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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"Roger Casement – the Real and the Fabricated"

Jack Lane:

Text of a talk at the
Mother Jones Festival Cork,
26 July 2025

You will find more work by Jack Lane on his website https://aubanehistoricalsociety.com

Roger Casement remains a compelling figure in Irish and British history. This year is the 60th anniversary of his re-interment. He has become an icon for many causes. But icons are lifeless things and are deprived of context and thus of any real historical meaning. But Casement remains highly relevant because of what he said and did. After 49 of his 52 years as an active participant and onetime poster boy for the British Empire, he became the most dangerous Irishman that the Empire ever faced. Why did this happen? That is why he was hanged and that is why there has been a consistent attempt for over 100 years since to traduce his moral significance. This talk attempts to put the record straight.

This talk is a very brief outline of the case for the real Roger Casement and why we are now presented with a fabricated or concocted version of him.

Like some people here, and anyone of my vintage in particular, I was introduced to Casement at the time of his re-interment in 1965.

Two events stand out for me at the time. A meeting in University College Cork addressed by Dr. Herbert Mackey on the 'Black Diaries'. At the time he was the leading proponent of the forgery thesis of the diaries.

That meeting was chaired by the then very radical and ostentatious Republican, friend and admirer of Tom Barry – Eoghan Harris. In his FCA trench coat he would perform at the Philosophical Society and seemed a reincarnation of Barry! And delighted to be regarded as such!

How times have changed! Oh, how people have changed.

The other event was de Valera's Address at the re-interment ceremony, at which he said:

> "It required great courage to do what Casement did, and his name would be honoured, not merely here, but by oppressed peoples everywhere, even if he had done nothing for the freedom of our own country."

This was true, of course, and de Valera was no doubt referring to Casement's humanitarian reputation. But it left me with a bit of a puzzle. Why exactly was he hanged and his name blackened ever since - and why is it still ongoing? Surely he was not hanged for his humanitarianism—which was carried out by him on behalf of the Empire. (He went to Putumayo at the specific request of his close friend, Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary; and Casement did an excellent job as usual—but that did not prevent Grey sanctioning his execution as a leading member of the cabinet that did so in 1916.)

Casement did his job and Grey did his job.

OPPOSITION TO THE RISING

And there was a further puzzle. Was Roger Casement hanged for his part in the 1916 Rising? Not likely, as he played no part in it, being in custody at the time. He came back from Germany to oppose the Rising—and the British knew this very well and prevented him from getting this message to the Irish Republican Brotherhood [IRB] leaders after he landed at Banna Strand.

So they hardly hanged him for that—for opposing the Rising? They should have applauded him rather than hang him, surely?

So the puzzle remained.

Casement's contribution to the Rising was echoed with just a few words in the Proclamation, where it refers to support for "our gallant allies in Europe" i.e., the Germans, a sentiment which Connolly also endorsed - though they never met - and Connolly ensured was included in the Proclamation.

But those few words are the key to an understanding of Casement's political position then, and his fate. That phrase unlocks what Casement really was at that point, and what he meant to the British then and since.

His was clearly not the simple Irish Republican Brotherhood position of England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity. And I am not, of course, criticising that IRB approach – just that it was not Casement's.

Now, Casement's opposition to the Rising was quite understandable from his then point of view: he knew that it would be a declaration of war on the Empire, and what matters in war is military success and any other approach is reckless. He knew enough about how the British Empire was built to appreciate that. The sword was mightier than the pen in the building of that Empire!

The likelihood of military success is also a condition for a 'just war', as any Catholic theologian will tell you. It is immoral to start a war you cannot hope to win.

Of course, despite being a military failure, 1916 turned out to be a political success as events developed and confirmed the validity of its purpose. The 1916 leaders could claim to be successful in beginning the end of the British Empire: but there seems to be a sense that all is forgiven them by the Empire! But for British historians and commentators it is clear that this not the case with Casement.

Why?

CASEMENT'S IMPERIAL CV

A regular series of books have been appearing since the 1950s that keep painting a very negative picture, shall we say, of him. Vilifying him, in fact. Though he had faithfully served the Empire and opposed the Rising? What is going on?

To get an understanding of this, we should begin by reminding ourselves that, for about 49 of his 52 years, Casement was a committed and active British Imperialist 'at the top of the tree' in the British Establishment, with a worldwide reputation.

He was a British Consul in ten different locations across two continents, was given the Queen's South Africa medal for his "special services, 1899-1900" in the Boer War, was made a CMG in 1905, Knighted and given the Coronation Medal in 1911. Not many got such honours. Erskine Childers, another prominent Imperialist did not get them.

Casement was the 'go to man' for dealing with some problematic issues for the Empire. He was in fact a poster boy for the Empire, exposing evils in the world such as the Belgian atrocities in the Congo, and the atrocities of the rubber/robber barons in Peru.

In supporting the War on the Boers, he was at odds with the Irish Republican Brotherhood and with Irish public opinion, which vehemently opposed that war.

CASEMENT AS A CULTURAL NATIONALIST

Casement was an Irish cultural nationalist from around the turn of the 20th century and, as with everything else he did, put his heart into it. Purely cultural nationalism is quite compatible with British Imperialism - and with any Imperialism worthy of the name! The Empire can thrive by encouraging such nationalism - as it can be quite containable politically because, in itself, it is non-political and can remain "inside the box" of the Imperial ambit.

This did not put him at odds with the Empire. So, he was not hanged for that.

HOME RULE AND THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS

Casement supported Home Rule and he helped organise the Irish Volunteers to bring it about, in the face of Ulster military resistance. The IRB played a part in this, but only a bit part at this stage. The proof of this is that the Volunteers were taken over by Redmond, and Casement supported that takeover.

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The Howth Gun Running was an Anglo-Irish achievement: with Casement and others intent on helping the Government militarily ensure Home Rule. The Volunteer forerunners of the IRA came into existence to help the British Government achieve its then aims.

All this was quite compatible with Imperialism, as 'progressive' Imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes, the greatest of them all, saw Home Rule as helping to consolidate the Empire, which is why he supported it financially and otherwise.

Of course, the IRB had other ideas but they did not then determine things, as Redmond's take-over with Casement's support proved, and events did not yet fall their way. They infiltrated the Volunteers - as they infiltrated everything that moved in Irish national and cultural spheres at home and abroad - but they were not then the driving force they later became.

What Casement was doing at that stage was fully consistent with what he then was, an Imperialist, and there is no need for any convoluted explanations for his behaviour as if he was some sort of enigmatic self-contradictory figure.

He was helping to update Ireland's role as a member of the Empire, as Redmond was also doing with Home Rule. Like millions of others for generations he saw the British Empire as a laudable and worthwhile project and served it with great, if sometimes critical, loyalty—and he was not hanged for that.

Again, his activity with the Volunteers did not put him at odds with the Empire.

SO WHY BREAK WITH THE EMPIRE?

Why then did Roger Casement begin to break with the Empire, shortly after being knighted? And why was he hanged a few years later for High Treason to the King and Empire that had knighted him, an honour which he had accepted with fulsome thanks?

His disenchantment seems to have begun with his research into the atrocities in the Putumayo, which were even worse than those of the Belgian Congo in terms of torture, floggings, mutilation and killing of the native population. But this time the rubber industry was sustained and dominated by British capital investment, companies such as the main one, the Peruvian Amazon Company, listed as the largest member on the London Stock Exchange. Rubber was like oil, another "black gold" of the era.

So, it was not nasty little Belgium and King Leopold this time! Others knew of all this but Casement saw it as it as an intrinsic part of the Imperial system he represented and he began to question the *raison d'être* of the Empire itself.

THE PLANNED WAR ON GERMANY

But, crucially, Casement also began to realise that there was a much bigger and a more consequential horror in the offing than anything he had witnessed in the Congo and Peru. 16 million dead and 21 million wounded was to prove him right. This was when he began to realise that alienation in writings from about 1913 onwards and they were put out in his only published book, "The Crime Against Europe", which appeared just as the war against Germany began.

This is a book that is not easily available these days and rarely even mentioned by his 'biographers'. It is available from Athol Books. It is a clear and incisive analysis of the international situation at the time, and it has stood the test of time. It is essential reading for understanding Casement and the world at the time.

He suspected the existence of this war plan for some time, while still accepting that the Empire was a constructive force for good in the world. But, when he saw his suspicions taking shape, he saw the plan as a wanton attack on a central part of European culture and on civilisation itself. This was a crime against Europe as he succinctly put it.

WHAT WAS THE ISSUE WITH GERMANY?

Since its creation in 1871, the German Federation had become a powerful innovative force in the economic areas of life – trade and industry (for instance, it created the pharma industry). It also brought advances in science, music, culture, philosophy, scholarship, and political progress.

Politically, Germany had the largest Social Democratic party in the world. It developed the genesis of what is now the welfare state, partly copied decades later by Lloyd George when he introduced Old Age Pensions.

It was a constitutional monarchy, like Britain: with a parliament that was directly elected by universal male suffrage on the basis of one man, one vote, and was the most progressive electoral system in Europe at that time.

As regards scholarship, the Gaelic Revival here would not have happened as it did without German linguistic scholarship, as represented by Kuno Meyer and others.

Germany had been a multitude of at least 30 little states, kingdoms, principalities, municipalities, cities etc.—which were united by language: so, the relationship between linguistics and nationhood was of great interest to them.

It was to be an Empire of Germans only and the State was not interested in acquiring other nationalities, having no designs on any other country and certainly not on England! It was Anglophile and took great pride in the fact that their royal families were first cousins. Prussia was the staunch Protestant ally of England in the 19th century and it had ensured victory at the Battle Of Waterloo for England.

It was a qualitatively very different Empire to that of Britain and other contemporary European Empires. It would be better named as a German Union. So different was it, that the word Empire as generally understood is not appropriate. Bismarck did not even include Austria in the Union and said of the nearby Balkans that "they were not worth the blood of a single Pomeranian Grenadier."

Being Anglophile, and after Bismarck had left the scene, some elements tried to copy England's methods in "the scramble for Africa", but the project was a bit late in the day and turned out to be a pathetic venture. Exceptional for Germany, but all the fashion for others.

Despite its spectacular success in less than 50 years, Germany did not cause, or get involved in any war, from 1871 to 1914. The British wouldn't have counted the German attempt to catch up on colonialism in Africa as a 'war'. Compare that with the many wars of the British Empire in those years—it was almost permanently at war.

As Germany was developing growing trade, it needed to develop an appropriate Navy. This was potentially a point of conflict with Britain—which relied on its Navy as a guarantee of its world trading supremacy, and prevented freedom of the seas, i.e. prevented other nations from having the trading freedom to grow to their full potential economically.

But Germany thought such problems could be solved amicably between friends—how naive they were!

The British Empire was based on compulsory free trade for others—and would try its best to counter efforts of states which wished to use Protection to develop fully national economies, as Germany was doing by following the trading principles of Friedrich List, one of the founders of the German Union.

CONNOLLY ON GERMANY

Connolly, from a completely independent standpoint to that of Casement, wrote a lot about Germany and this is a typical example written just before the Rising:

> "That country had the best educated working class in the world, the greatest number of labour papers, daily, weekly, and monthly, the greatest number of parliamentary and local representatives elected on a working class platform, the greatest number of Socialist votes in proportion to the entire population. All this was an index to the high level of intelligence of the German working class, as well as to their strong political and industrial position. This again was an infallible index to the high civilisation of the whole German nation. Germany had built well upon the sure foundation of an educated self-respecting people. Upon such a foundation Germany laid her progress in peace, and her success in war. Let Ireland learn this lesson" ("Forces of Civilisation", James Connolly Workers' Republic, 8 April, 1916)

And it is interesting to note that, like Casement, he regards the war on Germany as involving civilisation.

On 29th August 1914, he published "The War Upon The German Nation" in which he said that for England:

> "It was determined that since Germany could not be beaten in fair competition industrially, she must be beaten unfairly by organising a military and naval conspiracy against her..... remember that the war found England thoroughly prepared, Germany totally unprepared.... The British capitalist class has planned this colossal crime in order to ensure it uninterrupted domination of the commerce of the world."

I think we can guess which side he was on in the war and it was not neutrality as is sometimes suggested because of the slogan over Liberty Hall. He did not serve the Kaiser but he certainly "served" German Social Democracy as his model for socialist development.

SO WHY DECLARE WAR ON SUCH A COUNTRY?

The war against Germany was on the cards since 1871 when Germany was first united and had defeated and repulsed France's invasion to prevent its unification. However, under the English balance of power rules, Germany being the new power in Europe, was in the frame for being attacked by England in alliance with other less powerful states.

This was Britain's Balance of Power strategy since the so-called Glorious Revolution, and should really be called the balance of perpetual war and conflict within Europe, as it ensured ongoing conflict between European states, giving England a relatively free hand to increase its power in the rest of the world to build its Empire.

Casement summed it up:

> "The balance of power strategy had nothing to do with maintaining peace in Europe. Quite the contrary. It was a strategy to keep Europe in a condition of unresolved conflict—of negating Europe as a force in the world by keeping it in conflict with itself" (The Crime Against Europe).

It worked a treat. Some Imperial apologists even used to suggest it was all built by default and in a fit of absentmindedness—and that it was 'lost' in the same way.

The strongest Power in continental Europe at any stage, whether Spain, France, and now Germany, was to be opposed by inciting, and allying with, the lesser Powers against it.

Part of the plan to destroy Germany was to ensure it was surrounded by alliances of hostile Powers, as pointed out in detail by Casement in The Crime Against Europe—which is essential reading for anyone interested the history of the period. It has stood the test of time.

An expansionist Czarist Russia was expanding eastward, in what in Britain was called the "great game"—the contest between the two Imperial Powers over control of Afghanistan and other places—as well as looking

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westward towards the Balkans and the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. Here the intention was to have Constantinople becoming a Russian city and centre of Orthodox world.

On the other hand, Germany wanted the Ottoman Empire modernised, not destroyed, and saw it as a necessary part of the world order for Muslims.

Within Europe, Russia encouraged conflict with Germany's ally, Austria (the Hapsburg Empire), by supporting Serbia's expansion at Austria's expense in the Balkans. Hence the basis for a conflict with an aggressive Russia.

Separately, France wanted revenge for the 1871 defeat in a war it had started with Germany, and the recovery of Alsace Lorraine which it had lost as a result—and this laid the basis for an irredentist conflict from the west. And France had an intense desire to recover its position as the main Power in continental Europe by dismembering Germany back into its constituent parts.

SPECIAL PLANNING FOR THE GREAT WAR

Britain's special planning for the war began in earnest with the setting up of the Committee of Imperial defence in 1902 by Arthur Balfour—whose plans were kept secret from Parliament and most of the Cabinet, and therefore from Casement. Balfour was the main orchestrator of the war plans and was the ever-present power, whether in or out of government. He was the personification of what today would be called the deep state. An eminence grise who exercised power without being officially in power.

"Bloody Balfour", as he was nicknamed by William O'Brien after the "Mitchelstown massacre" when he was Irish Secretary.

As the author of the "Balfour Declaration" he gave the green light to Jewish nationalists with the unique award of a "national home" to people who did not actually live in their "national home." And that bit of 'statesmanship' has worked itself out to have dire consequences ever since—including the continuing Genocide in Gaza and expansionist war against all its Muslim neighbours with no end in sight. O'Brien could hardly have given the British leader a better, if very understated, nickname.

