

# Foreign Affairs

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*“Every nation, if it is to survive as a nation, must study its own history and have a foreign policy”  
- C.J. O'Donnell, *The Lordship of the World*, 1924, p. 145*

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# Editorial Statement

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This is the first issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, a quarterly journal established to comment on foreign policy and on global affairs from an independent Irish perspective.

The Irish State was founded around a core foreign policy idea – the right of the Irish nation to have an independent state of its own and through that state to make a distinct mark in the world. The limits of this independence were necessarily first and foremost the ability of the state to develop and act free of British constraints.

Until the 1960s, Irish citizens took for granted that this was what the state was about. People knew the Proclamation of 1916 with its continental European alignment, and there was in general a remarkably high level of knowledge about foreign affairs. This knowledge of the world was not derivative of the British liberal media and was informed by commentaries from a uniquely Irish perspective in newspapers such as the *Irish Press*, various journals, and even in early RTE television.

Today such a perspective is difficult to find. The Irish seem no longer to think about such things. Commentary and debate on foreign policy is often little more than a provincial echo of Anglo-American concerns or the fashions of pop culture.

Fashionable views now proclaim independent Ireland to have been “insular” and “inward looking”. The ending of this sad state of affairs by the “opening up” of Ireland since the 1960s is hailed as a major step in its “growing up”. This is a nonsense. Ireland in many ways has become a narrower, more derivative place.

Nationalist Ireland had always argued with itself about its role in the world: Redmondites saw an Irish future as a junior partner with England in a world imperial project, while the Sinn Féin Party which won the 1918 election in a landslide victory sought connections with the world independent of and at odds with that empire.

In challenging the British Empire, the Irish Independence movement raised the flag for all nations subordinated against their will within that empire, and became a beacon for their subsequent strivings for statehood. This reputation has remained strong across the world, particularly in popular liberation movements, though, as Conor Lynch reports in this issue, it is a reputation now understandably under threat.

The distorted development of the Free State resulting from the 1921 Treaty imposed on it under threat of “immediate and terrible war” was reflected in its early foreign policy. No faction of the Sinn Féin movement, including those who supported in retrospect the signing of the Treaty, believed in or openly defended the castrated sovereignty it bestowed. At the time it was signed Michael Collins wrote an article (re-published here) advocating that the Free State become “a pivot in a league of nations” which would lead to the dissolution of empire. But already even this focus back to possibilities *within the confines of empire* was a

distorted development. It was easily abandoned when the project to build the Republic was resumed under Fianna Fáil in 1932.

Under de Valera Ireland played a high profile role in world affairs, notably following his election to President of the League of Nations. Even before that he was making an impression as an international statesman, as reflected in his shrewd handling of the Soviet bid for League membership described in an article by Manus O’Riordan in this issue. “Insular” and “inward looking” indeed!

De Valera’s role advocating collective security while major powers plotted a replay of the First World War, and his role in asserting and vindicating Irish independence by finally ending British military occupation in 1938 and declaring Ireland’s neutrality in any new imperialist war, are key touchstones in the history of Irish foreign policy, and a cause of great headaches to those embarrassed by that history and seeking to revise it.

Connecting with Europe as a way to free the country from political, economic and security dependence on Britain was a much discussed idea in Ireland and reflected in the 1916 Proclamation.

Membership of the EU has been a cornerstone of recent Irish development. But it does not represent Ireland “opening up”. How can you “open up” something that was not closed to start with? From the start of the European process we sought involvement in it, but were constrained by our continued economic dependence on Britain (96% of Irish exports were still to Britain in the late 1960s). Charles de Gaulle was politely emphatic on why Britain could not join the EEC (see his speech reprinted in this issue). He regarded Britain’s traditional balance of power strategy towards Europe, its globalist trading culture and the dynamics of its internal social structures as fundamentally antithetical to the Community being built by Europe’s Christian/Social Democratic leaders.

When membership became possible, an overwhelming majority of the Irish electorate supported it, and repeated this support in various referendums until the Nice Treaty vote in 2004. British membership in comparison has been unpopular there and resisted and resented since. Irish governments – and the electorate – have repeatedly supported radical reforms to deepen the integration of Europe. Under Haughey Ireland was steered into very close relations with Germany and France, the driving force of the European Federalist movement. But the end of the Cold War and the re-emergence of British world power ambitions have disrupted the development of Europe and distorted the direction it is taking (as set out in the article by David Morrison ‘Lisbon and the Anglifying of the EU’).

This first issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs* critically examines these issues in relation to the Lisbon Treaty process, a process from which the EU of the Treaty of Rome must be saved.

# For an EU Federal State!

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## Editorial

In June the Irish people will be asked to vote on the Lisbon Treaty. We urge people to vote "No", to help save the EU project from its enemies.

One could parse and analyse every word of the Treaty for its meaning and then consider its *real* meaning. And no doubt that will be done as it was done during the French referendum of 2005.

But the forthcoming referendum comes down to one question and it is the same question that was asked of the Irish people in 1972 when we voted to join the EEC. That question is: are you in favour of the European project? From 1972 until the Maastricht Treaty the answer to that question was an unambiguous "yes".

The Irish people experienced the European project as a liberation. Roger Casement, a founding father of this State, believed that one of the most iniquitous aspects of British rule in Ireland was that it cut us off from Continental Europe. Joining the EEC was an opportunity to participate in an international project of cooperation on an equal basis with the other great nations of Europe. It also freed our agricultural products from dependence on the UK market.

And under Edward Heath even Britain appeared finally to have reconciled herself to the end of her empire and to wish to participate in this project along with the Irish.

But the Irish people, along with the French and the Dutch have fallen out of love with this grand project. And it is not the Irish who have been unfaithful; it is the European project that has strayed. An alternative vision has emerged that is at variance with the values of the founding fathers. And it is this alternative vision that has been in the ascendant.

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Following Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher became the leader of the British Conservative party and then Prime Minister in 1979. Her mission was to restore imperialist values and deepen the "special relationship" it had with the USA whose President was her ideological soul mate Ronald Reagan. Blairism is a continuation of Thatcherism.

The debate in Britain about Europe is not about whether she should be pro or anti Europe. That debate was decided long ago. It was decided within the Conservative Party when Thatcher replaced Heath. And if ever there was a pro-European element within the British Labour Party it jumped ship to form the long forgotten SDP.

The debate in Britain about Europe is about how best to disrupt the project - from inside or outside Europe. It is very clear that - among the political class at least - the "insiders" have won. The "insiders" have won in Britain because they have won in Europe. If anyone doubts that the British have won they should read British Foreign Secretary David Miliband's speech of 15/11/07 to the College of Europe in Bruges. Quoting from one of his predecessors, Douglas Hurd, he says this of the European project:

"Certainly there are Continental idealists who bitterly regret that it has faded away, but faded it has, as has been clear since Maastricht."

And why has the European project failed? Miliband gives a hint a few sentences later:

"The truth is that the EU has enlarged, remodelled and opened up. It is not and is not going to be a superstate."

And Miliband wants to prevent any possibility of the EU becoming a superstate by continuing the policy of enlargement:

"The first step would be the accession of neighbouring countries - especially Russia and the Ukraine - to the WTO. Then we must build on this with comprehensive free-trade agreements. The goal must be a multilateral free-trade zone around our periphery - a version of the European Free Trade Association that could gradually bring the countries of the Mahgreb, the Middle-East and Eastern-Europe in line with the single-market, not as an alternative to membership, but potentially as a step towards it."

Miliband sees the role of Europe as an adjunct to American imperialism:

"We must also overcome the blockages to collaboration with NATO. We welcome the signs of increased willingness on the part of key partners to do so."

But although the EU cannot aspire to being a “superstate” or “superpower” that should not prevent it from military intervention under the aegis of NATO:

“First, European member states must improve their capabilities. It’s embarrassing that when European nations - with almost two million men and women under arms - are only able, at a stretch, to deploy around 100 thousand at any one time. EU countries have around 1,200 transport helicopters, yet only about 35 are deployed in Afghanistan. And EU member states haven’t provided any helicopters in Darfur despite the desperate need there.”

Miliband wants - in language worthy of an Orwellian nightmare - the EU to “*engage in shared activities*”:

“In Iraq, where we are moving forward together to bolster the forces of economic development and political reconciliation.”

This support for imperialist aggression is anathema to the founding principles of the Irish State. If the British vision of Europe has supplanted that of its founding fathers – Monet, Schuman, de Gaspari - the European project should be abandoned before it inflicts any more damage on the world.

However, we are of the opinion that the original EU project is not irretrievable and that the Irish have a key role to play in its renaissance. The first step is to stop the momentum for enlargement and call on the EU to define the borders of its territory.

A “no” vote in the forthcoming referendum will help bring continental Europe to its senses and urge it to return it to the task of building a stable Federal European State. A continuation of the policy of a free trade area with undefined borders as well as ever closer collaboration with American imperialism is a betrayal of European ideals.

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## Lisbon and the Anglifying of the EU

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by David Morrison

On 29 January 2008, Gordon Brown entertained German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, French President, Nicolas Sarkozy and Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, in Downing Street. This was Gordon Brown’s first big EU initiative, his spin doctors told the world. After complaints by other EU states, Jose Manuel Barroso, EU Commission President, was invited – to represent the “small countries” of the EU, it was said. Slovenia, which had taken over the Presidency of the EU on 1 January 2008, was ignored.

Was this the way that the EU was going to be run in future, I wondered, with the big EU states agreeing positions in advance, as the five veto-wielding members of the Security Council do these days, having given up any pretence that the views of the ten temporary members of the Council matter? If so, there would have to be a seat at the table in future for the permanent President of the Council of Ministers, a post which will be created by the Lisbon Treaty.

### A permanent president

This proposition in the Treaty has been presented as a kind of tidying up exercise, made necessary by the fact that the EU has 27 members. It is inefficient to have the Presidency rotating around 27 states every six months, it is said. In fact, the rotation is no more or less efficient with 27 states than it was with 6. However, the drawback for big states is that they get to hold the presidency every thirteen and half years instead of every three years – and so do Luxembourg and Malta.

Now there is to be a permanent President, initially for two and a half years and renewable for a further two and a half

years. Significantly, individual states will not have a veto over who becomes President – s/he will be elected by qualified majority voting.

Gordon Brown could have Tony Blair imposed upon him by other states. Blair seems to be angling for the job. He went to the UMP conference in January at the invitation of Nicolas Sarkozy and described himself as a “socialist”, which is a sure sign that something is afoot.

The rotating presidency was a symbol that the EU, in its current and earlier forms, was an association of states with each state taking a turn at running it, while the permanent European Commission was the unifying mechanism acting for the Union as a whole. With the appointment of a permanent President, this balance will shift away from an association of states and towards the Union. Individual states will matter less and, the smaller the state, the less it will matter.

This shift towards a Union will be more pronounced if the roles of President of the Council of Ministers and the President of the Commission are merged. This is permitted under the Lisbon Treaty, which merely forbids the President of the Council from holding “a national office”, that is, a governmental position in one of the EU states. Earlier drafts of the Constitution forbade the President of the Council from being “a member of another European institution” as well, but that bar was later removed and the President of the Commission can now be elected President of the Council.

As a consequence of the Lisbon Treaty, the influence of individual states in the Commission will diminish as well. Currently, each member state appoints a member of the Commission. Under the Treaty, member states will only be able to do so two-thirds of the time – and their nominee as a commissioner can be vetoed by the European Parliament.

## A foreign minister

There are other ways in which the Lisbon Treaty will enhance the role of the Union at the expense of member states, notably in the area of foreign affairs. The Constitution provided for the creation of Minister of Foreign Affairs, formed by merging the functions of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the External Relations Commissioner, the posts currently held by Javier Solana of Spain and Benita Ferrero-Waldner of Austria, respectively. The Treaty creates a post with the same role, but is to be named the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRUFASP) – which will, of course, be known as the EU foreign minister. It's likely that the new permanent President will also spend most of his time representing the EU in the world. You can see why Tony Blair is angling for the Presidency.

Like the permanent President, the EU foreign minister will be appointed by qualified majority voting, and individual states won't have a veto. The foreign minister will be a member of the Commission and will chair meetings of EU foreign ministers in the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council. Furthermore, when the EU has a common policy on a subject on the agenda of the Security Council, EU states who are members of the Security Council will be obliged to request that the EU foreign minister be allowed to attend and speak for the EU. (From this, it follows logically that there should be a single EU veto in the Security Council, instead of the UK and France having one each, but it can be guaranteed that neither the UK nor France will agree to give up its veto).

For the first time, there is to be an EU diplomatic service – its official title is the European External Action Service – bringing together the External Relations Commissioner's staff working in Brussels (less than 1,000) with the 5,000 or so staff in the Commission's "delegations" around the world.

The British Government keeps saying that each state will retain a veto on foreign affairs, but that is not the whole truth. Qualified majority voting will apply in a number of areas in foreign affairs. For example, when the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council asks the EU foreign minister for a proposal on a particular subject, once s/he has made a proposal the Council will accept or reject the proposal by qualified majority voting. Furthermore, all decisions with regard to the diplomatic service will be taken by qualified majority voting.

## Qualified majority voting

The balance between the Union and individual states has shifted in other ways as well. The states' right of veto has been abolished in some 60 areas. Qualified majority voting is to be made officially the norm – the "ordinary legislative procedure". And the system of qualified majority voting is to be altered so that it will be more difficult for individual states to block legislation.

