Hello and welcome history friends, delegates all to the second episode of the DG. Last time, we brought you the very first instalment of this absolutely wonderful experience, and it went down well enough to persuade another handful of people to sign up since. It was a week of scheming and plotting, as the different FB chats saw an awful lot of magic happen, with cooperation the order of the day, and everyone really making this game special. Like many of you, I’ve had to mute several of these groups and check up on them after intervals, so incredibly active is this community of nearly 40 people which has grown up around this game. I cannot express enough how heart-warming it is to see this thing expand and develop, and it is surpassed my expectations so many times over and over again.

While it was a week of activity, it was also a week of learning curves for many of us, as we got to see precisely how the different mechanisms work and what we’re all capable of. For me, I encountered the first in probably a long line of woopsies when playing this game, as I was forced to announce the postponement of the votes which I had put forward at the end of last week’s episode, due to the very reasonable fact that you all could not be expected to vote on things like the Irish War of Independence or the LON when I had yet to bring you the background details of these stories in the actual VAP. The whole idea was that the VAP would inform the DG and make your votes easier to understand, and this had actually been mapped out within my notes, but due to my enthusiasm last week I forgot all this, and proposed votes a whole week earlier than I was meant to, so sorry for that mix up, but at least this exercise did reveal what you’ll be asked to vote on following today’s episode, and it also gave you some time to think over how you feel about the different options. To reiterate, please return your results by Wednesday 5PM GMT to ensure they have an effect, and to vote, simply click on the very handy link which you will be sent later on this evening.

So our pool of delegates is expanding, and I had to back pedal a little bit, but other things took place too. A huge shout out to Jo Doherty, Canadian delegate, who successfully proposed a motion for devolved government in the north and south of Ireland. As I understand it, this means that Ireland will essentially have what amounted to limited HR – a situation which mirrored that after 1922, only this time, in our history, the terrible traumas of the WOI and CW don’t have to be endured first. The implications of this resolution will be dealt with in this episode, as will the implications of another resolution, successfully passed by Bonifacio Fidel, called the IFTA, a revolutionary idea which brings free trade and economic cooperation to the Baltic, East-Central Europe, the Balkans and Adriatic, and which contains several interesting levers and mechanisms that we’ll get into shortly.

Of course, this wouldn’t be the DG if we didn’t introduce our new delegates! Last week our episode revolved around this mission, and while a rather ingenious prank was afoot, we got to meet each one of the different delegates in their turn, spending more time on some delegates than others. By introducing the delegates to you now, with an ever so brief message about who they are, where they come from and what they want, the idea is you hopefully won’t be confused when they begin appearing in this episode. We have six new delegates in all to introduce. First, let’s look at the two new American delegates. Oliver Flanagan is a rich oil baron and Harvard graduate who imagines that he can have a great impact on all proceedings; he is a firm ally of Roosevelt, and we referenced him briefly in last week’s episode. William Randolph Hearst is a billionaire newspaper magnate eager to put his money where his mouth is and have some kind of role in shaping the PC. He is vain, not particularly good at politics, and not particularly well liked either, so let’s see how he gets on.

Next, we have a man who needs little introduction, the former Russian premier Alexander Karensky, who finds himself in Paris in 1919 with few genuine hopes, but an awful lot of tricks up his sleeve nonetheless. Karensky wants to rid Russia of the reds and hold onto as much of old Russia as possible, and he is not above forming unusual partnerships to achieve this end. Fourth, we have a Belgian by the name of Genuris Dinglebrush, and if the name didn’t give it away, then what you’ve got here is a former soldier turned lacklustre politician full of 100% hot air. Fancies himself a Bismarck, but unable to lace up the shoes of a lesser clerk, Dinglebrush got this far because of his connections, but now that he was in Paris facing this test of his abilities, it was entirely possible that his shortcomings would be on full show. He will be cleaving to the far more accomplished other Belgian, Paul Hymans, who we met last week.

Our final two delegates aren’t necessarily new, but both come from listeners who signed up to play the game and then didn’t send me any details. Rather than leave their names on the board, I decided to sub in avatars for them myself, but if either Mr McCartney or Mr McCarthy don’t like what I’ve chosen for them, they are more than welcome to get in touch and suggest alternative avatars, and these fellows here will meet a sticky end. For you McCartney, I provided you with the Serbian premier Nicola Pasic as your delegate. Pasic was a renowned Balkan politician, fearsome and always quietly scheming, with the appearance of a grandfatherly statesmen that threw everyone off when he starting firing on all cylinders.

