Hello and welcome delegates all to your exclusive glimpse into the future, in this concluding episode of the DG. In this bonus episode, we have two missions, first, to examine the fates of your individual characters, what they went on to do, and how this strange experience of peace-making shaped them. Second, provide context to this world they left behind, and how it differs from our own based on my own very scientific calculations. Originally, you may be aware, I had planned to separate the two episodes into one, with the world and the characters getting their own episodes. After working at this script for more than a week though, I just came to decision that combining the two provides a better narrative and a more compelling story. Keeping everything tidy like this means that we will also bid farewell to the game in the final section of the episode, so stick around at the end for my concluding thoughts on everything, as well as the results of the prestigious, 74th annual DG awards!

Considering the sheer range of delegates on offer, our to-do list seems incredibly long, but I should prefix this by saying not everyone can have a supremely detailed epilogue for their character. The way I have worked this episode is that everyone will get something, but the more active players will get more. I think that considering how this game has evolved into roughly ten very active players, but about 35 technically active ones, this makes the most sense, and of course, it makes the task considerably less daunting for me. Of course we are still left with the largest DG we have yet produced, but hopefully with all these elements blended together and working coherently, you won’t really notice.

For this episode, I will use a mixture of narrative and analysis, explaining the fate of delegates by looking at their real life fate such as death and political career etc., if they existed in real life, and balancing it with how things have changed because of their actions here. To keep us all sane, I won’t be tracing their lives or consequences up to the present day, but will instead be going only as far as 1945. That might not sound like a long stretch of time, but it means that our story can be far more detailed and multi-layered than it would have been if we were forced to examine a whole century in a similar amount of time. I feel like the compromise is a worthwhile one, and I hope you’ll agree.

Be sure and let me know what you thought about the fate of your peacemaker – was I too harsh or too generous, or did I bring a tear of pride to your eye? Obviously, I have to say a massive thanks to all of those that played, or even those that listened in. Without fan engagement, this game simply does not work. Without your enthusiasm, we never would have been able to make this concept come to life. Ironically, the game proved to be too active, rather than not active enough, but we’ll get into that in our epilogue at the end of this episode. Without any further ado then, I will now take you to the immediate aftermath of the conference, where after making peace with virtually everyone, it was time for the delegations to pack up, and go home…

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TR stood in the oak tree lined garden of the ABH for the last time. It was a view he had become very familiar with, and it was certainly one which he was going to miss. The negotiations and drama of the last six months, far from exhaust him, had revitalised and re-energised the former President. He felt far younger than his 60 years, and he also felt driven like never before. The political scene had opened up at home, and with the deterioration of WW and the unpreparedness of the Republicans, Roosevelt found that he was already in receipt of offers to run as a Progressive, under the so-called Bull Moose party, as he attempted to do unsuccessfully in 1912. In the 1912 Presidential Election, Roosevelt’s decision to run had split the republican vote and enabled Wilson to win, but now, both parties were essentially reeling, and Wilson in his deteriorated state seemed to be perpetuating a constitutional crisis. It was possible that Wilson might hang on until the 1920 election, but even if he did, the damage done to the Democrats would be considerable, and a new candidate would be able to swoop in.

This, at least, was what Bruce Pug had told him. Roosevelt had been so impressed with Pug’s vision for the future of American politics, he had offered him the position of SOS. Pug had said he’d mull it over, but just this morning he had pledged to accept it. The first plank of his political comeback was laid, and Pug was already advising Roosevelt on what the world would look like in the coming years. It was not a particularly rosy prediction for the next decade of world relations. Europe still divided into camps, and threatened by a Bolshevik tide in the east; no form of international congress, as the flawed but significant LON idea had proposed. Pug was of the opinion that it was too dangerous to retreat into isolationism, as many had wanted to do. Greater than the thirst for isolationism was the sense of anger at the treaty for preserving the old order and failing to challenge the imperialists, who continued to hold onto their colonies with no signs of reform.

In fact, the only true result of the treaty seemed to be the expansion of the colonial possessions of the European powers. Pug had advised Roosevelt that the best way to meet this challenge would be by dividing and conquering economically. The US had posed as an economic powerhouse during the war, and had lent the allies billions. Now, she would offer the carrot of free trade agreements with the defeated or disenchanted parties, while striking deals with the major powers of France, Germany and Italy. Furthermore, Pug had advised, an understanding with Japan would solidify this commitment to peace, and reduce tensions, and therefore spending, in the Pacific. Pug had assured Roosevelt that war with Britain would not follow – this was merely America’s opportunity to emphasise its exceptionalism, its power and its interests far sooner than might have been expected.

Indeed, Roosevelt’s suspicions were correct. Rather than challenge Wilson and drag out the process in the courts, Wilson was allowed to stay on as president until his term expired. The optics of this clinging on provoked immense condemnation, and because the Republican Party had proved unable to capitalise, they also lost supporters. When Roosevelt announced his candidacy for the Presidency under his Bull Moose Party, in September 1919, the American political landscape began to shift. Unlike in 1912, there was now an ideal opportunity to capitalise upon the situation. And capitalise Roosevelt did. Warren Harding’s uninspired pledge for a ‘return to normalcy’ was not nearly as appealing as pledge to ‘embrace American exceptionalism’. Winning 62% of the vote, Roosevelt promised to serve America at home and abroad, and to break the two-party cycle which had dominated the political scene.

True to his word, Pug served as Roosevelt’s SOS from 1921, and Roosevelt’s declining health from 1923 meant that Pug was more active than he had perhaps expected to be. He came to be viewed as the public face of American policy, reconciling the new role of the US in a constantly changing world. Negotiations with European states produced positive impressions of the situation there, and the series of treaties made with Japan are still credited today as having helped to steer that country away from militarism and towards democracy. Baron Makino Nabuaki, during several meetings with Pug in the early 1920s, credited Pug personally with saving Japan from the military clique which was then eying up China. ‘Pug has saved Japan’, was the famous slogan, transformed into the still more famous cartoon, which depicted a proud, defiant pug squaring up to the might of Japan, apparently unfazed.

Using Prince Charoon of Siam as a mediator, Pug even managed to limit Japanese expansion in Manchuria and Korea, and the three men met together in 1922 at Tokyo, during the meeting Pug greatly impressed the Japanese in attendance by holding a conversation with Nabuaki in the Japanese language – optics, as Pug well knew, were vital if the Japanese people were to feel confident with an American compromise. Prince Charoon was unfortunately unable to move the Japanese to renegotiate its unequal treaties with either China or Siam. Instead, Nabuaki proposed a defensive alliance over Siamese territory, which, Charoon later discovered to his disgust, contained a secret clause which granted Japan a protectorate over the country. Charoon later retired from political life, effectively fading into obscurity after 1924, though the gong which he donated to the London Conference remains on display in the ABH, which has since been turned into a museum.

Considering his successes in foreign policy, and Roosevelt’s determination to credit Pug for them, it seemed only natural for Pug to contest the 1924 election as the Progressive candidate. Roosevelt had been determined from the beginning that he would serve only one more term, supposedly exclaiming to Pug at one point, ‘Three I can do, three is possible, three is necessary, but to do four, I should not bear the thought of it. Imagine it, Mr Pug, sixteen years in the Presidency, who would do such a thing?’ Roosevelt was also certain by 1924 that he was actively dying, though his strong constitution had helped him hide it. Sure enough, he lasted long enough to live out his third tenure as President, and even to publicly hand the reins over to the successful Republican candidate, Calvin Coolidge, in 1925. By spring of that year though, Roosevelt was confined to bed, and he knew it was the end. The presidency had taken the last reserves of his energy and health, but he continued to insist that it had been worth it.

‘I came home from the peace conference to find America still at war’, Roosevelt said, ‘now, I leave her in peace.’ Roosevelt died on 2nd May 1925. Pug followed him within the decade, dying of a heart attack in 1934 following his failure to successfully mediate the Danzig Crisis. At his funeral, Pug was called a disciple of Roosevelt, with some justification, since he remained the face of the Progressive Party, which continued to offer a viable third option to American voters, and which definitively broke the back of the two-party system. The progressive party would float around the political wilderness to some extent in the early 1940s, until the civil rights movement reinvigorated it, and propelled it to the forefront of American political thought once again.