Under the current system laws have to pass three hurdles: 74% of the weighted votes in the Council, plus 62% of the population, and a majority of member states. Under the new system there are just two hurdles: 65% of the population and 55% of the member states. Essentially, the highest "hurdle" has been taken away, making it easier to pass legislation.

The net result will be that the ability of individual states to block legislation will diminish, and the smaller the state the more it will diminish. Other things being equal, the influence of the larger states within the EU will rise at the expense of the smaller states.

## Why has the UK retreated?

Early in the negotiations on the Constitution (which began in 2002), the UK resisted much of this ceding of states' sovereignty to the Union. It was particularly vociferous in defending states' rights to an independent foreign policy: for example, it initially opposed the EU foreign minister (a) taking over the role of the External Relations Commissioner, (b) being a member of the Commission, (c) chairing the General Affairs and External Relations Council, and (d) speaking for the EU at the Security Council. It also opposed the creation of an EU diplomatic service. But, during the negotiation of the Constitution, the UK has retreated from all these positions.

My guess is that this retreat is a product of the fact that in recent years the EU has generally been persuaded to support US/UK foreign policy, for example, on Iran and Palestine. In the light of this, the UK's reluctance to cede sovereignty to the Union on foreign affairs has diminished and it has accepted that the establishment of what amounts to an EU foreign ministry and diplomatic service is necessary if the EU is to be effective in support of US/UK foreign policy.

The British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, gave a speech on 2 April 2008 entitled *From Global Empire to Global Hub*. In it, he was remarkably confident that the post-Lisbon EU would be an instrument for the implementation of British foreign policy in the world. Listen to this:

"In Britain, for too long, we have viewed participation in the EU as being at the expense of national sovereignty and national interest. But it is through the European Union that we can have greatest influence on some of the great challenges that face the planet.

“The passage of the Lisbon Treaty, and associated commitments to a period of institutional stability, creates an opportunity that has not existed during my political lifetime. Instead of debating how the European Union works we can deliver on what it is for. ...

“And on far-flung foreign policy issues that motivate European citizens - whether it be supporting free and fair elections in the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo], or providing humanitarian assistance and support for the police in Palestine - when the EU is united we are effective.

“None of these global challenges can be achieved by the UK acting alone. On these issues, the EU is a vehicle for the expression of UK foreign policy not a threat to it; the more successful the EU, and the greater its collective economic might, the more effective our bilateral links. The Prime Minister has talked about hard-headed internationalism. On key issues that means being pro Europe and pro reform in Europe – so that it is an outward looking organisation focussed on the new threats to security and prosperity. Our position within Europe is not a tactical weakness, but a strategic opportunity.”

## Ratification in the UK

The Lisbon Treaty is currently before the British House of Commons. Given its history of opposition to ceding sovereignty to the EU, one might have thought that the Conservative Party would be manning the barricades to resist the measures mentioned above. But it is not. Yes, it is opposing the Treaty, but not with the fervour one would expect given the significance of what is being proposed. It appears that the penny has also dropped with the Conservatives that it is advantageous to Britain to have an EU foreign ministry, when there's a good chance of Britain being in a position to drive it.

(The Conservative Party's main attack on the Government is that the Labour Party promised, in its 2005 election manifesto, to hold a referendum on the Constitution and it is now refusing to hold a referendum on the functionally equivalent Treaty. Since the Liberal Democrats, who also promised a referendum in their election manifesto, have also reneged on their promise, there won't be a referendum and the Treaty will be approved by Parliament, perhaps after a hiccup or two in the House of Lords.)

## Militarisation

Unfortunately, small states are unlikely to stand up against Britain's designs for the EU in foreign affairs, since their populations are unlikely to object, as they may do to the prospect of directives from Brussels affecting the everyday life of their people. It is only when states are asked to spill blood in order to implement EU foreign policy that they are likely to show reluctance (as NATO member states are showing with regard to Afghanistan).

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**Read David Morrison**

*on Ireland, Iran, the Middle East  
and much more*

[www.david-morrison.org.uk](http://www.david-morrison.org.uk)

In Ireland, left opposition to the EU emphasises its “militarisation” – the fact that the EU is acquiring a military capacity through battle groups etc. But that is largely beside the point: there is nothing in principle wrong with a state or group of states having a military capacity, not least to defend itself. What matters is not the military capacity, but the foreign policy being pursued using whatever capacity – diplomatic, economic or military.

The problem with the EU is not its growing military capacity per se but the fact that its foreign policy is increasingly indistinguishable from that of the US and the UK.

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## War and the Lisbon Treaty

*(Letter in The Irish Times, 1.4.2008)*

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Madam, - Your Security Analyst, Tom Clonan, writes (March 27th) that if we vote Yes to the Lisbon Treaty that it “would guarantee Ireland's ability to veto any future common defence concept - or indeed any EU military mission or operation that Ireland deemed inappropriate”.

Does he expect a country that allowed its airports to be used to prosecute an illegal invasion of another country and that continues to let its facilities be used for the rendition of kidnapped prisoners for torture to stand up to the rest of Europe?

Surely he is aware that that would require a government with a strong moral sense.

Even more worryingly, Dr Clonan goes on to state that a Yes vote will “commit the EU to considering a wider suite of options than has been stated in previous treaties and summits. This would in theory allow the EU to take robust and rapid action independent of Nato and the US to combat threats of genocide, terrorism or criminality within its sphere of influence”.

Note the use of the word “threat” and the omission of any UN mandate for these “robust and rapid actions”.

Dr Clonan should know from his military studies that engaging in such action is illegal. No country may go to war without UN approval except in the case outlined by Article 51 of the UN Charter. It states that:

“Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”

At the Nuremberg trials, the principles of international law identified by the tribunal and subsequently accepted unanimously by the General Assembly of the United Nations stated “that to initiate a war of aggression. . . is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime”.

Let there be no doubt that there is every willingness on the part of the vast majority of EU states to engage in such crimes, although they will be dressed up as “humanitarian interventions”.

Voting Yes will further facilitate these types of crimes. - Yours,  
etc,

DERMOT DONNELLY, Lieut Col (Retd), Balbriggan,  
Co Dublin

# Irish Foreign Policy Since The Opium War

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by **Brendan Clifford**

Irish foreign policy in any meaningful sense began when Daniel O’Connell, in 1841, whipped his MPs into line to support the Liberal Government against a motion of censure proposed by the Tory Opposition on the issue of the Opium War.

The Opium War was a war on China launched by the Liberal Government (in which the famous ideologue of Liberalism, Macaulay, was Secretary for War) to compel the Chinese State to allow British merchants to sell opium grown in British India to Chinese subjects.

For the Chinese State it was not a matter of keeping the opium trade in domestic Chinese hands. Opium was banned in China. Britain fought a war to legalise it.

It was not that the British Government thought opium was good for you. It didn’t care whether it was good for you or not. The issue was Free Trade.

In those days China was a self-sufficient society and state. It had been so for centuries. Its people were set in their ways and they showed little interest in the commodities offered to them by Manchester capitalism. But the British upper classes, having become wealthy from the slave trade, Caribbean slave production, the plunder of India, and Manchester capitalism, were becoming refined in their tastes, and had developed an insatiable appetite for Chinese products, especially fine porcelain. China was happy to sell its porcelain, tea and silk to the British in exchange for silver—which was the only money in those times. Since there was little Chinese demand for the products of primitive English capitalism, Anglo-Chinese trade had the form of English gold flowing into China and Chinese porcelain coming out. And in the era of Free Trade that would not do.

## Free trade

The Free Trade era began with the Reform Act of 1832, which enfranchised the middle classes of the new industrial capitalism. The Reform Act was followed immediately by the great Free Trade Agitation of the 1830s and 1840s, culminating in the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1848 on the flimsy pretence that free trade in corn would remedy the Famine situation in Ireland.

British merchants found that there was one commodity they could sell to the Chinese: opium. But opium was a banned substance in China. So the Liberal Government—an expression of the powerful Free Trade interest in England—made war on China for the purpose of opening up the country to the opium trade, and stopping the drain of gold from Britain.

The general principle of the War was trade. Opium happened to be the particular thing that was serviceable in breaking open the enormous Chinese market to British capitalism. The particulars didn’t matter. Trade was sacred and it sanctified everything that it touched.

China was defeated of course. That large peaceful Empire hadn’t a hope of resisting the power of British militarism. In defeat it was fined heavily for trying to prevent the opium trade,

and it had to cede Hong Kong to Britain. But it still hadn’t learned its lesson. Another Opium War had to be fought by Britain in the following decade before China was properly broken open.

## Daniel O’Connell and the Opium Wars

O’Connell was a Free Trader on principle. He was also an English utilitarian in secular world outlook. On coming to Ireland in the late 1790s and entering the Irish Bar, he had in effect, though a nominal Catholic (in the sense of not being a Protestant), acted as a member of the Protestant Ascendancy. At some time around 1810 he seems to have become a Catholic by conviction and not just by family inheritance. Then he set aside his Ascendancy orientation and became the leader of the Catholic masses in a national development, while at the same time remaining a Liberal Whig in other respects.

I don’t know what his reasoning was when he supported the Liberal Government in the Opium War. I have not had time to investigate it, and I have not come across an investigation of it by anyone else. It might be that he acted on the principle of Free Trade. Or maybe his heart went out, like Macaulay’s, to those poor Chinese who were in misery for want of a fix. Or maybe he just voted with his (British) party against the Tories.

Anyhow he whipped his Irish party into line in support of his British party in the Opium War, which I think can be fairly described as the first global Free Trade War. And that was the first act of Irish foreign policy since the Williamite conquest a century and a half earlier.

Throughout that century and a half there was neither an Irish state nor (in political terms) an Irish people. There was an Irish Parliament, but it was an assembly of the slim colonial wafer. There was a Presbyterian settlement in Ulster, but it lived its own life in informal autonomy as a kind of annex of Presbyterian Scotland. And there was the populace, silenced by the Penal Laws.

## The independent Irish Parliament of 1782

The colonial Parliament, subordinate to the English Parliament until then, asserted its independence in 1782 during the American War. It raised a Volunteer Army to defend Ireland against America’s ally, France, and Westminster found it prudent to recognise it as independent. But the independent Irish Parliament of 1782-1800 did not form its own Government. It was not prevented by Britain from doing so. It did not want its own Government. It wanted independence as a Legislature but protection from the Irish populace by the British Government.

## A realistic peace treaty

Jonathan Swift lived in Dublin after 1712 in a kind of exile. During the years before his exile he was a very influential writer on foreign policy for the English Tory Party and contributed to ending the war with France. Matters of substance were at issue

in his dispute with the Whig pamphleteer, Addison (who I believe was also Irish in the colonial sense), but unfortunately the substance was lost as both were eventually turned into 'literature', where they are tedious. Addison advocated total war against France until it was crushed, when perpetual peace would follow under unchallenged British supremacy. Swift treated Addison's vision as a delusion and advocated peace on the basis of the substantial points victory which had already been gained. That is what was done in 1712, and it set the precedent for the successful practice of foreign policy by the British ruling class during the next two hundred years. Then in 1914 Addison's policy was adopted, leading to the decline of British power and mayhem in Europe.

But this is all British foreign policy, the Irish who played a part in it being the English in Ireland.

Irish foreign policy in any other sense could not begin until the political monopoly of Irish public life by the English colonial stratum was undermined by the abolition of the Irish Parliament, and the Irish populace gained scope for a national development, and were admitted to Parliament in 1829.

O'Connell committed his Irish MPs to the role of Imperialist Liberals in 1841. The Young Ireland movement, launched in 1842 with the publication of *The Nation*, took up an anti-Imperialist position, though it operated within O'Connell's movement.

The national development was disrupted for two generations by the Famine, O'Connell's excommunication of Young Ireland, the 1848 attempt at rebellion, and the subversion of the Independent Party by Government patronage in the 1850s.

A company of Fenians went to assist France in 1870 in its war on Prussia, but the published account of the adventure suggests that they did so out of gratitude to France on other grounds, rather than because of a considered position on the Franco-Prussian War.

By 1900 British party politics had given up on Ireland outside the Protestant North-East. And, even in Ulster, the Liberal/Tory party development had been aborted by the growth of a strong national party in the rest of the country. The Liberals and Tories merged into the Ulster Unionist Party. In the rest of the country the Home Rule Party was unchallengeable. But it was a Home Rule party only because Britain let the Irish understand that Irish independence was not to be had by any other way than by defeating Britain in war, which was judged to be entirely impossible.

In the Boer War the Home Rulers supported the Boers, while the Ulster Unionists supported the Empire.

## The First World War

In 1912-14, when the Unionists raised a Volunteer Army to prevent the Home Rule Bill going through Parliament from being implemented, a *rapprochement* developed between the Home Rule Party and the Liberal Imperialist Government that was pushing the Bill through Parliament. When the Government declared war on Germany, expecting trouble with its Gladstonian backbenches, the Home Rule Party rushed to its support and helped to consolidate its position. The Unionists also supported the war on Germany.

Both Home Rulers and Unionists acted as recruiters for the British war on Germany, while preparing their respective Volunteer bodies to make war on each other at home afterwards.

