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## **Why was Keynes opposed to reparations and Carthaginian peace?**

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### **Abstract**

*The Economic Consequences of the Peace* was first published in 1919, and since then, changed the economic discourse surrounding reparations and Carthaginian peace. This paper specifies how three elements hinted at in the introduction of *the Economic Consequences of the Peace* – social classes, national sovereignty, and the international political system – can explain Keynes' assessment of Carthaginian peace. The paper analyzes the optimality of reparations in the context of these three elements.

I show that in the situation of a hegemonic country, all classes - the working class as well as the elite - opt for no reparations. But, in a balance of power context, wherein no single actor on the international scene possesses hegemonic status, the working class will choose harsh reparations, while the transnational elite and Keynes will not.

Keywords: Balance of Power, Carthaginian Peace, Hegemony, Reparations, National Sovereignty.

JEL: B17, B27, E12, F30.

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## I. Introduction

*The Economic Consequences of the Peace* was first published in 1919, and since then, changed the economic discourse surrounding reparations and Carthaginian peace. The entire book is a thoughtful *plaidoirie* against the peace treaty signed in Versailles. It contains some 180 pages of data, calculations, and projections, reshuffling the data as a deck of cards in the hands of a virtuoso player. Keynes' conclusion is cut and dried: Reparations are bad.

The book begins in another sphere altogether. The first two chapters do not even mention reparations. Why? Recall the movies based on the books of Agatha Christie: The movie begins with one or two frames that appear unrelated to the rest of the story. It is these frames that hold the solution to the mystery: a seeming digression, that contains the explanation for what happens at the end. If you missed this first frame, you missed the entire plot of the movie. Likewise, if you seek to understand why Keynes claims that "the purpose of [his] book is to show that the Carthaginian peace is not practically right or possible." (p.18), then focus on the first two chapters of his book.

What ideas do we find in the first two chapters, which are essential for understanding reparations and the Carthaginian peace? Three main subjects are developed in these two chapters: three subjects that are hinted at in the introduction and that are essential to understanding reparations and the Carthaginian peace: (i) the 'International Political system', (ii) the notions of 'social identity' and 'national sovereignty', and (iii) the fact that 'social identities' differ for the various social classes, i.e., the elite versus the working class.

About the international political system, Keynes made a clear dichotomy between periods of rivalries and periods of internationalization.<sup>1</sup> About national sovereignty and power, Keynes stressed that the notion of nation and nationalism enter the economic realm:<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the difference between social classes is crucial in Keynes writings. The first page of the introduction begins with this statement: "All classes alike thus build their plans, the rich to spend more and save less, the poor to spend more and work less." (p.2), and thereafter, "Thus the bluff is discovered; the laboring classes may be no longer willing to forgo so largely and the capitalists classes no longer confident of the

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<sup>1</sup> He wrote: "The projects and politics of militarism and imperialism, of racial and cultural rivalries, of monopolies, restrictions, and exclusion, which were to play the serpent to this paradise, were little more than the amusements of his daily newspaper, and appeared to exercise almost no influence at all on the ordinary course of social and economic life, the internationalization of which was nearly complete in practice" (p. 6).

<sup>2</sup> Nations are real things, of whom you love one and feel for the rest indifference – or hatred. The glory of the nation you love is a desirable end – but generally to be obtained at your neighbour's expense. The politics of power are inevitable.... the balance of power in one's own interests (p.17).

future, may seek to enjoy more fully their liberties of consumption so long as they last, and thus precipitate the hour of their confiscation. (p.11).

These three elements – the international political system, national sovereignty, and the differences between the elite and the working class are the hints given by Keynes in the introduction and which enable understanding of his position on reparations.

This paper's purpose is to indicate how these three elements can explain Keynes's assessment on Carthaginian peace. About the international political system, and the differences between social classes, I show that when there is a hegemonic state, it is optimal for all classes to ask for no reparations: the working class as well as the elite find free trade to be optimal, and there is no need for harsh reparations.

However, when countries are in a 'balance-of-power' system, then the elite and the working class have differing optimal policies. While, for the working class, it is optimal to claim for harsh reparations, the transnational elite find it optimal to reduce reparations.

Is Keynes on the side of the working class or of the elite? Keynes exhibits in his writing a 'transnational elite' assessment, and he chooses to reduce reparations since identity and nationalistic values are for him no more than "non-sense" despite his having lived during a period of balance of power.<sup>3</sup>

The reasons of the difference between the view of the elites and the working class about reparations is their difference in social identity. The working class cares about national sovereignty, because it gives them a national identity, while the elite are part of the transnational elite, and do not need a national identity. So, Keynes who is part of the intellectual transnational elite, chooses to reduce reparations since identity and nationalistic values are not important for him.