The Balfour Declaration was a tactic to win the war against Germany and the Ottoman Empire by getting Jewish support. It ensured a conflict with, and within, the Moslem world—weakening it so that Britain could increase its power in the Middle East.

BALFOUR AND THE NEED FOR WAR ON GERMANY

Of course, we don't need to rely on Casement or Connolly for the causes of WWI. We can go to the horse's mouth, to the man himself, the doyen and philosopher of British politics in that era, which is what Balfour was. It is not often we hear such a person give his real views clearly on fundamental issues except in very private settings.

But Balfour did so in 1907 with the American Ambassador, Henry White, who was also a long-standing personal friend. White's biographer recounts a conversation White had with Balfour:

> BALFOUR: We are probably fools not to find a reason for declaring war on Germany before she builds too many ships and takes away our trade,
>
> WHITE: You are a very high-minded man in private life. How can you possibly contemplate anything so politically immoral as provoking a war against a harmless nation which has as good a right to have a navy as you have? If you wish to compete against German trade, work harder.
>
> BALFOUR: That would mean lowering our standard of living. Perhaps it would be far simpler for us to have a war.
>
> WHITE: I am shocked that you of all people should enunciate such principles.
>
> BALFOUR: Is it a question of right or wrong? Maybe it is just a question of keeping our supremacy.
>
> (Alan Nevins, *Henry White, Thirty Years of American Diplomacy*, Harper, New York, 1930. p. 257)

You will see that this admission corresponds exactly to what Connolly said about the War and Germany. But Connolly's conclusion as an Irish Socialist was the exact opposite of that expressed by Robert Blatchford, a leading English socialist—who coined the famous catchphrase "My country right or wrong", a view which complements Balfour's view perfectly. Blatchford argued that the British working class were gaining so much from the Empire it should take that attitude.

I think Balfour's view might remind you of what has become known recently as a transactional view of international affairs: The action of going to war against another state because it is more successful than yours, so that you can be better off. Sounds familiar?

This is of course a most realistic view of what is euphemistically called 'international relations'—which in reality is dog eat dog, however sophisticated the rhetoric! We should be grateful to Mr. Trump for making that absolutely clear.

White's exchange with Balfour also shows that the US had no problem with Germany and regarded it as a harmless nation.

WAR: RIGHT AND WRONG

Balfour's concluding remark about right and wrong not mattering sums up in a nutshell the morality of the planned war against Germany. Right or Wrong did not come into it.

This was the exact opposite of Casement's view—that war is always a question of right or wrong and this 1914 War was wrong. And should be opposed in word and deed.

Casement, as always, had the courage to act on what he believed in. He was not just a wordmonger:

> "The rest of the writer's task must be essayed not with the author's pen but with rifle of the Irish Volunteer."
>
> (The Crime Against Europe, New York, September 1914).

He was always sincerely committed to what he believed in, and acted accordingly. He had physical as well as moral courage.

Balfour illustrated perfectly the moral bankruptcy of the Empire. Casement's moral case against WWI has been overwhelmingly vindicated—that crime against Europe was the seminal event which has given rise to every subsequent War—right down to today's reality of genocide in Gaza!

A war on Germany and the reasons for it, as clearly stated by Balfour, turned Casement's view of the Empire upside down. The Empire's raison d'etre was at an end for him. He had believed, like millions of others, that the Empire had been built to bring civilisation to barbarians. In turning on Germany it was barbarians attacking a centre of civilisation. Why?

In acting in this way, the Empire was now a destructive force, rather than the constructive force he had thought it was—and worked for throughout his life.

This was the essence of his case against the War on Germany.

This realisation was, to put it mildly, life changing for him. But he was not alone in the face of this British War on

Germany, as others also had to come to terms with this new situation created by Britain: they too had to change their minds and their plans.

WHAT THE WAR DID FOR OTHERS' PLANS

Many people had to change their minds because of the War Britain declared on Germany: and they would have reacted like Keynes when he was accused of changing his mind on some issue and replied "When circumstance change, I change my mind, what do you do, Sir?"

For example, Connolly had worked on the basis of an international socialist revolution arising from a war between the Empires. This did not materialise as hoped for when war was launched. So he decided to join with radical nationalists to pursue his cause. Ireland became for him, as for Casement, "the one bright spot"—to coin a phrase from Edward Grey in another context—in having forces within it that were prepared to challenge the Empire.

Pádraig Pearse had shared a meeting with Redmond in 1912, accepting Home Rule. But he had to radically change his views in the light of new realities of the war. The Declaration of War was used to reduce the promise of Home Rule to that of a piece of paper that would never now become a reality. That is why he decided other methods were needed. Hence 1916.

Erskine Childers, also a hero of the Empire, changed his mind—but after the War—and was executed as an unrepentant republican.

THE RESULTS OF THE 'GREAT WAR'

The war on Germany turned the world upside down and nothing has had such long-term consequences, right down to the present day—the Gaza Genocide being the most extreme example today. My grandmother used to say "The world went mad in 1914 and has never been right since". She was right up to a point. But the War was not caused by madness, but by design and the world has not recovered from its consequences. The world did not sleepwalk into that War, as is sometimes said, and as Mr. Balfour made absolutely clear.

Casement's indictment of the War has been amply vindicated by history since. That War declared on Germany on 4th August 1914 was nothing less than the pivotal event for the subsequent history of Europe and for the world with its continuing wars. That is why Casement remains relevant: he presaged the consequences of this War, an event which was in a real sense the beginning of modern history.

It led to a series of revolutions, each caused by the War—the Revolution in Russia and all that followed from that being the most significant.

The propaganda to justify the war - 'for the freedom of small nations' - which was intended to promote differences within other Empires into national movements—was ironically the very thing that led to the end of the British Empire itself: by the success of the subsequent national liberation movements that arose. The propaganda rebounded on the Empire.

As Hegel observed "History subverts the intentions of its dramatic actors."

The US, in joining the War on the basis of support for self-determination for nations—added fuel to the flames of national liberation wars against the British, and other European, Empires.

The price exacted by the US for getting the British Empire to be on the winning side (not the winners) in that War was that in due course they replaced the British Empire, a price which Britain had to pay as it had become a debtor to the US. The US hurried up the demise of the Empire—and the end of the Empire was the cost Britain eventually paid for launching WWI and its continuation, WW2.

Britain started that War but could not finish it, as also with the Second World War. What happened to the British Empire with regard to the US justifies Kissinger's warning that "To be America's enemy is dangerous, to be its friend is fatal!"

The way WWI ended with a punitive Versailles Agreement ensured that another war would happen—which duly arrived with the British Declaration of War on Germany again in 1939—and the upshot of that was the destruction of Europe and Britain as World Powers. America took over—along with "the new kid on the block", the Soviet Union, which arose from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 that was caused by the breakdown of Czarist Russia, Britain's ally, under the stresses and defeats of WWI.

Between them, both Wars destroyed Europe: and Casement's description of WWI—that began that process—proved very apt, it was: "The Crime Against Europe".

The destruction of Europe and the undermining of the British Empire was certainly not the intention of the parties to this War but it was an unintended consequence which Casement heralded.

Hence his ongoing relevance.

THE REACTION TO CASEMENT'S CONVICTION

When convicted and sentenced to hang for High Treason, a foregone conclusion, Casement's standing made many notable people in various walks of life seek clemency for this traitor. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle organised a petition of very distinguished people. The cream of the literati—writers such as Chesterton, Arnold Bennett, John Masefield, Jerome K Jerome, C.P. Scott (Editor of The Guardian), the Webbs, Ben Tillett, Robert Blatchford, some Professors, some Knights of the Realm, some Bishops and others. Douglas Hyde organised a similar petition in Ireland.

The Archbishop of Canterbury had spoken for a reprieve but the 'Black Diaries' (i.e. the police typescripts) changed his mind: and that of others. Shaw and Yeats worked for a reprieve, despite them.

Opinion in the US was so strong that the US Senate voted for a reprieve. The only comparable person in modern times with such a reputational influence would be Nelson Mandela.

Casement's standing was so high that these eminent people, seeking clemency for him, were saying his reputation should override the High Treason verdict of execution: even though that treason was committed in the middle of a 'life and death' war for the Empire.

WHY THIS APPEAL FOR CLEMENCY?

This was an extraordinary situation and confirms Casement's moral standing. His views on Germany, and against War with it, were fully shared by the leading Liberals and by Liberal opinion before the War was actually declared. But they had abandoned their position as soon as War was declared, when "the drums began to roll". Blatchford's cry became operative for them – "My country right or wrong."

They betrayed and debased themselves, while Casement had remained a consistent Liberal and acted on his beliefs—and was thereby, while alive, a stinging rebuke to the moral cowardice of his fellow Liberals. In their hearts they knew he was right about Germany and the War with its horrors.

And, to coin a phrase "they did not like it up 'em!" The appellants for clemency tried to salve their conscience as best they could.

Casement thereby touched a raw nerve in the English psyche—he punctured its self-righteous war morality—and that wound has never healed, and has never been forgiven. England would not be England if it did forgive him: because War is an existential necessity for England since the so-called Glorious Revolution.

Wikipedia and ChatGPT tell us that "The United Kingdom's forces (or forces with a British mandate) have invaded, had some control over or fought conflicts in 171 of the world's 193 countries that are currently UN member states, or nine out of ten of all countries." This is not a complete picture as there were more than one war with/within many countries.

And since WWI these Wars have been peoples' wars—with the masses, the democracy engaged—which was not the case previously. The masses were somewhat like spectators in earlier wars.

Such Wars could not be "sold" to the masses as transactional issues à la Belfour's admission to the American Ambassador. So the moral case had to be the focus, i.e. the wars became wars between Good against Evil, Right against Wrong, and always against demons, who appear as regular as clockwork when required right across the world. The moral self-righteousness became an absolute necessity in waging these Wars.

Casement personified the opposition to all this, in opposing the greatest war that England ever launched and labelling it a crime and supporting the enemy to defeat the Empire. Failure did not prove him wrong. This was supposed to be "the war to end all wars" but it was concluded by "the peace to end all peace" in the Treaty of Versailles.

What he did to England in puncturing its moral self-righteousness about its wars was more detrimental to it than what he did for Ireland. To misquote "Shakespeare", he "did the State some disservice and they know it."

That was the real Casement and why he had to hang.

CREATING THE FABRICATED CASEMENT

Casement had to be countered and fast. This is why the fabricated Casement had to be urgently created and promoted. It's easy to kill a person but not so easy to kill his reputation and his ideas and their subliminal effect. So a more powerful weapon was needed to obliterate him. But what to do? How to discredit such a man?

The old reliable weapon used was sex—a sex scandal. That always captures the English imagination and is part and parcel of its socio-political life. This was the well-tried and often successful weapon of choice for such a purpose in Puritan England with its "nonconformist conscience". And its use may not yet be at an end.

Within the then living memory it had worked against Dilke, Rosebery, Parnell—and had been tried earlier with O'Connell. Many more, but less famous people, before and since were treated likewise and were victims.

But, despite being one of best known people in the world, with countless friends in every walk of life across four continents, with every door open to him—and bedroom doors as well if he wished—no evidence could be found of a sex scandal.

When Devoy heard about the allegations of homosexuality coming from the Foreign Office he remarked along the lines, "I am not surprised, they know all about that. They are obsessed with it over there in that place."

But nobody from the Foreign Office or elsewhere came forward with any information to make or confirm a scandal: despite his hundreds, if not thousands, of friends and colleagues he had known across three decades.

And it was not for the want of trying. Agents were even sent to Peru to find some evidence but to no avail (see Irish Political Review, January 2025).

As there was no evidence of such a scandal attached to Casement, it had to be created and fast: because Casement's surprise arrival in Kerry caused consternation: this famous open, indeed proud, traitor had to be tried and dealt with as soon as possible for public morale—as the Empire was then at its lowest point in the War and it was touch and go as to whether it would win or lose.

CREATING THE BLACK DIARIES

Hence the creation of the 'Black Diaries' as the most potent weapon to discredit and paint such a person as one that hardly deserved to belong in society. He should become a non-person.

To fill the need, the police created typescripts of a 'diary' which tapped into the virulent homophobia of Puritan England. These first appeared in the Metropolitan Police's 'Submission of Evidence to the Director of Public Prosecutions' in mid-May1916. This is a defining document among the hundreds devoted to Casement and today it would be called the Book of Evidence for the Prosecution. A crucial document.

It is a large six-volume file that along with the police typescripts had lots of the most minute details and photographs of evidence. Included here were: a sausage wrapping of Casement's, a German train ticket, and some scraps of notes about his journey from Germany. (Birkenhead later claimed this was his 'Black Diary'.) There were photos of the Irish Brigade, the boat he arrived in and of Banna Strand. All supplied by the very diligent Royal Irish Constabulary in Tralee. These items became official exhibits at the Trial.

The RIC did not see fit to submit his coinage of gold and silver - then about £50 - which was auctioned for £7,000 about 10 years ago. Sergeant Hearne and Constable Reilly must have considered their share a nice little bonus for an unexpectedly busy Good Friday in Kerry in 1916. Their annual salary would have been around £60.

The police threw the proverbial book at Casement — but no diary—nor even a photograph of one. For the police the most potent item of all was missing.

To mix metaphors: there was no 'smoking gun' but plenty of smoke (see the file at the Public Records Office, Kew: TNA DPP 1/46).

I have drawn attention to this file before (Church and State, No. 141, September 2020) and I was surprised to read on Jeff Dudgeon's website under the "Controversies" section reference to that article in which Jeff says that this was a file "whose contents I had not been aware of." This was amazing for such an intrepid authenticity promoter and researcher on Casement. An elephant in the room he did not see.

The police case for making a charge for the then crime of homosexuality would be laughed out of court without a diary and some witnesses – or at least one. Wiser heads prevailed to prevent such a debâcle.

HOMOPHOBIA IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

Because different attitudes apply today, many people may find it hard to imagine the then virulent homophobia of England. Other countries did not share such a virulent phobia about homosexuality.

Just one example was a contemporary hysterical campaign led by MPs that

claimed the War was being lost because the "moral fibre" of the nation was being corrupted by the Government—by Asquith and his wife in particular—in promoting a culture of homosexuality and lesbianism. It led to a famous libel case against the campaigners, but they were not convicted.

It was a readymade English version of the "The stab in the back" thesis if England lost the War (See "Salome's last veil – the trial of the century" by Michael Kettle).

So virulent was this homophobia in Puritan England that, even 40 years later, the war hero and computing genius, Alan Turing, was chemically castrated for his homosexuality.

Some decades ago, I got to know Seán McGouran, the well known, and very cultured gay rights activist in Northern Ireland for over 50 years. He regarded the behaviour attributed to a man in Casement's position as incredible and laughable. And clearly homophobic in equating it with homosexuality.

And one need only read the behaviour of the persona created in the Government typescripts to see this. It has been well described as that of a:

> "...thoroughly repugnant pederast, obsessed with the male sex organ, indiscriminately promiscuous, addicted to prostitutes, an immoral priapic sex addict… unstable and incapable of affection and ordinary discretion" (Paul Hyde interview, Irish Political Review, June 2025).

