) would have no difficulty in obtaining over 70 per cent of the entire register. The one is a “representative of the people”, the other is a “tyrant”. Could anything be more fantastic?

A party devoted to Democracy, in the real sense of the term, is hardly thinkable in any of the capitalist states of the west. The Labour Party in Great Britain (for example) despite all its endless talk of Democracy and its venomous hostility towards Fascism, shrinks with horror from any serious attack upon financial interest. **The actual Democracy of to-day** (as distinct from a theoretical and possibly unobtainable “real” Democracy) **is completely bound up with the capitalistic form of society**, and is in fact little else than the political aspect of that society.

If the Man in the Street were more realistic, if he were not the easy victim of catchwords, he would awaken speedily to the fact that the ruling classes of to-day so eagerly lend their support to theories of Democracy and Freedom, partly because freedom is cheap and it does not cost them anything to “give” it to the masses; and partly on account of the *disruptive* effect of such freedom.

So long as there are parties and sub-parties to play off one against the other, so long as the millionaires and the wire-pullers of High Finance are free to run propaganda machines in which

they may say anything they please to divide and confuse the electorate, so long there will, it is certain, never come into being a people’s party formidable enough to cause any anxiety to the wire-pullers of the western Democracies.

It may be said, with dangerously little exaggeration, that the party system existing to-day in the democratic lands is one of the best devices for ensuring that the will of the people shall *not* prevail, that has ever been evolved by the wit of man.

How many of the really important decisions taken in recent British politics have been genuine expression of the popular will?

When Great Britain settled the American debt question after a fashion which loaded this country with fantastic debt and, at the same time, poisoned good relationships with the American people, was this the expression of this will?

When we spent scores of millions to “keep on” gold and then “went off” it again, were the extraordinary financial somersaults which accompanied these peculiar and (for certain modest and retiring individuals) extremely lucrative transactions, in any way whatever the result of popular judgement?

Were the people consulted with regard to the Abyssinian peace moves in the late autumn of 1935? True, popular indignation made itself felt, but this was *outside* the normal channels of democratic machinery!

For twenty-five years this country has pursued a pro-French policy. Yet it is a notorious fact that it would be difficult to find an ex-soldier who does not lament the fact that we fought against the Germans, and freely express his view that he vastly prefers the Germans as allies. In all probability, a direct vote on the plain question: “Do you support a pro-French and anti-German policy?” would have been answered in the negative by at least two-thirds of the population, at almost anytime outside the war years. But this has never made any difference to the orientation of our foreign policy!

Again, does anyone suppose that the ridiculous restrictions on the sale of alcohol in Great Britain represent the wishes of the people in this matter? It is well-known that they are the laughing-stock of the whole country.

One might continue almost indefinitely!

Anyone who is not afraid to face facts knows that *the political system called Democracy fails to give real effect to the will of the people.*

It is this fact which so weakens and stultifies the actions of the great western Democracies. There can be no firmness and purposefulness where no real contact exists between the people and its elected rulers.

12. THE BETRAYAL OF DEMOCRACY

If we were so unwise as to take at their face value the utterances of democratic politicians, we should find ourselves regarding these gentlemen as the champions of freedom, fighting a gallant fight against cruel tyrants and dictators.

In practice, however, they have seldom (if ever) taken any interest in the liberation of anyone who would not be of use to them in the game of power-politics. For years the peasantry of the South Tyrol, deprived of their national

and linguistic rights, sought without success to appeal to the League of Nations. The Slovaks have worn out the soles of their boots tramping up and down the corridors of Geneva. The Ukrainians, whose plight was the saddest of all, since millions died of hunger and disease, found no one in authority, in the west, to take up their case. The Hungarians have, it is true, found a strong champion in England. But they did not find him *where they ought to have found him*, amongst the Democrats, but in the person of the “reactionary” Lord Rothermere!

The large German minority in Czecho-Slovakia looked for many years towards the Democracies of the west, hoping (for they knew little of politics) that statesmen who talked so much about freedom would surely do something to help them. They are now tired of looking westwards and have turned their heads in quite another direction: towards the north, where Adolf Hitler sits in his Chancellery. For they have realized that the spokesmen of freedom and self-determination have not the slightest intention of putting their principles into action.