Pasic’s greatest loves were family and Serbia, so we can expect him to intervene enthusiastically and ruthlessly in the event that either come under threat. To you Mr McCarthy, I present the Irish real-life delegate Mr Sean T. O’Kelly, avowed Irish republican determined to fight for Ireland’s complete separation from Britain. Thanks to what we know about both of these men, the aforementioned proposals on Ireland and IFT will have some interesting foils to deal with. As far as I’m aware, that about wraps up our introductory work for this episode, so without any further ado I will now take you to the second week of our alternative PPC, where the plenary conference on the LON hung over those present in Hotel Twamley like some kind of shadow, a shadow which not all delegates were happy with. Oh and by the way, yes, that music comes to you courtesy of Paderewski, because he offered, and because we could all do with some class around here. Now then, take it away dear delegates…

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The implications were unmistakable, and he could not believe his ears. David Lloyd George felt his blood boiling as he made his way towards the Hotel Twamley. The walk, Clemenceau suggested, would probably do him some good, but there was no way either the French, Italian or American leaders would change their minds. Not only three of the big four, but also a significant number of the dominions and associated delegates had all made up their minds, and their minds had been made to grant devolved government to the two parties in Ireland. LG was adamant that this idea would instigate conflict on the island; those opposite LG were adamant that Ireland was moving closer to the abyss with each passing day, and that it was impossible to talk of a new world order or self-determination without talking looking oneself in the mirror first. Britain, it was said, would have to engage with this exercise, by looking at the Irish plank in its eye.

When he had first received news of the passage of the proposal on the evening of 22nd January, his mind had been taken up with Russian affairs and talk of German disarmament, and he had not been prepared for its presentation or its passage. Those among the CX were informed that the proposal for devolved Irish government had the majority support of all those present, aside from the British of course. It had been proposed by a Canadian judge turned delegate by the name of Joseph Doherty, and the proposal had quickly gained the assent of virtually all the relevant parties. Hotel Twamley, LG was told, had become a hotbed of new and fresh approaches to the world’s problems – it seemed to LG as though it was instead the hotbed of treasonous activity.

It was unacceptable that Ireland should receive representation in this manner – Ireland was still a British sphere, and was of no business to the other powers or delegates, who did not understand the Anglo-Irish situation. His back was up against the wall, and Balfour had assured him that Irish-Americans would never accept it, and that they would rally against it in the US. It was less than the complete independence from Britain which they desired, and it was therefore unacceptable to them. To SF as well, the leaders of that blasted Rising and now the forerunners of this seditious Irish Parliament in Dublin, or Dáil, as they liked to call it. They were children, Irish children playing with government, and now some sympathetic, naïve do-gooders had taken up their cause. It was inconceivable that the republicans should be recognised as some form of legitimate government, just as it was incredible that the Unionists in the North had actually agreed to the arrangement.

There was, nonetheless, a voice at the back of his mind which LG could not ignore, and this voice told the PM that this proposal was something of a saving grace. With half their MPs in prison, the Irish rebels were reduced to a skeleton political crew, and in a fit of fancy had declared the Irish Republic open for business only a few days before, on 21st. Evidently they had friends enough in high places, but there would be time in the future to get back at these well-connected Irish friends. He kept running over the details in his mind, as the noise and bustle of Paris passed him by. Some Parisians turned their heads or lifted their hats towards him as he walked; LG could feel his powers of charm fading as the anger increased, but to show anger was to show a lack of restraint, to show weakness. He would confound this Canadian, judge Jo Doherty, he would humble him and shame him for his lack of faith in Britain’s Irish mission, and he would do it in such a way that Doherty would thank him for it afterwards – that was what LG was good at, that was what he fully intended to do.

Still, he could not ignore that voice which told him that the proposal was well-timed and something of a get out of jail free card. If he could get past the feeling of being overlooked, being worked around, being outmanoeuvred, then the actual contents of the agreement were not all that fundamentally insulting. It was the limits of what he had intended to grant the Irish, if they had risen up in rebellion; let the Irish have their free state, but they would remain a dominion and part of the Commonwealth. Doherty’s proposal had made this clear, but it had also thrown a bone to the Unionists, while simultaneously taking any potential blame for the agreement off of Britain’s shoulders. LG saw an opportunity emerging – he could present his position to the Unionists, point to the unanimously supported proposal, that Britain was alone in opposing it, and that it at least granted the Unionists some security after the Rising.

It made everything effectively quieter in Ireland, it had cost Britain nothing, and LG could still present his acceptance of it as a great compromise on his part – some richer prize could surely be attained in return for this compromise, perhaps oil in the ME or greater control over further mandates. The potential benefits were starting to outweigh the negatives; Ireland had been a trouble spot for so long, maybe an external initiative like this was exactly what the doctor ordered? LG did not like the spectacle of so many other countries agreeing on what to tell Britain to do about its Irish problem, but the PM could not deny that Ireland was a problem, and that this proposal came closer than any idea he had seen to solving it. Pleading helplessness in the situation did not have to seem weak on Britain’s part, if her PM subsequently drove a hard bargain in return for accepting in public what he had already accepted in his heart. His political senses told him that the proposal had the assent of so many important and influential Americans, not to mention the support given by Paul Hymans, the Belgian FM, who had expressed his passionate desire to see Ireland compensated after all the blood her countrymen had spilt in freeing his lands from the German tyranny.