And the most lurid creations were set in Peru: exactly where the authorities tried and failed to find any evidence!

Casement was to be made an unmentionable person, a non-person. I think the behaviour created in the forged diaries would be described today as that of a serial child sex abuser.

All Casement's countless friends and acquaintances were shocked at this portrait and not one of them ever gave it any credence, then or since.

And in this era, I would guess that most homosexuals, past and present, have been 'outed' or 'come out' and are now proud of that. But Casement does not appear anywhere in that category.

CASEMENT ON SEX

In one of his most passionately honest entries in a genuine diary—when reflecting on the genocidal behaviour of the gangster owners of the company he was investigating (mentioned earlier) in Peru—he bared his soul, confessing that:

> "I swear to God, I'd hang for every one of these band of wretches with my own hands if I had the power to do it with the greatest pleasure. I have never shot game myself with pleasure. I have in fact abandoned all shooting for that reason, that I dislike the thought of taking life. I have never given life myself to anyone and my celibacy makes me frugal of human life but I'd shoot or exterminate these infamous scoundrels more gladly than I should shoot a crocodile or kill a snake" (29/9/1910, "The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement", edited and published by Angus Mitchell).

Nobody ever accused Casement of hypocrisy and nobody could honestly believe that the person who confessed the above could be harmonised with the rampant sexual behaviour of the Black Diaries.

In the pre-Freudian world, people were not as defined by sexual activities or orientation as is common today. Celibacy was not then regarded as some sort of affliction as it is now. It was in those days a choice often made for many reasons.

SUCCESS OF THE VILIFICATION IN IRELAND

But the vilification worked for the purpose at hand and Casement was hanged. It was challenged in Ireland for generations but the lurid story has now become accepted here as a depiction of the real Casement.

The success of this vilification here was confirmed for me by RTE's 'resident historian', Myles Dungan, just last September 29th. I was taken aback, listening to his interview with Casement's latest 'biographer', Roland Philipps, on RTE Radio 1. Dungan concluded the interview by saying that it was obvious that Casement had "mental health issues" (RTE, Radio 1, 29 Sept. 2024).

The claim is ridiculous. A person with such a psychological condition would most likely be at his lowest point when convicted and facing the hangman. But anyone who has ever read Casement's speech from the dock—and Dungan must have done that—must know that it was one of the most powerful and well-argued speeches ever made—and that is how it was described recently by Norman Lamont, a former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK.

Casement's analysis of the legal basis of the case against him showed it to be farcical. His philosophical and historical narrative justifying what he had done in opposing the War was so searing an indictment of his Prosecutor, Birkenhead, the powerful Attorney General, that it drove him from the courtroom. Hardly the indication of a person with mental problems.

Dungan was faithfully reproducing the portrait created by the most recent Casement biographer, Roland Philipps—who he was interviewing—which in turn was essentially repeating the case made by Birkenhead at the Trial—that Casement was a mental case. He suggested this to Casement's Counsel as a defence that might possibly avoid his execution.

Philipps' evidence for the 'mental health case' is based on his own psycho-babble—and Dungun's agreement with it speaks volumes for the puerile state of historical understanding here at the moment.

Philipps' unique contribution to Casement studies was to claim that he planned "a doomed invasion of Ireland". Which would also make Collins and others invaders of the country in 1916. You could not make it up.

But, as homophobia does not have the traction it once had in disparaging people, the 'mental health affliction theory' is getting more emphasis. This shows that the vilification of Casement is being honed and updated to suit a different audience today: mental illness is a more comprehensive and more sustainable form of it. And, if Dungan is representative, that means it is working a treat in Ireland.

Casement cannot be left rest in peace—his disparagement must be kept up to date. Watch this space! I understand yet another biography is with a publisher in the US. He is like the proverbial stone in the shoe that is stuck in the British subconscious.

THE GOOD NEWS!

But the good news is that the most compelling and conclusive case for proving that these 'diaries' were forged has been made over the past 5-6 years by Paul Hyde, in books, articles and on the internet. It is based on up-to-date research in the British National Archives and elsewhere.

But Paul Hyde's main book of 2019 has not been reviewed in the MSM [Main Stream Media, - ed.], or in broadcasting, or in academic or political outlets—including those that claim to be devoted to history, such as *History Ireland*.

Village Magazine and the *Irish Political Review* are the only, and honourable, exceptions. I would suggest you consult the May issue of *Village* this year for an example of Paul Hyde's latest forensic approach, and the June edition of the *Irish Political Review* where I interview him. Both are available at the City Library here in Cork city.

Hyde's main work is his book "Anatomy Of A lie – Decoding Casement". It is available via the Internet from Wordwell Books or Amazon. He has also published: "Casement: Decoding false history" (Aubane Historical Society), along with articles in *Village* magazine, *The Irish Political Review* and on the website and Podcast Decoding-Casement.com.

Angus Mitchell, who is today recognised as the leading Casement expert, says of the Anatomy book:

> "Hyde exposes the patterns of duplicity, misinformation and selective framing which have produced the contemporary consensus… he makes the crucial distinction between the police typescripts which were shown in the weeks before Casement's execution and the bound diaries which were not shown in 1916… Biographers treat the typescripts as if they were true copies of diaries for whose existence at the time there is no independent witness testimony… the book draws to a close a century of obfuscation, secrecy, and acres of academic and speculative waffle."

Anyone interested should get that book from Wordwell at a cost of about 20 Euro.

This talk is just a very brief outline of the real and fabricated Casement, and I look forward to any questions and discussion that time allows. The subject is wide and deep, fascinating at many levels and vital to an understanding of modern history.

Jack Lane Text of a talk at the Mother Jones Festival, Cork, 26 July 2025

Books by IFA Contibutors

The Crime Against Europe - A Possible Outcome of the War of 1914

By Roger Casement

The Crime Against Europe is Roger Casement's only published book. It is a book about British foreign policy and, because of what followed from its publication, it is a book of Irish foreign policy. It states the definite view that British foreign policy was the cause of the World War that began in August 1914 and that the most desirable outcome of that war was the defeat of Britain by Germany. It represents the British declaration of war as an act of aggression which gave effect to the foreign policy of the preceding years.

John Redmond on August 3rd gave support in Parliament to the British Declaration of War on Germany without consulting the Home Rule Party in Parliament or in the country. Six weeks later, following the simultaneous enactment and suspension of the Home Rule Act, he directed the Irish Volunteers to join the British Army for the purpose of making war on Germany.

Also published by Athol Books.

The Great Fraud of 1914
Pat Walsh

Ireland's Great War on Turkey Pat Walsh

Ireland in The Great War, The Insurrection Of 1916 Set In Its Context Of The World War by Charles James O'Donnell (1849-1934) and Brendan Clifford (1992)

An extract from the account of the Great War given by Charles James O'Donnell in The Irish Future with The Lordship Of The World (1929). With Introduction by Brendan Clifford

The Christian Brothers' History Of The Great War. Reprint of the monthly comment on the War between 1914 and 1918 in the Christian Brothers magazine, Our Boys (2007)

Connolly And German Socialism by Brendan Clifford (2004)

Roger Casement: The Crime Against Europe. With The Crime Against Ireland. 1914 (2003)

Traitor-Patriots In The Great War: Casement & Masaryk by Brendan Clifford (2004)

Casement, Alsace-Lorraine And The Great Irredentist War by Brendan Clifford (2006)

Britain's Great War, Pope Benedict's Lost Peace: How Britain Blocked The Pope's Peace Efforts Between 1915 And 1918 by Dr. Pat Walsh (2006)

1914: England's Darwinist War On Germany by Hans Grimm and Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell (2001)

The Fighting Irish and The Great War, "Lest We Forget" by Brendan Clifford (2008)

Lord Hankey: How We Planned The Great War by Pat Walsh 2015

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Arthur Bryant and the Unfinished Victory

Pat Walsh

In 1939 Britain's most popular and widely read historian of the period, Arthur Bryant, made the terrible mistake of writing a book explaining how the First World War of 1914 was leading to a Second World War. That was the 1940 book, *Unfinished Victory*.

Arthur Bryant was the author of around 60 well-selling books, including *The Spirit of Conservatism*, a multi-volume series on the life of Samuel Pepys, *Humanity in Politics*, *The Man and the Hour: Studies of Six Great Men of Our Time* (Edward VII; Lenin; Briand; Pilsudski; Mussolini; Hitler), *King Charles II*, *Years of Victory, 1802–1812, The Age of Elegance, 1812–1822, The Age of Chivalry, Protestant Island, The Elizabethan Deliverance*, two volumes of the Alan Brooke diaries etc. etc. These publications were very much in the vein of *Our Island Story*, well-researched but popular history narratives, about Britain's greatness in the world. They were readable and very popular indeed.

Arthur Bryant was also a four decade long regular contributor to the very popular weekly magazine *Illustrated London News* which more often than not contained essays by Bryant on popular historic themes for the man on the Clapham omnibus.

In the introduction to *Unfinished Victory* which he called 'Historian's Testament' Bryant explained his motivation for writing it:

> "I wrote it as an historian's attempt to retell the story of those events — forgotten in the press and clamour of contemporary news — which after 1918 set the course of mankind for a second time down the fatal and ever steepening incline towards a second Armageddon. I did so with a full realisation that much that I had to relate ran counter to the prevailing view held both in this country and in Germany. I knew that many would blame me for reminding them of what they preferred to forget. But I hoped, sometimes against hope, that an historian's relation of what had happened — almost inevitably as it now seems — might conceivably help to direct opinion in Britain and Germany, where the consequences and causes of those events had bee in turn misunderstood, towards a calmer and less reproachful atmosphere in which the problems of Europe could be understood and later settled in peace. It was a presumptuous hope and, as the upshot has proved, a vain one.
>
> For events outstripped me…
>
> We foresaw the calamity for we recalled the causes from which it sprang, but we were unable to avert it. Last August all that we had dreaded came to pass. I laid my barely completed manuscript aside, as I thought for ever.
>
> Yet nothing in this world stands still. The war which today seems permanent will one day come to an end. We believe that, after whatever dangers and sufferings, we shall attain our war aims as we did before. When we have done so, we shall have to strive for other aims which the sword alone cannot win. Last time we failed to achieve them. The price of that failure is the blood now being shed…
>
> Because of that failure mankind has returned for a second time in a generation to the shambles. To some of us who fought in the last war, the events of August 1939 brought a spasm of torturing bitterness. For it seemed for a moment as though the sacrifice of a million comrades had been in vain. We were again at war with the same defeated enemy, and for the same ends. After the greatest victory of modern times our elders had lost the peace. This time a younger generation has to bear the brunt of the battle. And through their courage and endurance it may be for us to make the peace. Shall we be able to frame a better and more enduring one, and one worthy of their sacrifice?

The last peace was not worthy of the men who died to win it. For it did not endure, and therefore robbed them of their victory." (pp.ix- xiii)

Bryant, having experienced the Great War with the Royal Flying Corps in France, developed a deep antagonism to the Treaty of Versailles, and a belief that a just peace with Germany would have prevented another world war. He had begun as a "hater of the Hun" with a dislike of all things German, but, having seen the aftermath of the war, and the treatment of the Germans in it, he underwent a transformation.

In the introduction to *Unfinished Victory*, Bryant suggested that British policy toward Germany had fallen fatally between two stools:

> "Since we would not bring ourselves to destroy the German people, and could only have permanently broken up Germany by such destruction, the only sensible course was to make a peace based on the proposition that we had got, for good or ill, to inhabit the same world. We had taught a bully by hard ' knocks, as we are now having to teach him again, the lesson that force without morality does not pay. Had we been content with that — had we been true to the old fashion of England in letting our enemy rise and giving him our hand — we might not now be having to repeat the work of 1914-18 a second time. In our anxiety, or that of our allies, to delay the day of Germany's recovery as long as possible, we undid the whole worth of our lesson by teaching a contradictory one — that only by force and violence was she ever likely to free herself from the painful shackles in which we had bound her. For the moment it mattered little, since she was powerless. But we forgot that the will of our own people to keep her so would not last for ever, and, that presently, true to our tradition and forgetting the past aggression, we should tire of sitting on an injured and revengeful Germany's head and let her rise. In the fullness of time, as was inevitable, we did so."(p.xiii)

Of course, this was the problem with the Balance of Power policy. The moment Germany was vanquished, Britain began thinking about the danger of France dominating Europe and it refused the more punitive settlement, involving German dismemberment, that the French demanded for their future security. Allying with the US, before Washington retreated within itself, Britain achieved this.

But having imposed a fairly punitive settlement upon ultra-democratic Weimar Germany, Britain then began assisting Hitler and his Nazis in revising the Treaty imposed upon it. What lesson did that teach Germany?

Bryant gives a good account of how Britain, victorious in the Great War, was

not all it seemed in the aftermath. It had become brittle and was quite unfitted to the role of mastery it had assumed as the result of its victory, as a result of the war it won:

> "When the war was over the soldier returned to England to earn his living. His chief ambition was to forget the war as quickly as possible. He therefore turned his back on a continent which had given him so much trouble and shut his ears against its affairs. He left them to those whom he regarded — most unjustly as the event has shown — as mere intellectuals and international busybodies.
>
> This, no doubt, was a pity. But he lived on an island which had only concerned itself with the affairs of Europe at intervals and which had plenty of troubles and disputes of its own to occupy it. He knew nothing of what was happening to Germans at that time because he was solely and wholeheartedly concerned in the affairs of his own country. They were disturbed enough to keep him fully occupied. For though 1919 brought Britain victory, it brought her also, as is inevitable with the waste and destruction of modern war, a host of difficulties. The revolutions that had come to so many great nations on the war-rent continent threatened her also… The moment the tension relaxed with the Armistice, grave differences between class and class made themselves felt.
>
> The post-war sufferings of Germany therefore made little impression on the British people. They left foreign affairs to those who understood them or claimed to. All they were resolved on was not to have anything to do with them themselves, above all not to get involved in any more troublesome wars. Only one aspect of foreign affairs made any appeal to them. That was the League of Nations.
>
> The Englishman… detested the idea of any further wars, partly out of a genuine desire to see everyone at peace and still more out of a very real sense of the evil, wastefulness and futility of modern war. He had learnt that a world war on the modern scale of destruction gained even the victors nothing. He therefore gladly joined the League of Nations Union, when solicited to do so, and gave his pennies to support an institution which he thought was outlawing war for ever. He did not — knowing so little about the real state of the continent — realise that the League's constitution prevented it from becoming an agency for peaceful change, and that without some such machinery to effect natural changes in a world that can never be static, some sort of an explosion was sooner or later inevitable.
>
> For some years both the League of Nations and a kind of vague, well-meaning pacifism were exceedingly fashionable in England. Few people thought very deeply about either, but it was generally believed that wars were solely brought about by stupid generals, ambitious and insanely imperialist statesmen and sinister armament manufacturers, and that all that was necessary to prevent war was for everyone to declare their loathing of the whole foolish and wicked business and roundly refuse to take any part in it…
>
> The rise of Adolf Hitler to power at the head of a movement to restore Germany to its place in the world, if necessary, by force of arms, was, therefore, little understood in this country. For the British people, knowing nothing of what the Germans had suffered since the war, failed to realise the causes and social implications of the Nazi revolution. But they disapproved intensely of a creed which appealed to force in settling international disputes. Because of their long and insular absorption in their own affairs they were unconscious of the fact that no other means of settling such disputes had been offered to a disarmed Germany. They imagined these matters could be settled to everyone's satisfaction by the League.
>
> They therefore saw the German Führer, not as the iron restorer of a broken nation but as a loud voiced intruder who threatened to disturb the peace of the world for reasons which they could not comprehend. They did not realise that Europe was not the peaceful place it appeared to be or that the German people had long been suffering under a sense of grievance, both economic and political. They only saw a vast number of Germans in uniforms who looked to them remarkably like the Prussians who had invaded Belgium in 1914 and forced them from their peacetime callings to the distasteful and horrible business of killing their fellow creatures in muddy trenches in Flanders and northern France…
>
> The successive stages of German rearmament, being achieved by sudden and unilateral action, produced the same effect on a people to whom law and legal forms were second nature. The reintroduction of conscription, the creation of the German Air Force, the re-fortification of the Rhineland, were all one-sided breaches of treaties in law, however justifiable they may have seemed in equity. They left the impression — one that became tragically endorsed by time — that the new German Government did not regard treaties as binding. To a German who knew that a revolution had taken place in his country and that his Government had attained power by its promise to abrogate the Treaty of Versailles, the enforced signature of a pre-revolutionary German Government might well not seem binding. He may have felt that no other way of removing treaty anomalies and inequalities was open to his country. But there was no Englishman, however much he may have sympathised with German aspirations, who did not feel equally strongly that it would have been better for the growth of understanding between the two nations had Germany shown more patience and respect for legality.
>
> For slowly, partly as a result of Hitler's dramatic activities, the British people were resuming their interest in foreign affairs…
>
> It was to make resort to force henceforward impossible that the British man in the street had fought in the Great War, and so enabled his rulers to make whatever its disputed failings, the Treaty of Versailles. It was not the individual clauses of that Treaty that the ordinary Englishman regarded as sacred — he recognised that his politicians, perhaps inevitably, had made rather an unsuccessful patchwork job of it in a difficult time — but the principle enshrined in the Covenant of the League that international disputes should no longer be settled by armed conflict. For that ideal and in that belief a million British had given their lives, not ungladly. The Nazi leaders now seemed set on proving that they had done so in vain. Germany had not only recovered her former strength but had fallen into all her old faults of brutal bearing and reliance on military force that had destroyed the old Europe in 1914…
>
> At this time the Prime Minister was pursuing a policy of Appeasement. Its aim was to establish personal contact with the rulers of the Totalitarian States, and by a friendly discussion of certain political and even more serious economic grievances to recreate a European Concert and so prevent a war between the rival ideological and economic blocs into which Europe was divided." (pp. xx-xxv)

Appeasement is a dirty word these days which has completely lost its

historical meaning. It is now merely a term of abuse to deter the settlement of conflict, when such things are unwanted, against authoritarians bent on world supremacy, no matter how limited their resources. Its core in the 1930s was a process of incoherent Imperial unravelling, brought about by the state of the damaged British mind as a result of the winning of the war of 1914 which made it never the same again. Britain understood that it had dictated unequal treaties at the moment of its supreme power, in 1919, but had become unwilling to continue to enforce them as it went into confusion of purpose in the world.

Britain in the 1930s, though having achieved a position of undisputed world dominance, was no longer able to think to any purpose and was therefore no longer able to act purposely in the world, within its vast dominions or without, in the world it reordered in the course of its victorious war.

Bryant, an admirer of the oligarchical government that had made Britain great, knew that the political decay of Britain had come about through the onset of democracy, which the conscription and mass participation of the middle class in popular war, for the first time, had produced. As a historian he knew that the Empire had been constructed by the Whig aristocracy and not by a democracy led by demagogues like Lloyd George, who represented nothing but the forces he felt around him at any one time, that put and kept him in office.

The democracy, as Bryant noted, did not trouble itself with foreign affairs after the catastrophe the masses had suffered in 1914. It hoped for peace and left things to the League. But the British political class, resting atop the democracy, was now unthinking and purposeless and it would neither discard Imperial power as the central structure of world order, nor allow the League to live up to its pretensions, or, indeed, encourage the states of the world to revert to the old system of alliances. Perhaps, in its heart of hearts it knew the future and was waiting for America to ride to the rescue, fulfil its destiny and take charge of the world it had prised from bankrupt Britain.

But America was unready at that point, and the old, but decaying master, remained on the throne.

De Valera, who had previously embraced the League thoroughly, saw that it was failing and he suggested that there be a Great Power conference to make a new settlement in Europe in place of the Versailles settlement, which he saw was no longer functional and which was proving dysfunctional in the way it was providing the dictators with a soft target which they could gain prestige out of by winning revisions of it through their own efforts.

But the British Government rejected De Valera's realistic proposal that there should be a reversion to Great Power politics for the purpose of settling European affairs and taking the wind out of the sails of the dictators. The British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden insisted that the League was sacrosanct, even though Britain ignored it completely and acted unilaterally as a Great Power when going to war again in 1939. Who was this upstart of a "Spanish Jew" anyway to tell Britain how to conduct its business in the world?

Arthur Bryant had a noble aim and naively thought he would serve his country's and humanity's interests by doing something to help prevent the descent toward the inevitable he was seeing before his own eyes. Knowledge, he believed, had come too late in 1914 and it was the time to speak before, rather than after, a second catastrophe occurred. And he went, on Chamberlain's request, to Germany in order to talk sense to the Germans before it was too late for Europe. He played an active part, therefore, in Appeasement.

Even after Britain's Declaration of War on Germany, Bryant continued his quest for peace. He supported Hitler's peace proposals of October 1939 and continued to argue in the *Illustrated London News* against the War. This, of course, was the period of the "phoney war" in which Britain, having declared War in defence of Poland, did not fire one bullet to divert the German Army from Poland. Instead, it supported Finland against Russia, indicating that it was at war with the wrong enemy and was more eager to fight the Soviets than the Nazis. Churchill was not Prime Minister at that point, only head of the Admiralty, but the policy was consistent with his earlier stated view that Fascism was the preservative against Communism.

Britain's commitment to the war of 1939 was, therefore, quite ambiguous, and very much less than its decisive springing into action in 1914.

*

The historian Andrew Roberts is bemused at the gall of Arthur Bryant in continuing anti-war sentiment, including persistence with the publication of *Unfinished Victory*, well into early 1940, months after the Declaration of War. In August 1914 the Liberal opposition to war which seemed so strong only days before Sir Edward Grey declared it, melted away in an instant and the men who had dedicated their lives to peace suddenly became enthusiastic warmongers, giving the Great War its strong moral dimension.

Roberts is supposed to be a historian and his speciality is Churchill, but he doesn't seem to realise what Bryant instinctively realised – that Britain was not fighting a real war against Germany the second time, until May 1940. Bryant knew this because he had witnessed the British war fighting in the first 9 months of the First World War and it was of an entirely different character and magnitude than its paltry efforts in Europe during the Second World War, consisting of a few skirmishes at sea and a botched expeditionary force to Norway to fight God knows who?

So just as *Unfinished Victory* went into publication, real war actually broke out in France when Hitler had enough of the nonsense and was not content to wait around forever. The character of England changed completely to warfighting and propaganda mode. And this time there was no retreat from the narrative written by Churchill himself to justify the British blundering into war that finally put paid to the Empire along with 50 million souls.

Sir Arthur Bryant, realising his terrible error, attempted to buy up every copy of *Unfinished Victory* he could lay his hands upon. His well-intentioned book now had all the appearance of a shit he had done on an altar to Churchill.

A recent book by a naval historian, Andrew Lambert, called *The British Way of War: Julian Corbett and the Battle for a National Strategy*, pointed out something quite obvious but never said in the Churchill-derived histories. That is the fact that Britain fought its Second World War much more in the tradition of its earlier limited liability wars of the 18th and 19th Centuries. That was because it realised that the First World War was a terrible mistake in that a smallish continental expeditionary force had become embroiled in a great war of attrition, and quickly worn away, meaning that it had to be replaced by a conscripted army of millions. In fact, a number of armies and an unprecedented commitment to continental allies and continental fighting. Britain had fatally departed from its traditional way of limited warfare, which involved the use of sea power and blockade, focused amphibious landings at sensitive points of the enemy and the paying of allies to do the main attritional fighting and bear the losses. Julian Corbett, a naval historian and strategic thinker, had warned against this departure from the

traditional British way of war but he had been ignored by the conscriptionists who wanted their big war.

Mindful of this, Churchill fought a traditional British war from 1940, with the British army disappearing off the continent very quickly after the reverse in France in May 1940 and only returning there after the Americans insisted upon it in 1944 and the Soviets had broken the back of the bulk of the German Army in the east. Meanwhile, Churchill waged a sea war, a bombing war on German cities and a pinprick war of commando raids and peripheral engagements against vastly stretched German forces, not to any great purpose or decision, and mostly involving defeat. The character of this war is fully reflected in British war movies, which are largely about great escapes, bouncing bombs and commando raids.

The British Second World War on Germany had, of course, nothing whatever to do with the Jews.

In *Unfinished Victory* Bryant made sharp criticisms of Jewish profiteers and communists in the Weimar Republic. Furthermore, like most other people of his time (notably Churchill, in an *Illustrated London Herald* article in 1920), Bryant felt no compunction about pointing to the Jewish over-representation among the Bolsheviks and the Left in general. Like most Englishmen of his time, he did not care much for his Jewish contemporaries. That is very different, however, from saying that he favoured any violence against Jews, or that he welcomed National-Socialist ideology in any but the most limited form. The mainstream view of the Jews in England, particularly on the Right, is one of the things that motivated the Balfour Declaration, which aimed to change the cosmopolitan Jew by turning him from a force for international disruption into a stable national element within a state, under the auspices of the Empire.

Unfinished Victory describes German Jews as having "often conferred, especially in the realms of learning, science, and medicine, the greatest distinction on their adopted country." Bryant called Nazi persecution "revolting and sickening "referring to Hitler's racial theories as "repulsive gibberish, his ambitions barbarous and ridiculous, his motives cruel and sadistic." A letter by Bryant to *The Times* in 1939 condemned the "barbarous act" of Germany invading Poland.

Bryant was neither a pacifist nor a follower of Oswald Mosley and he favoured British rearmament. He was probably at one with Lord Londonderry in that.

In his 1994 book, *Eminent Churchillians* (dedicated to David Trimble's biographer, Dean Godson), Andrew Roberts devotes a chapter to Bryant entitled Patriotism: The Last Refuge of Sir Arthur Bryant. It is a particularly vicious assassination of the fondly remembered historian, in which Roberts says:

> "Bryant was a Nazi sympathiser and fascist fellow-traveller, who only narrowly escaped internment as a potential traitor in 1940. He was also, incidentally, a supreme toady, fraudulent scholar and humbug." (p.288)

Knowing Roberts unconditional support for the genocidal activities of Israel today, his unwarranted and extravagant hatred of Sir Arthur Bryant is, of course, explicable.

Roberts wrote of Sir Arthur Bryant in 1994:

> "The Germans must have hardly believed their luck that a historian with such good credentials and connections as Bryant should regurgitate their propaganda for them. Such conduct was, of course, highly unprofessional." (p.306)

In the light of such a statement, what are we to make of "a historian with such good credentials and connections" as Baron Roberts of Belgravia's unconditional support and defence of Israel and its activities today? Hitler, by April 1940, had not done anything of the extensive killing that Israel has done,. In fact, his generals' conduct of war at the point was positively gentlemanly compared to that of Israel's over the last 34 months.

Macmillan's, the publishers of *Unfinished Victory*, agreed to its publication in April 1940, despite the state of war existing against Germany. The decision was made by Harold Macmillan himself - Tory MP and future Prime Minister. No problem, it seems, was even had with one perfectly judged line in which Bryant referred to the "Cromwellian fervour of the SS", which presumably passed muster in those days.

Bryant had a great many admirers across the political spectrum for a "Nazi sympathiser and fascist fellow-traveller". These included many Prime Ministers ranging from Baldwin to Churchill to Thatcher on the Conservative side, to Attlee, Wilson and Callaghan on the Labour wing of the British establishment. Michael Foot was also a great fan as was the anti-appeaser A.L. Rowse of All Souls. In April 1984 Harold Wilson wrote to Mrs Thatcher proposing Bryant "the great patriot" and "our greatest historian" for the Order of Merit. These illustrious pillars of the political establishment appeared with Archbishops, Generals and Royalty by Bryant's side at various celebrations of his life over the post-war years and who proclaimed their appreciation of his talents as a historian and popular writer. Bryant was knighted in 1954 and achieved the very rare title of Companion of Honour in 1967.

It was, therefore, accepted that Bryant, while acting with the best of patriotic intentions before the War had begun in earnest, in May 1940 had adjusted to the changed situation immediately and adjusted his patriotic stance from one of Appeasement to one of war historian and propagandist. *Unfinished Victory* was not unsound but merely most unfortunate in its timing.

Bryant, who had been educational adviser to Conservative Central Office from 1927, was urged to stand as a Conservative parliamentary candidate in the 1945 election, which Churchill was expected to win, as victorious war leader. But Bryant turned down the approach. His editing of Lord Alan Brooke's diaries, which spoiled the post-war British narrative somewhat, then brought him into conflict with Churchill's fervent champions. On the issue of Europe, Bryant felt closer to the old-fashioned anti–Common Market British Left of Michael Foot and Tony Benn than to Thatcher, Edward Heath, or anyone else among the post-Churchill Conservatives. He wrote of Thatcher's economic dogmas with a certain amused detachment, saying that they might have been fitting in the 18th century, but were meaningless in the circumstances of the 20th Century.

In *Eminent Churchillians*, Roberts suggests that Bryant's Nazi sympathies were unknown to his illustrious admirers and were only exposed by the expiry of the 50 Year Rule and the opening of his private papers. However, Roberts' evidence for Arthur Bryant being a "Nazi sympathiser and fascist fellow-traveller" is pretty weak if he is suggesting that Bryant was much different from mainstream conservatives in Britain at the time. And, of course, what he is really doing is contrasting Bryant with the anti-Appeasers who supported Churchill.

But most crucially, there is little or nothing that Bryant said privately that differs in any substantial way with what he wrote publicly in both the *Illustrated London News* and in *Unfinished Victory*. And his great and good admirers continued to admire him and honour him after reading all his writings.

Roberts criticises Bryant for stating that Hitler had "reawakened" Germany.

But isn't that exactly what Roberts' great hero, Churchill, praised Hitler and Mussolini for doing? Churchill has a chapter on Adolf Hitler in his 1936 *Great Contemporaries* book. He said in a letter to *The Times*:

> "I have always said that if Great Britain was defeated in war, I hope we should find a Hitler to lead us back to our rightful position among the nations. I am sorry, however, that he has not been mellowed by the great success which has attended him." (*The Times*, 7 November 1938).

Churchill, who had Sir Arthur Bryant knighted, was always an admirer of the historian, both before and after the war, and if he had thought him some strange Nazi or Fascist that would have been impossible.

There are further cheap digs by Roberts, including the fact that Bryant wanted Tory MP Sir Arnold Wilson, "who had an admiration for many aspects of the Nazi regime" (p.293), to write on "aspects of Germany." But Roberts must surely know that the illustrious Arnold Wilson had been the first governor of Mesopotamia, was a very popular author and was killed in his 50s over Dunkirk, after volunteering as an air gunner for the RAF (Sir Arnold Wilson is immortalised in the famous British war movie of 1942, One of Our Aircraft Is Missing).