It is hard to judge what thought there was in the war propaganda of the Home Rule Party, but it is impossible to doubt the analytical power of the case against the war on Germany published by James Connolly and Roger Casement.

Casement and Connolly had been Home Rulers until Home Rule was taken off the agenda of practical politics in August 1914 (while being simultaneously put on the Statute Book and suspended), and the Home Rule leaders became propagandists and recruiters for the war on Germany. Both of them declared support for Germany in the war.

It is now customary to dismiss both of them as mere nationalists trying to take advantage of England's difficulty, but it would not be easy to sustain that attitude in the presence of their writings on the war: Casement's *Crime Against Europe* and Connolly's *War Upon The German Nation*. But those writings have not been in print. And Connolly's position in particular has been systematically misrepresented, especially by Ruth Dudley Edwards in her biography of Connolly and her entry on him in the *Dictionary Of National Biography*.

The 1916 Rising was conducted in alliance with Germany. It was defeated, as was Germany two and a half years later.

## The Free State Dail and Turkey

The Irish electorate voted for independence in 1918. A Republic was established in 1919. Britain made war on the Republic and in 1922 persuaded a small majority of the Republican Dail to return under the sovereignty of the Crown under the name of an Irish Free State. The Free Staters, who submitted to Britain under duress and not out of conviction, asserted that they were independent of Britain in everything but name. But then in 1924 Britain told the Free State Dail that it must debate making peace with Turkey. The doings of the British Empire had been repudiated by the Republican Dail, but when the Free Staters made their deal with Britain they committed themselves to war with the enemies of the Crown. Fortunately for them Britain was in the course of being defeated by Ataturk as the Free State was coming into being and all it was required to do in that war was agree the peace terms. [Pat Walsh is preparing a comprehensive book in Ireland's War on Turkey. Ed.]

The Free State Party drifted along within an Empire which was itself adrift, until the anti-Treaty Party won the 1932 election. The Free State party was called *Cumann na nGaedheal* in 1923/1932 while it was in Government. In 1933 it merged with a small Redmondite party called the Centre Party under the name of *Fine Gael*, and continued its Treatyite stance during the 1930s, while the new governing party, *Fianna Fail*, was unilaterally altering the terms of the Treaty and establishing a new Constitution by popular vote (1937) in place of the 1922 Free State Constitution dictated by Britain.

*Fine Gael* failed to win an election between 1932 and 1948. Under the shock of losing the election of 1932 and losing even more heavily in 1933 it adopted a Fascist programme and aligned itself ideologically with Mussolini. In 1936 it supported Franco's insurrection against the Spanish Republic and demanded that the Irish Government should recognise the Insurrection as the legitimate Spanish. And its intellectuals, who dominated the academic life of the State, declared that the Parliamentary system was played out and should be replaced by a corporate State.

*Fianna Fail* stood by the system of Parliamentary democracy and by a large series of election victories it eroded the ideological stance of *Fine Gael*.



## The second World War

The reversion of Fine Gael to the system of Parliamentary democracy was facilitated by the generally agreed neutrality of the Irish State in the second World War. Of the leading political figures only James Dillon dissented from the neutrality policy and advocated war with Germany. He was obliged to leave the party for the duration of the war.

Treatyite sentiment withered gradually in Fine Gael during its sixteen years out of office. When it returned to office in 1948 (in Coalition with the Labour Party and a Republican Party called Clann na Poblachta) one of its first actions was to break the residual connection between the Irish State and the British Empire and Commonwealth. Fianna Fail removed Ireland from the Empire *de facto* and took no part in Commonwealth affairs and let the matter rest there. In 1948 John A. Costello, Fine Gael leader and Taoiseach, attended a Commonwealth meeting in Canada for the purpose of officially announcing that Ireland was formally ending its connection with the Commonwealth.

The possibility of independent Irish action during a major British war did not begin until 1938. British occupation of the 26 Counties ended in 1938 when Britain relinquished the Naval Bases which it held under the Treaty. Independence was asserted the following year when Britain embarked on yet another war and the Irish Government declared neutrality and refused to give way under British intimidation.

Because of its neutrality Ireland was excluded from the United Nations for ten years. It was then admitted to secondary membership—the only full members being the five permanent Vetoist powers on the Security Council.

United Nations membership sufficed as a substitute for a foreign policy—until 2003, when the Irish Government facilitated the American invasion of Iraq without a Security Council resolution authorising invasion.

Three foreign policy sore points were inherited from this history: the Connolly/Casement characterisation of British action in the 1914 War; neutrality in the 1939 War; and the use of Shannon Airport by the USA in the invasion of Iraq.

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### Aspects of World War 2

by  
Brendan Clifford

This new pamphlet provides a review of aspects of World War 2 - the British betrayal of Poland, the American provocation of Japan, the British insistence on delaying the Second Front, and the Nuremberg trials - in response to writings by Professor B. Girvin of Aberdeen University and Dr. G. Roberts, formerly of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

April 2008

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**The Rise And Fall Of Imperial Ireland.** Redmondism In The Context Of Britain's War Of Conquest Of South Africa And Its Great War On Germany, 1899-1916 by *Pat Walsh*. 594pp. Index. ISBN 1 0 85034 105 1. AB, 2003. E24, £18.99.

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Why did Ireland fail to become a partner to Britain in its Empire—like Canada, Australia or conquered South Africa—and instead embrace an anti-Imperialist point of view?

At the close of the 19th century, nationalist Ireland was anti-Imperialist. Pat Walsh shows how it was utterly united against Britain's conquest of South Africa.

But, after that, in the face of die-hard opposition to even the mildest expression of Home Rule, John Redmond—the compromise leader of a party re-united after the damaging Parnell split—metamorphosed into a loyal servant of the Crown: he would win Home Rule by showing that Ireland would be an asset to an expanding Empire.

After the Parnell split, Redmond had been the most anti-British of the Parliamentarians. But that was to change. He won the Irish Party to an exclusive relationship with the British Liberal Party, and, as that Party espoused active Imperialism, so did he—with political nationalism in tow.

After the Boers had been defeated, the Liberal Party had, by granting them self rule, won them over to be allies in expanding the Empire in Africa. Redmond saw in this master-stroke the template for the political future of Ireland. Home Rule would be the prelude to the new Imperial Ireland, Britain's junior partner.

In 1912 the separatist minority in Ireland was so small as to be irrelevant. That was to change after Ulster Unionists and the British Unionist Party brought the gun into British and Irish politics. Ironically, it was political developments in Britain which conspired to kill off the nascent Irish Imperial development.

In 1914—with Home Rule on the Statute Book and the Irish Party vigorously recruiting for Britain's war on Germany and Turkey—Imperial Ireland looked to be a dead cert. At Easter 1915 the big Volunteer military review in support of the Empire at war was Redmondite. A year later Imperial Ireland was shattered.

Dr. Walsh, using many contemporary sources, shows exactly what happened, and why, in this most readable of histories.

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# De Gaulle, the Irish and Canada – A McAleese initiative ignored

by John Martin

In 1967 Charles de Gaulle made a speech in Montreal attempting to liberate French Canada from the influence of perfidious Albion (see <http://archives.radio-canada.ca/clip.asp?IDClip=1048&IDCat=205&IDCatPa=149>).

The emotion was similar to that which Martin Luther King generated in another context with the important difference that de Gaulle was the head of a State. The speech finished with the words “Long live Montreal, long live Quebec, long live free Quebec, long live French Canada and long live France”.

It had a conscious resonance with the speech he made in 1944 on the liberation of Paris, which was not lost on his audience. In the course of the speech he shares a “secret” with his audience which he asks them not to repeat. The emotions he felt in French Canada were similar to those that he felt during the “liberation”. The crowd went wild.

He refers to a Quebecois politician called “Johnson”. This person had Irish relations on his paternal side and French Canadian ancestors on his mother’s side. De Gaulle was an admirer of Johnson. But he hated Pierre Trudeau. Trudeau was French Canadian on his father’s side and was Scottish on his maternal side. And from de Gaulle’s perspective the Scotch/Irish contrast made all the difference.

It was generally agreed that de Gaulle’s intervention in 1967 was an absolute diplomatic disaster. He had to leave two days later without even meeting the Canadian Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson.

When de Gaulle was asked about this he said that under the circumstances short term diplomatic considerations were of no importance. He felt that France had abandoned French Canada in the nineteenth century and this was his way of making recompense.

A couple of years ago our own President also attempted to re-establish links with French Canada.

Every French Canadian child learns about the Irish famine. In the 1840s Canadian capitalists were exporting logs to Southampton port in England. However, they were losing money (or maybe not making enough money) because while the ships were laden with cargo outbound they were empty on the return journey. They hit on the idea of filling the cargo ships on the return trip with Irish emigrants.

It was only the poorest of the poor who took the trip to Quebec. The ships were not designed for human transport. The coffin ships bound for New York and Boston were luxury liners compared to those destined for Canada. The decision to travel to Quebec was a declaration of despair. Many of those adults who travelled to Canada had given up and only hoped that their children would find a better life. When the ships arrived in Canada a large proportion of the adults had sacrificed themselves on the journey and Irish orphans were left at the mercy of their adopted country.

The Catholic Church encouraged French speaking Catholics rather than English speaking Protestants to adopt these Irish children. The French Canadians were moved by the pitiful condition of these children. As well as food and shelter they decided that they would preserve for these children the only thing that they had brought to the new land. And that was their name. And as a result it is not uncommon for a French Canadian to have a name like Pierre Murphy or Jacques Reill (a corruption of O’Reilly). 40% of French Canadians claim an Irish ancestor.

A couple of years ago Mary McAleese attempted to reconnect with this tradition, but the Irish media, of course, failed to rise to the occasion. Mary Raftery of *The Irish Times* had an article about some scandal in the Canadian Catholic Church.

Perhaps McAleese, unlike de Gaulle, spoke to the Canadian Prime Minister, but a great opportunity was missed.

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# Afghanistan: Ireland and 'The Great Game'

by Pat Walsh

Prince Harry has been withdrawn from active service as button pusher for the bombers of the Afghans. Someone else will now have to do the dangerous job of pushing the button for the bombers that Harry pushed. For Prince Harry the war is over. He has played his last innings in the Great Game which England has resumed playing in Afghanistan in conjunction with the United States.

In the past the Great Game proved deadly for England and when America took it up about two decades ago it proved deadly to them too. The Hindu Kush, which for centuries has been only interested in being left alone, has had an unpleasant habit of cursing all those who have disturbed it.

About 25 years ago there was a revolt in the Afghan army over the education of women. The government in Kabul was attempting to bring about some civilising progress in this matter. But the United States and Britain utilised the fundamentalist revolt against the educating of females by escalating a war against progress and its allies in Moscow. Now it has been made into a Hollywood film, without the unhappy ending, of course.

A decade or so ago I remember reading in *The Sunday Times* an article by some Special Forces operative which detailed how teams of British and Americans instructed the Afghan rabble, who were getting the worst of it from the Russians, in the arts of terrorism and made them into an effective threat to the Russian infidel. And this was printed without comment on the subsequent use of those arts on the friendly American infidels.

## Joe Devlin's Irish News

Much of what is happening now in Afghanistan and Iraq has its roots in Britain's decision to carve up the Ottoman Empire in 1919-20.

In those days much of the Irish press was Redmondite. But it did a lot more thinking for itself than it does today in 'independent' Ireland. *The Irish News*, the Belfast paper of Joe Devlin, would be a revelation to *The Irish News* of today, on foreign affairs. In fact it was more radically anti-imperialist than anything modern Ireland produces.

That is a strange fact indeed - that Ireland was more independent minded in its understanding of foreign affairs when it was under the Empire than it is today.

I must admit that I believed that the healthy distrust Ireland had of Britain's intentions in the world was a product of independent Ireland. I then found it in 1900 with regard to the Boer War in *The Freeman's Journal*. I thought that marked an end to it before 1916 and Republican

Ireland. But I did not think I would find it in Joe Devlin's paper in 1919.

Another thing I noticed in studying the Irish papers of this time was how much better was the Devlinitic paper than its Free State equivalents on foreign affairs.

The Devlinitic *Irish News* was a supporter of the Great War on Germany and Turkey. During the Home Rule struggle the objectives of Irish Nationalism and English Liberalism merged and Redmondite Imperialism was the outcome. *The Irish News* fully supported all the extensions and escalations that British Imperialism engaged in from the war for democracy and small nations. But around 1920 *The Irish News* began to realise that what it was hoping for in the world of Imperial triumph was not what was occurring.

In Belfast the Devlinitic dream was turning sour. The Imperial forces, for which *The Irish News* had helped recruit, had attempted to put down the Irish democracy. The Irish soldiers who had gone to fight for the Empire against Germany and Turkey, in the expectation of a reward of Home Rule, saw no Home Rule and their homes and families attacked by their former comrades in arms. This seems to have had a disconcerting effect on the Devlinites.

## The Independent

An interesting contrast is revealed between South and North during this period. The coverage of events in the Middle East is much more extensive in the Belfast *Irish News* than in *The Independent*. In an editorial, *The Balkans Again*, *The Independent* comments on September 19th 1922: "There may be a new war. Well don't worry. Ireland is busy setting up house. We haven't time for outside concerns."