When he at first had wanted to strangle Doherty, LG felt his mood lifting as his political brain worked in overdrive, spitting out potential scenarios and outcomes. He could see the large golden plated doors of the Hotel Twamley across the street – it was quite the place. LG wondered why more Brits had not been sent here; only Fitzwilliam and Tancred had been sent here, and considering their reputation as jokers he knew the reason why, but it was risky for security’s sake. He had heard it said that the drink was very strong, but the food was bad. LG thought that from where he was standing across the street, he could see a man leaning heavily against the front wall of the hotel. Could this man be drunk? It was 11AM?! As he approached and heard the man muttering, he thought he heard Polish. Walking gingerly past this drunken man, who seemed very well dressed for an urchin, it dawned on LG that it was unusual for homeless drunk Poles to frequent Paris, and that perhaps, this was a member of that separate Polish delegation he had heard so much about.

About ten feet from the doors, a figure burst through these same front doors and made a beeline for the drunk Pole. LG couldn’t help but stand and stare, as three more figures followed him. He recognised one man, that was Paderewski, no doubt, and another was Pilsudski, the famed commander. He thought Pilsudski was back in Warsaw, and that he couldn’t stand Paderewski, but here seemed proof that Poles were indeed working together like never before. A cloud of five Poles, only one of them sober, had thus gathered near the entrance of this Hotel, and argued loudly in Polish. LG did not realise that he had been staring, but he must have been obvious, because one among the group turned to glare at him, before double-taking, putting his hand over his mouth, and rushing up to greet him. LG took a few steps back in apprehension as a one eyed man stuck a rough looking hand out to shake, and in broken English, announced ‘Prime Minister, Poland welcomes you thanks, I am naming Bronski.’

LG took the hand as smoothly as he could, unable to quiet close his mouth at the scene, before Paderewski rushed over, and expressed himself in the most luxurious of accents: ‘Mr Lloyd George, please forgive our appearance, it seems as though one of my colleagues is quite ill. I hope you will not think *ill of us* at this very tense moment in Poland’s great and grave history.’ At last, someone with some class. ‘My dear Paderewski’, LG began, ‘a pleasure my good man.’ Paderewski then talked with some speed, gesturing in turn to Pilsudski and another figure he did not recognise named Pawel Lebowa. Paderewski mentioned something about Lebowa sitting on some relief committee, but he did not get all the information, as he realised his politicians’ senses were pulling him gradually away from the group of Poles and into the lobby of the Hotel Twamley. With a relief he waved goodbye to the Poles and headed inside.

The lobby was filled with people, but there was still plenty of space. He had entered a large rectangular room, on the other end he could make out a bar which was full from one side to another with guests, or delegates, he could not tell which. How an earth was he to find one Canadian in this entire place? How could he go about avoiding the Americans? Would he be able to catch a glimpse of that legendary Arabian warrior who supposedly resided here? As these questions filled LG’s head, the PM walked into the centre of the room where several splendid couches sat, and plonked himself down. Failing to look at who had been sitting on the other half of the couch, he was immediately aware that the man was looking him up and down. Wishing to avoid contact, LG pretended not to notice – at this rate he would have to find some sort of disguise. He checked his watch – he only had a few hours before the plenary conference opened for the second time, and the LON was presented to everyone that was anyone in the city.

Still he could feel the man burning a hole in the side of his face, and with some hesitation he turned towards him, expecting to have to make some sort of excuse before going on his way. Vittorio Orlando was staring back at him with barely veiled indignation. ‘Prime Minister, did you intend to ignore me all afternoon?’ Orlando asked. The question was in jest, or was it? LG prepared a politician’s answer, but Orlando fired back with some satisfaction ‘no matter, I have just finalised the details of a new arrangement for Eastern and Balkan trade.’ What was this fussy little man on about? ‘Eastern and Balkan trade?’ LG asked. ‘Why yes indeed’, replied Orlando, satisfied again that he knew something the PM didn’t, ‘and the Baltic too, but the Adriatic will be especially interesting. All wrapped up. Based in Prague, the idea of my subordinate Bonifacio Fidel – he’s quite brilliant really, I was most impressed.’ LG had a million questions, but he did not want to give Orlando the satisfaction – the Italian premier had been spending a great deal of time in the HT, and LG was concerned that the creation of some rival power bloc to the big three was afoot. Perhaps it was, LG admitted to himself reluctantly, because he kept thinking of the gathering as the big three rather than the big four. Would Orlando have schemed so openly if he had been treated better? Rumour had it that he had the ear of Teddy Roosevelt, and now this trade agreement, based in Prague, what did it all mean?! LG merely wished Orlando luck before moving on, awkwardly introducing himself to Fidel as he left this island of couches for the front reception desk. If Joseph Doherty would not come to him, then he would find the Canadian himself.