It is interesting to note that in France, Clemenceau takes the view of the working class, which cares about national sovereignty and therefore claims harsh reparations. Keynes believed in a top-down flow of ideas, while Clemenceau understood that the rage of the working class burst from the bottom-up. And indeed Keynes's remarks about Clemenceau and the French are harsh:

"He [Clemenceau] had one illusion – France, and one disillusion – mankind... His principle for the peace can be expressed simply. In the first place, he was a foremost believer in the view of German psychology that the German understands and can understand nothing but intimidation (p.16). ...The future life of Europe was not their concern; its means of livelihood was not their anxiety. Their preoccupations related to frontiers, nationalities, to the balance of power, to imperial aggrandisements, to the future enfeeblement of a strong and dangerous enemy (p. 27).

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<sup>3</sup> See also Mantoux (1946), Katiforis (2004), and Binkley (1929).

Therefore, Keynes's views differ from those of Clemenceau and of the working class of France that cares about national sovereignty. So, the main differences between Keynes and Clemenceau are in their belonging to identification with the elite or to the working class. Keynes feels part of the elite, while Clemenceau cares about reparations, which are linked to nationalism and 'national sovereignty'.

But why do the workers care so much about national sovereignty? Because it gives them a national identity, while the elite are part of the transnational elite, and do not need a national identity. This is the topic of the next section.

## II. National Sovereignty and National Identity

One of the main shifts in the history of economic theory lay in the introduction of Behavioral Economics in mainstream theory, which opened the floodgates to many other innovative lines of thinking. In consequence, it not only became 'kosher' to speak of culture and psychology in the economic realm, it became 'in'.<sup>4</sup>

Sociology also slowly penetrated the field of economic theory. In 2000, Akerloff and Kranton introduced 'identity' as an element affecting economic choices. In the field of social psychology, Tajfel developed the 'theory of social identity'. He contended that individuals have an inherent tendency to categorize themselves into one or more "in-groups", building a part of their identity based on membership in that group and enforcing boundaries with other groups.

The social identity theory posits the fact that a person's self-concept and self-esteem derive not only from personal identity and accomplishments, but from the status and accomplishment of the groups to which s/he belongs (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). In their experiments, they have shown that humans have a need for 'us/them' distinctions. Thus, social identity theory suggests that people identify with groups in such a way as to *maximize positive distinctiveness*.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) have shown that social identity leads to discrimination. When being divided into two groups, and asked to split budgets between the two groups, individuals had the choice between giving \$100 to each member of both groups, or receiving \$50 for each person in their group, but only \$10 to the other group. Most individuals chose the second option. Making the other group worse off is more important than making your group better.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In reference to Temin (1997): "Is it Kosher to talk about Culture?"

<sup>5</sup> Moreover, it was shown that those who had been allowed to engage in intergroup discrimination had higher self-esteem than those who had not been given the opportunity to discriminate (Lemyre and Smith 1985, Oakes and Turner 1980).

In all their experiments, group selection was chosen almost randomly, and in some of the experiments, it was chosen completely randomly by tossing a coin. Yet, the results were significant: human beings have a tendency to identify with a group.

These results were for a random selection of groups, so what happens when the group has some sort of common trait or culture, such as being white? Or being French?

Metzl (2019) discussed discrimination between whites and non-whites. He shows that individuals belonging to a given group can make decisions that are not “rationally” productive for them, just to feel part of the group and to separate themselves from the other group. An example he gives is that young white individuals belonging to the working class who were sick and in need of Medicare, chose “to be broke, but not to let the other group get it for free”.<sup>6</sup> They are willing to make choices that harm themselves in order to maintain their class identity (see also Reicher, 2015).

Another clear grouping is the nation itself. One speaks today about the identity of being American: While “Being an American is an element of the self-concept of most Americans”, it leads to discrimination and to in-group favoritism.

What are the ‘markers’ of social identity of a nation? Following Metzl (2019), the main elements defining working-class identity are the symbols of nationalism, which alongside sovereignty, is always part of the identity of the working class. Thus national sovereignty and power influence the sense of well-being of the working class.

However, social identity is not a value assimilated across society in a one-size-fits-all manner. Within each nation-state, the various in-groups - especially the working class and the elite - do not share the same identity.

The literature on 20<sup>th</sup> century elites pinpoints the interconnection of all elites, and their transnational values.<sup>7</sup> Weber (2008) showed that at the beginning of the 20th century, the elite of Germany and England had connections between them, and shared the same values despite the tensions between the countries, and acted to improve Anglo-German relations: “The British and German ruling elites tried to ease the tensions between the two empires.” (p. 49).<sup>8</sup>

Weber showed that militarist nationalism and European transnationalism were not mutually exclusive concepts: militarist nationalism appealed to the working class and

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<sup>6</sup> Medicare might improve life for all groups, but as it would improve the well-being of the non-white group more, working class ‘white’ Americans actively oppose it.

<sup>7</sup> See Brezis and Temin (1999, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Indeed Weber brings Britain and Germany's preeminent universities and playgrounds for political and social elites back to life to reconsider whether any truth is left in the old contrast between British liberalism and German illiberalism.