Roberts also cites the extraordinary description by Bryant of Churchill as a "warmonger" (p.294) in support of his Nazi/fascist theory!

Roberts, for all his recent attacks on "woke Britain", is up to a similar game himself as the people he condemns for rewriting his country's history. Woke manufactures a multi-cultural, progressive country out of a state that was a mono-cultural racial hierarchy, while Roberts distorts the history of Britain in support of the predominant fantasy Churchillian narrative that puts a comforting moral gloss on catastrophic British blundering of global proportions that lost the Empire and made killing fields of many parts of the world for generations.

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Chapters from Bryant's very interesting and informative *Unfinished Victory* will be republished in the next few editions of *Irish Foreign Affairs* with the aim of giving it the attention it deserves.

Bryant's first chapter deals with the effect the primary means Britain had at its disposal to win the First World War and impose a settlement upon a truly vanquished Germany had on the course of events and the outbreak of a Second World War in 1939. This was the Royal Navy starvation blockade of Germany, Austria and Central Europe.

At the time when Bryant was writing, a discreet silence had been maintained in Britain about what the Blockade of Europe had done, particularly in Germany. A single book called *The Naval Blockade 1914-18*, had been published by Lieutenant Louis Guichard of the French Navy. Nothing appeared in England.

A writer under the pseudonym "A.C.D." reviewed Guichard's book for the influential '*Naval Review*' of August 1930 and had this to say:

> "The blockade constituted the economic background of the war. It was largely devised, engineered and operated by England. But there is no English history of it. It was unique. It represented the bridge between the naval and economic operations of the war; its ramifications spread like a vast network over the economic life of the whole world; it overturned the previous structure of International Law. But if anyone wishes to make a comprehensive study of its workings, he will find it difficult to find a guide for the Official History has little to say about it. This omission has constituted a serious gap in the history of the war." (Naval Review, Volume XVIII, No.3, p. 597)

Was "A.C.D." Archibald Colquhoun Bell?

The Royal Navy blockade of Germany, as Bryant notes, had been the decisive factor in Germany's defeat, in Britain's view. It proved to be effective in cutting off Germany's imports of food and material and led to the policy of unrestricted submarine warfare which brought America into the war and tightened the noose around Germany further. And it was maintained for eight months after the official ending of the war, resulting in the starvation of more than half a million civilians, mostly children, in order to turn Germany's conditional surrender at the Armistice into an unconditional one in July 1919. Job done!

Most readers will be under the impression that the Great War finished in November 1918, and they will be totally unaware that the Allies continued the war against Germany for another eight months as Bryant relates.

Lieutenant Guichard wondered why in 1930 there was no history of the blockade despite its central importance in the war. Actually, one had indeed been commissioned to study the effects of such an important war-winning weapon that would more than likely be called upon again.

The *Official History of the Blockade* by Archibald Colquhoun Bell had actually been completed in 1921 and produced and printed in 1937 – a couple of years before Bryant's *Unfinished Victory*. But no one had seen it and it has a stamp on it declaring it for "Official Purposes Only". A limited number of copies were produced for the Ministries of state in Whitehall. But it was not released for general circulation until it was issued by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1961. The Nazis having obtained a copy through a sympathiser published a German version in 1943.

It is one of the most interesting records of the Great War, being strongly factual and only minimally propagandist and details the intricate planning of the Admiralty and Committee of Imperial Defence, going back a decade before the Great War, and the comprehensive measures that were taken in execution of the blockade of Germany.

It can only be presumed that while it was considered of vital importance to produce a detailed analysis of it for future reference it was not politic to draw public interest to it and what it had done. To this day the blockade only merits a passing mention in histories of the Great War and schoolbooks. And there are very few who know how many died as a result of it.

Professor A.C. Bell, using German data, argued that the food blockade achieved its pre-war objective of successfully fomenting revolution in Germany and finally causing the collapse of the Kaiser's government. In Bell's study, contemporary accounts, records from the British Ministry of Blockade, British and German cabinet minutes, and demographic evidence from German sources are used to show the extent to which famine conditions prevailed throughout Germany.

Bell's official history confirms the truth of what Bryant wrote in *Unfinished Victory* about the Blockade. Bell reveals that it was estimated that the average adult required 2,300 calories daily to preserve health and strength in 1914. By 1917 the blockade had succeeded in reducing the calorie intake of Germans in the towns and cities to 1,000 per person. The Royal Navy had also succeeded in reducing the consumption of meat to only 10 per cent of its pre-war level.

Bell cites the figure of 300,000 deaths within Germany specifically owing to the blockade as it really began to bite during 1918. He puts the total number of deaths from the blockade during 1914

to the Armistice in November 1918 at 760,000. And 250,000 Germans died in the eight months of blockade after the Armistice as the Royal Navy was used against a defenceless Germany to produce acquiescence to the peace treaty.

That means that the Royal Navy blockade killed over a million civilians behind the lines during the course of the war according to its official historian (Recently our knowledge of the Blockade has been added to by Eamon Dyas in his *The Evolution Of Britain's Strategy During The First World War series* (Volume One: Blockading the Germans and Volume Two: Starving The Germans, available from Athol Books).

The *Official History of the Blockade* describes the exercise in counting the number of defenceless Germans killed by the Royal Navy as "frivolous." Killing the poor, the unborn, the young and women was not what the great planning, effort and machinery that went into the Blockade was all about. The killing of innocents was a mere by-product of the actual objective. As Bell states, the important question was: "What damage was done to the national resistance of Germany?"

The *Official History* in answering this question concludes that the great achievement of the Royal Navy campaign was to "infect the German people with an anger against authority, wherever situated." (p.674)

Just before the Armistice, famine conditions were prevalent in many German cities and industrial regions. More than 3,500 people were dying each day of hunger and malnutrition in those months. In the eight months from the signing of the Armistice to the lifting of the blockade at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the records indicate that in Germany, an additional 250,000 deaths occurred among civilians, above the normal pre-war death rate. Forty per cent of these deaths occurred in November 1918 alone, as the British extended the blockade after the Armistice. Deaths were particularly severe among women and children. Women in childbirth perished at a massive rate and infant mortality soared.

The official observers sent from Britain to Germany between December 1918 and April 1919, to verify German statements at the Armistice negotiations that famine was imminent in Germany, were instructed to confirm whether the food shortages would lead to starvation and thus create a "tendency to increase Bolshevism." Most of them reported that Germany was indeed on the verge of starvation, and that Bolshevism was probable if the Royal Navy continued to restrict the food supply.

There was an important balance to be achieved between grinding Germany down and not producing Bolshevism. It was never asked what if that balance produced something in between the grinding of Germany down and Bolshevism? But that question was answered with National Socialism.

The visit of the official observers was followed by a fact-finding mission to Germany by Winston Churchill's War Department. It concluded that most essential foods in Germany would run out in the early spring, while the harvest for 1919 would probably yield only about half of the average pre-war crop.

The report, dated 16th February 1919, concluded that "while Germany is still an enemy country, it would be inadvisable to remove the menace of starvation by a too sudden and abundant supply of foodstuffs. This menace is a powerful lever for negotiation at an important moment."

It seems that Arthur Bryant was too kind to Churchill in his Unfinished Victory. Churchill knew what the blockade was all about and knew the tap had to be turned off at the right moment to prevent the German revolutionary chaos producing a Bolshevik development. And at that point it was politic to make a great show of humanitarianism toward the Germans, whom Churchill had plans for in fighting Russia.

In Parliament, in early March 1919, Churchill warned of the possible consequences of the Blockade policy if it was pursued to a finish. He suggested it was now time to make peace with Germany before it was too late:

> "We have strong armies ready to advance at the shortest notice. Germany is very near starvation. There was an imminent danger of a collapse of the entire structure of German social and national life under the pressure of hunger and malnutrition. Now is therefore the time to settle. To delay indefinitely would be to run a grave risk… of having another great area of the world sunk with Bolshevist anarchy. That would be a very grave event." (*The Times*, 4.3.1919)

The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, responding to this fear of the starvation blockade resulting in Bolshevism, began to refine the blockade (although it was not wound up for another 3 months, when a German capitulation to the Treaty of Versailles was finally secured).

Another ferocious speech by Churchill, made at the moment of decision for Lloyd George over the Bullitt/Lenin peace proposals with the Bolsheviks, seems to have put considerable pressure on the Prime Minister. At the Aldwych in London, on 11 April 1919, Churchill told his audience:

> "Of all the tyrannies in history, the Bolshevist tyranny is the worst, the most destructive, the most degrading… The atrocities by Lenin and Trotsky are incomparably more hideous… than any for which the Kaiser himself is responsible. There is also to be remembered – whatever crimes the Germans have committed… at any rate they stuck to their allies. They misled them, they exploited them, but… they did not desert or betray them. It may have been honour among thieves, but that is better than honour among murderers… Every British and French soldier lost last year was really done to death by Lenin and Trotsky… by the treacherous desertion of an ally without parallel in the history of , Germany may take the first step toward ultimate reunion with the civilised world."(*The Times*, 12.4.1919)

Churchill's slogan was "Feed Germany: Fight Bolshevism: Make Germany Fight Bolshevism!" (Anthony Read, *The World on Fire: 1919 and the Battle with Bolshevism*, p.166.) He held that there should be "Peace with the German people, war with the Bolshevik tyranny", according to Lord Riddell (*Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and after 1918-23*, p.50.)

When the Prime Minister heard about Churchill's spectacular onslaught, he is said to have exclaimed:

> "He has Bolshevism on the brain. Now he wants to make a treaty with the Germans to fight the Bolsheviks. He wants to employ German troops, and he is mad for operations in Russia." (Lord Riddell, *Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and after 1918-23*, p.50.)

In 1919 Churchill tried to act in accordance with the world he had operated within before the Great War, on the presumptions that had existed before 1914. He wished to secure the position that had been hard won and defend the civilisation Britain had gained predominance within along with exercising the duty to defend it. The War Britain had won had wrecked much of what was European civilisation and rendered others incapable of its defence against that which had been produced that now threatened it.

All the British Government was anti-Bolshevik, but Churchill was the most anti-Communist member of the War Cabinet and saw the defeat of what he

later called "the Bolshevik poison" as the main issue in the world in 1919. In the Aftermath volume of his World Crisis Churchill made clear his hatred of Bolshevism and what he thought it had brought forth:

> "… not a wounded Russia only, but a poisoned Russia, an infected Russia, a plague-bearing Russia; a Russia of armed hordes… accompanied and preceded by swarms of typhus-bearing vermin which slew the bodies of men, and political doctrines which destroyed the health and even the soul of nations." (*The World Crisis*, Aftermath, p.263.)

Churchill asserted that Bolshevism had to be destroyed lest it infect civilisation everywhere. That is why he proposed a British alliance with the Germany Britain had only just defeated, for a war on Bolshevism (as an alternative to it being punished for War Guilt). In his view the appearance of Bolshevism demanded a common civilisation defence and the hysterical moral propaganda of the Great War on Germany needed to be cast aside because of the necessities of the new situation.

Churchill outlined his views in a Memorandum to the Prime Minister that he wrote, criticising Government, i.e., Lloyd George's, policy on Russia:

> "Since the Armistice my policy would have been 'Peace with the German people, war on the Bolshevik tyranny'. Willingly or unavoidably, you have followed something very near the reverse… we are now face to face with the results. They are terrible. We may win maybe but we are within measurable distance of universal collapse and anarchy throughout Europe and Asia. Russia has gone into ruin. What is left of her is in the power of these deadly snakes."(*The World Crisis,* Aftermath, p.257.)

It was said that the War of 1914 was a "war for civilisation" on Britain's part – "Civilisation and the Barbarian" as it was put by Professor Tom Kettle in the Liberal press. Churchill knew that that was all propaganda. In 1919 there was a real war for civilisation taking place between European civilization and Bolshevism.

Churchill was later to lavish praise on both Mussolini and Hitler for defending Western civilisation against the Bolshevik threat. In 1919 he identified the influence of the Bolshevik State acting upon the situation of flux caused by the Great War and its settlement at Versailles as threatening the foundations of civilisation in Europe. Fascism was needed as a bulwark against Bolshevism and Churchill supported it on this basis as an antidote to poison. He proposed that Germany could atone for its War Guilt by acting as a European bulwark against Bolshevism and Hitler subsequently took Churchill at his word.

Churchill saw a strong link between what happened in Russia and what happened in Germany. In a Memorandum written later in 1919 he described this:

> "Generally speaking, it may be said that there are two Russias and two Germanies, a Bolshevik and an anti-Bolshevik Russia, and a pro-Bolshevik and an anti-Bolshevik Germany. Both Germanies look to Russia as their only means of regaining world power. Either by the pro-Bolshevik or anti-Bolshevik road Germany is determined to get hold of Russia… the moment the Allies take steps which are fundamentally injurious to anti-Bolshevik Russia, and make it clear they do not care whether it is crushed or not, both the Russian hands will be stretched out alternatively for Germany to clasp, and either in one way or another these two mighty branches of the human race will come together in effective action."[1]

Whilst Germany had revolutionised Russia, Britain had revolutionised Germany. The point now was to abort both revolutions lest they become one big one combined against European civilisation and Britain.

Balfour, the author of the Balfour Declaration only a year or so earlier, who was at the time British Foreign Secretary, summed up the value to British interests of the continuation of the Blockade in a joint War Office and Foreign Office memorandum, prepared on 21st January 1919, arguing that it would speed up the signing of the peace treaty. It would help to control the prices of Germany's food imports and provide a direct supply of food and raw materials to those provinces and proletariats resisting Bolshevism. By ensuring that the distribution of food and other supplies remained exclusively under the control of the Royal Navy and by using starvation as a weapon of war, the Germans could be squeezed until they submitted to the full Allied demands and made fight against Bolshevism.

It appears that Balfour and Churchill, in their activities in 1919, were very much progenitors of what was to happen in Germany in the 1920s and what it produced in consequence in the 1930s. Bryant does not say that explicitly in *Unfinished Victory* as he is far too patriotic to do so. But historic logic points to that fact.

The reader surely cannot help seeing the connection between these two major progenitors, Balfour and Churchill, of what happened in Germany and what happened in Palestine. We are seeing today how history has a oneness about it in the events in which the parallels between Nazi Germany and the Jewish State established and cultivated by Balfour and Churchill are clearly visible. And it is all a consequence of the British Foreign Policy of the *Unfinished Victory*.

And, of course, the historian Lord Roberts of Belgravia is a fierce supporter of both Churchill and Israel.

Sir Arthur Bryant's account of the Blockade in 1940, as Britain unleashed its main weapon of war against Germany for a second time in a generation, surely came at a very inconvenient time. But history must judge him, in spite of his (pro-Israel) detractors, as surely a far better man than they.