Behind the front desk was a bored Parisian with a cigarette in one hand and a pencil in the other. He was filling out a crossword. ‘One moment, Monsieur’, the Parisian said, without looking up from his puzzle. LG would have liked to have demanded service, but he waited for two minutes as his blood pressure rose once more. Apparently it was not merely the food in this blasted hotel that was of a poor standard. After five minutes, perhaps having given up on the crossword, the Parisian called LG to the front desk. This little secretary evidently had no idea who LG was, but as he looked up and looked at the PM, and as he glanced back down to his newspaper where the crossword had been diligently completed, he took some satisfaction by watching this man shrink before his eyes. ‘Mon dieu’, the Parisian exclaimed, ‘did I just ask the PM of Britain to wait?’ ‘You did’, LG replied, staring right at him.

The secretary was practically in meltdown, as he attempted to ask the same question three times, before giving up and asking in French. ‘Joseph Doherty’, was all LG said. The Parisian looked confused, and then horrified, opening a guest book and somehow flicking his pencil across the other side of the desk. ‘He is not here Monsieur’, the man stammered, ‘or he is, but not in his room – he has a meeting at the moment.’ ‘Well where is it’, LG nearly barked. ‘Basement function room no. 3’, the Parisian croaked. Was it possible that he could feel the sweat rising out of this man? LG wasn’t sure, but he was sure that he hadn't lost a step – if he could work this same magic on a nobody like Doherty, then he would surely be able to remake this proposal however he wished, or bin it altogether if it suited him. Walking briskly onwards, LG avoided the lift and took a single flight of stairs down, passing by the first two function rooms, before barging into number 3, as instructed. The sight which greeted him was nothing at all like what he had expected.

Seated in the room were 16 individuals of various nationalities. At the head of the table sat three figures, one of which was the now famous creator of this scheme, Joseph Doherty. To his right sat an Irishman by the name of Sean T. O Kelly, and to his left, incredibly enough, sat GC. Everyone present had evidently not been expecting LG, especially Clemenceau, who had only told LG that morning that he should walk rather than get a driver. Clemenceau obviously did not think LG would take it upon himself to travel all the way to the Hotel Twamley to make his case. LG stared daggers at the French premier, who matched them with an ashen expression of his own. The tension could be cut with a knife. The Irishman, O’Kelly, spoke up. ‘No danger of this leaking out now’ O Kelly said, ‘thanks for stopping by PM.’ ‘Mr O’Kelly’, LG began, ‘you will kindly tell me what it is you hope to gain by parading the domestic questions of the British Isles before the world.’ ‘My homeland prepares for war’, O’Kelly replied, his eyes fixed on LG, ‘and where you refused to help, I looked for people that would. Everyone here appreciates the need to solve the Irish question, especially with the LON due to be presented to the conference. Why should questions of Polish, Czech or Serbian independence be discussed, when we – a nation of Irishmen and women – still have yet to acquire representation?’

‘The Irishman lies’, LG hissed, ‘Irish MPs are fully entitled to sit at Westminster, it is not the fault of the establishment that rebels refuse to abide by the law.’ ‘You threw them in prison’, O’Kelly fired back, ‘you threw them in prison and you ignore the mandate which confirmed the desire for Irish independence. If you wish to speak for small nations, what about us?’ ‘This proposal does not even answer the question in your favour, so why would you support it’, LG asked, in an effort to deflect. ‘For the same reason everyone else is here’, O’Kelly said, ‘to prevent bloodshed in Ireland by creating a compromise which is inclusive of and supported by all. You cannot ignore Ireland, PM, my countrymen have been laid low for too long, and they’re close to breaking point. With this agreement, I at least have something to show for the diplomatic mission.’ LG was taken aback. He was disarmed not only by O’Kelly’s impassioned arguments, but also by his reasonableness and respect for rank. As LG paused, one man seated at the table addressed him. ‘If I may, PM, I am Arthur McColville and I represent Newfoundland. This proposal is bold indeed, sir, but it is just bold enough and imaginative enough to work. For the sake of Ireland, we simply must try.’

Another voice piped up, Belgian FM Paul Hymans; ‘respectfully PM, Belgium as you know has no interest in interfering in domestic British matters – we do not wish to give you the impression that the British losses in defence of our nation mean nothing to us, but we cannot at the same time ignore the horrendous sacrifices made by Irishmen in the same cause. Too much blood was spilled by Irishmen who answered the call for Belgium to ignore Ireland’s mission now, and Ireland’s mission is one of peace.’ ‘Australians support Ireland’, said David McKay, former Australian commander turned politician. ‘I believe it is time that the world moved on from the previous century, and gave our Irish brethren what they were entitled to. We in Australia lost much in this war, and have been promised a great deal in return. Ireland followed a similar path, so why should the same treatment not be afforded to them?’