Ciampani and Tolomeo (2015) follow a similar reasoning about the elite: “In effect, the research avenue that focuses on the meetings of the European elites aims to account for the progressive “amalgam” of the European elites’ national groups, their coming together both to initiate the processes to form new generations of élites, and to broaden (or restrict) the means of access to decision-making” (pp. 10-11).

transnationalism to the elites. He stressed that the elite of various countries feel related by their culture, and feel themselves to be part of the same group - the transnational elite of Europe. They emphasize humanistic, universal values and do not relate to values such as militarism, power and nationalism.

Therefore, we obtain a dual social identity.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, the working class of each country cares about national sovereignty and power. On the other, the elite in each country want a globalized economy with interdependence between countries. The transnational elite identity values internationalism, humanism, and universalism.

And to which group did Keynes belong? Did his feelings pulled towards the working class? or towards the elite? As he mentioned in *Essays in Persuasion*, commenting about Marxism (1931):

How can I adopt a creed which, preferring the mud to the fish, exalts the boorish proletariat above the bourgeois and the intelligentsia who, with whatever faults, are the quality in life and surely carry the seeds of all human advancement? Even if we need a religion, how can we find it in the turbid rubbish of the Red bookshops? It is hard for an educated, decent, intelligent son of Western Europe to find his ideals here, unless he has first suffered some strange and horrid process of conversion which has changed all his values." (p. 298)

This dual social identity leads to a dual view on trade policy and reparations. On the one hand, the working class of each country cares about national sovereignty and power. On the other, the elite in each country want a globalized economy with interdependence between countries. The transnational elite identity values internationalism, humanism, and universalism. In the next section, we analyze the relationship between reparations and national sovereignty in the perspective of the international political system. In other words, we analyze why in periods of hegemony, the elites as well as the working class have in common their views on trade policy and reparations, while in periods of balance of power, their views differ. We start with a historical perspective on these relationships.

### **III. Reparations and the International political System**

The historical record of the past 350 years shows cycles in which there are periods where a nation-state is dominant and has leadership, while there are periods of 'balance of power' in which there is no dominant state, and many nations are similar in their power.

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<sup>9</sup> See also Brezis and Hellier (2017).

We should of course first ask if in 1919, at the time of the Treaty of Versailles, is the international system in a hegemonic or a 'balance of power' system?

The data are presented in Figures 1-3. From 1850 to 1910, the Western world lives in a system of *Pax Britannica* – the UK is the leader of the world. The UK has leapfrogged the Dutch, and is the hegemonic power. However, after 1910, the UK is not anymore a leader country (see Figure 1).

After 1945, we are in a period of *Pax Americana*, the US is the leader of the world, and the US has leapfrogged the UK. From 1945 until 2010, the US is the hegemonic power of the world (see Figure 2).<sup>10</sup>

But, during the period 1910-19, the data display that GDP per capita among the main powers are very similar, (although Germany has higher GDP than France from 1900 and on). This is a pure 'balance of power' system. There is no leader countries, and this situation will stay so until 1945, the end of World War II (see Figure 3). So, the international system shows cycles in leadership.

In almost complete correlation with the cycles in leadership, the historical record of the past 350 years shows cycles in trade policy. These two cycles are correlated: Hegemony is related to periods of free trade while protectionism occurs in periods of balance of power.

To give some examples, the most notable change in policy is the Navigation Act of 1651, which is widely held to have represented the end of effective Dutch commercial hegemony in Europe and to have marked the beginning of the British challenge.

By the end of the second decade of the 19th century, Britain had set about dismantling its own protectionist apparatus and had initiated an era of free trade which lasted as long as the *Pax Britannica* endured.<sup>11</sup>

And as a last example, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of American power in the pre-World War II years was associated with a succession of protectionist measures, whereas the establishment of American hegemony after the war led to the pursuit of free-trade.<sup>12</sup>

Why this relationship between trade policy and the international system? The relationships between protectionist commercial policy, power, nationalism and balance of power have been explored at some length in the works of a number of political scientists. One of the most widely accepted paradigms linking the structure of the international political system with protectionism is the theory of 'hegemonic stability'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Brezis, Krugman and Tsiddon (1993) present a model explaining endogenously the changes in hegemony, and about the data on the Balance of payments, see Brezis (1995).

<sup>11</sup> Gilpin (1975) writes that: "Britain's interest lay in universal free trade and the removal of all barriers to the exchange of goods."(p.84).

<sup>12</sup> About the end of the American hegemony and "neomercantilism" at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Calleo and Rowland (1973), Cline (1980), and Malmgren (1970).

<sup>13</sup> A precursor is Hirschman (1945); see also Kindleberger (1975), Whitman (1975), Krasner (1976), Keohane and Nye (1977), MacEwan (1978), Keohane (1980), Wallerstein (1980), and Gilpin (1977, 1981).

