**Guilty Germans**



The Bundestag has passed the ‘Remembering and Commemorating Genocide against Armenians and other Christian minorities in the period of 1915-1916’ Resolution.

The vote of the German Parliament is more an indication that there is something rotten in the modern state of Germany than there was in Ottoman Turkey.

Germany had no reason to pass such a resolution. It was under no pressure from any powerful Armenian lobby it wished to placate and it has a sizeable Turkish minority of at least 3.5 million with long-standing contribution to the country.

Make no mistake about it this was a purely political statement against Turkey by the members of Parliament. It had nothing to do with scholarship, historical research or the discovery of new facts. The Germans were simply salving their Guilty consciences at Turkey’s expense.

Germans don’t seem to care for being the Guilty ones of the world, but they have only themselves to blame. And a thorough re-examination of their history and the events that led to the two World Wars is the only thing that could retrieve them from their Guilty disposition. And that is most unlikely at this late stage.

Germany is Guilty because it lost two world wars to England. Catastrophic defeat must have moral consequences for a nation’s view of itself. To be beaten so thoroughly must mean that something went wrong somewhere and the logical conclusion to be drawn is that the enemy was right – Germany had gone wrong, twice! There was, of course, also the extermination camps.

The Total War waged on Germany that reduced it to a state of Guilt was a consequence of the British Liberal disposition that sought to salve its own guilty conscience for supporting a catastrophic war after being anti-war for a generation. In the War the German enemy could not be given the credit of having a legitimate, if conflicting, position to Britain, the victor. It had to be evil personified to justify the War, and be outside the range of humanity, for a moral war to be waged upon it by peace loving Liberal England. It needed to be annihilated – or at least that is what ought to have been done to it.

Well, Evil was defeated in 1918 but the Germans hardly believed they were the guilty ones. The Weimar Republic indeed signed a War Guilt clause in the Treaty imposed upon it through a Royal Navy starvation blockade during 1919. It did so on behalf of the German people at the point of the Royal Navy’s guns. But it was a false confession made under duress. And it was an outrageous lie that Germany bore responsibility for the War that few believed. But truth could not overcome might. And that was a lesson not lost on what was subsequently produced in Germany in response to it.

Power is a great moral persuader and the British victory gave it the control over what went for political morality.

In 1918 the British Empire defeated Germany’s ally, the Ottoman Empire. But then Turkey suddenly and unexpectedly arose and defeated the British Empire and a conglomeration of Imperialists 4 years later. This was a rather shocking experience for the British Empire and it never quite recovered from the experience.

The moral consequences of this was that Britain was unable to impose its moral judgement on the Turks, who escaped Germany’s fate through the Ataturk resurgence.

Britain had a Blue Book narrative ready to be imposed on the Turks, saying they had massacred the Armenians. It was prepared by Liberal moralists like James Bryce, who had been anti-Turk for a generation. However, the imposing of a morality on the enemy is very dependent on the appliance of military power and England failed to apply itself, encouraging catspaws instead to do its work for it. The Greek catspaws threw the existence of their Anatolian community into the pot on behalf of Lloyd George and lost, as the Armenian insurrection had.

And so Turkey not only resisted the imposition of a punitive Treaty it emerged with an enhanced national will.

Ataturk’s defeat of the British Empire in 1922 meant that Turkey did not accept the ‘Crime Against Humanity’ prepared for it. And it has resisted it ever since as any country with concern for its own integrity and well being should do. There have, of course, been some simple-minded individuals who have conceded to moral pressure within their spheres of life. But they were the small patsy minority.

It should be made clear that Germany was made Guilty by losing two World Wars to England, not for being Nazi. In fact, Churchill, who the British like to think was Hitler’s nemesis (really Stalin) praised Germany in the 1930s for becoming National Socialist and said he hoped England would choose a man like Hitler if the bit came to the bit, as it had in Germany.