The guaranteeing of the frontiers of Czecho-Slovakia, which include a large block of German territory, is a main plank in the programme of the Anti-Fascist Front. Democratic politicians are extremely interested in Czecho-Slovakia, *for they have discovered that the Czechs are useful*. With their aid, Russian troops can be poured into Germany! Their boundaries are hence invested with a special sanctity.

It would thus appear that the Democracies of the west (as “represented” by their politicians—it has of course, nothing to do with the peoples) intend to maintain, **even at the cost of war**, a system which refuses a plebiscite (where one had been promised) and forces many thousands of young German conscripts into an alien army.

It would contribute to the clarity and honesty of politics if we ceased to apply the meaningless term “Democrat” to these gentlemen. The situation would then emerge as being (what, in essence it is) a power conflict.

The consideration of these cases, and of the parallel case of Austria leaves us in little doubt as to why the masses turn away from Democracy. It has become the empty shell of what it purports to be, and once, perhaps, was.

The story of modern Democracy is a tragedy—a pitiful, sordid tale of golden opportunities thrown away, of solemn promises broken, of the hopes of millions disappointed. In 1919, democratic politicians had the whole world at their feet. They might have made a noble, just, generous settlement, initiated disarmament, established a new world-era of peace and justice! *What did they do?* They gave us the most stupid, dishonest and vicious treaties of which modern history has any record—treaties which still poison the entire international situation.

I shall no doubt be accused of making “a bitter attack upon Democracy”. But, in truth, have I attacked Democracy at all? Would it not be more accurate to say that **I have defended Democracy against the politicians who betrayed it?** Democracy, like Christianity, has never been tried. It is even now not impossible that a genuine stand for democratic principles might do much to save the world.

13. HOW WAR PSYCHOLOGY IS CREATED

Let me remove a possible misunderstanding. I do not belong to any political organization, Fascist or Anti-Fascist. For some years I was a member of the I.L.P., and frequently spoke on behalf of International Peace.

Now, however, the world-conflict between Fascism and Communism has altered the entire situation. An English Left-

wing Peace gathering is not easily to be distinguished from a meeting to promote war against Germany and Italy. We are confronted with a vast organized campaign, directed against friendly powers, whose sole crime seems to be that they have chosen another form of government.

It is obviously impossible for one who has lived, as I have, in both Germany and Italy and knows the true conditions obtaining there, to participate in a campaign which is provocative, hysterical, reckless of truth and clearly designed to foment war rather than to encourage a spirit of peace. I am thus compelled to pursue a path diverging from that of my Left-wing friends. But I have not become either a “reactionary” or a “militarist”!

If western civilization cannot find room within its limits for differing political creeds it is doomed to perish.

We are therefore better employed, I feel, *in seeking to understand one another*, rather than in still further intensifying the hatreds and fanaticisms which poison the air of present-day Europe.

No one will object if democratic politicians say: “We must oppose Fascism, because it is anti-democratic, authoritarian, and nationalistic.” That is a legitimate political argument.

It is quite another story when the entire publicity machine of Anti-Fascism is employed to paint a grotesquely false picture of what Fascism really is. When day after day and month after month a constant stream of distorted information as to conditions in Germany or Italy is poured forth. [13] The ignorance which prevails in our own country as to conditions in Italy or in Germany, a land only a half-day’s journey from our shores, is amazing.

The most ordinary facts as to wages, prices, conditions of industry, status of workers, and so forth in Fascist lands hardly reach the British masses. During the election in November, 1935, hundreds of parliamentary candidates made statements as to conditions in Germany which were totally untrue.

In spite of the fact that every visitor to Germany can see with his own eyes that the housing conditions are superior to those obtaining in England, that the most magnificent recreation grounds, schools, hospitals, holiday homes, camps and cruising vessels are at the disposal of the German worker, the statement that “the workers under Fascism are ground down to subsistence level” appear again and again in our Left-wing journals with the monotonous regularity of a gramophone record (as indeed it is!).

Worse still, writers of reputation denounce with fury conditions that they have—evidently—never examined.

The plain truth is that a large proportion of our people lives already in what is virtually a prepared war atmosphere, in which truth, moderation and good-will are stifled by prejudice and emotion.

14. THE RISE OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

To-day a thousand tongues are busy informing us that Fascism is a devilish concoction compounded of “reaction”, militarism and capitalistic cunning, and that its supporters are sub-human monsters; it is a return to mediaevalism, an enthronement of the god of war, and an astute device for forcing the workers under the control of high finance.