In August 1922 the conflict about the Treaty in the South began to change character. The Free State forces had largely won control of most towns and won the war of territory; the Republican forces had begun guerrilla type activity in response. What *The Independent* meant when it said that "Ireland is busy setting up house" is that the Irish Republic was being disestablished through military force in favour of the Irish Free State - a house acceptable to the Empire.

*The Independent* was becoming the newspaper of the Free State during this period and it was leaving behind the activist Imperialism of the Redmondite period. That is not to say that it was leaving behind the British influence in its

understanding of foreign affairs. That was still there in its world outlook. And that can be seen in contrasting its view to that of *The Catholic Bulletin*.

## The Irish Press

An independent Irish viewpoint on the world did not emerge within the popular press until the publication of the *Irish Press* in 1931. This paper was the newspaper of independent Ireland. All the other papers have been adaptations from the Home Rule era, in one way or another.

The North-East, unlike the South, was still Redmondite, or more correctly, Devlinite. *The Irish News* was hesitantly moving toward a Free State position for the purposes of adapting to what the bulk of the nation was doing in the South, but it was doing so within the ambit of the Devlinite Imperialism of the previous decade or so. That is understandable. To the Northern Catholics the Irish 'Civil War' was a travesty and disaster. The main concern in the North was for the conflict between Nationalists in the South to be over so that the main part of the nation could exert itself on the behalf of the Northern Catholics again. That is mainly why *The Irish News* took the Free State side. But the Catholics of Belfast remained Hibernian/Devlinite in orientation - despite the British/Unionist provocation that was driving them in a Republican direction.

West Belfast, unlike the rest of the country, was reasonably content with Home Rule and the participation in Imperial affairs that went with it. Belfast was a British city, unlike anything in the South, and it took a continued interest in the affairs of the State it remained part of, and what it was doing in the world. That is why there are references sprinkled about *The Irish News* about the continued importance of events in the East when the Free State *Independent* does not want to know.

## The Ottoman Empire

On May 19th 1919 *The Irish News* editorial, *Dividing Up*, reported on the proposed division of the Ottoman Empire amongst the victors:

"Official sanction has not yet been proclaimed in connection with the Allies' dismemberment of the 'Turkish Empire.' There was a time - and that within the memory of men who yet deem themselves far from aged - when the preservation of the Turkish Empire in Europe and Asia was a cardinal point of British 'Imperial' policy... England fought the Crimean War to secure Turkish integrity... and now the Turkish Empire is to pass from existence, as greater 'combinations' have faded out of sight. Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, where are they now?"

We do not question England's desire to get Palestine and Mesopotamia. The Suez Canal will then be as completely under English control as the passage through Panama is under American, and the Red Sea will become an 'English lake.' Some years ago Russia (of the Czar) and England 'partitioned' the ancient Kingdom of Persia into 'spheres of influence.' Russia has vanished from the 'Imperialist picture'; we shall soon learn that Persia's genuine interests demand the supervision and 'protection' of the European Power whose new territories adjoin the Dominions of the Shah. In old days the Russian menace to India from the North was the most pressing problem of English statesmanship. The Ameer of Afghanistan and his people were threatened, petted, coaxed, and bribed in turns so that English influence might be maintained and

Afghanistan held as a 'buffer state' between the Czar's forces and India. Now the necessity for preserving a sort of independence in Afghanistan has passed away; therefore it is being discovered that the Ameer and the Afghans are behaving badly - that they are treacherous and uncivilized - that they engaged in a 'German Plot' - and that the interests of Law and Order, the League of Nations, Christianity, and Civilisation imperatively require their subjection to proper discipline. When Afghanistan and Persia have been placed in a fitting state of 'protection,' Central Asia, south of Siberia and China, from the Mediterranean and Red Sea to the Pacific Ocean, will be under English dominion. And, of course, we did not go into the war for new territories in Asia or Africa and President Wilson barred conquests, and declared that no people's lands or liberties should be bartered as if they were cattle."

A week or so later on 3rd June *The Irish News* revealed that the situation had developed into the Third Afghan War:

"An Amir was murdered recently - by no means an unusual fate for Amirs - and the Afghans soon afterwards delivered attacks on England's Indian outposts. Therefore 'the Afghans are lawless, ignorant, rapacious, and almost incurably vain; they are a race of desperate fanatics.' ... For long years the Afghans were England's allies; they held the pathway between Russian territory in Central Asia and the Indian Peninsula, and the Russians should fight the Amir's forces if they tried to get to the Punjab. In those days the Afghans were a brave and martial race - fearless mountaineers who loved liberty so well that no Muscovite dared trifle with their territory. Now they are 'lawless, ignorant' etcetera..."

Afghanistan is a large country - as big, we learn, as France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland put together. But its population is only between 5,000,000 and 6,000,000. So recently as 1907 - when relations between the Czar's Government and the British Government were becoming cordial - Russia declared that Afghan territory was without the Russian 'sphere of influence' and undertook to act in all its political relations with Afghanistan through the British Ministry. Russia exists no longer as an Imperial State; and Turkey's downfall leaves Afghanistan the largest and most formidable of the Moslem Powers. The headship of the Moslem World has practically reverted to the Amir: and this fact must be borne in mind when the new Anglo-Afghan war is considered... Fomenters of strife have an immense area of operations... Asia must be reconquered from the eastern borders of China to the Mediterranean Sea. The latest Afghan War - the third waged against the mountain tribes of the old 'buffer state' within 42 years - is only one piece of a gigantic movement that may soon reach the dimensions and be

LE PRINCE HARRY EN AFGHANISTAN:



It's great to be normal!

marked by the ferocity of a 'Holy War.' Afghanistan cannot cope with the English power in India but it is doubtful whether England will deem it advisable to march troops through the Himalayan Passes again and occupy Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. The cost of conquering the whole country would be serious - in blood and treasure. The cost of holding it would mean a huge annual addition to the burden of taxation. But if the Moslems of Afghanistan are not completely subdued they will be perennially dangerous to the British Empire in India. It is an awkward dilemma: it would be difficult if Afghanistan alone were conquered; but the Afghans are only a small section of the vast Mahomedan population in Western and Central Asia, and in India, the prospects of peace in a continent where war under the 'banner of the Prophet' is considered a solemn duty and where death in battle is looked upon as the opening of the gate to external bliss - the variety of supreme happiness that commends itself to the Oriental imagination - are not particularly hopeful."

## The Great Game

The Great Game was the British term for Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia. It stemmed from the British fear that the Russian civilizing mission in Central Asia would extend into Afghanistan and ultimately India. The Imperial ruling class in London viewed the Russian civilizing, particularly of the Moslem regions of Asia, as having great dangers for the Indian Empire and they determined that it should be prevented from entering Afghanistan.

The Afghan Wars resulted from the British desire to maintain Afghanistan as a buffer state between Russian influence and India and to install puppet regimes in Kabul. When Afghan rulers refused to accept English missions to Kabul armies were sent from India to change their minds, as in The Second Afghan War.

## The First Afghan War

The First Afghan War (1838-42) had ended in disaster for Britain as an army of 16,000 perished to a man retreating from Kabul. But in the 1870s the New Imperialism favoured a Forward Policy toward Afghanistan, holding that the 'defence of India' required pushing its frontiers to the natural barrier of the Hindu Kush, so that Afghanistan, or at least parts of it, would be brought entirely under British control. In 1876 Disraeli sent the new Indian Viceroy, Lord Lytton, to Delhi with orders to institute the Forward Policy. Sher Ali, the Emir, rejected a demand for a British mission in Kabul in 1876 arguing that if he agreed the Russians might demand the same right and his country would become a battleground of the Great Powers.

After Britain blocked Russian influence in the Balkans at the Congress of Berlin the Czar turned his attention to Central Asia. In 1878 Russia sent an uninvited diplomatic mission to Kabul. The British demanded that Sher Ali accept a British mission. Sher Ali had not responded by August 17 when his heir died, throwing the court at Kabul into mourning.

## The Treaty of Gandamak

When no reply was received, the British dispatched an envoy, Sir Neville Chamberlain, with a military force. When he was refused permission to cross the Khyber Pass

by Afghan troops the British viewed this as a handy pretext for implementing the Forward Policy and grabbing most of Afghanistan. An ultimatum was delivered to Sher Ali, demanding an explanation of his actions and when the Afghan response was viewed as unsatisfactory three British armies entered Afghanistan. Sher Ali died on a mission to plead with the Czar for help and with British forces occupying much of the country, his son, Yaqub, signed the Treaty of Gandamak to prevent British invasion of the rest of Afghanistan.

According to this agreement, and in return for an annual subsidy and an assurance of assistance in case of Russian aggression, Yaqub agreed to British control of Afghan foreign affairs, the presence of British representatives in Kabul and Kandahar, British control of the Khyber passes, and the cessation of various frontier areas to the Indian Empire. Then the head of the British Mission, Sir Louis Cavagnari, was assassinated, just after he arrived in Kabul. A British army went through the passes and reoccupied Kabul, deposing Yaqub.

But despite the initial success of the military expedition, Britain was unable to control the country outside the capital and withdrew.

The Afghan State was always easy to destabilise since it was hardly a state at all. The Afghans preferred to live in their tribal lands with their extended family groups and get on with life free from the 'progress' imposed by a centralising state structure. But the political preferences of the Afghans made them difficult to conquer and control. So in the late nineteenth century Britain used mainly punitive operations against Kabul to maintain an influence that kept the Russians out.

As part of its agreement with Russia in 1907, to clear the decks for war on Germany, England had secured the Czar's agreement that Afghanistan should become a British protectorate - thus ending the Great Game. Of course, the Afghans had no say in the matter. Their country had been the battleground in the Great Game and now that the Game was over the winner took the board.

In 1919 the Czar was gone and Britain felt that all deals were off with regard to Russia with the regime change - except with regard to Afghanistan where the agreement of 1907 with the Czar was deemed to stand. Only the idea of Protectorate had started to appear old-hat.

Afghanistan had remained neutral in the Great War and the new Amir, Amanullah, thought that since the Czar had gone and Britain was free of the Great Game and had fought a war for small nations, Afghanistan might be one of those nations that might enjoy the new world of the victors. So he wrote to the Governor General of India declaring his accession to the free and independent state of Afghanistan and his intention of asserting this status through an independent foreign policy.

In April 1919 the Amir moved troops to the frontier with British India in response to the administrative massacre of 400 Indians by General Edward Dyer at Amritsar. In Britain this was called an ‘invasion.’ But it can hardly be seen as an invasion since the area around the Afghan/Indian (now Pakistani) frontier is inhabited by the Pashtun, who move across both territories, and hardly recognise the existence of a border at all (Afghanistan’s frontier with British India was drawn up by Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893. It was an arbitrary line designed to cut the lands of the Pashtun tribes in two and make them easier to control.)

Fighting broke out in the Hindu Kush and when this proved costly to Britain the RAF bombed Kabul and Jalalabad and the Amir sued for peace.

## The Treaty of Rawalpindi

This was the great opportunity to drive the lesson home to the Afghans that they were to be ‘protected’ by Britain whether they liked it or not. But when it came to the bit, the thought of occupying Kabul, Kandahar and Herat made the British Indian administration think again and the Third Afghan War was ended with the Treaty of Rawalpindi. In this Treaty England conceded the Afghan demands for independence and control of foreign relations and almost immediately the Amir made an agreement with the Bolsheviks for the establishment of a Soviet consulate in Kabul.

Afghanistan was the first sign that Britain’s power, which seemed to have increased with its victory in the Great War, and its territorial extensions in the Middle East, was not all it appeared to be. No more British armies marched up the Khyber Pass to Kabul.

Is modern ‘independent’ Ireland closer to the views of Free State *Independent* or the Devlinite *Irish News*? I’m afraid it must be The Free State *Independent*. What does that say about ‘independent’ Ireland?

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## The Rise and Fall of Imperial Ireland

### Redmondism in the context of Britain's Conquest of South Africa and its Great War on Germany, 1899-1916

by Pat Walsh

Why did Ireland fail to become a partner to Britain in its Empire—like Canada, Australia or conquered South Africa—and instead embrace an anti-Imperialist point of view?

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## Revering Casement

Letter sent to The Irish times on 2 March 2008

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Madam,

I must take issue with Frank Callanan’s review of Seamus O’Siochain’s biography of Roger Casement (‘A rebel who found his cause,’ *Irish Times*, 1st March 2008).

Callanan quotes a fragment of Casement’s assessment of the origins and nature of the First World War, including his view “we feel that the German people are in truth fighting for European civilisation at its best.” Very few analyses of the War outside a presumption of British righteousness and moral superiority were written by Irish people. But Casement was one of them. In his *The Crime Against Europe* he saw the British Empire instigating a total war to destroy any challenge to its hegemony of the world and described Germany as the most socially advanced power involved in the conflict. Callanan thinks this view an obvious absurdity and quotes it to that effect.

But Casement is in good company. His views were shared by James Connolly who in 1914-16 wrote in support of Germany in the war in very similar terms. Also, as revealed in the recent collection of Connolly’s correspondence edited by Donal Nevin, this view was also shared by Francis Sheehy Skeffington, the celebrated socialist pacifist, who wrote on the outbreak of the war: “I am hoping against hope for a German victory; I fear the Germans are hopelessly ringed in.” This sentiment was at the heart of the 1916 Proclamation too, which referred to the Germans as “our gallant allies in Europe.”