In his book *Great Contemporaries*, written in 1937, between Arthur Balfour and Lord Curzon, Churchill wrote his account of Adolf Hitler. He started his account on the German Fuhrer in the following way:

*“It is not possible to form a just judgment of a public figure who has attained the enormous dimensions of Adolf Hitler until his life’s work as a whole is before us. Although no subsequent political action can condone wrong deeds, history is replete with examples of men who have risen to power by employing stern, grim, and even frightful methods, but who, nevertheless, when their life is revealed as a whole, have been regarded as great figures whose lives have enriched the story of mankind. So may it be with Hitler.”* (p.261)

Churchill further speculated that he could not tell at that point,

*“Whether Hitler will be the man who will once again let loose upon the world another war in which civilisation will irretrievably succumb, or whether he will go down in history as the man who restored honour and peace of mind to the great Germanic nation and brought it back serene, helpful and strong, to the forefront of the European family circle. It is on this mystery of the future that history will pronounce. It is enough to say that both possibilities are open at the present moment… We must never forget nor cease to hope for the bright alternative.”* (p.261)

This passage is included in the late 1938 edition of *Great Contemporaries*. It seems that it was a close run thing for Hitler and Nazi Germany whether they constituted, for Churchill, heroes or villains. Things were still in the balance whether Hitler was a great man and saviour of Europe with some rough edges or an enemy of England, and a monstrous evil. And it was not the Nazi Jewish policy that determined the issue. It was whether Britain determined to make War or not on Germany that praised or damned Hitler.

I think that pretty much shows that Germany’s future depended entirely on the attitude taken to Hitler’s subsequent actions in England. On that depended Hitler’s legacy to history. Which is another way of saying that Britain determines history.

The extermination of the Jews occurred because of the World War Britain declared on Germany and as a consequence of the extension of it eastwards, which was England’s only chance of victory after it had bungled its war of 1939-40. The extermination occurred in the course of the War and was not a cause of the War declared on Hitler and Germany by Britain.

After the Second World War defeat Germany was saved by a remarkable individual, Konrad Adenauer. He was an impeccable anti-Nazi and hostile to Britain due to Adenauer’s view of Britain’s erratic behaviour that plunged Europe into War for a Second time. The other thing that saved the Germans was the Cold War. However, the realistic grasp of affairs that West Germany had under Adenauer within the political space the Cold War permitted began to evaporate with the fall of the Iron Curtain. And Germany fell into Guilt. The logical culmination of this was Baader-Meinhoff, which took the Guilt seriously and waged a campaign of terror against the Guilty.

Also Fritz Fischer wrote an account of WWI according to the British narrative with every sincerity that he was telling the truth. It was, however, illustrative of demoralisation and disorientation and a bad state of health that Germany had sank into.

The Germans, defeated twice by the Power that declared War on them have accepted the verdict of history. And history is written by the victors. So German national development became understood in relation to the moral standard of its victor, Britain. And to purge itself of evil Germany accepted its Guilt and it became a righteous missionary of Guilt, with the zeal of one who was “saved” – rather like notorious serial killers who find God.

The German President Joachim Gauck has said that the Armenians were *“the victims of planned and systematic murder”.* Anyone who has studied these events will know that what was planned was Forced Migration, not murder. That is a very important distinction. The extermination of the Jews was planned. The idea that the killing, both of Ottoman Armenians and Muslims, was *“systematic”* is also faulty. The Ottoman State was a most unsystematic entity which hastily improvised a relocation plan to deal with an existential threat. It can never be accused of being *“systematic”* in anything it did. Systematic is what Germans do very well, in all spheres of life, so it is ridiculous to hear a German describe the Ottomans as *“systematic”*. Killing and murder on all sides were highly unsystematic, as is always the case in insurrections and civil wars. If there was anything systematic put into the Ottoman structures it was put there by the Germans.

It is totally understandable that the Germans should concede to the charge of “Guilty” and the view that the only good German is a Guilty one. It is equally understandable that the Turks do not consent to such a label. And that is quite apart from the respective strengths of the cases put up against them.

What is ridiculous is the notion of Guilty Germans trying to make Guilty Turks. It is a kind of attempt to drag people down to their level. And it is a warning to Turks never to concede, lest they end up on the level of Germany.

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