The weakness of this picture lies in the fact that no one who has spent more than a week in any Fascist land will believe it!

How very much deeper we must go if we are to understand the Fascistic world-movement! **Does any reasonable man suppose that, for no apparent reason, some 150 million Europeans have suddenly turned “reactionary”?** Or that a little capitalistic bribery and wire-pulling could have altered so

profoundly the life-outlook of entire civilized nations? Such views are childish. They cannot be seriously held even by those who use them as propaganda.

We are told that the Fascist lands are groaning under a tyranny from which they long to be liberated. Take Germany as an example. Not ten per cent of its inhabitants have the faintest desire to return to a democratic form of government. (There is an underground Communist agitation, but that is, of course, also anti-democratic.) The average German regards with horror the regime of 32 squabbling parties from which he has escaped. He has no intention of going back to a state of affairs when speculators and stock-jobbers (often aliens) became millionaires in a few months, while eight million unemployed men and women walked the streets of their native land.

There will be no hope for Democracy until it has taken stock of its own shortcomings. Instead of indulging in hate-inspired and hate-creating propaganda, how much wiser Democrats would be to ponder over those defects in their own system which have made it a thing to be remembered with horror over a large part of Europe!

It is inadequately realized in England that **the Hitler Movement was carried to victory**, not by force or by the contributions of capitalists, but **by the patient daily work, year after year, of the hosts of ardent young men and women—of all social classes, including hundreds of thousands of weekly wage-earners—who made up its backbone.** Hitler himself has said, again and again, he could never, without the self-sacrificing efforts of thousands of nameless men and women, have come to occupy his present position. In wandering about through Germany, talking to all sorts and conditions of men, I have heard a score of times the remark: “Hitler is *our* leader! We ourselves put him there. That is why we are so proud of him. He is a friend and comrade—one of ourselves.”

Paradoxically enough, this sense amongst the people of possessing their “own” government, is (as most travellers will agree) stronger by far in Germany or Italy than it is in the democratic lands.

There could not be a more profound error than to believe that Fascist states are governed in defiance of the popular will. It is true that the forms of Democracy have been ruthlessly set aside, and that a mechanism of uniformity, deeply distasteful to the western mind, has been set up. But it is even more true, in the words of Douglas Jerrold (*They that Take the Sword*, chap. 4) that: “In Italy and Germany, the western urbanized masses have seen, for the first time in history, a government installed by their own direct act of volition”, and that without understanding that “these movements [i.e. Fascism in Italy and Germany] were acts of the people themselves ... we understand nothing that matters in Europe to-day.”

The western Democrat forgets that (to take the case of Germany) the regime was not imposed from above but was swept into power by an immense pressure originating in the masses (and more especially amongst the *young*), who were sick to death of the party-political system. He does not realize that if the Nazi regime were (as he thinks it is) a *class* government, it could not possibly enter, with such immense energy, upon a *campaign against class distinction.*

Beneath the dictatorial political mechanism of Nazi Germany there flows a deep current of Democracy (in the *social* not the political sense) expressing itself in a new and moving spirit of comradeship and equality. Every student of modern Germany knows that class distinction is there infinitely less marked than it is in the Democracies of the west, which are, by comparison, veritable strongholds of money-worship and snobbery. [14]

When the Great War was over, the men from the trenches returned to Germany to find their country in the hands of profiteers, speculators, traitors, political wire-pullers and demagogues. The tone of society could be summed up in the phrase, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

After fifteen years of democratic government there were eight million unemployed, the principal cities had become centres of corruption and putrescence, veneered with diseased gaiety (invariably referred to as “Life” by Anti-Fascist writers!) The prevailing mood was one of depression and despair.

At last, in 1933, the long pent-up anger and impatience of the people found its outlet, and Adolf Hitler, carried to victory, with the battle-cry *Deutschland erwache!* was made dictator, and proceeded to put into practice the principles embodied in the teaching of the Nazi (National Socialist) Party, which he (with six other men) had founded at the end of the war, when they returned from the front.

Hitler believed, with fanatical intensity, that it was possible to create a State at once Nationalist and Socialist.

15. THE “IRREVOCABLE DECLINE” OF CAPITALISM

“By some of the audience it was judged to be a “Socialist” declaration, by others a “Nationalist”. Undoubtedly it was both. Fascism, he said, wanted all individuals to be equal before the nation, and equally capable of bearing arms in its defence. No longer did economy aim at individual profit, but at collective interest. “In face of the irrevocable decline of the Capitalist civilization”, Signor Mussolini continued, “there are only two solutions—the Communist and the Corporative.”” — *The Times* (Oct. 9th, 1935), in a leader upon Mussolini’s Milan speech of Oct. 8th.