Kindleberger (1973), following in the footsteps of Frohlich, Oppenheimer and Young (1971), argues that international security is a collective good. Since free trade can arise only in a climate of international security, it is only when some power is dominant enough to enforce security that a regime of free trade will arise. Given the inevitable tendency of weaker states to free-ride on the provision of the collective good by a hegemonic power, the absence of a hegemonic state leads to the erosion of free trade and to the growth of protectionism. Gilpin (1975) writes that "a liberal international economy cannot come into existence and be maintained unless it has behind it the most powerful state(s) in the system.... A liberal economic system is not self-sustaining, but is maintained only through the actions -- initiatives, bargaining, and sanctions of the dominant power(s)."<sup>14</sup>

Another paradigm linking these cycles is the theory of "imperialism of free trade".<sup>15</sup> It purports to explain the development of the world trading system in the presence of a hegemonic power. This theory argues that "the hegemonic power is expected to extend its control -- and the open international trading order-- over local economies by informal or indirect means whenever possible, since this constitutes the cheapest way to create and maintain its predominant position in the world." The link between international political system and economic policy was also emphasized by Skidelsky (2010, 1976).

In conclusion, the literature relating trade policy to the international system is vast. But the theories of 'imperialism of free trade', 'hegemonic stability' or 'collective good' are too general statements. There is a need to pinpoint the essential elements which are the thread between trade policy and the international system. Some of the political scientists stress that in a period of balance of power, keeping with power necessitate to increase foreign reserves.

Already Adam Smith laid out the reasons for increasing foreign reserves in periods of balance of power:

The real wealth or poverty of the country ... would depend altogether upon the abundance or scarcity of those consumable goods. But ... they are obliged to carry on foreign wars, and to maintain fleets and armies in distant countries. This, cannot be done, but by sending abroad money to pay them with; and a nation cannot send much money abroad, unless it has a good deal at home, Every such nation, therefore, must endeavour in time of peace to accumulate gold and silver, that when occasion requires, it may have wherewithal to carry on foreign wars. <sup>16</sup>

Wallerstein (1980) also emphasized the importance of foreign reserves: "control of an adequate bullion stock was... a crucial variable in the struggle between core

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<sup>14</sup> Gilpin (1975), p.85. See also Coleman (1969), and Brezis (2003).

<sup>15</sup> See Gallagher and Robinson (1953), MacDonagh (1962), Moore (1964), Mathew (1968), and Platt (1968, 1973).

<sup>16</sup> Smith (1937), p. 399.



powers."<sup>17</sup> Colbert, much before, also claimed: "trade is the source of public finance and public finance is the vital nerve of war." With more foreign reserves available in the economy, the nation-state could increase its success at war, and even in 'balance of power' system refrain from war. Moreover, Kinder and Hilgemann (1964) note that "the duration of campaigns depended on finances."<sup>18</sup>

In this vein, this paper asserts that the main reason for asking for reparations is the desire to increase foreign reserves in periods of balance of power in order to increase 'national sovereignty' and thus national power. Requesting reparations is one of these means in the hands of a nation to maintain its national sovereignty, especially when the other country is slightly more developed. In periods of hegemony, then, reparations are not necessary, as countries can free-ride on the power of the hegemonic nation-state.

This is the idea developed in the following framework. We focus on periods of balance of power, as it was the case in 1919, when Keynes wrote *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* about reparations. We show that the optimal policy for the elite is different than for the working class, due to the fact that their social identity differ. In order to analyze the effects of reparations, we incorporate in the model these following elements: social identity theory, the concept of national sovereignty for the working class, and the concept of humanism for the transnational elite.

## IV. The Framework

### 4.1 Introduction

*The Economic Consequences of the Peace* was published in 1919, a period of balance of power. In consequence, we will only analyze the case of balance of power, wherein no single actor on the international scene possesses hegemonic status

We focus on the case of France and Germany for describing the model. In Table 1, it is shown that the GDP of Germany is higher than that of France.

This very simple framework will permit to explain why during a period of balance of power, as it was the case in 1919, the working class (and Clemenceau) will choose harsh reparations, while the elite (and Keynes) will not. And the main reason I emphasize in this paper is that it is due to social identity. The social identity of the working class is national identity and national sovereignty. The social identity of the elite is humanism, and internationalism; and they want a globalized economy with interdependence between countries. Therefore, we obtain a dual social identity.

Then, as already hinted in the previous section, we show that the 'markers' of national sovereignty and power are related to foreign reserves, while the 'markers' of

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<sup>17</sup> Wallerstein (1980), p. 277.

<sup>18</sup> Kinder and Hilgemann (1964), p. 253.

internationalism are just increasing investments. Let us start by modelling social identity.

#### 4.2. Social identity of the working class

This model is assuming a duality of social identity: There are two social classes and each class has its own identity, which has an impact on the individual's utility. We start with the working class.

One of the main elements defining the working class is its attachment to symbols of nationalism, as 'national sovereignty' and power. (We use these two notions as equivalent). How national sovereignty and power affects the utility of the working class? We could, of course, introduce national sovereignty directly into the utility function. In this paper, I try a more "subtle" line of modeling.

Following the research presented above, I assume that the working class does not have utility from the size of national sovereignty per se, it is the comparison with the other country which affects utility. If power is less than a required amount in competition with another country, then the utility is affected.