LG felt himself wincing at the interjection of two dominion delegates and the Belgians Britain had moved to save. The PM inhaled quietly, and paused again, before turning to the French premier. ‘And what of you, dear Georges’, the PM began, ‘you previously disavowed all efforts by the Irish to move you, rightly noting that it was a British domestic affair above all. What changed your mind?’ ‘PM’, GC replied, ‘I hope you forgive the shock in seeing me here. This is not a table of your enemies, I merely arrived because I did not think you would, and I wished to ensure that your nation was not disadvantaged by the proposal or by your absence.’

‘And’, LG asked, ‘what has your journey revealed?’ ‘I have learned that this proposal is moderate, attainable and the best solution to Britain’s problem’, Clemenceau replied. ‘France has its own problems with disillusioned peoples, as you know’, Clemenceau added, before stealing a stern glance at Charles Sheer, the Alsatian delegate. ‘However’, continued the Frenchman, ‘it would be reckless not to give peace every chance, particularly in a nation which has bled so terribly for Belgium and for British interests.’ Clemenceau then produced a letter which Sean T. O’Kelly had written to him only a few days before. ‘This letter was sent to me not long ago by the gentleman beside me’, Clemenceau said, in a low, gentle tone. ‘It symbolises not only a nation’s brave quest for independence, but also this man’s willingness to meet his counterparts halfway. This is the true mark of a great statesmen.’ After a gesture from LG which indicated that the PM would listen, Clemenceau then cleared his throat and proceeded to read the letter:

Sir: As the accredited envoy of the Government of the Irish Republic, I have the honour to bring to your notice the claim of my Government, in the name of the Irish nation, for the international recognition of the independence of Ireland, and for the admission of Ireland as a constituent member of the League of Nations. The Irish people seized the opportunity of the general election of December, 1918, to declare unmistakably its national will; only in 26 (out of 105) constituencies of the country was England able to find enough 'loyalists' to return members favourable to the union between Ireland and Great Britain; for the remaining 79 seats the electors chose as members men who believed in self-determination; of these, 73, who now represent an immense majority of the people, went forward as republican candidates, and each of these republican members has pledged to assert by every means in his power the right of Ireland to the complete independence which she demands, under a national republican government, free from all English interference. On the 21st of January, 1919, those of the Republican members whom England had not yet cast into her prisons met in the Irish capital in a national assembly, to which, as the only Irish Parliament de jure, they had summoned all Irish members of Parliament; on the same day the national assembly unanimously voted the declaration of independence appended hereto and unanimously issued the message to the free nations likewise appended. The national assembly has also caused detailed statement of the case of Ireland to be drawn up. That statement will demonstrate that the right of Ireland to be considered a nation admits of no denial, and, moreover, that that right is inferior in no respect to that of the new states constituted in Europe and recognised since the war; three members, Eamon de Valera, Mr. Arthur Griffith and Count Plunkett, have been delegated by the national assembly to present the statement to the Peace Conference and to the League of Nations Commission in the name of the Irish people. Accordingly, I have the honour, sir, to beg you to be good enough to fix a date to receive the delegates above named, who are anxious for the earliest possible opportunity to establish formally and definitely before the Peace Conference and the League of Nations Commission, now assembled in Paris, Ireland's indisputable rights to international recognition for her independence and the propriety of her claim to enter the League of Nations as one of its constituent members.[[1]](#footnote-1)

LG paused for a moment once again, gaining a full mental picture of the range of delegates seated at the table. An international affair indeed, and he had only sat with Orlando a few minutes before and the Italian has said nothing about the wide support for this deal. ‘Where are those Irish delegates mentioned by the gentleman in question?’ LG asked. ‘I told them not to come’, O’Kelly replied, ‘I told them that a moderating hand was needed in light of this proposal, and that my peers at the Conference would be able to trust my judgement.’ ‘*Your judgement*’, LG scoffed, before he had a chance to stop himself, ‘you’re a *rebel*, a rebel soldier…a…a criminal.’ ‘I am a freedom fighter’, O’Kelly replied, ‘and I stand here fighting with all my power for peace, where before I fought with all my power for war. Many people have died in my country for the sacred mission of independence, PM, and many more will die again if needs be, but we must consider whether this is truly the best deal which my country can get, and if it is, then I will support it, as will my friends in this room.’

The words hung in the air with a weight that prevented LG from ignoring them. He had been outvoted, and now he had let his temper get the better of him, and he had been out-talked. Everyone had seen it happen, everyone knew that he was on his own. Joseph Doherty then spoke up:

PM, Canada supports this proposal, and wishes to welcome Ireland into the family of the dominions. The proposal was not imagined in a spirit of intrigue or bad faith, but as a means to solve these burning questions which for generations has ruined the relationships of people Irish and English alike. We will not fight the mother country in Ireland’s name, but I urge you to consider the positive and negative implications for your acceptance of this compromise. It sends a clear message and sets Britain up to stand as an ambassador for worthy compromise and national understanding across the world.