Germany at the time was a European based power, to whom the term “empire” in the British sense scarcely applies. Its Bismarckian welfare state and powerful social democratic party were the envy of socialists and progressives the world over.

Redmond believed in Ireland’s future within a British Empire that continued to dominate the world, and in which a Home Rule Ireland would have a slice of that action, and that was the basis of his stance in 1914 in support of British imperialism. What Callanan disparagingly calls Casement’s “obsessional nationalism” was opposed to the depredations of imperialism in the world.

Casement’s revelations of the genocidal brutality of the Belgian Congo just a few short years before Redmond’s exhortations to defend “gallant little Belgium” are acknowledged by Callanan, but in seeking to have Casement revered for his harmless “humanitarianism” rather than his robust anti-imperialism he is diminishing the man.

Philip O'Connor

# An unconvincing globaliser: Review of *Testimony* by Nicolas Sarkozy

by John Martin

Once in a generation or so a man of destiny emerges who changes and defines the politics of the age. In post war France de Gaulle and Mitterrand were such men, but on the evidence of this book Sarkozy most certainly is not.

A few years ago I spent some time in France and was quite prepared to believe the opposite about Sarkozy. As an occasional reader of *l'Humanité* I had no reason to doubt the French Communist Party's view on the matter. This was that Sarkozy represented a *rupture* from current politics in a reactionary direction. According to this view the Sarkozian project extended beyond the political. The ideological basis for this rupture had its source in a book by Edouard Balladur, an unsuccessful right wing presidential candidate of the 1980s. The title of the book was *La fin de l'illusion Jacobine* ('the end of the Jacobin illusion').

In *l'Humanité*'s view Balladur's book was designed to undermine the values of the French Revolution. And Sarkozy was Balladur's protégé.

I can't comment on Balladur's book since I have not read it. But on the evidence of Sarkozy's book, *l'Humanité* has given him more credit than he is due. Sarkozy is too superficial to implement profound change in France. And the French are beginning to realise that he is that most contemptible of politicians: a politician who wants to be liked.

In the year preceding his election as President he paraded his private life for public consumption. He was the loving father and husband. Unfortunately as the election drew near it became obvious that all was not as it had appeared in the pages of *Paris Match*. But there was a reconciliation just before his elevation.

Sarkozy's book was written after his election as President but before he married Carla Bruni. So readers will experience a malicious pleasure at reading the following:

"C. I write "C." because still today, nearly twenty years after we first met, it moves me to pronounce her name. C. is Cécilia. Cécilia is my wife. She is part of me. Whatever challenges we have faced as a couple, not a day has gone by that we didn't talk. Really! We didn't want to betray anyone, but we're incapable of being apart. It's not that we haven't tried, but it's impossible. We finally realised that it was vital for us to speak to each other, listen to each other, hear each other, and see each other" (page 39)

He goes on in this vein for a page and then announces:

"Today Cécilia and I have gotten back together for real, and surely forever. I'm talking about it because Cécilia asked me to speak for both of us. She wanted me to be her spokesman. She could no

doubt have said it better than I, but by asking me to do it she showed her modesty, her fragility, and maybe also her confidence in her husband.

"We won't talk about this anymore because, even though I'm only saying a little bit, I hope the reader will understand that this is a lot, given how important C. is to me.

In particular, I hope that however famous we may be, everyone out there will understand and accept that our story is simply that of a man, a woman, and a family. We do not deny our mistakes but ask to be respected so that we can calmly continue along the path of a life that we now know is not easy for anyone. A life in which we, like anyone else, need love. I now know this to be so precious that it must be protected. The past will serve as an eternal lesson" (page 40).

Let's just say that Sarkozy is no Mitterrand and leave it at that!

Despite the foregoing there is much in the book that is sensible, although unremarkable. He claims that he was a hands-on Minister for the Interior and believes that it is important to go out and meet people and visit places to understand problems. All this is sensible stuff but not particularly original. The Americans call it MBWA (Management By Walking About) in contrast to MBA (Master of Business Administration) which is the academic qualification for management.

Sarkozy was Minister for the Interior at the time of the riots in France but was not blamed for them. And in fairness to him there were no fatalities after the deaths of the two youths, which sparked the riots. Again he says some sensible things about the problems in the poor suburbs of France. In his view no part of France should be exempt from the law of the Republic. It is not acceptable that young people should accept local drug dealers as authority figures.

My impression is that the extent of the drug problem in France is far less grave than in Ireland or the UK. Also the level of integration of North African immigrants into French society is much greater than that of Pakistanis and Turks into British and German societies. That having been said there are problems in the *banlieues* which a law and order approach alone will not solve.

Sarkozy's answer is greater social mobility. He believes that there should be affirmative action for job applicants from poor areas. He has been accused of supporting the American model of multiculturalism, which is anathema to French Republican values where all citizens should be treated equally. His defence is that the affirmative action he favours is not based on race but on the area people come from.

Another area of controversy is his support for religion and religious values. Critics accuse him of undermining Republican values. He believes that the 21st century will be more religious than the 20th century and he views this as a positive development. He doesn't expound on this subject in his book and it was noticeable that he took an uncharacteristically low profile during the debate of a few years ago over the banning of overt religious symbols such as the veil in public offices. So it remains to be seen how profound Sarkozy's convictions are on this.

On the economy Sarkozy takes a conventional right wing view on the 35 hour working week. He believes it undermines the work ethic. Individuals should have the right to work longer if they want. His argument is that the law is too inflexible. Young people are quite happy to work long hours, while middle aged people with families may want to work less. But because the number of hours worked is restricted, the most dynamic element of the workforce is lost from the economy.

He points to the relative economic success of the UK compared to France and the large number of young French people living in London. He argues that you cannot ration work. The more economic activity that is generated the more employment results.

The Left argue that the flexibility which Sarkozy wants to introduce will completely undermine the 35 hour week. This is not the place to discuss in detail the merits of the 35 hour week, but it is a fact that not only Trade Unions, but many French companies support it. Shorter working hours are credited with enabling French workers to have the highest hourly rate of productivity in the world.

But Sarkozy is no free market ideologue. In his book he boasts of his intervention to save the French energy and transport company *Alstom* with State aid. He also claims credit for organising a merger of a French and German company *Sanofi-Aventis* to prevent a takeover by a company from outside the EU.

This was allegedly done while he was finance minister. My own memory of his time in this post was that he couldn't get out of it quickly enough. He considered it a poisoned chalice and a potential pitfall in his quest for the Presidency. During this period Chirac was directing economic policy. I discussed this with a *Sanofi-Aventis* employee who confirmed that Sarkozy's involvement was minimal.

Nevertheless, it is interesting that Sarkozy tries to take credit for these examples of State intervention. In his book he describes himself as a liberal but:

"Being liberal doesn't prevent me from thinking that the liberal economy needs regulation, norms and constraints in order to serve citizens rather than having citizens serving it.

"Such measures include labour laws, minimum wages, union laws, worker representation, consumer rights, and anti-trust policies.

"I am convinced that in certain sectors such as culture and sports, specific rules must be applied to levels of pay. I also think that public services are necessary, because some goods and services are unique or so critical that they cannot be subject to the laws of the market.

"Even more, I think the State has certain responsibilities, and in particular that it must have industrial and research policies" (page 151-152).

The above puts him firmly in the mainstream of Gaullist thinking: very far from a "*rupture*".

On taxation Sarkozy takes a conventional right wing position. He favours increasing indirect taxation (e.g. VAT) and reducing income taxes and social insurance. However his argument for this is quite interesting:

"Financing social insurance with a tax on sales, sometimes rather bizarrely called the "social VAT", has many advantages in the context of the global economy. It is a way to fight against exporting employment, to create jobs, and to boost buying power. By raising the price of imported products, it lowers the incentive for consumers to buy cheap imports from low-salary countries rather than products made in France by more expensive labour. The consumer, who is all the more driven to find the cheapest goods because his buying power is weak, is thus given an incentive to participate in the destruction of his own job and social insurance" (page 180).

This looks suspiciously like a protectionist argument for increasing VAT. It is very clear that Sarkozy is very far from being an enthusiastic exponent of free trade. But the question arises: why doesn't he suggest protectionist tariffs on imported goods? because an increase in VAT will also affect domestic producers competing in the home market. I can only assume his reluctance to advocate such a policy is so as not to infringe the *World Trade Organisation's* rules.

But it is clear where Sarkozy's heart lies on this matter. He favours environmental taxes. But these aren't ordinary environmental taxes. They will be imposed on imported products "*from countries that do not respect environmental rules*". Nothing about domestic polluters! He also thinks that there should be an environmental tax on the "*carbon content of imports*". It is clear that these "*environmental taxes*" are nothing more than import tariffs.

This brings us to the question of Europe and it is worth quoting extensively from Sarkozy on this subject:

"Europe cannot simply be a place you come from. To count in the world, Europe must be ambitious. André Malraux was right to say that 'Europe must be ambitious or it will die.' The EU's founding founders – Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gaspari – had this ambition. So too did Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, and Konrad Adenauer. And so did Georges Pompidou, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Francois Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac, Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl, and Jacques Delors. From the European Coal and Steel Community to the single currency, Europe was built on the ambitions of its people and governments.

"These people and governments wanted a Europe that could act, not a passive Europe. They wanted a Europe that would multiply their power. They wanted a Europe that could protect them, not a



Trojan horse. They wanted a strong Europe that could defend their interests and values in the world economy, not a victim of globalization. They wanted a democratic Europe that would respect the national identities and sovereignty of its people, not a bureaucratic Europe that flattens everything under its regulations, that prevents any industrial policy in the name of a dogmatic vision of competition, and thus bans macroeconomic policy. They wanted a single currency that works for Europe's competitiveness, growth, and employment, not a Europe stifled by an overvalued currency. They wanted the currency to work for the economy, not the other way around. They wanted a Europe with personality, an identity, and borders. They wanted a Europe in which they could recognise themselves – a European Europe. They didn't want a Europe with no fixed borders, expanding indefinitely, diluting its will, policies and institutions in an ever-wider heterogeneous and loose grouping.

“The enlargement of the EU has weakened the common will and placed an insurmountable obstacle before political integration. Turkey's entry would kill the very idea of European integration. Turkey's entry would turn Europe into a free-trade zone with a competition policy. It would permanently bury the goal of EU as a global power, of common policies, and of European democracy. It would be a fatal blow to the very notion of European identity.

“Part of our current identity crisis results from a Europe that has come to symbolise weakness, with an overvalued euro, a free-market ideology, and a dogmatic commitment to competition. It results from endless enlargement, a “race to the bottom” in fiscal and social policy, and the feeling of many citizens that Europe is being built without them or even against them” (page 188-190).

All of this puts Sarkozy in the mainstream of Gaullist thinking with one exception.

It is also in line with the editorial policy of this magazine with that one exception.

What is that exception? The exception is that in his list of European Greats he puts Winston Churchill in front of Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer! But Churchill contributed absolutely nothing to the development of post-war Europe.

It is certain that Sarkozy knows this, but feels that there should be at least one British name in the pantheon of European Greats. But this points to the great flaw in French thinking on Europe. After de Gaulle she has persisted in thinking, despite all the evidence, that Britain can be persuaded to contribute to the European project.

But de Gaulle was right all along. Britain should never have been allowed to join the EEC.

If Jacques Delors had waited for Britain's agreement, the Euro would be stillborn. And it took an Italian to find a way out of the impasse. The Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti suggested that Margaret Thatcher devise her own document on Europe and those countries in favour of the Euro devise their document. When subsequently Thatcher objected to parts of the pro Euro document he said but we are not discussing *your* document now this is *our* document. We can discuss *your* document later.

Sarkozy's sentiments on Europe are the polar opposite to those of Britain. To pretend that Britain can be convinced

that the EU can be something more than a free trade area is a piece of wishful thinking that is an obstacle to fulfilling the ambitions of Europe.

Along with his illusions about Britain there are those that Sarkozy has in relation to the USA. He cannot understand why many of his countrymen detest the US. The Frenchman Lafayette, after all, was on the side of the Americans in the battle of Yorktown in 1781. But then Sarkozy makes the following extraordinary statement:

“The French cannot forget that it was the Americans who liberated them from Nazi barbarity and who put an end to the bloodletting that this regime inflicted on the whole of Europe” (page 194).

This is completely against the doctrine of de Gaulle, which was faithfully followed by Mitterrand. According to this doctrine France liberated herself. She may have received help from others but it was France who liberated herself. To believe otherwise is suicidal for a French head of State. It immediately puts France at a moral disadvantage in her dealings with America and Britain.

Sarkozy, in his book, says that Chirac's foreign policy was “exemplary”. On Iraq he says that Chirac was correct and the Americans were wrong. It is easy to say that now when it is obvious that the invasion of Iraq has been a disaster and when the weapons of mass destruction, the *casus belli*, have been shown to have been non-existent. But Sarkozy was no help to the French government in the early stages of the war. A couple of years ago he visited the US and expressed embarrassment at French policy. This in my view is an indication of a sense of inferiority which the Americans and British will be adept at exploiting.

Even now Sarkozy's support for Chirac's position on Iraq is not unqualified. On this subject he says:

“But where our strategic interests are concerned, systematically opposing the United States is a double mistake. It's a mistake first of all because ignoring or criticising your friends is bad strategy. And the Americans have been, are, and will remain our friends and allies. It's also a mistake because you can more freely express disagreements if you do so without questioning fundamental links. Thus on Iraq, our disagreements were legitimate, but they would have had more impact had they not been coupled with the threat of using our veto” (page 195).