We focus on the case of France and Germany for describing the model. France is country 1, and Germany is country 2. Thus, the country with higher output is country 2. Moreover, France could ask for reparations, since it was a winner at war.

Each country is represented by an individual of the working class, and which faces the following payoffs:

$$V_1 = \begin{cases} c_1 & PW1 \geq PW2 \\ c_1 - K & PW1 < PW2 \end{cases}, \quad (1)$$

Equation (1) presents the utility of a worker in France (country 1). For country 2, it is the same equation, with the suffixes inverted. We define  $c_i$  as the output allocated to consumption. Equation (1) emphasizes that the utility/payoff of a citizen is equal to its utility from consumption (assuming that  $U(C) = C$ ).

The workers care about consumption, but the workers care also about national sovereignty and power (this is their social identity). In other words, the French working class feel 'insulted' by an equivalent quantity of size  $K$  when the power of Germany is greater than the one of France, as it was shown above in the works of Tajnel and Metzl that people feel insulted when the other group gets some more than their own group.

What is the definition of power,  $PW$ ? In Appendix 1, I show that the power of a nation can take the following form:

$$PW_i = \text{Min}(c_i, R_i + y_i - c_i) \quad (2)$$

where  $R_i$  represents the reparations paid by a foreign country (only a country having won a war can ask for reparations), and  $y_i$  is output (see the exact definitions in the appendix).

### 4.3 Objectives and Payoffs for the transnational elite

The transnational elite put the emphasis on humanism, i.e., consumption and economic growth of the world. Moreover, recall that the elite are the individuals who are investing (as underlined by Keynes in the introduction). So the utility function of the elite in country 1 is:

$$V_{E,1} = U(C_E, I) \quad (3)$$

where  $C_E$  is the consumption of the elite, and  $I$  are investments, since the savings of the elite finance the investment of the nation. In their utility, there is no national sovereignty and power.

### 4.4 Equilibrium

In equilibrium, the workers choose  $c$  and  $R$  as to maximize (1). The elite maximize equation (3). Remember that we assume  $y_2 \geq y_1$  (Germany has higher output than France). We get the following proposition.

#### Proposition 1

When countries are in a balance of power regime, with output quite similar, then in the unique equilibrium, the working class (and the politicians listening to the working class) will choose to increase their national power by hoarding foreign reserves until they attain maximum power. In case, one country can ask for reparations, then, the optimal size of reparations is:

$$R_1^* = -R_2^* = (y_2 - y_1)/2 \quad (4)$$

and

$$c_1^* = c_2^* = (y_1 + y_2)/4 \quad (5)$$

The proof is presented in Appendix 2.

## Proposition 2

In a balance of power system, the transnational elite choose not to hoard foreign reserves and not to ask for reparations.

In their utility, there is no national sovereignty so that hoarding foreign reserves are not important, and therefore reparations are not necessary. And since we have:<sup>19</sup>

$$S = I + NX \quad (6)$$

Then, they are better off, when hoarding foreign reserves and reparations are zero.

To conclude, in case of Balance of power, and when one takes into consideration the aspirations of the working class, then it is optimal to ask for harsh reparations. This was the point of view of Clemenceau, in the name of the “people of France”. The optimal size of reparations is given by equation (4). It is interesting to note that the optimal amount of consumption and reparations is such that all countries have equal consumption.

The transnational elite put the emphasis on humanism, i.e., consumption and economic growth of the world. Moreover, recall that the elite are the individuals who are investing (as underlined by Keynes in the introduction). Hoarding foreign reserves is not optimal, and therefore the amount of optimal reparations is zero.

## V. Conclusion

There is no better conclusion of Keynes' *Economic Consequences of the Peace* than to quote Skidelsky:

Keynes was also a product of the old Europe, of which Britain was an integral part. He was brought up by a German governess, married a Russian ballerina, and was at home in France and Italy. He looked forward to an era of small political and cultural units combined into 'larger, and more or less closely knit economic units.(2010, 191-192)... Keynes was staking the claim of the economist to be Prince. All other forms of rule were bankrupt. The economist's vision of welfare, conjoined to a new standard of technical excellence, were the last barriers to chaos, madness and retrogression. (1983, p. 384)

This paper seeks to explain the disagreements between Keynes and Clemenceau. I show that the various in-groups' national identities between the working class and the elite explain their opposing views on reparations. For the working class, national sovereignty is essential, despite “the apparent inability of the intelligentsia to

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<sup>19</sup> Government expenditures are included in the maximization of the working class.

understand and appreciate power-problems". This difference in identity can explain why the optimal policy for the working class differs from that of the elite.

This paper has stressed that in the context of a hegemonic country, all classes, the working class and the elite opt for no reparations. But, in a "balance of power" situation, wherein no single actor on the international scene possesses hegemonic status, the working class will choose harsh reparations, while the elite will not.

What, then, does this paper teach us? There are two main conclusions: The first is that if we ask why 1945 is so different from 1918; and why the peace treaties after 1945 differ from those of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, the answer is obvious.