One figure who was active behind the scenes of the Progressive Party was WC, who served as its chartered accountant during its rise in the early 1920s. Cameron earned his moniker of God’s garbage man, ensuring that the Party boasted a funding structure without parallel, and serving as essentially the third man of the Progressive triumvirate, though with few aspirations for office. Adhering to his goal of facilitating the fading of Britain’s star and its supplanting by the US, Cameron proved a ruthless number cruncher and taskmaster well into the 1930s. He died one year after Pug, in 1935, also of a suspected heart attack, following more than a decade of intensive service to the new Party. The Michigan native remains a figure of some repute, and his purchase of a stake in the Detroit Tigers baseball team in 1926 provided sufficient funding for a World Series win in 1933, 34 and 35, a record only surpassed two decades later when the Yankees dominated the 1950s.

Cameron was also known posthumously as the ‘two-statue man’ by his peers, since after his death he would be immortalised in service to his two great loves, the Detroit Tigers, and the Progressive Party. In the carpark of Tiger Stadium, a statue of Cameron still stands, erected shortly after his death. Long associated with his favourite team, it is often easy to forget Cameron’s considerable role in facilitating the rise of the Progressive Party, and the Party’s HQ in Washington DC boasts an additional statue of the Michigan native. Commentators note that the Tiger Stadium statue portrays Cameron as considerably more jovial and relaxed than his Washington statue, a reflection, it is said, on the heavy workload which Cameron willingly bore in service to the new party. Historians are mostly agreed that without Cameron’s considerable expertise, the Progressive party would have floundered in its efforts to maintain a funding base.

William Randolph Hearst, renowned media mogul and ally of Roosevelt, played a significant role in PR for his new party, and was the fourth member of what came to be nicknamed ‘the delegation team’ after the four men’s roles in the PC. Hearst worked hard to undermine the treaty thereafter, publishing innumerable critiques of the TOB well into the 1930s, and blaming the treaty for the de facto cold war between Britain and the US. Following the corridor crisis in 1934, Hearst supported the German side against Pilsudski’s initiative, according to the approach taken by the Progressive Party as a whole, but following revelations of German atrocities, later switched sides. Now in declining health, Hearst recently donated his Hearst Castle, overlooking the Pacific, to the Progressive Party, which was later turned into a museum. Upon merging the New York Journal and New York World papers in 1930, Hearst’s lasting legacy was complete with the Daily Bull, which survives to this day as the official organ of the Progressive Party. The Daily Bull, named after Roosevelt’s Bull Moose moniker, continues to maintain one of the highest nationwide circulations, and can regularly be found in Europe.

Josef Zahn was never to return to the US, accepting a position as legation secretary in Berlin upon the end of the PC, and representing the US interest thereafter from 1920 until his death in 1931 as ambassador. Zahn was responsible for bringing the free trade agreement between Germany and the US to life, and is widely credited with repairing relations between the two countries following the GW. During the 1930 Bavarian crisis, Zahn proved vital to maintaining peaceful relations between Germany, Bavarian separatists and the French government, and chaired a conference the following year in 1931, which granted autonomy to Bavaria under a federal German structure. Less than a month after concluding this arrangement, Zahn died suddenly of a suspected stroke at his residence in Berlin. His funeral was conducted in German, and his German wife proclaimed her husband a ‘child of the great German-American caucus’ which she declared would never falter. His statue stands on the grounds of the American embassy in Berlin, a symbol of the incredible work Zahn did to bring the two nations together.

Oliver Flanagan, among his fellow American delegates, was less successful. Retiring from politics, to tend to his considerable oil interests in Texas, Flanagan enjoyed a brief stint as President of Harvard’s political science department, before retiring due to the intensive workload. Following his third divorce, Flanagan died in 1928, still incredibly wealthy, and his portfolio of investments were divided among his children and friends. Among this latter group was counted WC and Bruce Pug, who invested some of the $14 million he left them back into the Progressive Party. This quick injection of funds enabled the Progressives to pump money into the 1928 election, barely missing out on the top spot to a renewed Republican Party and its candidate, Herbert Hoover.

Back on the other side of the Atlantic, Sir Alistair Tancred returned to political life following his impressive performance to discover that LG was not finished with him yet. After helping to bring France closer to Britain at the critical moment, Tancred’s star was at an all-time high, and he enjoyed another two decades of political notoriety, most importantly, during his stints as FS from 1922-27 and 1930-35. So important was Tancred’s grasp on foreign affairs believed to be, that he was able to persuade Ramsay McDonald, the labour leader, to retain much of his services, an unprecedented arrangement in British politics. The arrangement did not last though, and during the three elections which were held between 1924-26, Tancred remained in place, a solid driver of policy at a time when the world appeared to be fragmenting, and Anglo-American tensions increasing.

Tancred remained on good terms with Sir Arthur Fitzwilliam, and the two shared Cabinet space together in 1930, when Tancred returned for what he thought would be a brief stint as FS, only to stay for five years. Then, Fitzwilliam was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and alongside PM Stanley Baldwin, effectively dominated British politics. Following the collapse of MacDonald’s Labour administration in 1929, Baldwin took office just in time to face the Bavarian crisis, which was followed shortly thereafter by the corridor crisis. In both occasions, Tancred’s relationship with the French proved pivotal, as he represented Britain in the conferences which Josef Zahn chaired. While he didn’t see eye to eye with the more pro-German Zahn, Tancred’s last and arguably greatest act was the conclusion of the Munich Treaty in 1935, which resolved many of the problems that the TOB had caused. He died shortly afterwards, on the verge, it was said, of being offered the premiership by the strained Stanley Baldwin.

Fitzwilliam’s career trajectory was similar to his old friend’s, in that his passion for the Royal Navy and willingness to learn singled him out as an ideal candidate for First Lord of the Admiralty for much of the 1920s and 30s, at a time when the challenge switched from Germany to America. Fitzwilliam unsuccessfully attempted to host naval conferences with his American counterpart, and played a pivotal role in the 1936 Tangiers settlement, which pooled French and British naval resources together, at the height of the tensions with the US in the late 1930s. Unlike his late friend, Fitzwilliam would accede to high office, but the Fitzwilliam premiership was not built to last, succumbing to the same divisions and splintered vote problems which had afflicted his Conservative predecessors. After succeeding from Baldwin in 1937, Fitzwilliam’s premiership ended with the defeat by Clement Atlee’s Labour in 1942, after the perceived weakness in standing up to America greatly tarnished his reputation. At the time of writing in 1945, Fitzwilliam remains a prominent political figure, though he has officially retired from high office.

One of the most pressing foreign policy problems of the UK during the post-war period, Poland, saw its own fair share of challenges for its significant actors. Ignacy Paderewski did not stay long as premier, largely due to the bitterness he felt at Poland’s interests in Danzig being ignored. Paderewski maintained that the accommodation of France in the Rhineland and Italy in Fiume made it incredibly unfair that Poland was left short of attaining its goals. He became more anti-British as a result, blaming LG for these failures, though he essentially retired from politics, emigrating to America in 1922, where he played a performance for WW in his final days. Naturalised as an American citizen, Paderewski withdraw from the public eye, returning in 1934 with the corridor crisis, to advocate, interestingly, for the German perspective, after having learned of Pilsudski’s extensive efforts to undermine Polish democracy and aggressive foreign policy.

Thereafter, Paderewski was left utterly vilified by his countrymen when news of German atrocities emerged, and he received death threats for several weeks, until the issue blew over. Serving as a moderate voice of Polish nationalism for the final years of his life, Paderewski refused to accept Pilsudski’s dictatorship as legitimate, and continued to urge Polish democrats to retain the institutions which had characterised the old Commonwealth. Paderewski remained a fixture of New York, and well into his late 70s could be viewed, still astounding crowds with his musical talents. As he had done before the war, Paderewski continued to donate generously to various causes, including several Jewish, Polish and even a few Russian charities. He died in 1941, following a bout of pneumonia, and was given an enormous state funeral. He was survived by his second wife and two children.

Arguably Paderewski’s major rival, Josef Pilsudski ended the conference still wearing his General’s uniform. He returned to Poland and quickly asserted his opinions in the shaky Polish democratic sphere. Drawing attention to his past successes, and his important relationship with the President Marshal of France, Pilsudski easily won the premiership in 1922, and quickly set about undermining the very system which had brought him to power. Pilsudski’s efforts at improving Poland’s lot in Europe, and recasting her as the powerhouse of the east were aided by the position of Ukraine as a Polish protectorate, and the relative weakness of Lithuania. In June 1930 while the western powers were distracted, Pilsudski launched an invasion of Lithuania, and the country capitulated in only a week, owing to the well-planned nature of the campaign, and the technological sophistication of the Polish army.