In my view the last sentence demonstrates quite clearly that Sarkozy would not have had the moral courage to oppose the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq.

The President of France's uncritical admiration for Britain and America does not bode well for the future of Europe.

# De Valera and USSR membership of the League of Nations

by Manus O’Riordan

This article first appeared in *Church and State*, Autumn 2007

Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Volume IV, 1932-1936 was published by the Royal Irish Academy in 2004. In it is reproduced some fascinating archival material that shines the spotlight on the pivotal role played by Éamon de Valera, as President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State and its Minister for External Affairs, in facilitating the admission of the USSR into membership of the League of Nations in 1934.

## Entry of the USSR into the League of Nations

On 4 August 1934, the Irish Minister to the Holy See, William Macaulay, reported as follows to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Joseph Walshe, on the attitude of the Vatican in respect of this issue:

“I have to inform you that the Holy See prefers not to express an opinion on the question of the admission of Russia to the League of Nations, as the Holy See itself is not a member. However, when I suggested that Russia as a member of the League would perhaps be more susceptible to pressure in favour of relaxation in its attitude towards religion in general and the Church in particular, I was countered with the remark that, on the contrary, Russia would merely find at Geneva another point from which to disseminate her propaganda and this she would do incessantly. There is no doubt in my mind, from the conversations I have had, that the Holy See fears Russia’s admission and would be prepared to oppose it if that were possible. The Holy See will in no way do anything to obstruct Russia’s admission in view of the attitude of France and Britain on this matter”.

In a follow-up report, the Irish Legation’s Chancery Clerk, Patrick Byrne, also wrote to Walshe on 28 August 1934:

“I visited the Vatican yesterday morning and had a talk with Mon. Pizzardo. I mentioned the *Osservatore Romano* article of August 18 and he immediately asked me if I had read the one in the *Avenire d’Italia* of 22nd. I replied that I had, and furthermore that I had sent translations to the Department. He inquired if the articles were quite clear. I said that the question of ‘conditions’ in the *Osservatore* article was somewhat vague and might be shown more clearly. I then asked him if the Vatican would consider that conditions similar to those required by England and the U.S.A. (as mentioned in the article) were sufficient to admit Russia to the League with satisfactory hopes for the future. He replied by partly shaking his head and said: ‘Russia is everywhere going ahead; she is using every means of furthering her policy in Europe; she is working her way into all countries, and this is her great effort at Geneva.’ I said that France seemed to be very prominent in backing her candidature, but that there seemed to be some doubt

regarding Italy’s attitude. He replied that France was at the back of the whole movement, that she was ‘the leader’ ... He then made a very complimentary remark about the Irish people who subordinate everything to the Faith, ‘who keep it continually present in all their actions’. He said: ‘you are a great missionary people and naturally you view world events from the standpoint of Catholic doctrine’. He added that my inquiry about the conditions of Russia’s admission to the League ‘was extremely welcome’ and that he would like me to go to the Vatican again tomorrow (Wednesday) to talk further on the matter. Returning to the subject of Italy, I said that it might be supposed that the price of Italy’s support at Geneva would be an extension of her trade with Russia. He replied ‘absolutely; Russia wants immense quantities of aeroplanes, and Italy requires the orders; it will help to solve her unemployment problem’.”

“I will send you a further minute tomorrow after my second visit to the Secretariat of State. Mon. Pizzardo was extremely gloomy on the subject of Russia and the League. He regarded the result as a foregone conclusion and repeated several times that it was ‘all France’ and that in Italy’s case it was the necessity of ‘providing for the stomach’. These phrases alone are of full eloquence.”

## De Valera’s speech on USSR entry

When President de Valera rose to address the Plenary Session of the League of Nations in Geneva, on 12 September 1934, he felt he had the leeway to take a bold and imaginative initiative to resolve the log-jam on this issue. This speech, entitled “Russia and the League”, deserves to be quoted in full:

“It was with a feeling of no little anxiety that I ventured to put my name on the list of speakers for this evening. Many of the delegates present will remember that on a former occasion I availed myself of the indulgence which is usually given to a newcomer to the seat of the League to make some frank comments, and to give expression to the views of the plain people in my own country, as I understood them – views which I believed were largely shared by the plain people of many countries who desired to see peace reign in the world. My remarks were received not unfavourably, in the belief that they were prompted by a sincere desire for the welfare of the League. May I claim the same favourable consideration for the remarks which I am now about to make on an even more delicate subject.”

“Not a single delegate to the League but must be aware that the dominant issue at this Assembly is the question of the entry of Russia into the League. That was known before we came to Geneva. Since we came here it has been the sole topic of conversation, I might say, between delegates; and it is, in my opinion, in the interests of the League, in view of the suspicions and the distrust which have been aroused not merely among delegations here but among our people at home who receive the Press reports, that this subject should be dealt with frankly and plainly in the Assembly.”

“I do not want anyone to imagine that I am not fully aware of the difficulties, or that I do not realise that there are many questions which have to become the subject of private negotiations and conversations before a public arrangement can be reached. I fully realise that, but I am convinced that a continuance beyond a certain period of those private negotiations may very well defeat the purpose for which they were entered upon; and if I can judge from what I have heard from other delegations, we have arrived at the time when the danger is a real possibility.”

“Now, what is the position? The position, as I conceive it, is this: that it is believed – the various trends of opinion having been explored fairly carefully – that there is in this Assembly the necessary majority of votes to secure Russia’s entry into the League. Of course, not every delegation has at its disposal the evidence which would assure it of that fact, but it is a fact, I understand, which is generally accepted. On the other hand, there is a belief, and those who seem to speak with authority on the matter say they are certain, that Russia desires to enter the League. We have therefore the two necessary conditions. On the one hand there is the readiness of Russia to enter, and on the other hand there is here, we understand, the necessary majority to secure her entrance if she applies.”

“What is it reasonable for Russia to expect? Russia, like any other State – great or small – naturally wants to assure herself, before applying, that she is not to be subjected to the humiliation of having her application rejected. That is very natural. It is a thing we can understand; it is a thing that our peoples can understand, and that can be understood in this assembly hall as well as in some hotel room. That being so, why can we not state it openly here? On the other hand, the League has also a dignity to maintain, and the members of the League have a dignity to maintain; and those who talk of issuing invitations must realise that any person who is likely to be a party to such an invitation will need to be assured that the invitation, if issued, will not be rejected. I think the people of Russia, or the people of any State that desired to enter the League, would understand that.”

## An invitation to join

“With regard to this question of an invitation: those delegates who, like myself, for example, would not sign any invitation without first of all having the assurance that the invitation would not be rejected, have another very important matter to consider. It is true probably – I am assured by very many delegates that that is a fact about which there can be no doubt – that the necessary two-thirds majority is available here to support an invitation to Russia, but it is well known also that there are States which are not prepared to support Russia’s entry. These States have rights too; they have the right to express their views, and any invitation or procedure that would have the effect of depriving any of those States of this right is something, in my opinion, that it would be unworthy of the League even to consider.”

“The necessary machinery is provided by which, when a certain majority of votes is available, the opposition of a minority can be overborne. There is no humiliation to Russia in coming along in the ordinary way, having been assured that there is no intention on the part of the majority of delegates to attempt to humiliate her in any way. But, as I have said, those of us who are in the League, whether we are in support of Russia’s entry or against it, have rights which must not be abrogated. They are provided for, and if a matter of procedure is involved, have we not the Sixth Committee, for example, in which the whole question of procedure could properly be considered in the presence of all the delegations instead of in caucus in a hotel room.”

“I think there is no real difficulty at all. We have only to face the situation frankly. We can individually make quite clear what our attitude will be when the necessary application or the necessary steps to bring about Russia’s application are taken. Russia will have in that way the assurance she requires in advance. She can then make her application. In the nature of things she must feel in any case that there is going to be a favourable consideration of the application. Why? Because it is obvious that anyone who has the interest of the League at heart, and looks upon the League as an instrument for the preservation of world peace, must desire to see in the League a nation of the importance of Russia.”

“Her territory is two, perhaps three, times the size of the rest of Europe; she has a population, I believe, of some one hundred and sixty-five millions. Is it not obvious, *a priori*, that there must be a strong feeling on the part of everybody who wishes well of the League in favour of having such a nation participate in the League’s work, subject, of course, to the understanding that in entering the League she was entering it in no special or privileged position; that she was to be subject to all the obligations which other members of the League have to undertake.”

## Religious freedom

“I represent a country which, if you consider its political and religious ideals, is as far apart as the poles from Soviet Russia; but I would be willing to take the responsibility of saying openly and frankly here that I would support and vote for the entry of Russia into the League on account of the considerations I have mentioned. I admit that I should be much happier, as the representative of a country which has suffered greatly for religious freedom, if Russia, on entering the League, were to make universal those guarantees which she gave to the United States of America on resuming diplomatic relations with that country. I hope that the rights which Russia agreed to accord the nationals of the United States on the resumption of diplomatic relations with that country will, on Russia’s entry into the League, be made universal. I believe that the day has gone when nations that want liberty and peace, or enlightened Governments claiming such ideals, can continue persecution, or persist in the denial of religious freedom.”

“I say, then, that what we should do here in this assembly is to get at once about this business, and if it is a matter of procedure – as it now seems largely to be – to bring that matter to the Assembly. And let us not, for the credit of the League, attempt to deprive any State of its rights under the Covenant and of its rights to object and criticise if a proposal is made for a new entrant into the League. As I said at the beginning, I have ventured on rather delicate ground. I hope that my doing so will be understood by the Assembly. To my mind, if we continue this method of hawking round draft after draft for signature, we shall do nothing but excite suspicion, and give an impression of intrigue which will be fatal to the credit of the League. It is not in the interest of the League, nor is it in the interest of Russia, that any special method should be devised for her. It is important that it should be understood that she comes in in no specially privileged position. A special situation is created here by the fact that because of want of unanimity you cannot adopt procedures that were adopted recently in a few cases. In the great majority of cases, however, the regular procedure was followed. As far as I know, the regular procedure was departed from only where there was no question of depriving any delegation of its rights – its rights of criticism. When there is unanimity, and all are in agreement, there is no deprivation in passing over or side-tracking (if I may say so) the ordinary procedure; but when there is not unanimity, any attempt to side-track that procedure is made at the expense of certain members of the League, and this, I think, should under no circumstances be done.”

## Reactions to the speech

On 13 September 1934 Frederick H. Boland, Head of the League of Nations Section of the Department of External Affairs, reported as follows to his Departmental Assistant Secretary, Seán Murphy:

“The President spoke in the Assembly yesterday afternoon on the question of the procedure to be adopted for the admission of Soviet Russia. I enclose a copy of the speech. The speech was well received in official circles here and we are now waiting to see the press reactions. We understand, however, that [British Foreign Secretary] Sir John Simon summoned the Press to a special meeting last night and made an attack on the President’s speech on the ground that it revealed a lack of knowledge of the procedural difficulties of the situation. The points mentioned by Sir John Simon did not bear out his general thesis because they were carefully discussed by us with the President before the President spoke at all. The President’s speech was made at a most strategic moment and the general feeling here is that it is bound to exercise a strong influence on the future course of the negotiations in connection with the admission of Russia.”

Four days later, on 17 September, Boland further reported to Murphy:

“So far as we can judge from the English, French, Swiss and other newspapers, the President’s speech has been very well received everywhere. Neither the *Osservatore Romano* nor the *Avennir* appear to have made any special comment on it, but so far as we can see, the President’s reference in his speech to the desirability of obtaining guarantees of religious liberty from the Soviet Government has created a most favourable impression in Catholic circles generally. The curious thing is that the speech seems to have pleased everybody, both those who are in favour of Russia’s entry into the League and those who are against it; and a great many people here are loud in their praises of the tact and delicacy with which the President publicly discussed the question of Russia’s entry into the League at a moment at which the private, hotel-bedroom conversations on the subject were at a peculiarly difficult and delicate stage. I think the *Journal de Genève* was right when it said that the practical effect of the speech was to bring about a *détente* in the atmosphere of strained anxiety which the secret conversations had been responsible for creating. The President is on the Sixth and Second Committees ... He proposes to take part in the discussion of the Russian question when it comes before the Sixth Committee this afternoon ...”

And so it unfolded. The strategic intervention by de Valera paid off on the following day, 18 September 1934, when the League of Nations formally voted to accept the USSR into membership.

## A Hungarian viewpoint

An indication of how vitally important Dev’s strategic intervention had been can be gleaned from a virulently anti-Communist source - Tibor Eckhardt - the founder President of the Hungarian Smallholders’ Party, its chief delegate to the League of Nations in 1934, and a wartime and post-war exile in the USA. In his memoirs entitled *Regicide in Marseille*, which were first published in 1964, Eckhardt was to recall [and, incidentally, also reveal just how respectful and devoid of bitterness or prejudice de Valera had remained towards the memory of Arthur Griffith, notwithstanding Ireland’s own Treaty split and Civil War]:

“In mid-September 1934 the admission of the Soviets to the League of Nations caused considerable uneasiness among the delegations in Geneva ... In 1924, I had prevented the establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and the Soviets by quoting in Parliament passages from a British Red Cross report (1919) on the mass murders committed by the Bolsheviks in Leningrad. I never changed my views of the Soviets, so when their admission was put to a vote, I walked out of the Assembly. An official of the Hungarian Delegation then carried out the Hungarian Government’s instruction to vote for their acceptance ...”