A great deal of confusion has been created by the statement—circulated originally as Communist propaganda—that *Fascism is an attempt to bolster up the decaying Capitalistic system.*

The above utterance from the horse’s mouth, disposes effectively enough of this stupid notion. Stupid, for the simple reason that in all Fascist lands the operations of big capitalists have been severely restricted. That capitalists should seek to place in power a system of government which (far more than Democracy) limits their profits and interferes with their speculations is, to say the least, improbable.

The strength of Fascism—so baffling to those who can see in it nothing but brutal tyranny—is due to the fact that *it appeals to deep-seated emotions*, long suppressed during the capitalistic-individualistic era; *to the community-spirit, to man’s need for moral discipline, to the profound instincts of race and family.* To dismiss these factors as so much “reaction”, while attempting to base society solely upon the opposed principle of individualism is, I believe, a serious psychological and political error.

In Germany, Austria and Italy, where the full force of the communist drive against religion and the family was experienced, it appeals, also, to large sections of the religious-minded—in spite of the fact that the official leaders of the churches are (in part) Anti-Fascist.

Fascism represents a **violent reaction against the extreme individualism of the last century and a half.** It is, as Mussolini has often said, **the negation of the ideas of the French Revolution**, with its glorification of the natural man, and its contempt for social discipline. The aim of the Rousseau school was “to live one’s own life.” Fascism places in the forefront of its teaching the surrender of self and the service of the community. Oddly enough, this is regarded by democratic

Socialists and Communists as something almost diabolical, and they are never tired of denouncing Fascists because they subordinate themselves to the State—although, before Hitler and Mussolini came upon the field, this (stated in different language) was their own gospel!

The intellectuals of the British Labour Movement (who send their own children to expensive and exclusive schools) can see nothing but evil in the new German Labour Camps, where the sons and daughters of all classes come together, to learn mutual respect and co-operation in social service.

The Socialists of the west have been trained in the idea that Nationalism and Socialism are as incompatible as oil and water. Hence the Nationalism of Fascism blinds them to its Socialism.

Are they really so incompatible? If a man loves his nation he will want to see *all* its members happy and prosperous. He will become, if he is sincere, an enemy of all class-exploitation and class-distinction.

Fascism eludes academic definition. **It is essentially an assertion of racial and national values rather than an intellectual creed.** It has been developed on the field of battle against Communism; not, like Marxism, in the British Museum Reading Room. In Italy and Germany, Fascism was looked upon as the rallying creed of the nation in its struggle to resist absorption in the international mass-life of the Marxian Movement.

In its extreme form it appears as a doctrine of racial glorification. In its more moderate forms (as expounded, for example, by many National Socialists) it asserts the rights of national freedom for all nations, and does not preclude a peaceful understanding between the peoples.

In internal affairs, Fascism works through the corporative system, by which the various branches of national life—industry science, art, agriculture, etc.—function as members of a whole, in a manner reminiscent of the mediaeval Guilds.

It is impossible to read the literature of Italian Fascism or that of the Nazi Movement, without realizing that many of the most fruitful ideas of Communism and Socialism are here presented in a new synthesis, grafted on to the living tree of the Christian European tradition.

“Germany is ready to undertake further international security obligations if all nations for their part are equally ready. Germany is ready to dissolve her whole military system and to destroy the small remnant of weapons remaining to her, if neighbour nations will do the same.” —Adolf Hitler, in the Reichstag, May 17th, 1933.

And in a broadcast, Oct. 15th, 1933:

“The history of the past 150 years should, in its changing course, have taught the two nations (Germany and France) that essential and enduring changes are no more to be gained by the sacrifice of blood. It would be a mighty happening for all humanity if these two nations of Europe would banish, once and for all, force from their common life.”

There can be no doubt that it is the militarist aspect of Fascism which has most deeply impressed itself upon the British public. “It may be true,” thinks the Man in the Street, “that valuable social experiments are being made in Germany or Italy; but is it not a fact that both nations are arming to the teeth?” Time and again, I have discussed these points with representative Germans, and the reply is, “Yes, we are arming rapidly; but when we proposed disarmament you let the matter drop like a hot potato! Now we must arm!”