With Russia still in a state of anarchy, Pilsudski felt confident to proclaim the Second Commonwealth before the end of the year, and in the years that followed, Pilsudski set his sights on West Prussia and the city of Danzig, which he insisted had been unjustly detached from Poland in the 18th century, and belonged to the Polish people. By this point, with his monopolisation of Polish politics, his destruction of the traditional party system and his foreign policy successes, Pilsudski was in a formidable position, and was greatly aided by the deepening of the relationship with PMF, who remained a critical ally and advocate of the Polish interest. Determined to protect their nation from a German resurgence, French statesmen were eager to let Pilsudski away with many offences, and to advocate for the Polish perspective wherever possible. Yet, during the Corridor Crisis of 1934, even Foch had trouble fighting in Paderewski’s corner.

An abortive effort to seize Danzig by Polish nationalists, operating under the orders of Pilsudski, almost resulted in war when the German ruled city fought back. The crisis could have caused the fall of Pilsudski’s regime, but then the Germans infamously overstepped, and Freikorps units stormed over the border and raided numerous Polish communities. Once the extent of these crimes were learned of by the international community, it was easy to paint the Poles as the victim, and thanks to his control of the Polish press, Pilsudski reimagined the corridor crisis as another victory. In the Munich conference which followed, Poland was leased the city of Danzig for fifty years, in an arrangement which cost Poland billions of gold marks, but which effectively closed the door on the German rule of that city. In the years which followed, forcible Polish settlement of the West Prussian region, and German abandonment of the Polonised city of Danzig – which was subsequently referred to as Gdansk, and as Poland’s second city – rapidly changed the demographic, and severed East Prussia from Germany proper.

The greatest gift to the Pilsudski legend was that the General died shortly after bringing Gdansk into the Second Commonwealth, in May 1935, of liver cancer. Reportedly, Pilsudski had plotted a new military campaign against Russia sometime in the near future, which would return the provinces of Belarus to the Poles, lost in the 17th century. As the commiserations from foreign powers trickled in, these were surely tinged with relief that Pilsudski had not touched off a Polish-German conflict, which was surely the end result of his constantly increasing belligerency. ‘Undefeated and unbowed, with the pen and sword’, was the inscription on Pilsudski’s statue in Gdansk, and the city continues to host a ‘Pilsudski Day’ on 1st February every year, on the anniversary of the city’s return to Polish control.

Bognan Kuzdzal, in many respects the background member of the Polish delegation, went on to become the most famous disciple of Pilsudski, penning his account of the man’s life in 1936, which would be a bestseller, and led to the creation of several myths surrounding the man’s life. A proponent of the unification of Pomerania with Poland, Kuzdzal viewed the creation of the Second Commonwealth as the first step towards rectifying the errors of Polish history. Like Pilsudski, he continued to advocate the country’s expansion, and personally sponsored the Prussian-Polish group, a political and cultural organisation designed to demonstrate Poland’s historical links with the Prussian region. Historians suspect that if Pilsudski had lived longer, Kuzdzal’s work would have been instrumental in preparing the region for a Polish-German war over Prussia. Kuzdzal’s interpretation of Polish history, in addition, was published in the early 1940s, when the Second Commonwealth was flagging, and in need of a boost. Kuzdzal succeeded to the military triumvirate which took over after Pilsudski’s death in 1935, but Kuzdzal himself never attained the similar high office to his mentor, and died in 1943, shortly after completing his aforementioned history of Polish Prussia.

While the Poles reimagined their role in Eastern Europe, the French were similarly searching for their identity. PMFF, undoubtedly the most vibrant, controversial and significant figure to emerge on the French side, would later be credited by historians for strengthening the country’s position during the peace conference. In particular, historians found it difficult, and still do, to gel Foch’s achievements in this regard with the methods he used when coming to power. Just as the peacemakers felt at time, many find it difficult to square the terrible destruction of the Parisian riots with the reassertion of the French position. Was it worth that carnage, they ask, for the sake of French pride? Foch would have insisted that more than French pride was on the line, and after the treaties had been signed, many Frenchmen seemed to agree. As his opponents had feared, Foch did not relinquish his title of President Marshal once the peace was signed.

This, he claimed, was because he was not allowed to – the French people would not accept his resignation, but his political rivals, such as Rene Massigli or Albert Claveille, were said to have been furious at his about face. In the now infamous rally of triumph which was held on Bastille Day, 1919, in Paris, Foch appealed to the people, and asked them to protect the peace. Conveniently, a chant began rise from the crowd of hundreds of thousands that had gathered ‘Foch must stay’, they said, and Foch took it literally. For the next decade, Foch monopolised control over French politics, serving as the chief of state of France until his death in 1929. By the end, his popularity had begun to wane, and his monopoly over French politics had been heavily criticised internationally. In America he was viewed as little better than a tinpot dictator, who had gone back on his word to cling to power, cynically exploiting his popularity for political gain.

The Polish general Pilsudski, however, made great use of his relationship with Foch, and the Franco-Polish relationship was never as close as it was when the two men were at helm of their states. This had a profound effect on the foreign policy of both states, but historians remain divided over whether Foch’s tenure as PM helped or hindered France more. Certainly, it is Foch whom we must judge, as Premier Raymond Poincare became largely irrelevant as the Presidency usurped much of his powers. Poincare made a show of cooperation for a time, before going against the grain and directly challenging Foch’s dictatorship in 1924, when Foch refused to allow proper presidential elections to take place. The excuse given was that only he was capable of protecting the peace, but if that didn’t work, then he claimed the people or the army would not allow his resignation.

Until his retirement from politics, Poincare stood as the political opposition, and campaigned across the country and Europe for what he called ‘the return of democracy to France’, yet Poincare found what Foch already knew to be true – that few cared about the sincerity of democracy so long as the country was well-led. Along with Rene Massigli and Albert Claveille, Poincare was a loud and prestigious voice in favour of change, but the three men also appreciated that Foch was untouchable until he made a mistake which eroded his popularity. Until then, neither the army nor the people would demonstrate against him. It was because of this tacit acceptance of Foch’s strengths that neither they nor Foch made any effort to increase the tension within France. They remained loudly opposed, especially from 1924, to the suggestion that Foch should stay on indefinitely in the office, but Foch refrained from arresting these men or harnessing any propaganda organs for himself. What Foch did do was make regular trips around France, conversing with the people and making himself constantly seen.

He presented himself always as a Marshal, a keen and determined military mind, here to do what was best for France in these difficult circumstances. His unwillingness to make use of political violence has moved some historians to praise his efforts, but like Poincare and others, Foch’s achievements must always be measured against the extent to which he undermined the democratic institutions of France. With his death in 1929, the trio of Massigli, Poincare and Claveille attempted to pick up the pieces, but the shaky and unsure administration found that, with international crises striking with unsettling regularity, it was safer to cleave to what Foch had done, especially in the realm of foreign policy. What was more, the maintenance of these soft dictatorships in France and Poland likely motivated the Germans to follow suit, and elect a famed general of their own to the office in 1926.

When PVLV was elected President of the Republic in 1926, he had a formidable task ahead of him. His goal, he claimed, was to remove Germany from the shackles of the past, and to look ahead to a brighter future in Europe. VLV never clarified whether this meant that he would work against the terms of the TOB, but it became clear relatively early in his presidency that he would have more than enough to occupy him even without a planned challenge to the status quo. The border with Poland remained deeply controversial, particularly in the West Prussian region, where the city of Danzig caused a great deal of friction among Polish and German citizens. It was in 1930 though, at the expiration of the ten year period of Bavarian independence, that the tensions within Germany itself nearly erupted into a new world war.

The Bavarian crisis, as it came to be known, was a result of three factors. First, the shaky new French administration under Poincare, which was attempting to feel its way forward only a year after Foch’s death. Second, there was the tension among the Bavarians themselves, who were divided over how to proceed, and could not agree how their future with Germany might develop. Third, within Germany, the VLV government had assumed that Bavaria would vote to re-join Germany overwhelmingly, but when the plebiscite result brought a nearly even 33% split in the three camps, a Bavarian civil war followed, and the German and French governments moved troops to the border to protect their interests. These three camps in Bavaria; the Bavarian independence movement, the pro-German camp and the pro-French camp, were all bitterly divided from one another, and produced their own strain of potent propaganda.