1 CAB 24/89, 16.9.1919 and Winston S. Churchill, *World Crisis*: Aftermath, pp.251-3.

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UNFINISHED VICTORY—ARTHUR BRYANT (1940)

CHAPTER I
FAMINE OVER EUROPE

"I saw in vision the worm in the wheat
And in the shops nothing for people to eat;
Nothing for sale in Stupidity Street."
Ralph Hodgson

In the middle of the war famine came to central Europe. As other combatants fell away, the two most powerful and dogged nations in the world, Britain and Germany, settled down to death grips. Germany's weapon was the giant machine — militarism ruthless and enthroned — that directed every activity to one purpose, victory by battle. Britain possessed a weapon still more terrible. By the invisible use of sea power, with its far armada of shadowy masts and guns lurking among the barren islands of the north, the strength of Britain was exercised not against the fighting man but against every man, woman and child living in the territories of the Central Powers.

When Germany retaliated with unrestricted submarine warfare — the inexcusable and indubitably illegal murder of defenceless women and children, as it seemed to us — the war became a starving match between the two greatest commercial nations of Europe. To both trade was a necessity: both had to import or die. Had the fight gone the other way, Britain, with her dependence on foreign foodstuffs, would have perished in a few weeks. There were moments, as in the spring of 1917, when she looked like doing so, when one out of every four ships that left her shores failed to return, and when her most famous admiral declared that she could not sustain the war into 1918.

But the British Navy held the trump cards after all. The Unterseebooten were mastered. ` The blockade continued. Slowly the noose of starvation tightened round Teuton bodies. For long an obstinate people, less immediately vulnerable in their dependence on trade than their enemies, held out. But the end was certain. The cold, remorseless pressure of the Admiralty never weakened.

One saw its consequences in the German food-lines in the industrial towns, where pale-faced, depressed-looking women who had never set eyes on the sea stood motionless in long queues in the wind and rain for the bare necessities of life. For potatoes, for beet, for flour, for coal, for soap and washing powder, for shoes and clothing and thread, the womenfolk of Germany and Austria-Hungary waited morning after morning for four grey years. |

After 1917 the bread, fat and milk were distributed by rationing zones, but for the other commodities the food-lines remained. Often when those at the end of the line reached the shop after hours of standing and shuffling, there was nothing left to buy. At the fringe of the line policemen stood to keep order and drive away the human jackals, who watched for their opportunity in the pinched faces and strained, anxious eyes of the younger and prettier girls. An American visitor to the working-class quarters of Berlin, Vienna and Budapest in the winter of 1916 could not find one face in the food-lines that did not show signs of hunger. "In the case of the young women and the children the skin was drawn down to the bone and bloodless. Eyes had fallen deeper into the sockets. From the lips all colour had gone and the tufts of hair that fell over parchmented foreheads seemed dull and famished."

As the war continued, the rations distributed grew increasingly meagre. Even by the end of 1916 the allowance of eggs was down to one per head per week, and potatoes — for many the staple and sometimes sole dietary — to a few pounds. In the summer of 1918 it was reckoned that among the urban population of Germany the daily consumption had sunk from the 2280 calories regarded as the indispensable minimum in pre-war days to a bare 1000. That of flour fell from 320 grams to 160, of meat and fat from 1050 to 135, and of butter from 28 to 7. In Vienna in the autumn of 1918 the flour ration was down to a quarter of a pound a week. Milk was almost unobtainable and was reserved solely for nursing mothers and children. In the first year of the war alone, the daily milk supply of Berlin dropped from a million to a hundred and fifty thousand litres.

In the last two years of the war, nearly 800,000 non-combatants died in Germany from starvation or diseases directly attributed to under-nourishment — about fifty times more than were drowned by submarine attacks on British shipping. The biggest mortality was among children between the ages of five and fifteen, where the death-rate increased by 55 per cent. Tuberculosis alone accounted for 145,000 civilian deaths in 1918, or double the pre-war figure. Adding the death-roll of the Austro-Hungarians, those whom the blockade killed alone exceeded the million British fighters who fell in action. Such, for those who do not possess it is the effect of sea power. And such — in a far more terrible and sudden form - would be the fate of the people of these overcrowded islands if, through their own neglect or rashness, they ever lost that power.

This human wastage was accompanied by every circumstance of misery. Pleasure and vitality went out of the lives of more than a hundred million people. The food with which men and women fought their long losing battle against starvation was of the most miserable quality. The bread was dark-brown in colour, sometimes like clay in composition and sometimes dry and brittle with fragments of straw and sand buried in it. It had a sour flavour and caused indigestion and heartburn. Jam was made of turnip, tea of blackberry leaves and nutshells or the flowers of the lime-tree, coffee of beans. Many people subsisted for weeks on a sweet greenish pulp made of potatoes that had frozen in transit through the deterioration of rolling stock. Clover and the leaves of field plants took the place of cabbages and carrots: and dogs and cats vanished from the streets.

In the luxury hotels of Berlin hungry fashionables regaled themselves on such refinements of the time as aniline "foam" cakes, dry grass tea and ingenious deceptive dishes compounded of the white of egg and gelatine. One was hungry within an hour even after the most expensive meal. Sweet things were virtually unattainable…

All real food was kept for the fighting man… Food was the staple subject of conversation for all classes. In the co-operative dining-rooms of Vienna famous poets, painters, architects and musicians, now penniless, begged humbly for their daily pittance of soup. The last days of the old Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria were made bitter by his people's cry for bread. The word "want" was writ large across the whole of central Europe.

The same all-consuming need touched every department of life. Every scrap and crumb had to be saved. Old rags and iron had become precious as

gold: the very sweepings of the street fetched fancy prices. At the University of Dresden the students carried the contents of their waste-paper baskets once a fortnight to the local paper dealer to be exchanged for the wherewithal to buy minute quantities of food. Many schools had to be closed down in the winter because of the lack of lighting in the streets. In the country, bands of children scoured the hedges for berries. Everything capable of conversion into one of the innumerable commodities which that unsleeping Navy withheld was required for Ersatz.

Ersatz was the word of the time. It comprised every sort of substitute, from concoctions of gelatine made to look like white sugar to clothes and boots and dainty leather-looking suitcases made of paper. There was a grim joke current in 1918 of a man who ate an Ersatz beefsteak of so revolting a nature that he resolved to make an end of his life. But the rope he bought to hang himself broke, being Ersatz, and the poison he bought to swallow was Ersatz too, and did him no harm. So he was forced to go on existing.

It was not only food that was lacking. New clothes and linen were beyond the reach of all but the richest. The only people who could afford them were food profiteers, speculators and landowners…

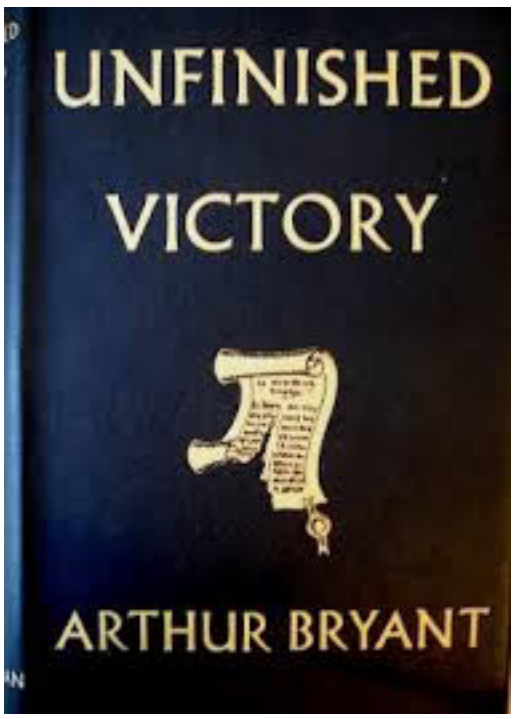
A typical case that came before a School Care Committee in the summer of 1919 helps one to realise what all this meant to the individual citizen. A war widow — there were nearly a million of them in the country at the time — had eight children ranging in age from four to fourteen…

One child has caught scabies . . . another has an infectious skin disease (impetigo). Naturally the whole family are infected. Hardly had they got over one illness than another sets in.

The mother has to go to work as the means left by her husband are insufficient to procure the necessities of life. She cannot carry out the treatment for the illnesses. She goes to hospital with her eight children, at the expense of the State. Hardly has the family been dismissed from the hospital than the twelve-year-old daughter gets discharging glands on her arm. The child has to wear the same woollen frock for weeks without it being washed (lack of soap). The mother has, of course, seen the trouble and wanted to bandage the arm, but she has no old linen. It is impossible to buy bandages on account of the high prices.

The poor woman was the kind of person whom, in the almost inevitable mood then prevailing in England, one spoke of as a Hun and regarded as collectively and individually responsible for the war.

Lack of soap and warm water — for the great majority coal was almost unprocurable — lack of bed and personal linen reduced a cleanly and frugal people to a race of slatternly scarecrows. Such soap as there was, made of a gritty, earthy mixture minus any fats, played havoc with threadbare garments, sheets and towels. Faced by such obstacles, even the finest characters degenerated. Many wearied, starving women, who were denying themselves their own rations to feed their children, gave up even trying to be clean. In infant welfare centres after the war it was common to find new-born babies and nurslings with sores up to the armpits. Among the working classes, conditions of indescribable filth prevailed in houses that had formerly been spotless. Children slept on vermin-crawling mattresses of old wastepaper — straw was too precious for such use, being needed for bread — and it was common to find two or three adults sharing a bed without sheets. The evil was aggravated by the compression of living space caused by the complete cessation of house-building during the war. Paint was practically unprocurable. Its lack reduced the whole of central Europe to a uniform, colourless grey which was matched by the faces of the people…



The consequences of this on the health and morale of the civilian population was one of the most terrible of all the evils of the war. The whole of central Europe, comprising 150 millions, was sick, physically and spiritually. The average weight of the urban population sank by 20 per cent. Tuberculosis, phthisis, dysentery, intestinal catarrh and other diseases caused or aggravated by under-nourishment were rampant: at Nuremberg after the war 50 per cent of the children had T.B. The hospitals, suffering as they were from the universal want, could do little…

The heaviest weight of the blockade fell on nursing mothers: the incidence of puerperal fever doubled. Owing to the lack of feeding stuffs for the cattle, milk was not only scarce but of the poorest quality. The consequent fall in the birth-rate is reckoned to have cost Germany three and a half million future citizens, which with her two million war dead and her close on a million starved, brought her war losses to over six millions or nearly 10 per cent of her population. Children born during the latter part of the blockade averaged only four or five Pounds in weight. In Bohemia in February 1919, 20 per cent of the babies were born dead and 40 per cent were dying within the first month of birth. A visitor to Cologne hospital in the same year reported boys and girls of six years old with tiny, shrivelled bodies covered with queer, inelastic skin that could be moved about in folds or smoothed flat, soft skulls that yielded to pressure, and bones so soft that they could be bent by the touch. Wherever the German poor were gathered together in that starving time, an unpleasant odour assailed the nostrils. It reminded those who first noticed it of the smell of a distant corpse. It was the symptom of a universal malnutrition, of the waste of tissue in underfed bodies undergoing a process of decay not dissimilar to that which sets in at death.

That there was no compunction for all this among the English — a humane people — is a testimony to the mesmeric powers of modern war. It is not true to say that the English did not know that German women, children and old men were starving, for they were frequently told so in the columns of their newspapers. But after a few weeks of war losses and propaganda, one ceased to think of one's official enemies as human beings. Fat Hans tightening his belt and whining about his meagre rations was a good joke even in so respectable and humanitarian journal as Punch. The enemy's occasional and always promptly flouted feelers for peace were set down

as the cowardly reaction of greedy appetites to a perpetual diet of sardines. That starvation implied anything more in terms of human suffering never occurred to the people of triple-guarded Britain. One sardonic jest of the period — it was never clear whether it was intended as a joke or an atrocity — was the story that the Germans boiled down their war dead in corpse factories to make substitute butter.

But though the kindly English were cheered by the news that hunger was playing havoc with their enemies' wives and little ones, they never for one moment pictured the reality of it. They had commanded the wealth of the world for so long that it was not easy for them even to conceive of starvation: Of the imminent possibility of themselves being starved into submission by the submarine campaign they were kept in blissful ignorance by the censor.

The bulk of the population never knew how near the U-boats came to triumph, or realised what it would have meant to them had they done so.

As for the British rationing schemes at the end of the war, they seldom amounted to much more than an inconvenience to the well-to-do classes. Food queues, ration cards and a dearth of certain commodities were a burden to the poor and at times a very real hardship, but they never constituted a major tragedy. Lord Rhondda, the Food Controller, and Sir Arthur Yapp, formerly of the Y.M.C.A., respectfully invited people to eat a little less… The meaning of war as it was understood by her enemies was never really brought home to her civilian population.

It was this that explains the first of the tragic mistakes that threw away the victories of 1918, unwittingly betrayed the dead and led imperceptibly but inevitably to the present situation of Europe. In November 1918, sooner than face another winter of starvation, the German people, broken by blockade, forced their Government to surrender. But though the rain of shells and bullets ceased, the war against non-combatants continued. In fact it was intensified, for the Baltic, hitherto open to German merchantmen and fishermen, was now closed by the British Navy.

The rough fish that had helped to eke out the people's starvation rations ceased altogether. Despite the entreaties of the German delegates — and it should be added of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army — Article 26 of the Armistice laid it down that all German ships found on the high seas should be sequestered. It was not that men like Foch and Clemenceau were inhuman, but, like the war-worn people they represented, they had long ceased to regard Germans as fellow creatures. The ditch that had divided the peoples of Europe for four years had been dug too deep for bridging.

It was only by degrees that tales of the plight of Germany began to percolate to the Allied countries. At first they were disbelieved or contemptuously rejected as what the most popular of English dailies described as a "Hun Food Snivel". The millions who had suffered from the war, and especially those who had lost their loved ones or endured the insolences of rapine and invasion, felt no compunction at the thought that the cruel enemy was at last cringing on his knees. They did not visualise his suffering in terms of hollow-eyed, despairing women and tragic children with vast pulpy heads tubercular bones and shrivelled bodies. They would certainly have acted otherwise had they done so. It is a tantalising reflection to think how much unhappiness and bitterness Europe might have been spared had the peace dictators met not in Paris but in starving Berlin or Vienna or even on the Rhine.

It was in Britain and America to their honour that among the victors men first began to awake to the realisation of what was happening to their former foes. A handful of Anglo-Saxon pioneers, travelling in the terra incognita of central Europe on military or political business, were suddenly made aware of the presence of a vast human calamity. For as they gazed out of the train or from the windows of their hotels, they saw a wintry world that bore no resemblance to that which they had left behind —a country of dimmed lights and of shabby, broken-down houses…

The people in the streets were like pale ghosts, listless and dejected with sunken yellow cheeks, flat breasts and hollow eyes. If one had the money, it is true one could stay at luxurious hotels and sit among well-dressed people — rich Jews from Galicia or native profiteers — eating and drinking fabulously expensive food and wine. It was not here that the strangers from afar sensed the breath of famine in the air. There was little actual starvation in the streets, for the Germans are a proud and sensitive people. Emaciated women of the better classes put rouge on their cheeks to hide their unnatural pallor.

It was to attics and cellars that lonely want retired to die.

An anonymous visitor to Germany — a Quaker — wrote in that first winter of the peace: "The picture is etched upon my mind. A man emaciated, half clothed, propped up between a perambulator and a tiled stove, feeding the baby he was too weak to lift. He was feeding the baby with a paste made of black bread and cooked in water with the addition of a little lard and salt. That was the only food he had." "The starvation is done quietly and decently at home. And when death comes, it comes in the form of influenza, tuberculosis, heart-failure or one of the new and mysterious diseases caused by the war, it carries off its exhausted victims." At Frankfurt, even as late as March 1920, the funerals never ceased all day.