LG was taken aback somewhat by Doherty’s eloquence and turn of phrase. He had little choice but to accept defeat, but he did not have to give up this fight publicly – the longer he held out, the greater the concessions he could expect to get in return. ‘Gentlemen’, LG began, ‘it is apparent that we are at an impasse, I will have to return to this matter in the future, as I am needed to prepare for the second plenary conference.’ It was the best excuse he could have thought of, and it at least meant that everyone was reminded how important he was. As he left the room he nearly walked into an individual standing outside, leaning against the door. ‘Pardon me’, LG said, without much conviction. ‘Mr PM!’ the man exclaimed, before taking his hand and shaking it rapidly. ‘My name is Genuris Dinglebrush, military commander and veteran of the diplomatic school. I represent the interests of Belgium, and can promise you firm friendship and support in all matters relating to our country’s interests.’ LG barely heard what Dinglebrush had said, he was too busy staring at the man’s utterly ridiculous features, from the exaggerated moustache to the gleaming black shoes to the bushy eyebrows to the dark yellow waistcoat to the bulging gut.

Dinglebrush was quite the name, which was only appropriate because Dinglebrush was quite a sight. LG garbled some greeting, and Dinglebrush made an effort to perform an unnecessary bowing gesture, which somehow caused him to flick a pen which had been in his hand in LG’s direction. Black ink was flicked onto the PM’s white shirt and onto his forehead. Dinglebrush, completely oblivious, made some remark about his diplomatic prowess equating to Bismarck’s, as an infuriated LG removed a handkerchief from his pocket and patiently dabbed at his shirt, as the seething anger started to build. At the top of the staircase he could already see Fitzwilliam and Tancred, who called down to their PM, ‘Have you seen Orlando anywhere Sir, we were told he was working on some kind of trade agreement for the Baltic! Did you ever hear such…’ ‘ENOUGH!’ LG bellowed, his patience finally escaping him, ‘I am leaving this wretched Hotel before another scheme is hatched on top of me. Dinglebrush, you pretentious ratbag, you will get out of my way or your new lodgings will be at the bottom of the Seine riverbed!’ Genuris Dinglebrush went pale, muttered several apologies and tripped over the first step of the staircase in a bid to remove himself from LG’s furious presence. Apologising also to this staircase, Dinglebrush then hurried onto the bar. Alcohol, he was sure, would clear his senses.

LG walked briskly towards the front door of the Hotel Twamley, with Fitzwilliam and Tancred anxiously following behind him. ‘Sir…’ Tancred began, before Fitzwilliam glared at him to stay silent. There was a time and a place to warn the PM about what those pesky Eastern Europeans were up to, and this was not it. The two Brits let LG walk ahead, calling after him that they would see him at the plenary conference. The British PM got into the first cab he saw and sped off. The two Brits then glanced at one another, then glanced at the bar, then glanced back to one another, then began walking. Before they met with their next delegate, it was essential to prepare. After a few drinks and about 30 minutes later, Fitzwilliam and Tancred were suitably lubricated to begin considering meeting with Nicola Pasic, the Serbian premier. While at the bar they had met another figure whom they believed would help them in their cause – a Slovenian by the name of Karhoo Rosnack.

Smoking far too many cigarettes, in between puffs and clouds of smoke, Rosnak informed the two Brits that he spoke Pasic’s dialect of Serbian, which would be handy considering the fact that Pasic spoke little else, aside from some broken French. Armed with their translator, whom they promised would get a chance to properly converse with Pasic about all manner of issues, Tancred and Fitzwilliam made their way to Pasic’s room. Rosnak seemed to have several bees in his bonnet where Pasic was concerned, probably because his homeland had recently been folded into a massive Slav kingdom under Serbian domination. The meeting with Pasic could either be really interesting or a total disaster, but these two Brits were too desperate for information to care that much about the consequences. The Poles were planning something, some kind of free trade agreement, and if they could find out more about it, then they might be able to ensure that Britain got a piece, or if it was a bad idea, that the whole thing was killed in its cradle before any real damage was done. Reportedly, the newly arrived Serbian premier was a master of plots, and knew of all schemes going on at all times; this was supposedly how the bearded Serb had survived so many years at the helm of his stroppy country. Leaving the bar, going up a flight of stairs and knocking on Pasic’s door, the three men entered.