Because in 1945, there was a hegemonic state - the US - while in 1919, the world was in a balance of power system. As this paper has shown, this fact changes countries' entire perspective on reparations and free trade. Under a hegemonic system, there is no "Clemenceau" to ask 'in the name of the people' for harsh reparations, in order to enhance national identity. In periods of hegemony, there is room for coordination, for the UN, for the GATT, for the Marshall plan; There is no room for harsh reparations.

Being part of the intellectual transnational elite, Keynes understood this already in 1919. He fought for a treaty of reconciliation. But Clemenceau could not accept this. On behalf of the French working class, Clemenceau cared about national sovereignty and national identity, for which the French were willing to pay the price. They did not know that the price will be so high.

The second main conclusion of this paper is that the small framework presented in the previous section helps us to understand the present. Indeed, the hegemony of the US extended from 1945 until 2008. Since then, we are back in a balance of power between the US and China. From 2008 and on, the world has entered a new balance of power system. Therefore, the working class in many countries oppose free trade.

I hope this paper shed new light on Keynes' view on reparations and Carthaginian peace. And let me conclude this overview on Keynes, with an optimistic quote:

It is our duty to prolong peace, hour by hour, day by day, for as long as we can. We do not know what the future will bring, except that it will be quite different from anything we could predict. I have said in another context that it is a disadvantage of the 'long run' that in the long run we are all dead. But I could have said equally well that it is a great advantage of the 'short run' that in the short run we are still alive. Life and history are made up of short runs.  
[Keynes, *New Statesman*, July 1937]

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## Appendix 1

The debates over the definition and measurement of national sovereignty and power are endless. Despite the lack of consensus on precise definitions, most scholars of the "realist" school agree that economic as well as military factors are crucial. We thus begin with the premise that the national sovereignty, i.e. power of a nation depends both on its economic and on its military power. Mathematically, we express this assumption as:

$$NS_i = PW_i = F(EPW_i, MPW_i) \quad (A1)$$

where  $NS_i$ ,  $PW_i$ ,  $EPW_i$ ,  $MPW_i$  are national sovereignty, total, economic and military power respectively. Without loss of generality, we take a Leontief form of relationship between both powers:<sup>20</sup>

$$NS_i = PW_i = \text{Min}(EPW_i, MPW_i) \quad (A2)$$

All suggested measures of economic power are intrinsically ad hoc. The proxy we adopt for economic power is total consumption – private and public. A priori, a more natural choice might be output. This choice has the inconvenience that in the case where a country decides to allocate its output to exports and leave very little for consumption, this country would be said to have economic power. Consumption is therefore a more appropriate proxy in the context of our model. Thus:

$$EPW_i = C_i + G_i = c_i \quad (A3)$$

Where  $C_i$  is consumption of citizen,  $G_i$  government expenditures, and  $c_i$  is then the output allocated to consumption.

Military power,  $MPW_i$  is a function of the stock of military equipment and infrastructure of war owned by the country (planes, missiles, artillery, warships...), but also of the possibility of immediately purchasing ammunition and financing the soldiers. The stock of military equipment, as well as the stock of foreign reserves hoarded in the past,  $M_i$  is given exogenously at the start of the period and there is no depreciation of materials during periods of peace. The possibility of being ready for war is then a function of the stock of foreign reserves.

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<sup>20</sup> I choose this discontinuous functional form for convenience, and in order to ensure transparency of the results, but any functional form in the class of the CES function yields the same results.

Therefore the increase in foreign reserves, denoted by  $O_i$  is a factor influencing the military power of a country. (Note that the accumulation of foreign reserves in the past is included in  $M_i$ ).

We therefore have the specification

$$MPW_i = O_i + M_i \quad (A4)$$

Therefore the power of a nation,  $PW_i$  is:

$$NS_i = PW_i = \text{Min}(c_i, O_i + M_i) \quad (A5)$$

From the national income identity, we have that:<sup>21</sup>

$$Y_i = C_i + G_i + NX_i \quad (A6)$$

The flow of foreign reserves and the trade balance are linked by the simple expression:

$$O_i = R_i + NX_i \quad (A7)$$

where  $O_i$  is the increase in foreign reserves,  $NX_i$  is the current account surplus, and  $R_i$  represents the reparations paid by a foreign country (only a country having won a war can ask for reparations).

In consequence we have:

$$NS_i = PW_i = \text{Min}(c_i, R_i + y_i - c_i) \quad (2)$$

where  $y_i = Y_i + M_i$ .

## Appendix 2

In order to prove Proposition 1, we first show two lemmas. Note that we assume that  $K$  is such that  $K \gg y_1/2$ .

### Lemma 1.

Given reparation of size  $R$ , consumption which lead to maximum power is:

$$c_i^* = (y_i + R_i)/2 \quad (A8)$$

### Proof.

Equate the two elements of equation (2). See also Figure 4.

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<sup>21</sup> Recall that investments are equal to the savings of the elite, a small group of size 0 not included in this part.