British statesmen no doubt feel that they were justified in acting as they did; but it is impossible for the ordinary peace-loving citizen not to feel that a great mistake was made in

rejecting—one might almost say with contempt—the apparently sincere offers of Hitler. (Even journals so strongly Anti-Fascist as the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald* pleaded for a serious consideration of the German proposals.)

The British citizen is assuredly not lacking (when he is allowed to know the relevant facts) in a sense of justice, and there is a strong feeling amongst the public that it is not quite fair-play to pin the whole guilt of the armaments race upon the Fascist Powers, when their peace proposals (which would, at the very least, have immensely eased the tension) were ignored. [15]

The two striking passages at the head of this section (especially when taken in conjunction with recent similar utterances) **do not suggest to the fair-minded man that we are faced with a spirit of ruthless militarism!** We should not, I think, forget that Hitler was the first German statesman to hold out definitely the hand of friendship to the people of France, and to say in plain words that the issues at stake between France and Germany were not worth the life of a single German soldier.

“Ah, yes!” said a democratic friend on reading the above, “I daresay Hitler has no hostile intentions towards France; or, for that matter, towards England. *But what about the East? Are Czecho-Slovakia and Russia safe?*”

This brings us to *the real kernel of the problem*. **We are not asked to fight in self-defence, or even in defence of France or Belgium. If England is dragged into another Anti-German war it will be on behalf of Russia or her Czecho-Slovakian allies.**

Again we are faced with “The Great Riddle”. Why should democratic politicians be prepared to go to almost any lengths to secure the safety of a Communist dictatorship?

If the English people feels, after duly weighing up all the facts, that it is prepared to shed an ocean of blood to guarantee frontiers which are almost universally regarded as unjust and to defend a semi-Asiatic dictatorship, well and good. There is no more to be said. Let us get on with the bombs and the poison-gas!

“It is not for Russia that we want to fight; it is for the principle of Peace. If eastern nations can be attacked then others can also be attacked,” replied my friend.

It is not, however, a question of Russia being attacked, but of the unstable character of the eastern European frontiers. That sooner or later these will be revised is almost a matter of course; they do not represent any principle of popular will or justice, and it would be folly for us to commit ourselves in respect of them.

England cannot secure Peace by bolstering up this ramshackle system of frontiers. If she interferes at all, it should be on the side of the progressive forces which aim at revising them.

“The older generation decided the question who should destroy whom within our country. **We, led by our Party, led by the great Stalin, commanded by Marshal Voroshiloff, have an extraordinarily arduous and important history task—to decide who shall destroy whom in the whole world.**” —Kosareff (Secretary of the Union of Young Communists), speaking at a Soviet government conference, in the presence of Stalin, on January 7th, 1936.

“Over 500,000 young Russians have been trained as air pilots.” —M. Eidemann (Chief of the Ossiaviachim).

Mr. Churchill and his friends seek to make us tremble by drawing a lurid picture of German war preparations. They regard it as fantastic that Germany should feel in any way disturbed by Russian military or aerial armaments. Although

(in their opinion) a German army of some six million, on a war footing, should fill us with terror, they refuse to admit that a Russian force of 13,000,000 (backed up by an air-force which is to be increased, according to recent Russian statements, *until it is larger than the combined air-forces of all other European nations*) can be regarded by Germany as in any way threatening her security—even when such statements as the above, by Kosareff, are being freely made. What, one wonders, would Mr. Churchill have said, if the proposal to create such an air-force had emanated from Berlin and not from Moscow, or if Hitler and not a “Red” had proposed to “destroy” all those nations in the opposite political camp?

That Germany has armed very heavily during the last two years is true; but this cannot be looked upon as “proof of aggressive intentions,” save by those who are wilfully blind to the significance of plain facts. In Czecho-Slovakia, a whole ring of air-bases have been constructed by Russia within quick bombing distance of Berlin, Vienna, Buda-Pest, and other vital centres. Is there an English politician who would dare to suggest that if such a step had been taken by Germany (for example, by building military aerodromes in Belgium, within easy range of London) he would have regarded it as in no way menacing our safety or interest? [16]

The mere statement of these facts is a devastating commentary on current political sophistry.