Inside they found the equivalent of an American embassy, as the five man American delegation, swollen in recent days with two new additions, were seated around a square table with Nicola Pasic slowly pacing up and down beside them. Teddy Roosevelt was muttering something about the necessity of free trade to Bruce Pug and Joseph Zahn, while the two newer American delegates, Oliver Flanagan and William Randolph Hearst, talked to each other. The two Brits could feel the tension in the room, and before they could say much else, Karhoo Rosnack walked briskly to where Pasic was pacing and engaged him in passionate conversation. Nobody else in the room had any idea what these two Balkans were saying to one another, but they could discern from the tone and facial expressions that there was a lot of emotion in the air. At one point, Rosnack began shouting at Pasic, who simply shook his head – this was not what their supposed translator was meant to do! Fitzwilliam and Tancred exchanged glances with the five Americans, who looked up only briefly from their table to nod at them.

Apparently giving up, Rosnack stormed past the two Brits. Fitzwilliam stopped the Slovenian before he could leave; ‘Sir’, Fitzwilliam began, ‘what was all that about?’ ‘Insufferable!’ Rosnack replied, ‘an insufferable man with insufferable views – he refuses to leave my country in peace, and he refuses to place the future of Slovenia in Slovenian hands. By what right does Serbia have to march up the Adriatic coast and occupy my country!? The French ought to do something, I am going to find Clemenceau!’ Before either Fitzwilliam or Tancred could offer a reply, Rosnack was gone. Now they were in a room with a Serbian and five Americans, but that begged the question – what exactly were all the Yanks doing here? Could it be that they were here for the same reason? ‘Does anyone have a cigarette?’ Hearst asked, before Pasic stopped his pacing and flung a small pack in his direction. Joseph Zahn and Bruce Pug also took one from the pack. Apparently it had been that type of day.

‘What are you doing here Sirs’, Tancred asked, as confidently as he could. Roosevelt stole a glance in his direction before looking at his delegates, who declined to answer. ‘Very well’, Roosevelt muttered, rising from his seat.

Gentlemen, we have been talking with Serbia’s premier for some time now, and it is evident that the IFTA is severely lacking, and in many respects dangerous. The Poles, with 45% representation, the council of this organisation, based in Prague? America’s interests not considered, Greater Serbia’s ignored as well. Germany and Austria pushed to the wayside. Britain and France excluded. This is unacceptable, and while the Italian, Greek, Polish and Hungarian delegates may see opportunities and potential in the scheme, it is the opinion of America’s representatives that the act is fundamentally unsatisfactory.

‘Mr President’, Oliver Flanagan piped up, ‘the motion has already been passed, should we wait for it to collapse in on itself or should we actively seek to undermine it?’ ‘It is an outrage’, opined Bruce Pug, ‘the whole idea is flawed from the beginning – what about voting rights, opt out rights, trade with third parties, self-determination for states within its orbit?’ ‘Where are the Hungarians now?’ Hearst asked, ‘could they be a convenient route into undermining the scheme?’ ‘We think so’, Roosevelt replied, ‘but Mr Zahn, didn’t you say you heard that Lady Csok and President Karolyi have gone AWOL?’ ‘They were last seen having a wild night on the town’, Zahn confirmed, ‘and I haven’t been able to find them since the 22nd.’ Whispers and giggles began to ripple around the table, and then Pasic intervened, in a gruff, raspy version of French. ‘IFTA is unacceptable to Serbia, and we will oppose it by force if necessary. Monsieur Orlando has always feared the Slavs, now he will have to face us and our friends on the battlefield if he continues to push the issue. I will never compromise on Serbia’s interests.’

Tancred attempted to sum up the situation. ‘So it’s essentially the Polish, Greek, Italian, Hungarian and Russian delegates against our own?’ ‘Correct’, Roosevelt said. ‘I have heard it said even by some of its Polish supporters that the arrangement leaves much to be desired, so I would not worry too much about its sustainability.’ ‘WW will lose his marbles’, Hearst remarked, which gave Roosevelt the opportunity to add, ‘He never had them to begin with!’ All this room of men could agree on was that IFTA was bad, but they seemed less able to devise a solution for taking IFTA apart, or whether it could be taken apart. ‘We will adopt a wait and see attitude’, Roosevelt said, ‘this is the best policy, because so long as we are prepared, we will not be caught off guard. Rest assured Mr Pasic, America will stand by you no matter the outcome.’ This seemed to give the Serbian premier a measure of comfort. Sir Alistair Tancred wasn’t quite satisfied with that though, and he added, ‘Gentlemen, I know we see many aspects of this conference differently, but I really must emphasise Britain’s emphatic condemnation of this whole scheme. Should any other delegations, including your own, present themselves as also opposed to this scheme, then I commit to support you wholeheartedly.’ Fitzwilliam echoed his colleague’s sentiments, before adding ‘has anyone seen the Gerries lately?’