During the summer of 1930, as we know, tragedy consumed Bavaria, as conflict costing in excess of 10k lives raged on. Faced with this challenge, the international community worked to find a solution, and they found it in a conference in Brussels, chaired by Josef Zahn, the American ambassador to Germany, and attended by Poincare for France, VLV for Germany, and interested neutrals Sir Alistair Tancred for Britain and Josef Pilsudski for Poland. It took some time for the interested parties to gather on an international stage, but a ceasefire was upheld in Bavaria until they did. There was furious disagreement for some time over whether Bavarian representation at the conference would be accepted, with VLV angrily opposed. Eventually, it was agreed that rather than Johannes Hoffman attending, a Bavarian civil servant without plenipotentiary powers would be invited. Zahn’s swansong as American diplomat extraordinaire proved fruitful, as three sides were eager to reach a solution, and the mediation by Polish and British leaders proved effective. The solution was enshrined in the Brussels Treaty of 1931, which granted autonomy to Bavaria under a federal structure, which could be renewed or altered after ten years, when another plebiscite was held.

Loud in their opposition to the compromise was former Chancellor Philip Scheidemann, who remained active in German politics after his resignation in late 1919. Unlike many of the old guard in German politics, Scheidemann was disadvantaged by his status as one of the signatories of the peace, and by his later claims to have stood up to the allies and their harsher demands. VLV contested these claims publicly, and once it emerged that Scheidemann had lied, he was sent to the political margins where he began to plan for a political comeback. If he could acquire the presidency, Scheidemann believed, then he would be in a position to challenge the terms of the TOB, and transform his political legacy. This desire to assume the presidency became particularly acute during the 1926 presidential election when it became apparent that his rival, VLV was running as well. VLV’s energetic and enthusiastic campaign was far more effective than Scheidemann’s choleric and calculating vision. Scheidemann was slaughtered in the polls, pulling in less than 10% of the vote. He retired from politics thereafter, mostly writing angry polemics for the increasingly far right organs which he subscribed to. He refrained from taking responsibility for the TOB for the remainder of his life, insisting on taking the whole credit for proclaiming a German republic in the first place. He died mostly unnoticed in 1939.

Back to the Brussels treaty though, and even though it has been criticised since as pleasing nobody, and merely kicking the can down the road, the decision proved fateful as it transformed the WR into a federal republic. Following the welcoming of Bavaria into a federal structure, other German states, particularly Saxony and Westphalia, began to request similar treatment. A new German constitution was developed in 1932, taking the very important lessons learned during the Bavarian crisis, and harnessing the wealth of difference present in the country at the time. It was debated intensely over the year of 1932, and VLV distinguished himself as a fair and reasonable judge, easily winning a second term as president as well. In 1933, when the Federal Republic of Germany was proclaimed, there was much enthusiasm that Germans had moved past their troubled history, but there were storm clouds on the horizon which not even VLV could avoid.

Buoyed by the reimagined relationship which the German centre had with its constituent federal parts, Danzig began to agitate for this federal status alongside the so-called big five of Bavaria, Saxony, Westphalia, the Rhineland and Silesia. When the Weimar government did not prove susceptible to this request, the council of Danzig, composed largely of ethnic Poles, declared their independence from Germany. Had this been all, it is possible that the issue could have been resolved relatively painlessly. However, eager for some foreign action to distract his supporters, the Polish Chief of State Josef Pilsudski clung to the Danzig crisis, moving Polish soldiers to the border in East Prussia, as well as along the badly defined border with West Prussia. What happened next has been covered elsewhere, but the fallout from the Polish involvement and the German atrocities was too great even for VLV to overcome. Declaring his innocence of the affair, and insisting that he had done all he could for both sides, VLV resigned amidst an international crisis and Polish-German standoff.

Confined to limited skirmishes before, it appeared likely that the crisis might escalate into full-scale war, perhaps pulling in all of Europe in its rage. Again though, diplomacy prevailed, as Sir Alistair Tancred, the British FS, called for a conference at Munich. The location was intended to remind the participants that successful resolution of disagreements through diplomacy was possible, and it seemed to do the trick. The Munich treaty was a compromise whereby Germany leased Danzig to Poland for a period of fifty years, after which point a plebiscite could be held. The arrangement catapulted Pilsudski’s reputation to new heights, on the eve of his death, but it also closed the door on several centuries of German rule of the city of Danzig, thereafter returned to its Polonised name of Gdansk. Another aspect of Pilsudski’s reign which made him so popular were his efforts to stick close not just with the French, but also with Poland’s Eastern neighbours, such as Romania and CS.

In the case of Romania, a dispirited Ioan Bratianu was heavily blamed for his failure to seize Transylvania, and the myth of a victory violated by her former allies moved Romanians to veer further to the right. In 1922, King Ferdinand became the leader of the so-called Restoration Party, when the Romanian army seized power, and placed their King at the top of the political food chain. Yet another democracy, it seemed, had been lost. Finding scapegoats continued with Ferdinand’s accession to absolute power, and Bratianu was arrested for what was called his ‘betrayal of Romanian interests’, but it was clear that Bratianu was merely the fall guy. Thereafter, Ferdinand focused his attention on Hungary, and on the Habsburg King Charles who ruled there. The hatred between the two was only equalled by that felt by Ferdinand’s son Michael, who succeeded his father in 1927.

In his search for allies, King Michael moved towards Poland and the example set by Pilsudski. A treaty of alliance was signed between the two in 1929, and the support which Romania offered to Poland during the latter’s invasion of Lithuania the following year proved critical. In return, Pilsudski supported Romanian claims to Bukovina and Bessarabia, but was silent about Transylvania. In 1931, shortly after the conclusion of the Brussels Treaty which settled the status of Bavaria, Pilsudski negotiated the lease of Bukovina and Bessarabia from the Ukraine, which Poland retained as a protectorate, to Romania for a period of fifty years. It is unknown how much King Michael’s government paid for the lease, but historians agree that the injection of funds enabled Pilsudski to prepare his forces during the later standoff over Danzig. Thus, the connection between the different fronts was well understood at the time.

Pilsudski’s silence over Transylvania was due to his efforts to balance friendship with Hungary and Romania simultaneously. A military alliance had been reached with Budapest in 1928, but Hungary refrained from sending any aid to Poland during the invasion of Lithuania in 1930, which Pilsudski took personally. It helped that Pilsudski got on well with King Charles of Habsburg, and on one occasion, during a state dinner at Budapest where he was invited in 1932, Pilsudski impressed his hosts by insisting on meeting with Lady Nora Csok, who had since retired from politics. ‘My journey’, Pilsudski is reported to have said, ‘will not have been complete, until I meet the purest of the Magyars.’ This helped repair any hard feelings, and following Romania’s satisfaction through the acquisition of Bukovina and Bessarabia, Pilsudski offered to mediate between the two countries on the Transylvanian problem, in the fortnight before his death in May 1935.

After Pilsudski’s death, one might have expected the Transylvanian situation to escalate, but Edward Benes stepped in to avert disaster in the late summer of 1935. As the FM of CS, Benes was a seasoned enough statesman to recognise the potency of nearby disputes for Czech security. The 1937 Prague settlement, negotiated between the three parties, reaffirmed the intentions of the three parties to respect the situation in Transylvania and to respect each other’s sovereignty. As the Poles worked to fill the political hole left by Pilsudski in the late 1930s, Benes stepped into the role of Eastern European arbiter with impressive finesse. Negotiations with Hungary in particular proved significant, as King Charles renounced all claims on Czech territory, and visited Bratislava in 1938, reportedly speaking in Slovakian to those that attended, which made a tremendous impression.

A defensive alliance followed, and military arrangements in the event of a Soviet attack were discussed, with a view to deepening the CDA which had been allowed to lapse. These initiatives brought Eastern Europe closer together, and resolved much of the tension which had previously dominated. In 1939, at the Czech capital once more, Benes presided over the creation of the Eastern Association, a grouping of Romania, CS, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, and later Poland, the Ukraine and Lithuania, into a common free trade area and military alliance. The arrangement was Benes’ greatest triumph, and with its base of operations in Prague, the Eastern Association serves as the barrier against Bolshevism and Russian encroachment to the present time of writing, in 1945. There are reportedly plans to expand the operation into Italy, Austria and Germany, and potentially the Baltic as well.

Charles of Hungary, indeed, had only joined the EA once consultations had been made with Italy. By the time the EA had been negotiated in 1939, VO had managed a retirement and a return to politics. Like many of his successful contemporaries, Orlando found that he was unable to withdraw completely from the spotlight. Following the conclusion of the peace, and Italy’s generous gains, VO found his popularity was at an all-time high, and he remained premier until a short illness moved him to announce his retirement from politics in 1928. The retirement was short lived, as the crisis in Bavaria and Danzig thereafter persuaded Orlando that his expertise was still needed in Rome. Throughout the 1920s he worked diligently to build a proper Italian system in Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia, and maintained a beneficial relationship with Hungary’s King Charles.