**Lemma 2**

Given that  $K \gg y_1/2$  then the optimal amount of reparations is:

$$R_1^* = -R_2^* = (y_2 - y_1)/2 \quad (4)$$

And therefore we get:

$$c_1^* = c_2^* = (y_1 + y_2)/4 \quad (5)$$

$$NX_1^* = (3y_1 - y_2)/4 - M_1 \quad O_1^* = (y_1 + y_2)/4 - M_1 \quad (A9)$$

$$NX_2^* = (3y_2 - y_1)/4 - M_2 \quad O_2^* = (y_1 + y_2)/4 - M_2 \quad (A10)$$

**Proof**

The equilibrium is a perfect Nash equilibrium of a one period decision game. In the case of balance of power, then the Nash equilibrium necessitates that  $PW_2 = PW_1$ .

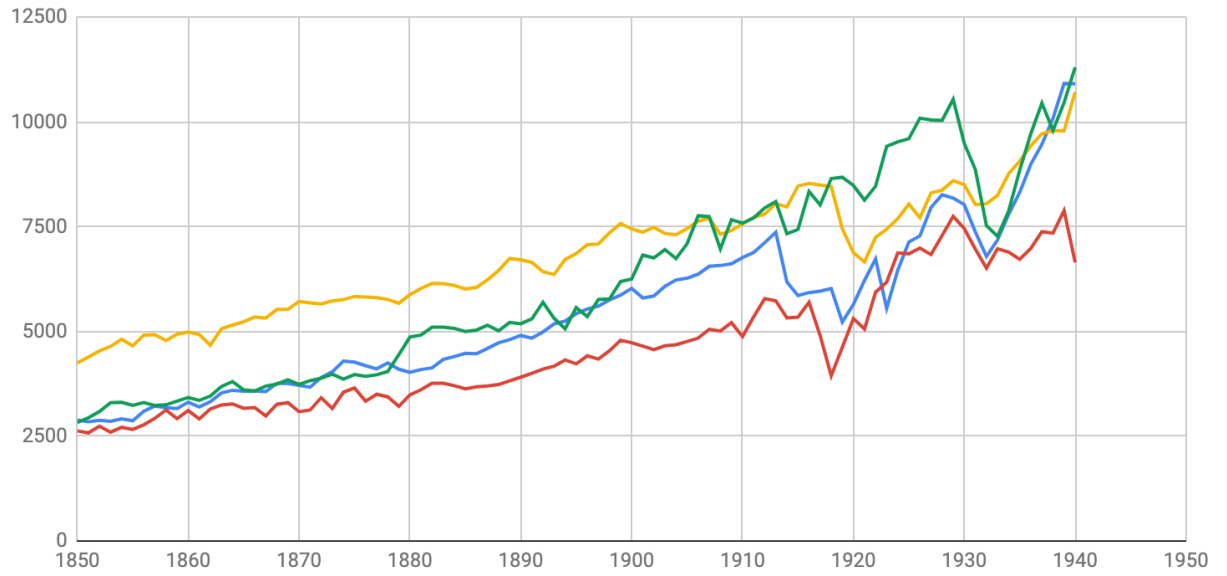
In consequence, given equation (A8), we get the equations (4) and (5) and especially that  $c_1^* = c_2^* = (y_1 + y_2)/4$ . QED

Table 1. Data on leader countries – 1850-1950.

Year	Germany	France	United Kingdom	United States
<b>GDP per capita in 2011 US\$</b>				
1860	3312	3113	4988	3425
1870	3715	3086	5716	3736
1880	4023	3488	5879	4866
1890	4904	3909	6711	5184
1900	6029	4731	7446	6252
1910	6763	4878	7567	7586
1920	5647	5309	6881	8485
1930	8027	7455	8504	9490
1940	10914	6650	10716	11307
1950	7840	8531	10846	15241
<b>Population, in thousands</b>				
1850	33746	36350	27181	23580
1860	36049	37300	28888	31839
1870	39231	38440	31400	40241
1880	43500	39045	34623	50458
1890	47607	40014	37485	63302
1900	54388	40598	41155	76391
1910	62884	41224	44916	92767
1920	60894	39000	46821	106881
1930	65084	41610	45866	123668
1940	69835	41000	48226	132637
1950	68375	42518	50127	152271

Source: Maddison.

## Figures

**Figure 1: Hegemony of Britain: 1850-1910 – GDP per capita**

**Notes:** The GDP per capita index is set at 100 for 1850. The UK is in yellow, Germany is in blue, France in red, and the US is the green line.