“According to the alphabet, Hungary is a neighbor of Ireland, so sitting next to Mr. Eamon de Valera in the Assembly of the League, I listened with sympathy to his honest views, which he expressed with much clarity. I feel indebted to him for a book he gave me, written by Arthur Griffith, the hero of Irish independence, who was inspired - as Mr. de Valera related - by the example of the Hungarian, Louis Kossuth, who dared to challenge two Empires: the Austrian and the Russian; whereas, Ireland had to fight against only one Empire: the British. On the Soviet issue, de Valera’s speech greatly relieved my conscience, for he said much of what I could not voice, (September 12, 1934), that the days were gone when freedom of religion could be denied by a government. His political and religious ideals represented the opposite of the Communist teachings, he continued, yet he would vote for admission of the Soviets, since this was a League of Nations and the Russians were one of the largest nations on earth. But he wanted to bring the Soviets into the League so that they might learn to respect human rights and to induce them to extend to all the nations the guarantees against subversion which they gave to the United States when diplomatic relations between them were established. And, certainly, he stated, the admission of the Soviets was no occasion for any celebration; no privileges should be accorded to them; the problem of their membership must be discussed publicly, and the opportunity must be accorded to every member to vote against their admission.”

“This plain talk decided the issue. Mr. Motta, the Swiss Delegate, told the Assembly that the Soviets would have to give some explanations when they joined the League. Their anti-religious propaganda plunged Christianity into tears and compelled us to ask God for justice. Mr. Eden, far from showing enthusiasm, explained that he would vote for the admission of the Soviets because he wished the League of Nations to be as representative as possible. Finally, the Soviets were admitted with only 39 votes.”

## Francis Cremins and Maxim Litvinov

The character of de Valera’s intervention was to come up two years later in a remarkable conversation that took place between Francis Cremins, Ireland’s Permanent Representative to the League of Nations, and the Foreign Minister of the USSR, Maxim Litvinov [1876-1951]. A right-hand man of both Lenin and Stalin, Litvinov had served as Soviet Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs 1921-30 before being promoted to Commissar of Foreign Affairs 1930-39. He had been in a political limbo during the period of the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, before becoming once again – until his retirement from public life – Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs 1941-46, while also serving as USSR Ambassador to the USA 1941-43. Unlike the phony “Christian-Marxist” dialogues of the 1960s and 1970s, this dialogue between Dev’s representative Cremins and Commissar Litvinov was an impressively honest-to-God and no-holds-barred frank exchange of views from

conflicting ideological perspectives. On 29 September 1936 Cremins submitted to his Departmental Secretary Joe Walshe - for the expressed purpose of having it brought to the personal attention of de Valera himself - his report on a luncheon that he had attended in Litvinov's company that very day in Geneva. It had been hosted by the Aga Khan, who sat on Litvinov's left, while Cremins sat on his right. The report contained the following detailed narrative:

"M. Litvinoff opened the conversation with me by an enquiry for the President. How was he? Did he not want to come here any more? I explained the President's absence (as in the case of numberless other enquiries from Delegates to the Assembly) by stating that the President was unable to leave home this year owing to pressure of other work. M. Litvinoff then said 'I like your President de Valera, except for one thing'. I asked what that was, and he said 'he is too religious'. I said that, as no doubt the Commissar was aware, religion counted much with us in Ireland. 'I know that', he replied, 'but he allows his religion to interfere with his policy'. 'In what way?' I asked. He hesitated, and I said, 'did not President de Valera vote for the admission of Russia to the League?' He said 'yes, but with reservations'. I said: 'so far as the vote was concerned was it not 100 percent support? President de Valera did, certainly, make an appeal to the Soviet Government to extend to all foreigners in Russia and to the Russian people, the guarantees of freedom of conscience and of worship which the United States Government made a condition, in regard to American citizens, of the recognition of the U.S.S.R. by the U.S.A.. Surely, M. Litvinoff would admit that that was a natural appeal to make, seeing that the Soviet Government had declared its desire for peace; that peace could not be had without goodwill, and that there could be no goodwill when people found that attempts were being made to destroy things which meant most to them in life.' He said 'we do not care whether other people have religion or not, but we can have no such thing in Russia'. I said that the Soviet Government did not confine her activities in that respect to Russia; take for example, the anti-religious broadcasts. Did they stop at the Russian frontiers? He said: 'they are for our own people'. 'But do they stop at your frontiers', I asked, 'and are they not given in other than Russian languages?'

## Anti-religious broadcasts

He repeated that Russia did not interfere with religion in other countries, but she could have none of it in Russia; at least, he said, we will teach against it. I pressed him on this. 'Your Constitution, I said, provides for liberty of conscience, and is supposed to allow religious as well as anti-religious teaching, but how does that work in practice? I have read that religious teaching is forbidden in the schools, but that anti-religious teaching is given. Where is the equality there?' He seemed to assent to this, and said that atheism was taught; 'but that is for our own people', he said. I asked him would his Government now reconsider their whole attitude seeing that it clearly interfered with good understanding between the peoples, but he said that that was a matter for the Russian people themselves; they could practice religion if they liked and go to Church, but 'we will continue to teach against it', and as regards broadcasting, he said 'why should we give up such an excellent means of propaganda?' adding that other people were free to listen in or not as they might desire. I pressed the point. 'If Russia was not concerned now with the destruction of religion in other countries, that was certainly a change. The Soviet policy was not merely a Russian policy, but a world policy, and was it not the original intention to destroy religion, as a necessity for putting over the Soviet Social policy on other peoples, as on their own.' He maintained that, now at any rate, it was none of Russian policy to interfere with religion in other countries ..."

## Paradise in this life

"At the end, on the question of religion, he said to me that Russia wanted to provide for Paradise in this life, not in the next. I said that, the next life being so much longer than this one, would it not be wise to provide for it also? 'If there is a next life', he replied. I asked if that meant that he believed that he would be as dead 'as a door-nail' when he died, and he said something to the effect that he would probably then have joined the other minerals in the earth."

"My talk with M. Litvinoff, which was of course in friendly strain, was not so continuous as I have reported it, as he was frequently engaged in conversation with the Aga Khan. The latter, also, asked questions bearing on the religious issue. I heard him ask, for example, whether the young people in Russia now show any desire for religion, to which Mr. Litvinoff answered, 'no, no desire at all'. The Aga Khan then asked whether there were any divisions between the young generation? For example, did the children of Jews mix with the children of Christians?, to which M. Litvinoff replied that the young people mixed freely, and that there were no differences between them".

"With regard to M. Litvinoff's speech to the Assembly, I remarked that it had caused something of a stir. 'Yes', he said, 'the British people do not like frank speaking', and he coupled this with some reference to the *Manchester Guardian* which I did not quite follow ..."

## Litvinov in Belfast

When Litvinov admitted to Cremins that he knew just how much religion counted for in Ireland, this was about as much as he was prepared to admit. He was not prepared to own up to any first hand experience of Ireland as a one-time Cavehill rockclimber who had in fact spent two years of his life living in Belfast. Such details constituted the subject matter of an article entitled "*A Bolshevik in Belfast: an episode in the biography of Maxim Litvinov*", which was published in *Irish-Russian Contacts*, a special 1984 issue of *Irish Slavonic Studies* (Belfast), and written by that volume's editor, Neil Cornwell. He narrated:

"Litvinov was born as Meier Wallach (on July 17, 1876) in the town of Bialystok in Russian Poland. After being discharged from the Russian army he joined the Social Democratic party in the late 1890s and embarked on a long and famous revolutionary career. This included an escape from Kiev prison in 1902, a first meeting with Lenin (in the Reading Room of the British Museum) and participation in the famous Congress of 1903, running the distribution of *Iskra*, *Vperyod* and *Novaya Zhizn* in Riga, St. Petersburg and other locations, and buying arms for the Bolsheviks. He had adopted the name of Litvinov, probably taking it from Turgenev's novel *Smoke*; apart from Max Harrison, other aliases used included Gustav Graf, Ludwig Wilhelmvich Neitz and Engineer Tech. He also operated under the Bolshevik code-name 'Felix' and the nickname (accorded him by Lenin) of 'Papasha'. In January 1908 Litvinov was arrested in Paris, in possession of banknotes taken in the Tiflis expropriation of 1907 (carried out by Kamo, under the orders of Stalin), and deported to England".

Cornwell then related the story of Litvinov's sister Rifka: "Litvinov spent some considerable part, if not all, of the two

years from 1908 to 1910 with his sister and her family at 15 Cliftonpark Avenue in North Belfast ... David Levinson, 'then a pushing young merchant', met Rifka Wallach, 'renowned for her beauty' and the daughter of a well-to-do and cultured Polish Jewish family, in Byalistok. The best man at their wedding was the bride's brother, the future Maxim Maximovich Litvinov, then a cadet in the Tsarist army. The story of the Levinsons then becomes ever more romantic. Conscripted into the Russian army, David Levinson took the first available leave pass and was promptly smuggled out of the country on a cart by his young wife. The couple traveled further and further westward and eventually arrived at Liverpool. There they met some people from Enniskillen (Co. Fermanagh) who advised them to go to Ireland ('there being no Jews there!'). They settled first in Enniskillen and then in Clones (Co. Monaghan). David Levinson's business activities made him a well-known figure, both in the border areas (following partition in 1921) and in Belfast. He is mentioned in a book of Patrick Shea (1981), and a former Belfast resident remembers him as 'a strongly built Russian (sic) type who would give me – a youngster – a kindly nod of greeting'. The Levinsons' three children were all born in Ireland ... David Levinson, 'general merchant', moved into the Cliftonpark Avenue house during 1908 and had vacated it by 1913."

The Enniskillen people whom the Levinsons had met in Liverpool had only been strictly accurate in terms of their own native patch. There had been no Jews at all in Co. Fermanagh in 1891 and only 3 in 1901, while the number of Jews in Co. Monaghan was a mere 7 in 1891 and 6 in 1901 – with the Levinsons themselves possibly being included in one or other of these counts. But, against the background of rising anti-Semitism in the Russian Empire, the Jewish population in Ireland as a whole was to increase from 400 in 1881 to 1,500 in 1891, to 3,000 in 1901 and to 3,800 in 1911. [For two recently published essays-in-review in which I examine the details of Irish Jewish history, see [http://www.drb.ie/june\\_citizens.html](http://www.drb.ie/june_citizens.html) for the Summer 2007 issue of the *Dublin Review of Books* and – for a more extensive evaluation – <http://www.anfearrua.com/story.asp?id=2126> on the website of *An Fear Rua – The GAA Unplugged!*]

## Belfast synagogues

But what specifically of the Belfast Jewish community, among whom Rifka and David Levinson would finally settle? There had been no Jews at all in the city in 1814, but in 1871 a synagogue was opened in Great Victoria Street for a community of about 50, primarily German in origin. Its founding father was Daniel Joseph Jaffe, who originally hailed from Mecklenburg-Schwerin. His son Sir Otto Jaffe in turn became the congregation's Life-President, and also went on to serve as Lord Mayor of Belfast in both 1899 and 1904. Notwithstanding his services to the city, including his funding of a physiology laboratory in Queen's University, and despite the fact that his own son was serving in the British army, Empire Loyalist war hysteria seized on Otto's own Hamburg birth in 1846, and subsequent service as German consul in Belfast, to force his resignation from Belfast City Council in 1916, while also forcing the Jaffe family to flee for their lives from the province.

By this stage the Belfast Jewish community was also overwhelmingly composed of immigrants from Lithuania

and Russian Poland, increasing in number to 200 in 1891 and 700 in 1901. It was to cater for such a growing community that in 1904 Sir Otto Jaffe had opened a much larger synagogue in Annesley Street, Carlisle Circus. This would have been David Levinson's place of worship. But we can also be reasonably certain that this was one Belfast building whose doors Maxim Litvinov himself never darkened. For his uncompromising atheism held as much antipathy towards his sister Rifka's Judaism as it would towards Dev's Catholicism.

## Litvinov's family in Belfast

Cornwell proceeded to quote from a two-part article written by local journalist Tommy Anderson for the *Belfast Telegraph* on August 26 and 27, 1940. Detailing how Litvinov had spent the years 1908-10 living with his sister Rifka in Belfast (where she, in turn, had died in 1933), this article was primarily based on interviews conducted by Anderson with Litvinov's two Belfast nieces, Ray and Estar, as well as with their father David Levinson:

"What rejoicing there was that day [in 1908]. Rifka laughed and cried alternately – laughed with joy at seeing her beloved brother again, cried because of the marks which privation had left on his face. He was thin and emaciated. His clothing was shabby. He had the furtive air of a hunted man. And he has his 100,000 roubles in 1,000 rouble notes – the full of a suitcase. But that, Litvinoff explained, was the sacred property of the Party and could not be touched. Then, the family were introduced to this strange, foreign-looking Uncle Max about whom they had heard their mother talk so much".

"And what a jolly uncle he proved himself to be – bubbling over with fun and high spirits when he could be prevailed upon to come out of his serious moods, always ready for a game with his little nieces, full of the most wonderful bed-time stories which simply made you ask for more".