16. HOW TO MAKE WAR

The road to war is paved with good intentions. Nothing could be more plausible than the idea of an “indivisible” system of collective security, by which all nations agree to unite against the aggressor. *Nothing is more likely to lead to war!*

This indeed is actually admitted by the more honest protagonists of the idea. Mr. Edward Thompson, described as a representative Democrat, speaking at the Liberal Summer School (1936) said: “We shall have to get back to collective security, the only real security. But before we can get back to it, we shall probably have to fight again.” Just one more war—a *world war*—and then *those of us who are left* will be able to settle down, with our wooden legs, to a real spell of peace!

Is it not obvious that another major war would (as Mr. Eden recently said) utterly wreck civilization? It would leave behind it a terrible legacy of bitterness and hatred. **It is inconceivable that after a fresh outburst of slaughter, humanity will settle down to perfect peace.**

I know, of course, that Mr. Thompson and his friends do not *want* another war. The trouble is that they care so much more about politics than they do about peace! Good old Dr. Johnson, a very typical Englishman, said, “I would not give half-a-guinea to live under one form of government rather than another.” A small dose of this spirit would, I think, do much good to those who care so *very* much about the forms of government that they are prepared to kill us all off in political wars!

On the one side, today, we have those who believe in **Internationalism**, in the creation of a *vast international world-order centred at Geneva* (or is it Moscow?) *imposing its will upon the separate nations*. On the other are ranged those who reject this ideal and cling to **Nationalism**.

The way to get Peace (so the Internationalists tell us) lies in compelling everybody to come into their camp. A Pacifist, in their phraseology, is a man who believes in this international Super-State, and is prepared, if need be, to fight for it.

The new Super-Internationalists contemplate, with a horrifying degree of cheerfulness, the prospect of a war—or even a whole series of wars—to impose the international life-

outlook upon the world. They are (unfortunately) absolutely sincere. So were the fanatics who waged fierce religious warfare in Europe three hundred years ago!

There seems no reason why the conflict between Communist-Democrat-Internationalist and Fascist-Nationalist should not provide a new Thirty Years War, laying waste the whole of Europe. *The case of Spain is before our eyes!*

As in the religious wars of the past, the motives of the combatants are by no means purely ideal. **Collective security means primarily** (despite much sincere idealism) **security for those who have great possessions.** A union of Russia, France and Great Britain is more than anything else (as a glance at section 4 will show) a Land-Owners’ League. It represents 26 million square miles of land. These vast territories are to be secured against the aggressive militarism of the wicked landless men, the “international proletariat”—in the main, Germany, Italy and Japan, who boast (between them) *about one-thirtieth part of this land.*

If these nations come into the collective security system they will be pledged to remain within their present narrow frontiers. If they do *not* come into it, they will be morally branded as Disturbers of the Peace. Looked at from this angle, collective security amounts to little more than an unpleasantly hypocritical plan for “bottling up” the land-hungry nations.

In truth the attempt to create a *closed system*, checking the natural growth of nations, is the best way to make war; *it can be compared to dealing with a boiling kettle by soldering down the lid!*

17. HOW TO MAKE PEACE PEACE IN OUR TIME

We have taken a glance down the road marked “One-more-war-to-end-war!” And what we have seen determines us to step very firmly in the *opposite* direction!

We turn our backs upon the “guaranteed” and “indivisible” Peace, which, stripped of verbiage, is revealed as being a plan for using overwhelming force (in plain English, bombs, poison-gas and starvation blockades) to impose a static political system upon a dynamic world.

Since this system meets (very naturally) with fierce resistance in the present, it is in essence, a *future* Peace.

But what the peoples want is not Peace in the Future; but Peace here and now. Not Peace after another war; *but the Peace that shall prevent that war taking place!*

DYNAMIC PEACE

It is, I believe, indisputable that the whole Peace Problem pivots about the disturbing situation revealed in section 4.

It is clear that we must give up the attractive but perilous notion that a mechanical fool-proof Peace can be established by the simple process of fixing the peoples within their existing frontiers by what is (in effect) organized international terrorism. As well walk through a forest and clamp iron bands around the trees to stop all further growth! **The basis of a realistic, constructive World-Peace is the making of room—as cheerfully as we may—for the development of young and virile peoples.** Why pretend that the map of the world will be the same in fifty years that it is to-day? It will not, cannot and *should* not be.

FRIENDSHIP WITH GERMANY

The obvious first step is to grasp the hand held out to us by the German people, who have no greater wish than to be on a (continued p. 29)