Following several months of preparation, VO was invited by Austrian Chancellor Karl Renner to Vienna in 1927, the year before his temporary retirement. While there, a triple alliance between Austria, Italy and Hungary was concluded, named the Habsburg accord. The agreement stunned international opinion, as it was assumed that Austria and Italy would never see eye to eye on the world stage. The agreement provided for aid to the Balkan states and for investment from Austria in return for its old role as Habsburg overlord in the region. King Charles, meanwhile, made the immensely popular decision to pledge two years’ of his income to the reconstruction of the Balkan regions. So extensive was the improvement in relations, that when a new Italian vessel was launched in Italy, it was named the Charles.

Orlando’s ability to parry criticism for this accommodation of old enemies was made all the more easier by Italy’s satisfaction at the peace table, having received the Tyrol, Fiume and several Greek islands, not to mention a sphere of influence in the Balkans. It was in the course of intervening against the Serbs that the more extreme political opponents of Orlando were arrested or exiled, among them nationalist upstart firebrands like Gabrielle D’Annunzio and BM. After the crisis in Bavaria and Danzig, Orlando was re-elected in 1936, and in his final premiership, provided the Czechs with military training and technology. Orlando was warm in his welcoming of the EA, which he claimed would insulate Western Civilisation from the terrors of Bolshevism. For his part, Orlando conceived of joining the EA, but hoped also to attach Italy to the Pact of Cartagena, a significant achievement if successful. As of 1945, negotiations between the relevant parties are still on-going, but Orlando’s success in repairing relations with Spain, and his personal friendship with Antonio Maura, deserves mention too.

Maura died in 1925, but not before concluding a treaty of friendship with Italy in 1922. The cooperation between the two countries and their pooling of scientific resources in the face of the challenge which the Spanish Flu presented was said to be especially significant. With the apparent end of the Spanish Flu threat in late 1922, Orlando and Maura were seen in Madrid to have declared ‘Spain and Italy have defeated this plague upon mankind’, and notwithstanding the accuracy of the claim, it made for a brilliant photo opportunity. Maura offered Italy diplomatic support against Greece during the Dodecanese Islands Crisis in 1923, and offered to host a conference to bring a lasting peace to Turkey the following year. For the most part, Maura’s position in the conference is viewed positively by the Spanish today. At time of writing, no great Spanish resurgence has taken place, but Maura’s record is remarkable nonetheless, as he overcame the prejudices which the allies had towards the neutral Spain, and he managed to gain in the colonial sphere in doing so. Upon his death in 1925, Maura was lauded as Spain’s greatest son. Among the pall bearers at Maura’s funeral was a distraught and grieving Orlando – and this was quite a turnaround considering the utter venom which the two had spewed at one another throughout 1919.

Awkwardly in the middle of the EA and Pact of Cartagena, Chancellor Karl Renner struggled in the post-war years to assert Austrian policy among the distinct camps. He found that the Germans were occupied with domestic matters and mostly disinterested in discussing any kind of union, while the old rivals in Italy, France and Hungary were hostile to any empowering of the old Habsburg base. It wasn’t until a few years passed and some jealousies expired that Renner found his neighbours more amenable to making agreements. Arguably his greatest diplomatic achievement was the conclusion of the Habsburg accord in 1927, which bound Italy, Austria and Hungary together in a mutually beneficial arrangement which priorities defence against Bolshevism and reconstruction in the Balkans.

Maintaining a strong commitment to democracy, Renner was loudly critical even of potential allies like France and Poland, when they refused to account for their dictatorial presidents. Reportedly, he even took Orlando to task for his political dominance, asking the Italian, according to those present at the 1927 meeting in Vienna, ‘Tell me Sir, is this democracy?’ Orlando took it in his stride, but uniquely among his contemporaries, Renner did not feel a strong pull to remain in politics. He published his most famous work, *A Democratic Defence* in 1931, just as Europe seemed to be descending into conflict and liberal democratic principles were in short supply. This polemic proved influential, and ironically, Pilsudski called it ‘my second bible’. Most significantly, it persuaded the French, struggling in the aftermath of Foch’s death and the Bavarian crisis, to declare a fourth republic in 1932.

That same year in 1932, Renner announced his retirement from Austrian politics upon the expiration of his third term as Chancellor. By this point, Renner was proud to denote that he had paid all of Austria’s reparations, and that the country had been welcomed back into the concert of nations. ‘Present in the war, I led her through the peace, I fixed her in the peace, and now I leave her in prosperity’, was how Renner signed off on his premiership. At time of writing in 1950, Renner remains a regularly consulted sage of Austrian politics in his 70s, and is reportedly an advocate for Austria joining the EA. It was during his efforts to make sense of the crises in the early 1930s, that Renner made contact with Felix Calonder, a blast from the past indeed.

The two men had been familiar with one another during the Conference, and during Calonder’s traditional chairing of the Annual Conference from 1920, Renner was at least able to pick his brains for a few days of the year. From 1924 though, once Renner began sending a subordinate to the Conference, he lost touch with Calonder. Calonder’s career trajectory is also worth noting, as the man’s reputation was greatly bolstered after his performances in the conference as its chairman, which gained him international fame and plaudits. ‘Now that peace is made’, Calonder is reported to have said, ‘I am aimless, like a sail without wind.’ Perhaps he spoke too soon though, as Italian Greek tensions over the Dodecanese Islands moved him to act. Having seen how quickly peace could be jeopardised by the refusal of the two sides to talk to one another, Calonder proclaimed that a new approach to diplomacy was required.

In late 1923, Calonder resigned his seat in the Swiss Federal Council in late, and established the Democratic Peace Institute in January 1924. The core belief of the Institute was that the best way to preserve peace was through the creation of democracies, and he sponsored the establishment of several branches across Europe. As a secondary aim, the Institute was tasked with bringing disputing parties to the table, and promoting dialogue as the best way to resolve crises. Mediation, Calonder believed, was only possible where a neutral third party existed, and the most effective such third party was surely a stateless organisation, which lacked the traditional trappings of a nation state. The rest of the world seemed to agree. This activism singled Calonder out as a renowned practitioner of fair diplomacy and a firm advocate of democratic government. His DPI became synonymous with the resolution of crisis, and was instrumental in providing back channel dialogue between the feuding parties in the 1930 Bavarian and 1934-35 Danzig crises.

In 1932, following his completion of A Democratic Defence, Karl Renner resumed his relationship with Calonder, and upon his retirement thereafter, served as one of many spokesmen for the DPI. Renner’s enthusiasm for the preservation of peace and the promotion of democracy moved Calonder to relocate the organisation to Vienna, and in 1935, with the resolution of the Danzig crisis, Calonder announced the establishment of an additional base in that West Prussia city. The move was welcomed by the German and Polish governments as a way of reducing the tension, but Calonder’s DPI also aimed at promoting patient diplomacy by offering extensive training courses in mediation and diplomacy to potential candidates. Soon, these courses became so oversubscribed that Calonder had to appeal to the international community for funding, and even then, demand was too high.

Shortly afterwards in 1937, Calonder determined to add a further feather in his cap by expanding the DPI as a university. Previously, those that completed their training would receive certificates, but Calonder reimagined this system, and devised a three year university course where budding diplomats from all over the world would apply. While studying they would receive tutelage from the best and brightest diplomatic and stately minds on offer, including training in several languages, in mediation, in history, political science and diplomatic theory. The well rounded candidates which the institute produced recommended Calonder’s fledgling university to students, and it also provided an ideal career path for statesmen who had tired of politics and wanted to give back. Thanks to his connections, Calonder managed to host lectures with Bruce Pug, VO, Rene Massigli and even DLG, with Karl Renner becoming a permanent member of staff by 1939.

At the time of writing, the DPI has welcomed its eighth cohort of students, and thousands of well-prepared diplomats have moved through its doors and into the business of statecraft. Calonder continues to maintain an active presence on the Institute’s campus at Vienna, while the offices in Danzig serve as a useful training ground and administrative centre. Calonder’s claim is that he hopes, with his work, to promote the use of diplomacy as a true alternative to war. This is reflected in the motto of the DPI, emblazoned on the flag which flutters high above its campus, and which appears regularly on its communiques, it reads ‘Diplomacy, more honourable than war, stronger than arms.’ Calonder believes that within a decade, the DPI could expand into the US.