The Gerries were in fact a short way down the hall from Pasic’s room. Seated around a small table was Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, Horten von Hotzendorff, Chancellor Karl Renner of Austria and two less obvious allies, Japanese FM Baron Makino Nabuaki and his Bedouin friend, Prince Nawwar Sharif. The five men were discussing, unsurprisingly, the recent passage of the IFTA proposal. ‘Let me make this clear’, von Lettow-Vorbeck began, ‘this arrangement is based upon inequality, and its key tenets are founded upon sand. It provides for an arrangement which the current state of flux in Europe could easily render obsolete within a few months. I also fear it will embolden the reckless Poles and rash Hungarians into action, not to mention embolden the jealous Italians to undermine us further.’ Karl Renner added, ‘Your excellency, we understand that Japan has no real interest in this arrangement, but we urge you to consider that by supporting us on this correct course of opposition, you will have firm allies in Germany and Austria going forward at the conference.’ Baron Nabuaki didn’t say much, but he did continue to stroke his moustache and sword in equal measure.

Prince Sharif then spoke up in a smooth French turn of phrase, saying ‘My friends, Arabs the world over wish only to be treated with equal respect and friendship. When we see acts of injustice perpetuated elsewhere, the sight makes us deeply angry and upset. I cannot speak for ME, but for my family, we are with you in standing against this agreement.’ Horten von Hotzendorff noted the Bedouin’s approval, before turning back to the Japanese FM, ‘have you talked with Prince Charoon of Siam? His highness has expressed values and sentiments similar to your own.’ ‘I have spoken with the Prince of Siam’, Nabuaki confirmed, ‘but our arrangements are our own.’ Von Lettow-Vorbeck seemed a bit offended at this, so Karl Renner attempted to change the subject. ‘Gentlemen, soon the LON will be presented before the world, and we can all be certain that WW will never tolerate any rival institutions, be they based in economic or political principles. I believe it is thus essential to demonstrate our firm support of the League at this early stage, especially since it provides us vanquished powers with the opportunity to rebuild our relationships with the West.’

‘Speak for yourself’, von Lettow-Vorbeck boomed, ‘Prussia remains strong and has not been defeated, her enemies fear her even now!’ ‘Certainly’, Chancellor Renner sighed, ‘but for the rest of us not fortunate enough to possess Prussia’s constitution, I believe it would be wise to approach the allies with willing hearts, and to look for opportunities to drive wedges wherever we can.’ ‘Agreed’, said Sharif, ‘His Excellency Nabuaki and I will work towards the end of freeing formerly subject peoples in Asia and the ME from European dominion, and we will remain sympathetic to approaches from your quarter so long as you return the favour in time.’ ‘Understood’, Chancellor Renner replied, ‘you can count on the Germanics to support you in your quest for justice and liberation.’ Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck grunted and muttered something racist under his breath, but it was ignored. The time had come to attend the plenary conference, and see what WW had brought for them.

It had been a morning of great tension, speculation and compromise. What impact would devolved government have on Ireland, and could the British or Irish communities accept the proposal as it stood? With IFTA passed, was it too late to modify it and make it more acceptable to all involved, or was the proposal by its very nature contentious, and simply in need of a solid defence by all the parties involved? These two proposals had very much shaped the course of the debate over the recent days, but more debates and votes and proposals lay on the horizon, and for the residents of the Hotel Twamley, there was much work still left to be done…

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Ok history friends and delegates, you have now reached the end of the episode. Last week I asked you to vote on certain issues, but today we are redoing these votes, with the hope that you’ve listened to the actual episodes of this project that address their nuances and contents so you understand what you’ll be voting for. We turn first to that aforementioned meeting of the League; the question is how you react to it, and the choices are permit history, oppose the LON, support the LON, propose amendments to the LON or establish your own rival institution. Considering the passage of IFTA and the potential that institution has to court political cooperation as well as further controversy and opposition, the field looks very different indeed to how it looked last week. The same is especially true for the Irish proposal, which has greatly shaped the situation in Ireland.

Our second weekly challenge is based on the eruption of the Irish War of Independence which broke out on 21st January 1919. The question is how you react to this and the options are permit history, declare neutrality or disinterest, condemn the Irish, condemn the British or declare war on Britain. Bear in mind that the devolved government resolution has passed, but the war of independence still rages on. This was because, of course, not all Irishmen and women would be happy with a political solution, and some preferred the use of force to the use of dialogue. To those that did prefer fighting with words, such as delegate Sean T. O’Kelly in Paris, there remained much work to be done to persuade his colleagues at home and in the French capital that this course was the correct one. I hope you’ll join me next weekend to find out the implications of these two votes, but remember to get out there and vote, as they say, by participating in the Survey Monkey vote which I send your way shortly. On that note I should add that I have 37 delegates, but only 36 email addresses, so rather than having to track the lonely person down myself, if you haven’t received an invitation to vote by Saturday 26/1 then please let me know – because you’re the odd delegate out! Other than that, thanks so much for listening and participating if you’ve been playing along with us, and make sure you continue to scheme, intrigue, negotiate and propose in the meantime. Thanks for playing my dear delegates and I’ll be seeing you all soon.

1. Available: https://celt.ucc.ie//published/E900014/index.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)