It was the testimony of such travellers that provided the first frail bridges for reviving humanity…

Yet the process of awakening realisation was tragically slow. At the first renewal of the Armistice on December 13th, Germany made a plea — pathetic in the light of her former strength — for leave to import wheat, fats, maize, oats, rice, condensed milk, meat extracts and medical stores. Though renewed German resistance was now out of the question, and though a clause had been appended to the original Armistice terms that "the Allies and the United States contemplate the provisioning of Germany to such an extent as shall be found necessary", the request was rejected. So a month later was a German proposal that in return for the surrender of her merchant marine, which the Allies were demanding, she should be permitted to purchase two and a half million tons of urgently needed foodstuffs to tide her over till the harvest.

Meanwhile the sufferings of the German people grew daily worse. Though more than a quarter of a year had elapsed since the Armistice, not only was the last remaining sea closed to her, but artificial divisions created by the new military frontiers were creating havoc with the ordinary economic life of her people. On March 1st, the Manchester Guardian — always to the fore in discovering and exposing suffering — published an article from a special correspondent in Düsseldorf where an appalling increase in infant mortality had occurred owing to the French stoppage of the city's normal milk supply from the farmlands on the opposite bank of the Rhine. Three days later the same paper published a manifesto by the German Republican Government at Weimar: We cannot feed ourselves from our own supplies till next harvest. The blockade is eating away the vitals of our people. Thousands are perishing daily from malnutrition.

Similar voices, inspired by tales of suffering brought home by explorers, now began to be heard in the House of Commons. A Conservative back-bencher, Lord Henry Bentinck, declared that the

whole of Europe east of the Rhine was in danger of starvation and that the terrible thing was that Britain, by maintaining its blockade, was chiefly responsible for it. "No attempt", he said, "has been made by any English public man to justify this cruel and wicked proceeding, no doubt because no man felt equal to the task." "The Secretary of State for War, Mr. Winston Churchill, plainly did not, for he expressed his opinion that the sooner we put an end to the blockade which was destroying women and children and sick people in Germany, the better it would be for ourselves and the world — an opinion which was warmly endorsed by Mr Bonar Law, the Tory leader. A few days later the National Council of the Independent Labour Party passed a resolution calling for the immediate raising of the blockade so that the starving nations of Europe could be given a chance to feed themselves and begin the urgent work of economic reconstruction.

Yet all this made only a slow and gradual impression on a House of Commons largely composed of "hard-faced men who looked as if they had done very well out of the war " and who had been returned to Parliament in support of the policy of squeezing the lemon till the pips squeaked. Nor did it rouse any echo in the bulk of the people, who were preoccupied in licking the wounds of four years' warfare and returning as quickly as possible to their own long-neglected affairs. The ordinary Briton was not un-naturally fed up with the Continent and did not want to be reminded of it. His favourite newspapers were quick to note his mood. Anger against the Hun was succeeded by indifference. And the Prime Minister, though with his quick Welsh prescience well aware of what ailed Europe, was peculiarly sensitive to the atmosphere of those from whom he derived support. He did nothing.

It was the British fighting men on the Rhine who first drew the serious attention of the Government to the inhumanity of its policy. On March 10th a Reuter's report appeared in the press that Mr. Lloyd George had received a strongly worded telegram from Lord Plumer, the British General commanding on the Rhine, urging that food should be immediately supplied to the suffering population on whom his troops were billeted. They were unable, he said, to endure the spectacle of starving children. Soon afterwards stories began to be published of British officers who had told correspondents that they had not fought for four years in order to watch German children dying of hunger six months after the war was over. Such stories were perhaps exaggerated, but there was no doubt that the feeling of the Army was too strong to be ignored. Unlike the civilians at home, the Tommies at Cologne did not need to rely on their imagination to picture the reality of hunger. They saw it with their own eyes and were compelled to live with those who suffered it.

It was this intervention of the British soldier that procured the first real mitigation of the blockade. On March 16th Germany, unable to resist any longer, agreed to hand over her merchant fleet. The second greatest exporting nation in Europe delivered to her conquerors thirty-two million tons of shipping including every vessel of more than 1600 tons. In return she was allowed to make monthly purchases up to a maximum of 300,000 tons of cereals and 70,000 tons of fat, including pork, vegetable oil and condensed milk. Even this fell short of the country's minimum requirements. It was not till May that anything like substantial imports entered Germany. The blockade itself continued till the middle of July.

Looking back on it from a calmer and less war-racked age, all this may one day appear hard to justify. At the time it seemed not only explicable but inevitable. Only a year before the Germans had been on the point of victory, and the British Army, rallied by Haig's famous order, was fighting with its back to the wall. The chief factor in the salutary and amazing transformation that had followed had been the withholding power of the British Navy. Now that the victors' armies were melting away under the popular clamour for demobilisation, it seemed unwise to cautious minds to discard that one decisive weapon until the future peace of mankind had been secured by a strong peace. "We have all demobilised so quickly", wrote an English diplomat in his diary in March 1919, "that we cannot enforce our terms except by the blockade which is hell." (H, Nicolson, *Peacemaking*, p. 287.)

From all this followed tragic consequences of which we have still not reached the end. There can be very few over the age of 25 in Germany today who have not suffered the pangs of prolonged hunger and been taught to attribute those pangs to the inhumanity of other countries. For nine years, six of which were after the war, the bulk of the German people suffered profoundly — physically, morally and spiritually. Nearly a year after the Armistice a little German girl could ask her mother if it were true that there were countries in the world where there was no war and where people could eat all they wanted. In 1920 the Mayor of Essen reported that of 75,000 school children at least 25,000 had not even the most necessary clothing. A member of the Hoover Mission to the schools of the Erzgebirge in the previous year described children of seven or eight years with tiny faces, huge, puffed, rickety foreheads and swollen, pointed stomachs hanging over crooked, match-like legs.

Few elements in the German nation except the very basest escaped that prolonged and useless martyrdom…

As for the poor — the vast bulk of the defeated German people — they were deprived for years of everything that could sweeten life. Whole families were crowded into a single room bare of all furniture save perhaps a couple of broken chairs and a bare table. Everything else had long ago gone to the pawnshop. In 1919, when the minimum weekly subsistence level was calculated at 330 marks, 77 per cent of the population of Berlin were receiving an average wage of 162 marks a week, of which 10 per cent had to be paid in indemnity tax to the victorious Allies. It was small wonder that fifteen years later when Communism had ceased to make an appeal to the German urban worker, the feeling of hatred against the victors of Versailles survived — a potent and terrible force in the hands of the new chauvinist.

Most hardly of all could the women-folk of Germany forgive the prolonged agony of their own and their children's starvation which no principle could explain or justify to them. To them the continued blockade was unintelligible. Even during the war they had been unable to view it as anything but cruel and barbarous. They regarded it just as English folk did the drowning of their own defence-less non-combatants by submarines. They did so with even greater feeling, because the effects of the blockade injured not merely a few travellers but themselves and everyone around them. An American visitor to Berlin in 1916 was assailed by women asking why the United States Government did not intervene to prevent the British Navy's breaches of international law and of the Hague and London Conventions. For years the blockade was the dominant obsession of the entire German people. It was in the hope of defeating it and saving the wastage of its civilian population that Germany resorted to the desperate and terrible expedient of unrestricted submarine warfare and so brought America into the alliance against her. It was despair of ending it in any other way

that caused her, eighteen months later, to submit to the terms of the Armistice.

It was when the hated blockade still continued after these had been accepted that the indignation of the German people against Britain became something deeper and more permanent than wartime hysteria. Eighteen years after, a member of the Allies' Military Mission of Control which took up residence in Germany at the beginning of 1920, recalled how painful it was, in view of the widespread evidence of real distress, to be asked, "Why did England go on starving our women and children long after the Armistice?"

However deplorable and terrible in their results present German methods, however evil to free minds their form of government, and loathsome their brutality towards the weak, it is necessary, if one would understand their psychology, to remember what Germans can never forget. It is because so few of our own people — even our statesmen — seem conscious of it that I have tried to retell the mournful story of it here. It explains why the German people found it so hard to understand the sincerity of even the most obviously honest British protestations of humanity and goodwill towards them. It explains more. For the long years of hunger left their impress not only on the memory of those who suffered, but on the nervous organism of millions of Germans. A whole generation grew up in an epoch of under-nourishment and misery such as we have never in this country experienced.

It was a return to a state which Germany had known once before in her tragic history, when more than two-thirds of her people perished from the privations of the Thirty Years War. It makes intelligible much that is otherwise unaccountable in Nazi Germany — the hysteria, the emotionalism and the lack of proportion. One cannot render a whole nation physically, mentally and morally prostrate for years without its producing a dangerous effect. "Starvation which brings to some lethargy and a helpless despair, drives other temperaments to the nervous instability of hysteria and to a mad despair." (J.M. Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, p.213.)

Blockade or siege culminating in starvation has always been held a legitimate exercise of war. It has been used against every besieged town since the trade of soldiering began… So long as ordeal by battle continues to be the ultimate method of resolving disputes between nations, starvation blockade will remain, as it has always been, a weapon of war. Like every other weapon its capacity to inflict destruction has increased out of all measure with the advance of the scientific and mechanical means of enabling man to magnify his activities. Where once it slew its thousands, it can now in its universal application take its toll of millions. It leaves behind it psychological reactions that endure long afterwards and sow in human hearts the seeds of other wars and other agonies for the suffering race of man.

ARTHUR BRYANT (1940)

The Great Fraud Of 1914-18

By Pat Walsh

Athol Books 2014

The Great War of 1914 was Britain's Great War. But it should also be called Britain's Great Fraud on Ireland and the world. When Britain encouraged and then entered the European war that was taking shape in August 1914 it made it into a Great War. It was Great Britain that put the Great in the Great War. That is to say that without Great Britain's participation in it there would have been no Great War. In entering the European war Britain stated its aims in grand universal terms that were idealistic in the extreme. These aims were not only idealistic and unachievable but they were fraudulent.

The objective of the Great Fraud was to show to the world that Britain was fighting a good war against an evil that had to be vanquished. The war was proclaimed as being for "civilisation against the Barbarian", for "democracy" against "Prussianism". And it was also supposedly a "war for small nations" for "poor little Belgium" or for "gallant Servia" and for a host of other long forgotten things.

But what it came down to was a pulverising of Germany and the taking of its trade and markets in what was a traditional Balance of Power war catastrophically invested with a great moral mission. The Fraud that was perpetrated on Ireland and the world, concerning the character of the war Britain proclaimed itself to be fighting, was produced in order to convince any doubters, at home and abroad, about the rightfulness of it.

To read more of Pat Walsh's work, visit his website:

https://drpatwalsh.com

Lavrov on the Causes of the War and the Basis for Peace

Moscow calls for lasting peace instead of a ceasefire

"... The foreign minister referred to a 1970 UN declaration stating that the principle of territorial integrity applies only to states whose governments represent the entire population without discrimination ..."

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's interview with the Hungarian newspaper Magyar Nemzet

07.07.2025

Question: Is Russia genuinely seeking peaceful settlement, or is all of that just playing for time in order to adjust the military strategy by redeploying troops or mobilising supplies to the line of contact?

Sergey Lavrov: Russia has always been and remains open to a political and diplomatic settlement in Ukraine. However, it must bring durable peace, not a mere ceasefire. We do not need a pause that the Kiev regime and its foreign handlers will use to regroup forces, continue mobilisation, and rebuild their military capability.

Sustainable solution cannot be achieved without eliminating the underlying causes of the conflict. It is crucial to remove threats to Russia's security caused by NATO expansion and dragging Ukraine into this military bloc. It is no less important to ensure human rights in the territories that remain under control of the Kiev regime, which since 2014 has been destroying everything that is related to Russia, Russians, or Russian-speaking people, including the Russian language, culture, traditions, canonical Orthodox Christianity, and Russian-language media.

There must be international legal recognition of the new territorial realities arising from the inclusion of Crimea, Sevastopol, and Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic, as well as the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions into Russia. These people decided on their future by freely expressing their will during the referendum. Our agenda includes demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine, lifting sanctions on Russia, rescinding all lawsuits against Russia, and returning the illegally seized Western-based assets.

These provisions must be included in a legally binding agreement for peaceful settlement. Ukraine should return to the origins of its statehood and adhere to the spirit and letter of the instruments that formed its legal basis. As a reminder, the provision on Ukraine's neutral, non-aligned, and nuclear-free status is enshrined in the 1990 Declaration of its state sovereignty. In August 1991, the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine, reaffirming the inviolability of the provisions of this Declaration. Reference to the Act of Declaration of Independence is included in the preamble of the applicable Constitution of Ukraine.

Question: What is your perspective on peace talks?

Sergey Lavrov: At our initiative and with the assistance of our Turkish partners, direct talks with the Ukrainian side without preliminary conditions took place in Istanbul. Two negotiating rounds were held on May 16 and June 2. The timeframe for the third round is being determined. The negotiating process has led to signing agreements on a number of humanitarian issues, such as swapping detained civilians and POWs, among them severely wounded and ill people, as well as younger soldiers under the age of 25, and repatriating over 6,000 dead bodies of Ukrainian servicemen to Ukraine and laying them to rest.

We have been provided with a list of 339 children who lost contact with their parents or legal representatives. This refutes Kiev's untruthful propaganda claims about 19,000 children allegedly kidnapped by Russia. Proper checks are being conducted with regard to each child on the Ukrainian list. Everything will be done to have them reunite with their families.

The Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights is putting together a counter-list for Kiev. Preliminary, it includes 10 children currently in Ukraine and 8 minors in European countries. We expect the Ukrainian side to handle our list responsibly, and the children will reunite with their families in Russia.

Question: Following up on the underlying causes of the conflict, Russia claimed that ethnic Russians were persecuted by Ukrainian authorities. Additionally, Russia cited Ukraine's prospective NATO membership as a cause for concern. Why does Moscow take this as a threat considering that NATO is a defensive alliance?

Sergey Lavrov: Russians in Ukraine were persecuted and killed. This policy was adopted immediately after the February 2014 coup in Kiev. Nationalists seized power and promised to "drown Crimea in blood," because it refused to accept the coup outcomes. They sent "friendship trains" with neo-Nazi thugs onboard to the peninsula for them to crack down on the residents of Crimea. In Odessa, activists who refused to embrace the new authorities in Kiev were burned alive in the House of Trade Unions on May 2, 2014. Not a single perpetrator of that crime has been brought to justice to this day, even though they have been identified from publicly available surveillance videos, among other evidence. The Ukrainian punishers have killed more than 10,000 Russian and Russian-speaking civilian residents of Donbass since 2014.

The Kiev regime has declared war on the Russian language and Russian culture. In violation of the Constitution of Ukraine and Kiev's international obligations in the field of protecting human and ethnic minority rights, laws have been adopted that ban the use of the Russian language in education, scientific research, culture, media, advertising, services, and even everyday life. Ethnic Russians who refused to abandon their ancestry and traditions have faced sweeping discrimination.