It was in the first post-war crisis, that of the Dodecanese Islands, that individuals like Calonder, VO, and Antonio Maura became concerned at the viability of the peace. One figure who subsequently came under a great deal of criticism for this uncertainty was the Greek premier Venizelos, who campaigned politically and militarily to maintain the grip upon Smyrna which he believed all Greeks were entitled to. Venizelos angrily contested the Turkish independence movement, and urged the international community to come to Greece’s aid. To his surprise, Sir Alistair Tancred advised his PM against such aid, which represented the first strike against Tancred and LG’s friendship, which was not to survive the 1920s. Venizelos was desperate to cling to the Smyrna enclave, but found that the British and French were distracted and more interested in propping up the Hussein Bin Ali’s Arabian Kingdom than in helping out. The insurgency led by Prince Nawwar Sharif took some time to eliminate, and it wasn’t until the late 1920s that Bin Ali’s regime was believed safe.

Considering these distractions, it was only once his government fell, and Venizelos went into exile in Paris in late 1922, that Europe seemed to take notice of the crisis in Turkey. Then, the following year in 1923 as the situation in the Smyrna pocket worsened, an ambitious Italian general attempted to seize the Dodecanese Islands from the ruling Greek administration. The islands were, claimed the Italian general, ripe for seizure, and would provide Italy with unrivalled access over the Aegean. Unfortunately for Italy and for Greece, the incident aroused strong emotions in both countries, and while Orlando was initially horrified, he felt compelled for the sake of national honour to support the Italian general. It was then that Calonder felt compelled to act, setting up the DPI after the crisis was resolved, no thanks to Venizelos who agitated for a campaign of reprisal in Italy until the Italians left the Dodecanese.

In the following year, in 1924, the defeat and destruction of the Greek pocket in Smyrna moved Venizelos to effectively give up the charade. He appealed personally to Calonder and to Foch, Pilsudski, LG and others to reach a peace deal for his country which would resolve the centuries of antagonism between Greece and Turkey once and for all. Venizelos won back some credibility with his sensible climb-down, and he personally advocated that Smyrna should be surrendered, and promised also to meet with Mustafa Kemal Pasha if it proved necessary. The peace which followed was a bitter pill, but a worthwhile sacrifice in Venizelos’ mind. Retiring from politics after this rough experience, Venizelos did give several lectures for Calonder’s DPI in the late 1920s, and he urged the military dictatorship in Greece, under Jon Metaxas to reform, to no avail. Venizelos died in Paris in 1936, shortly after giving his final lecture in the DPI urging peaceful cooperation between Turks and Greeks.

The DPI remained suspicious to the British, who cleaved to their Empire and viewed Calonder’s initiatives as too distinctly European to be of use. This was a shame for LG and his successors, as the increasingly strained relationship with the US would have seriously benefited from some concerted attempts at mediation. Instead of the DPI though, LG and his FS Tancred advocated a deepening of the relationship with the dominions. After attending the first two conferences in Geneva, Tancred made a show of boycotting the third one, when Calonder criticised Foch for staying on as President in 1921. The French were also to boycott the conference of course, for the next few years until Foch’s death, but the British never returned to them as the French did from 1930. Instead, following a suggestion put forward by Prince Ganga Singh, the British Empire hosted its own annual conference, which became something of a competitor to the conference in Geneva.

This so-called Empire congress, hosted in London on St George’s Day, 23rd April also became something of a pageant, where ostentatious displays of wealth and pomp by the dominions were encouraged. In its first iteration in April 1921, nothing much of consequence was discussed, and it seemed in many respects like a reunion from the recent peace conference. The one exception was SA’s Louis Botha, who died shortly after the peace conference was concluded, in August 1919. As time went by thought, and the political ramifications of the Anglo-American competition became more apparent, talk of collective security and alliance became more common. Within the decade, the Empire Congress was less about showing off, and more about pooling information and resources among the Empire’s component parts. Increasingly as well, the cold war with America became too dominant a problem to ignore. American naval expansion and her conclusion of several treaties with European powers troubled British policymakers, but they also spooked the Canadians and Newfoundlanders.

In the April 1936 Empire Congress meeting – held in the aftermath of the crises in Europe which had dominated the early 1930s – a petition from the Newfoundland and Canadian delegations made it plain that something would have to change. The message was a simple one – Britain must not make its American dominions choose between London or Washington, especially since London was so far away from the North American frontline in the event of war. Peace activists in Canada and Newfoundland were adamant that the US and Britain held far too much in common to ever come to blows, and were in fact natural allies. The appeal moved British statesmen to consider something radical, and in late August 1936, the British declared checkmate in the naval race, with a striking deal.

In return for concessions in Africa and Syria, and a guarantee of French territory along the Rhine frontier, the French agreed to pool their naval resources with those of the British, even placing their navy under the command of a British admiral. This deal was made in return for the British Army’s promise to march under the command of a French general in the event of war. With this significant arrangement, the British and French governments signified their commitment to defend the other, and it greatly bolstered the sense of security which London felt. ‘Paris evens the odds’, was how the Times described the development, and British policymakers seemed to agree, passing the Statute of Westminster in 1937, just before the 14th annual Empire Congress was held. This Statute had the effect of greatly increasing the constitutional freedom of the dominions, granting the rights to dominion governments to effectively ignore laws made in London if they were viewed as incompatible.

Predictably perhaps, this granted Sean T. O’Kelly a fantastic opportunity to make good his promises to dismantle the Anglo-Irish links, one step at a time. At the time of writing, O’Kelly remains committed to bringing Ireland out of the Empire, and returning full sovereignty to the island. With considerable American support, and the tacit support of other dominions, it appears as though the lure of a republic may well be within the grasp of O’Kelly’s All-Ireland Party within a decade. Other dominions are not so eager to remove themselves from the British orbit. Sir Robert Borden, premier of Canada attended the Empire Congress as Canada’s representative every year until his death in 1937. Borden had been kept busy in the meanwhile with his presidency of Queen’s University, Ontario, but he retired from Canadian political life shortly after returning home from the peace conference in 1920. By that point, he had been premier of Canada for nearly a decade, and felt due a rest.

Borden’s experience at the peace conference imbued within him a deep respect for international law and the importance of democracy. He was therefore disappointed to note Foch’s clinging to power, and Britain’s tacit support of his undemocratic regime. Uniquely among the peacemakers, Borden did not confine himself merely to attending the Empire Congress, he also attended the Annual Congress in Geneva, and was an enthusiastic speaker at the DPI. In the latter organisation, Borden can be credited with bringing an international flavour to the Institute, as he was the first statesman outside of Europe to speak there, in 1928. His performance, wherein he warned about the dangers of war due to misunderstanding and miscommunication, was well-received, and is even credited with leading to a momentary détente in 1929-30, when the British were distracted by the Bavarian crisis.

Thereafter, Borden joined with William Antrobus Griesbach to call for an end to the Anglo-American cold war, and in 1933, Borden made use of his popularity to found the Anglo-American League for Peace, which sought to host speakers from both countries to demonstrate the commonality which both sides shared. On one speech held in late 1934, at the height of tensions over Danzig and general global misery at the deterioration of the world economy and the prospects for democracy, Major General Griesbach gave the speech of his life during the AALFP’s second gathering. Griesbach’s speech began by underlining the severe threats to democracy which an Anglo-American war would represent, and he insisted that there could be no winner in the struggle ‘the only real winner’, Griesbach declared ‘would be apathy; apathy for democracy, for civilisation, and for the good governance which these two nations had for so long espoused.’

An unnamed, unofficial international tide of opinion set against an Anglo-American war followed, and helped the AALFP to host additional conferences. In 1938, the AALFP merged with the DPI, serving as its unofficial American wing, and greatly improving the standing of both organisations in the process. Griesbach served as the de facto head of this exciting new initiative for peace, undermined only very recently by events in Russia. Sadly, only a few months before writing, Griesbach passed away in January 1945. Griesbach’s death was marked at this year’s Empire Congress, where Arthur McColville, representing NFD, underlined the late Major General’s pivotal role in promoting Anglo-American cooperation. It was high time, McColville then urged, that a true resolution to the Anglo-American hostility be found, whatever the price. The election of Clement Atlee’s Labour government in 1942, and its focus on ambitious domestic plans such as social welfare meant that Britain was in an ideal position to consider productive peace talks. As of writing, these talks have yet to be hosted, but both sides remain more open to dialogue than at any point in their recent history.

With the separation of the NFD and Canadian dominions, Arthur McColville’s political legacy was secured among his fellow Newfoundlanders even had he not become premier of the country within a year of his return. McColville attempted to retain a measure of neutrality in the Anglo-American dispute, and with the help of Borden, formed a powerful third block. Accused thereafter by LG of disloyalty, McColville published the widely praised ‘In Defence of Anglo-American Exceptionalism’ in 1926, which served as the bible for those caught in the middle of the messy divorce. Within the tract, McColville argued for a lasting alliance among London and Washington, and cooperation in Europe. He maintained a deft balance, defending the Pact of Cartagena for the stability it granted the French and Spanish regimes, and defending Foch’s regime as well, which is why it remains somewhat controversial twenty years later.