**Source:** Maddison

**Figure 2: Hegemony of the US: 1945-2008.**

Maddison Data - GDP per capita, index set at 100 for 1850

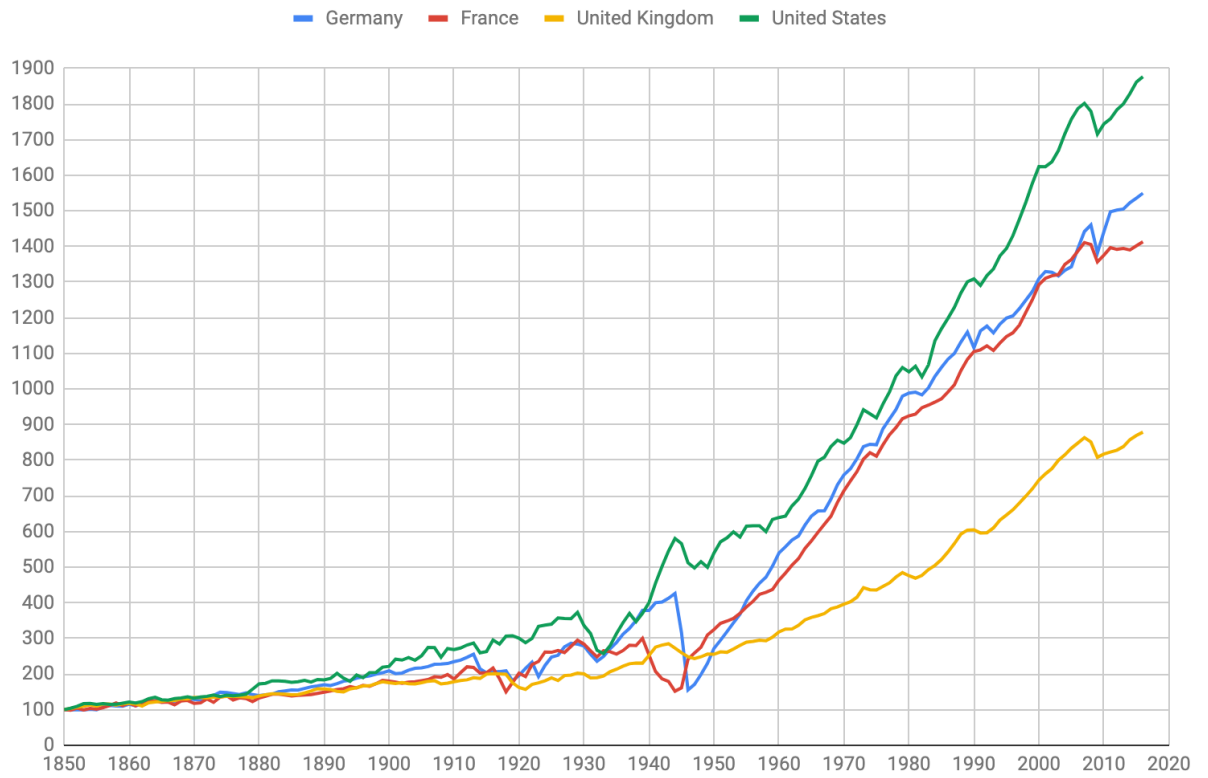


Figure 3. Balance of Power: 1910-1945.

Maddison data - 1910- 1960

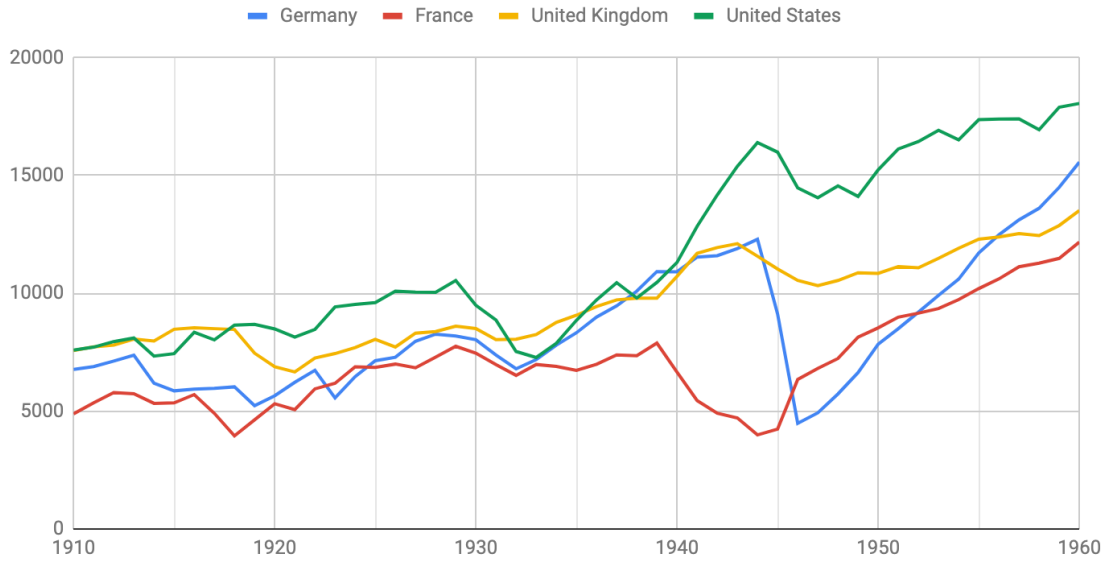


Figure 4 – Equilibrium