Other ethnic groups, including Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, Bulgarians, Armenians, Belarusians, and Greeks, have experienced forced Ukrainisation as well. Budapest is well aware of this. Russia and Hungary are openly raising their voices in defence of their compatriots. We can join forces in this regard.

In addition to Kiev regime's racism and discrimination against everything Russian in Ukraine, NATO's eastward expansion that goes hand in hand with transforming Ukraine into a military foothold to contain Russia is another cause of this conflict.

The North Atlantic Alliance has long ceased to be a defensive alliance, even though NATO leaders continue

to claim so. The military adventures in Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Libya cannot be explained by the need to protect member states' territories. From whom were NATO countries defending themselves in those countries? Who was attacking them? NATO bases in Ukraine and dragging Ukraine into this bellicose alliance pose a direct threat to our national security.

We find this state of affairs unacceptable. That is why, in late 2021, we asked the United States and NATO to provide Russia with security guarantees without altering Ukraine's non-aligned status. Our initiative was turned down. The West continued pumping weapons into Ukraine betting on a forceful solution to Donbass and Crimea issues. As a result, we were left with no choice but to launch the special military operation. I am convinced that any country with any sense of dignity would have done the same given the circumstances.

Question: On what grounds does Russia claim sovereignty over Crimea and the four recently annexed regions?

Sergey Lavrov: Using the term "annexation" in this context is unwarranted and unacceptable. In accordance with international law, referendums were held in Crimea, Sevastopol, and the Lugansk and Donetsk people's republics, as well as the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions. The turnout was very high, and the overwhelming majority of the voters cast their votes for reunifying with their historical homeland, Russia. In doing so, the people exercised their right to self-determination as enshrined in the UN Charter. This constitutes the grounds on which Russia exercises sovereignty over the above territories.

For some reason, whenever the West makes a reference to the UN Charter, it does so selectively, yanking, for example, just the territorial integrity aspect (Article 2.4 of the Charter), and ignoring the right of peoples to self-determination (Article 1.2), as well as the obligation to respect "human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" (Article 1.3). This is a case of unadulterated manipulation and double standards.

As you may be aware, in 1970, following many years of debate, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It stipulates that the principle of territorial integrity applies to states whose governments observe the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and, as a result, "represent the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour."

Any unbiased observer can clearly see that the Kiev regime, which has elevated Russophobia to the level of state policy, does not represent the people of the Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine, including Crimea, Sevastopol, Lugansk, Donetsk, Zaporozhye, and Kherson. As I earlier noted, people who identify as Russians and strive to preserve their identity, language, culture, and religion have been told in no uncertain terms that they are second-class citizens - outliers - in Ukraine. For example, in 2021, Zelensky publicly referred to residents of southeastern Ukraine as "species" and urged them to "make off to Russia for the sake of their children and grandchildren." One could say they followed this advice by voting for "homecoming" to the Russian Federation. Since the Kiev regime does not represent the people of these regions, it cannot, under international law, claim that the principle of territorial integrity should apply to the Ukrainian state in its current form.

Question: We also have a question about Russian-Hungarian relations. President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly called them "pragmatic." How should this be construed in the context of bilateral cooperation?

Sergey Lavrov: We value the balanced approach of the Hungarian leadership, which, despite unrelenting pressure coming from NATO and Brussels, maintains a pragmatic course in its relations with our country.

Despite sanctions on Russia, bilateral trade and economic ties continue to expand. The flagship project of our cooperation - the expansion and modernisation of the Paks Nuclear Power Plant - is progressing successfully. The facilities of the plant's construction base are under construction and will have been completed by late 2025.

Russian hydrocarbons are being delivered as planned. Russia values its reputation as a reliable supplier and is willing to work with its Hungarian partners on all issues that may arise.

Overall, prospects are good for continued dialogue with Budapest based on mutual benefit and respect for each other's interests.

Question: Several Western intelligence agencies reported there was evidence that President Putin intends to "occupy" the Old World or to expand Russia's influence in Europe. European political leaders often repeat such claims. How does the Russian Federation react to these accusations? When does Russia plan to "occupy" Europe?

Sergey Lavrov: Indeed, there are such accusations. We hear them. Perhaps, those making them know more about Russia's plans than we do. At the very least, we are unaware of any of our plans "to invade Europe," much less "to occupy" it.

On a serious note, though, experts and analysts who believe that the ruling circles of European and North American countries are wasting no time building an image of Russia as an enemy have a point there, and these circles are doing in order to keep together the people who are weary of socioeconomic issues. They keep demonising our country through media manipulations. They are forcing on the public consciousness an idea that the Russian leadership allegedly entertains imperial ambitions.

It is entirely possible that, by inflating the myth of a Russian threat, they are trying to divert attention from their own failures in addressing real issues, such as inflation, rising unemployment, declining real incomes, illegal migration, and the ensuing surge in crime.

What really saddens and concerns us is the fact that precisely "united Europe" is fanning Russophobia, relaunching the military-industrial complex, and antagonising Russia. Once an integration project, the European Union has in no time morphed into a military-political bloc, essentially an offshoot of NATO. This is a dangerous dynamic that can have far-reaching consequences for all Europeans.

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The Black Diaries



The Black Diaries are diaries purported to have been written by the Irish revolutionary Roger Casement, which contained accounts of homosexual liaisons with young men, mostly prostitutes. They cover the years 1903, 1910 and 1911 (two). There are seven conflicting versions of their provenance all given by British officials at different times.

Casement was charged with treason following the Easter Rising. Before his trial the prosecution (F. E. Smith) suggested to the defence barrister (A. M. Sullivan) that they should jointly produce the diaries in evidence and then plead "guilty but insane" . [1] Sullivan refused, and Casement was found guilty and condemned to death.

The British intelligence chiefs had shown the police typescripts to journalists and politicians for weeks before the trial claiming these were official copies of handwritten diaries in their possession. This defamatory conspiracy aimed at the destruction of Casement's reputation and the weakening of any appeals or requests for clemency, particularly from the US. [2] The campaign was largely successful in dissuading would-be supporters from joining appeals for clemency. Casement was hanged on 3 August 1916.. [3]

The term Black Diaries was coined by Peter Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias in their 1959 book of that name. [4] A long diary in Casement's handwriting covering his 1910 Putumayo investigation is today held in The National Library of Ireland and is known as The Amazon Journal. [5] It does not contain any compromising homosexual references.

Suspicions about the diaries validity began even before his execution and reached a critical point in 1936 with William J. Maloney's book, The Forged Casement Diaries, in which he provided circumstantial evidence that the British authorities had forged the diaries in order to discredit Casement and the Irish independence movement. Maloney argued that forgers used a diary full of depravities written by Armando Normand, a man that Casement investigated while in Peru in 1910, the diary was transcribed by Casement and then was sent to the Foreign Office as evidence where it was later exploited by the secret services as being Casement's personal diary. However, it is a fact that Maloney never saw manuscript diaries or the alleged copies typed by the police. He had relied on hearsay evidence given by a few of Casement's friends. Bulmer Hobson and Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty, two of Casement's close friends, claimed that Casement returned to London with the diary of Armando Normand, the Peruvian Amazon Company manager at Matanzas who was implicated with perpetrating vicious crimes against the Andoque and Bora populations. [6] Hobson and O'Hegarty's accounts both noted that Casement translated this diary and sent a copy of it to the Foreign Office. This apparent diary of Normand's has not been made public. [7]

The poet W. B. Yeats was moved by this book to write a poem, "Roger Casement", which he described as "a ferocious ballad". [8] Another poet, Alfred Noyes, who had accepted the diaries as genuine in 1916, also criticised the establishment in a 1957 book, *The Accusing Ghost or Justice for Casement*. [9]

In 1959 Peter Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias published The Black Diaries—a version of the diaries which they described as being based on "a bundle of documents" given to Singleton-Gates in 1922 by "a person of some authority"—in Paris, where they could not be prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act . [4] That person was most likely Sir Basil Thomson who on his dismissal from Scotland Yard stole large quantities of official papers. Manuscript diaries whose existence had never been officially confirmed, were given restricted release by the government in 1959 and made available to approved persons in the Public Record Office in London. [10]

In 1960 Roger McHugh doubted the diaries' veracity, commenting on: "suspicious internal discrepancies and contradictions which hint toward the hand of a forger and the diary's physical evolution from the descriptions of eyewitnesses in 1916 to the physical appearance of the diaries made available in 1959". [11]

In 1965 *The Trial of Sir Roger Casement*, a book by H. Montgomery Hyde, was banned by the Irish Censorship of Publications Board because the purported diary extracts in it were found to be "indecent or obscene". [12]

Casement's biography by Brian Inglis (1973–74) strongly favoured the supposed authenticity of the diaries but provided no evidence for authenticity and his 400-page book was totally without source notes. Inter alia, Inglis asked why any putative forgers had created 3 diaries and a cash ledger, ".. when a single diary would have sufficed". ".. a single mistake in any of them would have destroyed the whole ugly enterprise". [13] In fact, there are dozens of mistakes in the police typescripts and in the manuscript diaries.

In 1993 a Home Office expert Dr. David Baxendale made a report featured in a BBC Radio 4 documentary. Dr.

Baxendale stated that "the bulk of the handwriting in there is the work of Roger Casement". With reference to alleged interpolations he stated: "the handwriting of all the entries which were of that nature correspond closely with Mr Casement's handwriting." [14] Baxendale's opinion was broadcast to coincide with the open release of the diaries in the National Archives.

In 1994 Eoin O'Máille analysed the use of words in the two 1910 diaries, to establish if both were written by Casement, but the result was criticised for using "a computer programme which was designed to tell the 'reading age' of North American schoolchildren ... Linguistic analysis is something a little more subtle than that!" [15]

In 2002 a comparative handwriting investigation of the diaries was commissioned by W. J. McCormack, Professor of Literary History at Goldsmiths College, University of London. The documents were examined by Dr. Audrey Giles, a leading British document examiner, who was instructed to authenticate the diaries as Casement's work. She stated that she could find no 'significant differences' between the diary handwriting and undisputed Casement handwriting. She did not clarify what she meant by 'significant differences'. Failure to distinguish between handwriting samples testifies only to a close resemblance and does not exclude a skilful forgery. A report in The Guardian, stated that "the handwriting, ink, paper, pen strokes and pencillings were all genuine." [16] Other press reports stated that pollen, DNA, paper and ink testing had been done but no such testing was done because it is not allowed by the National Archives. Giles also falsely claimed that Michael Collins had authenticated the diaries; however Collins left no comment on the diaries so the claim is unverifiable. Giles was probably manipulated. McCormack published a book on Maloney and the diaries in 2002. [17] The Giles Report was published in 2005. [18]

Also in 2002 Professor Daniel Vangroenweghe's examination of Casement's time in the Congo was published. He is a Belgian historian of the Congo Free State period, and argues closely that Casement's use of Kikongo slang, and some entries about people and places in 1903, could not have been known in London in 1916. He does not explain how he in 2002 knows what was known or not known in London in 1916 by persons un-named and unknown to him. Finally he quotes from the unpublished autobiography of John Harris, who he falsely claims was shown the diary in 1916: "I was so firmly convinced, that the diary was not Roger Casement's handiwork. Alas, when it was put before me and I had examined certain parts, my confidence was shaken. Then I came upon two or three facts only known in Europe to Casement and myself, and then my hopes were scattered...". [19] However, it is confirmed by Home Office files that, by instruction of the Home Secretary, Harris was shown the police typescripts only.

Two US forensic-document examiners later peer-reviewed the 2005 Giles Report; both were critical of it. James Horan stated, "As editor of the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* and *The Journal of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners*, I would not recommend publication of the Giles Report because the report does not show how its conclusion was reached. To the question, 'Is the writing Roger Casement's?' on the basis of the Giles Report as it stands, my answer would have to be I cannot tell." Marcel Matley, a second document examiner, stated, "Even if every document examined were the authentic writing of Casement, this report does nothing to establish the fact." [20]

In 2016 '*16 Lives': Roger Casement* by Angus Mitchell summarised his long held views that the diaries were forgeries. [21] He also edited the Amazon Journal of Roger Casement and included a number of footnotes which express some of these views. One of these notes states "The latter [the black diary] portray Casement's state of mind as muddled, inaccurate and exaggerated. It should be remembered that as well as writing thousands of words of his journal each day, Casement also copied out in longhand the statements made by the Barbadians. In the seventy-five days covered by his Putumayo Journal, Casement wrote a total of around 250,000 words averaging well over three thousand words each day." [22] Mitchell also refuted the allegations that Casement had a sexual relationship with Andrés O'Donnell. [23][a]

In 2016 the University of Notre Dame published Paul Hyde's monograph, which concludes that both sides of the dispute have outstanding issues to address: "the dominant and 'official' theory of the authenticity of the Black Diaries, in force for almost one hundred years, has almost no explanatory power whatsoever. It fails to answer the most basic and persistent questions ... Those who believe that the Black Diaries are forged do not have their belief supported by facts proven beyond reasonable doubt." [24] Soon after *Village* magazine published Hyde's Dis-covering Casement which revealed the absence of independent witness testimony for the material existence of the manuscript diaries in 1916.There was, however, plentiful evidence of the police typescripts being shown.

All the diaries, including for the first time the 1911 volume which contained the most prolonged sexual narrative, were published by Jeffrey Dudgeon, an influential champion of authenticity, the same year. A second, extended, paperback and electronic edition was published in 2016. [25] The Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, in the epilogue to his novel *The Dream of the Celt* which is based on Casement's life, expresses his opinion – "as a writer, and claiming no expertise" – that Casement did write the diaries, but that much of their content described his erotic fantasies rather than actual sexual experiences. [26]

In 2019, Paul Hyde published *Anatomy of a Lie; decoding Casement* with a foreword by the Casement scholar Angus Mitchell. This presents new evidence and arguments against authenticity and includes the earlier Dis-covering Casement concerning the absence of witness testimony. [27] Hyde continued publishing in Village and in 2024 an article appeared based on what Hyde identified as contradictory entries relating to the purchase of a motorbike in a ledger that formed part of the diaries. [28] Dudgeon then published in Village stating that manuscript diaries were shown to two named witnesses. In March 2025, Hyde published another article fiercely critical of Dudgeon, citing Home Office documents verifying that both alleged 'witnesses' saw only police typescripts. [29] This reputedly establishes that neither Dudgeon (after 30 years research) nor any other expert can identify anyone who saw manuscript diaries in 1916. Hyde argues that the only explanation for this absence of evidence is that the manuscript diaries, now in the UK National Archives, did not exist in 1916. According to Hyde "The deception is of such simplicity that no-one detected it. But once revealed, its maximum explanatory power emerges to answer all those persistent questions".

In the eight years since *Village* magazine first exposed the absence of witness testimony, Dudgeon was silent. Then, in October 2024, in an attempt to prove authenticity he cited reputedly false testimony which Paul Hyde exposed in late March 2025.

Wikipedia, May 2025

Notes

a. "Although Casement certainly found O'Donnell the least offensive of the Section Chiefs he had encountered thus far, it is wholly untenable that his feelings towards the men went beyond this." [23][a]

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Photocopies of the police typescripts held at Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge

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Eamon Dyas is a former head of The Times newspaper archive, was on the Executive Committee of the Business Archives Council in England for a number of years, and was Information Officer of the Newspaper Department of the British Library for many years.

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