McColville was not quite brave enough to pull a Borden, and attend Calonder’s Annual Congress in Geneva in addition to London’s Empire Congress, but his political views were never obscure. Upon the news of the Statute of Westminster being signed in 1937, McColville led the debate in St John’s over whether NFD should simply declare its independence, and forge ahead on its own. ‘Should we take our chances with the wind, with the salt, with the sea?’ His now famous article in The Times asked. The article was incredibly important for explaining to British audiences what the position of NFD was, and the dispositions of those parties within the country who advocated for or against complete independence. ‘NFD’s greatest fear’, McColville wrote, ‘is to lose its unique identity, to be subsumed beneath the waves of its neighbours, to be forgotten, un-mourned, and to have our record of service to civilisation cast aside.’

To demonstrate his seriousness to preserving NFD’s uniqueness, McColville advocated sending Owen Lind to speak at the Annual Congress in Geneva, in November 1940. By that point, McColville had lost a great deal of weight, and would shortly succumb to cancer. Owen Lind, the man who had followed McColville to NFD in spring 1919, would serve thereafter as McColville’s unofficial disciple. McColville passed away in February 1941, having resigned from the premiership of NFD only the previous summer. On several occasions, McColville had petitioned the parliament at St John’s, ‘pick someone else, gentlemen, I am merely a citizen of this land, and I cannot be expected to carry this burden any longer’, to which, according to legend, one of the men in the assembly called out, ‘But Sir, what harm is just one more day?’

Needless to say, a cult of personality far too extensive grew up around McColville during his lifetime, which has only grown in size in the few years since his death. Currently, work is being done on a statue of McColville, to stand in front of St John’s city council. Reportedly, Owen Lind has also raised funds for a statue of McColville walking towards the port, and pointing his cane towards Europe. The inscription on the statue reads ‘follow me Newfoundland, follow me and see the world.’ Innumerable parks and streets were renamed in his honour in the months after his death, and Owen Lind recently declared his intention to contest the premiership, after serving in the background as a skilled civil servant and good friend of McColville for many years. One imagines that the story of this windswept, foggy corner of North America has not been completed quite yet.

An examination of the fates of these characters cannot fail to address, however briefly, arguably the most tragic character of all, Dmitri Rabotnik, the enormously tall Russian who so enamoured his hosts during the peace conference. Rabotnik, the record shows, has not been heard from since 1923, when he and several allies determined that the time was right to move to Moscow, and see for themselves what the condition of the country was. Ever since the assassination of Lenin, it has been said, the actual state of Russia has been incredibly difficult to determine. Upon Lenin’s assassination, as expected, various factions within the Bolshevik camp began agitating for control, among them Leon Trotsky, Mikhail Kalinin and a relative unknown by the name of Josef Stalin, better known for his failure to halt the advance of the Whites at Tsaritsyn in spring 1919. Stalin would be eliminated from this race first, having had no opportunity to establish his power base, and Kalinin suffered a similar fate. Trotsky’s supporters proclaimed him chairman in early 1920, but shortly thereafter, the puzzle begins to utterly confound the historian.

It seems that Trotsky’s plans for the country were based less on practical application and more on ideology, and rendered the country utterly disunited. Determined to spread Bolshevism across Europe, and convinced that revolution was guaranteed, Trotsky does not appear to have planned for a more severe challenge to his authority from within the White faction. Indeed, as the Reds had fought over the Bolshevik Crown, the Whites had made great progress in the Crimea and from Siberia. With Finnish help, the White even managed to seize St Petersburg in late 1920, and while this was a cause for celebration for the likes of Rabotnik and his allies, it soon became apparent that not much had changed – the two factions were still not strong enough to decisively defeat the other, and under these circumstances, it seemed that the RCW would go on forever. Facing this detestable situation, Rabotnik determined to make his way towards Moscow in spring 1923 and make some effort in negotiating a proper lasting peace for the aching Russian country.

To date, more than twenty years later, Rabotnik’s fate and the fate even of Trotsky remains unclear. What is certain is that beyond the borders of Ukraine, a wild morass of warring peoples and states seem to live. Last year in 1944, a greying, bearded individual claiming to be an envoy of the Bolshevik government appeared in Warsaw. When, in their excitement, the Polish government brought him before the Sejm’s leading politicians for questioning, the mysterious man blew himself up, killing some thirty people and wounding four others. Some believe that this martyr, for whatever cause he died, was in fact the missing Rabotnik, while others have brushed this aside. Conspiracy theorists have also developed the theory that the martyr was one PL, the assassin who murdered Lenin, only to disappear.

Perhaps, in a kind of poetic justice, the Reds had captured and turned Lebowa only to send him back to Warsaw, to murder the people who had facilitated his infamous mission. This story, while certainly the more exciting, has not been confirmed. Whatever the identity of the martyr, the incident predictably enraged the Poles, and the current government vows to resolve the Russian crisis once and for all. In the recent months, a call for volunteers to join an expedition into Russia have been put out by the Second Polish Commonwealth. Critics and sceptics alike note that the appeal is eerily similar to that which preceded the doomed CD, launched more than 25 years before. The incident drew attention to the fact that Russia remains a serious threat to Western Civilisation and the peace which followed the GW. It led to a doubling down in the commitments of the Eastern Association bloc, and King Charles of Hungary, now in his late 50s, has pledged to do all in his power to avenge the Polish losses.

At the time of writing, the expedition into Russia has yet to be launched, but one hopes and prays for a successful resolution of the Russian threat. Whether Russia belongs in the concert of civilised nations or not, one cannot say for certain. Yet, considering the fact that they managed to construct peace treaties for Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Germany after the GW, one is reminded not to underestimate the peacemakers. Furthermore, after bringing the Anglo-American cold war mostly to an end, healing the rift over Transylvania, mediating disputes the world over, and creating democratic peace organisations which are built to last, it is clear that even while the Russian challenge may be colossal, few can stand before the might of the peacemakers and fail to be moved. With the greatest peace-making brains on the case, the resolution of Russia is surely only a matter of time…

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And that dear delegates is the end of our last episode. Wow, what a ridiculous story ay? What do you think of this world we made, rocked by crisis in the early 1930s, dominated by an ambitious Poland in the East, buoyed by democratic peace initiatives in Central Europe, a Cordon Sanitaire propping up the tired defence of Europe against the Bolshevik tide. The mystery of Russia was a common theme of the conference in real life as much as during our game, so I saw no reason for that to change so long as the focus was taken off her. Europeans had bigger fish to fry, but they snapped to attention once Russians cruelly re-entered their consciousness in 1944. Perhaps, if our narrative had continued to 1960, we might see a conclusion to the Russian story, we might even see that Second GW everyone is talking about. As it stood though, by 1945, I felt confident in this world building to note the expertise of the peacemakers like Calonder, and to play on the genuine dispositions of many of the real life characters you played, who had been given a unique voice thanks to their role in making the peace treaties.

Perhaps in the future, we will return to this world – the sadist in me thinks it’d be cool to return to the end of the SGW, where it’s time to make peace again, and the world we have created informs all the decision making. That’d be going very far into the realm of alternative historical zaniness, but there’s something strangely alluring about making these worlds come to life, and speaking of come to life, you have all worked diligently over the last six months to do exactly that for our humble game here. I have often been asked by generally distressed relatives how I developed the concept for this game, and where it came from. It came from several sources, such as my love for RPGs, my desire to increase fan engagement with the podcast as much as the era, and too many late nights staring at the ceiling, my brain never switching properly off.

In fact, that latter sentence can really summarise the last six months or so of work for me. Not switching off, and balancing what feels at times like three full time jobs, between this game, Versailles and, oh yeah, my actual job lecturing and learning how to be a lecturer, was not an easy task. It explains why I got so stressed, why I only finished writing and researching Versailles in early June, when an old plan I found the other day said I’d be finished it in February. Of course, it isn’t all this game’s fault, mostly it was the lecturing, and getting to grips with something so completely unlike what I'm used to. Any one of these things, by themselves would be enough to keep me more than occupied enough, but I was enough of a dope to take on the three of them at once. I remember when presenting the game idea to Anna in November, she was horrified, not because it was a terrible idea, but because it would be far too much for me – and this was before I was offered those extra hours in Uni which made everything so incredibly difficult.

So yes, I underestimated the workload, and it came back to bite me, but this isn’t a pity party – I did have a lot of fun, even if I was busier and more stressed than I’ve been before. I think Anna even found a grey hair! The problem was that being this busy meant my original vision for this game suffered. To begin with, I hadn't imagined that you guys would all be willing to interact with each other, crazy as that sounds. I thought that each week, I would talk with you over the FB group, and I would gather your responses via the voting system. Mad as it sounds, the idea that you create loads of FB chat groups to keep the narrative going outside of the show didn’t even occur to me. The private negotiations amongst yourselves and the development of schemes also didn’t register. That you shattered my expectations with this game is a point which deserves to be said, but it also explains why we took a very long time to reach anything that could be defined as rules for the game, and even now, when we’re at the end, these rules seem a little bit, shall we say, unruly.

In fact, it’d be fair to say that things became so active and so engaging, I had to take a bit of a step back. I had to delete the FB messenger app off my phone, not because you were all annoying me, but because so long as people were able to contact me 24/7, I was unable to actually switch off, and switching off is so important when your home is your office, and your job is personally important to you. It is underrated, though it is becoming more well known as more people are able to get their ‘dream job’ so to speak and work from home, that you do need to take care of yourself, and you do need to be careful about how much time you spend knee deep in your projects. I don’t want to talk too much about the stress element, because I go into that a bit in the Versailles retrospective episode, out on 10th July, but at the height of my workload, an average week looked as follows.

Monday – prepare for lecturing the next day. Tuesday – 9-6 in university, my longest and grossest day by far. Wednesday, the only day I had for the podcast, which in this case meant recording, researching and writing Versailles. Thursday, half day in university, half day doing Versailles, recording and other bits I missed. Friday, university in the morning, come home and try to write the DG, normally fail and announce it’ll be late, as I pick it up on Saturday. Feel bad about only having written one Versailles script in the week, so try and write another one on Sunday. Get given out to by Anna for being a workaholic, lather rinse repeat the next week. Of course, when University increased in activity, like when I had to make exam papers for instance, the workload only increased. All in all, this is a roundabout way of me saying, I am sorry I wasn’t active enough in this game and that I didn’t have the time to give you all the attention you deserve. If we ever do this again, I certainly know what I’d do differently.

And that begs the question which I’ve been asked an awful lot – will I do this again? Certainly not for several more years, and if I do it, I will make sure I actually have the time to do it justice. I am currently imagining a Westphalia version of what we’ve done here, the main reason being it’d be a good way to say goodbye to the TYW, and because it wouldn’t be happening for about 4 years, so it’s long into the future. I will never say never, but I have learned my lesson, not to promise to do things when I have no real idea what I’m getting myself into. When you get so overwhelmed that you can’t even marvel at or appreciate the significance and greatness of what’s developing right under your nose, then you know you’ve done it wrong. I wish I had time to appreciate you all more and spend more quality time with you as delegates, let alone role play with you as the mysterious chairman, that’s my biggest regret for this game, but at least it’s something that is easy enough to fix.

I have to say it again then, a huge message of thanks is due to all of you that joined in this game, whenever you did join it, because it is literally true that this game would have been nothing without you. In fact, it is because you all exceeded my expectations that the game was as fun as it was. I know some of you rubbed each other the wrong way, but I’d like to think that in the end, we all had a newfound respect for each other. If nothing else, it is impressive that you get angry on behalf of the virtual characters you’ve created, for an imagined slight that another virtual character inflicted upon you, in a virtual world which does not exist. Perhaps now you know what it’s like to be a peacemaker, and certainly, some of you deserve the plaudits you receive. That’s right, it’s time we got into the reason you’re still here – the DG awards. A reminder of the categories. First, we have most productive or effective delegate; second, most irritating delegate; third, best death; fourth, best plot point and fifth, favourite chat group. The results are in, and are as follows…

For the most productive delegate, tied in third place, we have Paderewski and VO. Tied in second place, we have Bruce Pug and Arthur McColville. In first place though, the runaway winner by far with double the vote, is Sir Alistair Tancred. Congratulations sir Alistair, and thanks to Kyle Walters for playing the game with such a ruthless determination to keep Britain great, no matter what those mean Americans might think of you. Any suggestions as to what we should give Sir Alistair as a reward, I’m all ears. Now we move to the category which has understandably evoked the most debate, the most irritating delegate. Interestingly, in third place, we have Sir Alistair Tancred! You’re not the first to spillover into two categories, as we’ll see. Second, we have, oh dear, Genuris Dinglebrush, jeez that’s a bit harsh guys, the man is dead. In first place, with more than double the vote, in a result which will probably surprise no one, we have VO/BF. Congratulations to the player Moshe for getting under people’s skin as only he can, and for making the game interesting/exhausting with his support of schemes like IFTA and the undermining of the very innocent King Hussein Bin Ali of Arabia.

For our best death, in third place, we have two delegates in a draw. The first is Frederick Bronski, who you may remember as responsible for shooting up the HT and forcing us all to relocate to the HZ, not to mention responsible for shooting down Mihaly Karolyi and Joseph Doherty. Well done Bronski, who is played by Zachary Gibbs, and who soon found his footing as Antonio Maura. The other third place fellow we have is Pawel Lebowa, that mysterious creature who everyone thought was dead, but who went on to murder Lenin and then vanish, like a legend, into thin air. Well done PL, played by, PL, who has since gone on to play Pilsudski. In second place, we have the gone but not forgotten HVH, that German statesman who was torn to pieces by the German mob, after they found out he had approved the Western peace treaty. Thanks to Adam Vonahme for playing as Horton, and for switching it up afterwards to play as Premier Poincare. This means that our winner for best death is something of a foregone conclusion – Genuris Dinglebrush, congratulations for having the best death of all, as you were vindicated in the ruins of Kiev, dying in the arms of your Australian friend, and even having a film made in your honour. You made fictional Belgian audiences cry, and you also forcibly ingratiated yourself on our hearts, one gaff at a time. A huge thanks to player Chris Taylor for being such a good sport with the Dinglebrush character, and going above and beyond with the silliness. At one point, I believe you accidently voted twice, in true Dinglebrush form, so thanks again, and Congratulations!

For our next category, the best plot point, we have something of a chasm of opinion going on. In third place, perhaps disconcertingly, you decided that making the actual peace treaties was your favourite plot point. In second place, the creation of IFTA, the CDA and Pact of Cartagena was your best plot point, which is to be expected, as you’ve essentially changed history with these. Perhaps surprisingly then, in first place, we have the destruction of the Paris conference during the riots, and the relocation to London, as the best plot point of all by a country mile, so hey, congrats to the ABH for hosting us when the rest of the world probably thought we were all cursed by that point. An honourable mention of course must go to the moment when everyone just got a little bit moist, only to dry themselves off the following week.

Finally, the favourite chat group of the delegates, was by far and away the ABH group, previously known as the HZ and before that the HT chat. It was here that much of the magic happened, and people played in as well as out of character. It was the best place to announce a scheme, invite someone for a drink or just give out to someone for their impudence, and for the last six months, it has also served as the place where I announced, normally a few days late, that the new episode was out. Sometimes it got a bit clogged, but just like the real-life ABH – real life? – we love it anyway, and this leads to my next point. Now that the awards have all been handed out and our narrative has wrapped up, you may be wondering – what next? It’s a reasonable question, and one we can answer by saying I hope you’ll stick around, in this ABH chat group, where we can all stay in touch. For those of you new to pledging on Patreon, who only joined up for this game, you are welcome to cancel your pledge if you wish, and to stay in this chat group. If you’re interested though, we do have some quality stuff to get through still with the SC, and with PINYL in September, so maybe you’ll stick around for those Patreon exclusives?

So that’s it. Over the last six plus months this game has been a staple of WDF programming, and it has gradually become part of my weekly routine. I won’t be sad to have that Friday and Saturday back every week, but I will be sad to have that regular engagement come to an end. So, don’t be a stranger, and make sure and spread the word about the mess we made here. People cannot get enough of their alternative history, so I’d wager even those who have no idea how this game works will be interested to see how this world differed from our own. Did we do a better job in the end? Well I’ll let you be the judge dear delegates. At the very least, by 1945, according to my calculations, there had been no terrible apocalypse, just as there was no terrifying USSR to rule over the ashes. To me, that seems like a pretty good result. But that’s got to be it dear delegates. It’s been a pleasure and an honour to host this game, but it’s time we moved on, and bid farewell to the oak tree lined boulevards of the ABH. Until next time we meet then, my name is Zack, I have been your DG for the last six months and several hours, and this has been the final episode of the DG. Thanks, and pat yourselves on the back for listening and playing one last time, and I’ll be seeing you all soon.