Cornwell continued with some further information supplied directly to himself by Estar, still alive and well in Belfast in 1984:

"Two Okhrana agents (anachronistically described by the *Belfast Telegraph* as 'the hounds of the Cheka') had allegedly followed Litvinov to Belfast and kept watch on him from a house down the road. He therefore carried a revolver and a Gurkha knife (at which his sister was 'aghast'), which frightened the children (particularly little Estar, then aged about ten); thereafter he cleaned his knife behind a locked door".

"Litvinov obtained a job, through the influence of his brother-in-law, as a teacher 'in a school of languages in the Antrim Road'. Estar Levinson is certain that her uncle worked in the Berlitz School. This establishment, however, occupied premises at 5 Royal Avenue in 1908, moving in 1909 (until its closure in 1915) to Kingscourt, Wellington Place (both locations in the centre of the city). There exists also folk memory that Litvinov taught at the [Belfast Jewish community's] Jaffe National School, at 6 Cliftonville Road."

Anderson had also related:

"He was engaged principally to teach Russian, but as the number of students of Russian, was not numerous he also taught German, French, Spanish, Italian and other languages that Belfast people wanted to learn. Even Japanese ... His students were mostly connected with the textile trade, and needed Russian,

German, French and Spanish for their business journeys in those countries”.

Cornwell commented:

“Unusually, perhaps, for someone alleged to know fourteen languages (in prison, ‘learning foreign languages was his method of killing the time’), Litvinov had first to learn English before he could take the job at the languages school: ‘He spoke a little English when he came here, the result of his brief residence in London, but inadequate as the medium of explaining the intricacies of another language.’ His sister and the children rallied to assist and ‘at the end of six weeks he was speaking the language almost ‘like a native’.”

“Apart from teaching, Litvinov spent much of his Belfast nights reading and smoking, and his days walking and rock-climbing (on the Cavehill). Unusually dressed, in a Parisian white linen suit and Panama hat, Litvinov was commonly seen ‘striding along with his head in the clouds, puffing furiously at a cigarette ... - one of the most hunted men in Europe’. He seems to have avoided any political activity while in Belfast. On his arrival, Litvinov had agreed to stay with his sister until ‘I get the call from Moscow’. ‘I can see why you call Belfast your home’, he is said to have told his sister, ‘and why you never sigh for the loveliness of our beloved Poland’. Two years later the call came and Litvinov immediately left, with his suitcase of roubles: ‘that was the last of Litvinoff so far as Belfast was concerned.’ Folk memory persists that Litvinov left hurriedly, following an attempt made upon him by the Tsarist agents. However, in reality he is said to have left quietly, thorough the back door at night, leaving the Okhrana men to watch patiently for him for days to come.”

“Litvinov’s only remaining contact with Ireland would appear to have come in January 1918 when, as Bolshevik plenipotentiary in London, he received a deputation from the Irish TUC and, [according to John Carswell, author of *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov*, his English-born wife], ‘assured them that the Bolsheviks had long been students of the writings of James Connolly’.”

The conclusion of Cornwell’s article indicates that Litvinov’s own uncompromising atheism had also led to conflict with the observant Orthodox Judaism of his sister’s family in Belfast:

“Estar Levinson recollects letters arriving from her uncle for a period of a year or two after his departure from Belfast; she also thinks that at least one letter came mentioning Ivy (which suggests that the correspondence may have continued longer, or else re-started). Furthermore, she recalls subsequently meeting an aunt of Ivy’s, Fanny Low, in London. There is therefore some grounds for supposing that Ivy and her family should have at least been aware of the existence of Litvinov’s Belfast relatives. A possible clue to the situation may lie in Estar Levinson’s recollections of the circumstances in which contact between the family and Litvinov ceased. She remembers a row between her mother and her uncle over religion; Rifka Levinson apparently severed connections with her brother for fear that his atheistic and revolutionary ideas would infect her Jewish family. The Levinson children were dismayed by this development; when Estar wrote to her uncle some time later, wishing to renew contact, he replied – coldly denying the relationship.”

“Following the quarrel with his ‘favourite sister’, it seems likely that Maxim Litvinov might have regarded his duty to her as best served by maintaining a strict silence over the Belfast branch of the family and by enjoining others to do likewise. This would have been very much in character; remembered still by his niece as ‘a charming man’ and ‘a gentleman’, Maxim Maximovich Litvinov was also a man of delicate family sensibilities.”

Such then, was the Irish background of Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet statesman and militant atheist who in 1936 would express such genuine political respect and personal concern for the well-being of that Irish statesman and principled Catholic Éamon de Valera, who had been the architect of such a successful diplomatic strategy in Geneva designed to bring the USSR in from the international cold.

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## The Rescue of Princess Clementina (Stuart) A 1719 Adventure of the Irish Brigades by Sir Charles Wogan 2008

Charles Wogan (1685?-1754) was a member of an important Catholic family in Rathcoffey near Dublin, who spent most of his life in exile in France and Spain. A deeply sympathetic character, twice in his life he had occasion to defeat measures taken by George the First, King of England. First he led an escape from Newgate gaol where he was awaiting trial for treason for his part in the rising of 1715; three years later he arranged the escape of a princess arrested on the orders of King George.

The princess was Clementina Sobieski, the grand-daughter of the Polish King who won the battle of Vienna against the Turks in 1683. She was engaged to be married to James Francis Edward, son of James II, the Stuart King who was driven from the British throne in 1688 and replaced by William of Orange, later followed by the Hanoverians.

Imprisoning the last Stuart claimant’s fiancée, King George did not count on Wogan who, with the help of three of his relations, officers in the Irish brigade of Dillon based in France, scooped the princess from her prison; and they galloped over the Alps in their carriage in winter to safety. Clementina and James were married soon after and their first child was to be Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Writing to Jonathan Swift in 1732, Wogan comments on history written to adorn a country with glorious tales, and on the need for an Irish history that would fulfil that purpose. His writing of the Clementina story was a step in that direction. Letters which Chevalier Wogan exchanged with Swift are reproduced in an annex to the book. Wogan’s story appears here both in the original French and in translation, together with an introduction by Cathy Winch.

# Ireland, the EU and the strangling of Palestine

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by David Morrison

Ireland hasn't got an independent policy on Palestine. It follows EU policy, which in practice means US policy, since the EU is yoked to the US (along with Russia and the UN Secretary-General) in the so-called Middle East Quartet.

The picture the Quartet likes to present to the world is one of a body devoted to mediating between Israel and the Palestinians to arrive at a political settlement. In reality, its purpose is to provide a veneer of international legitimacy for US policy and actions in the region. The bizarre presence of the UN Secretary-General in the Quartet is useful for this purpose.

Whenever possible, the US gets the Quartet to publicly endorse what it wants to do. If this isn't possible, the US does what it wants to do without the imprimatur of the Quartet, in the sure and certain knowledge that the other members of the Quartet won't criticise its actions in public.

## The EU follows the US

Lest there be any doubt about this, listen to Alvaro de Soto, who was the UN Secretary-General's Middle East envoy for two years until his retirement in May 2007. In his *End of Mission* report to the UN Secretary-General, report which was very critical of the Secretary-General's role in the Quartet, he wrote:

"Whatever the Quartet was at the inception, let us be frank with ourselves: today, as a practical matter, the Quartet is pretty much a group of friends of the US – and the US doesn't feel the need to consult closely with the Quartet except when it suits it." [1] (paragraph 63)

(For further details, see my article *UN Secretary-General has toed US line in the Middle East* [2])

Or listen to Graham Watson, British Liberal Democrat MEP and leader of the ALDE Group in the European Parliament, speaking to the Parliament on 10 March 2008:

"The major condemnation of the European Union in all of this is that we have followed blindly the strategy of the Americans. Marc Otte, the European Union's Special Representative, speaking to our Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council recently, said that, on strategy, the European Union follows the USA. The most obvious result of this is that Palestinian infrastructure, funded by the European taxpayer, is being regularly destroyed by the Israeli army using American weapons. Should we be committing European money in this way, in these circumstances?" [3]

Looking in from the outside, it is fairly obvious that the EU tailends the US in the Quartet. Marc Otte has confirmed it from the inside.

## January 2006 elections

Two years ago in January 2006, Hamas contested elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) for the first time. By then it had been on a truce for nearly a year, having announced a truce and ceased suicide bombings in Israel in February 2005.

In these elections, Hamas won 44.5% of the "national list" vote and 74 out of the 132 seats in the PLC, compared with Fatah's 45. It is worth emphasising that nobody, not even President Bush, questioned the fairness of these elections. Hamas won, and won fair and square.

But, taking its cue from the US, the EU refused to accept the result of the elections and refused to deal with either of the two Hamas-led governments set up in the next eighteen months. Instead, the EU joined the US in collectively punishing Palestinians by withdrawing economic aid to the Palestinian government, because 44.5% of them had dared to vote for an organisation of which the US/EU disapproved. Ireland never uttered a word of dissent from this scandalous refusal to accept the result of what were free and fair elections.

Both of the Hamas-led governments were properly established in accordance with the Palestinian constitution (the Basic Law [4]). In each case, Ismail Haniyeh was duly appointed as Prime Minister by President Mahmoud Abbas. In each case, also, the government put together by Haniyeh sought, and was given, a vote of confidence by the PLC as required by Article 79(4) of the Basic Law, which states:

"The Prime Minister and any of the Ministers shall not assume the duties of their positions until they obtain the confidence of the PLC."

The second of these governments, established in March 2007, was a National Unity Government, which included ministers from Fatah and other parties in the PLC, plus independents.

## EU supports overthrow

In June 2007, the EU supported the overthrow of this properly constituted government and its replacement by an entity led by Salam Fayyad that has no democratic validity whatsoever.



Fayyad's main qualification for the post was his popularity in Washington. It wasn't the first time that this qualification had earned him a seat in government in Palestine: in 2001, the US forced Yasser Arafat to accept him as Finance Minister and he served in this post until the Fatah government resigned after their defeat by Hamas in January 2006.

Fayyad was elected to the PLC in January 2006 as the leader of the Third Way party, which received 2.4% of the "national list" vote and got 2 seats on the PLC. So, a Hamas Prime Minister, whose party got 44.5% of the "national list" vote, and won 74 seats overall, has been replaced by a Third Way Prime Minister, whose party got 2.4% of the "national list" vote, and has 2 seats overall. The US/EU has finally brought democracy to the Middle East!

Fayyad has never sought a vote of confidence from the PLC for the "government" he put together – because he hasn't a hope in hell of getting a vote of confidence. Nevertheless, the EU, including Ireland, now deals with this entity as if it were the legitimate government of the Palestinian Authority.

## US foments civil war

The overthrow of the Hamas-led National Unity Government in June 2007 was the culmination of 18 months of US plotting to undo the result of the January 2006 elections. This was detailed by David Rose in an article entitled *The Gaza Bombshell* in the April 2008 issue of the US magazine *Vanity Fair*. Here's an extract:

"Vanity Fair has obtained confidential documents, since corroborated by sources in the U.S. and Palestine, which lay bare a covert initiative, approved by Bush and implemented by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Deputy National Security Adviser Elliott Abrams, to provoke a Palestinian civil war. The plan was for forces led by Mohammed Dahlan, and armed with new weapons supplied at America's behest, to give Fatah the muscle it needed to remove the democratically elected Hamas-led government from power." [5]

Even though Hamas won the PLC elections, and took the leading role in the governments formed as a result, it never succeeded in taking control of the various Palestinian security services (14 in all) built up under Yasser Arafat. Fatah managed to retain control of them, including of substantial forces in Gaza, so Hamas was always vulnerable – which is why it set up its own 6,000-strong Executive Force in Gaza.

The US plan was for Fatah-controlled forces in Gaza under Mohammed Dahlan to eliminate this Executive Force and take control of Gaza. To that end, the US organised the reinforcement of the Fatah-controlled forces in Gaza in April/May 2007. Correctly surmising that this was a portent of an attack on it, Hamas took pre-emptive military action and within a few days Gaza was under its control. Most of the Fatah-controlled forces didn't fight.

For the previous year or so, the US had been putting immense pressure on President Abbas to dismiss Haniyeh

as Prime Minister and appoint Fayyad in his stead, as the President is allowed to do under the Article 45 of the Basic Law. On 14 June 2007, after Hamas routed the Fatah-controlled forces in Gaza, Abbas finally did as the US told him. However, as I have said, Fayyad has never sought a vote of confidence for his "government" from the PLC and therefore isn't a legitimate government under the Basic Law. Indeed, until he receives such a vote of confidence, the National Unity Government led by Haniyeh is the legitimate government under the Basic Law.

These events are constantly described as a Hamas coup in Gaza. In reality, what happened was a US-backed Fatah coup, which overthrew the legitimate Hamas-led National Unity Government. The coup wasn't fully successful, because pre-emptive military action by Hamas prevented the Fatah takeover of Gaza that the US planned.

The EU would no doubt claim that its hands are clean, that it had nothing to do with the dirty business of fomenting civil war in Palestine, in which its partner in the Quartet was engaged. Alvaro de Soto tells [1] of a meeting of the Quartet in early 2007, when a US envoy rejoiced at the near civil war between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza, in which civilians were being regularly killed and injured. "I like this violence", he exclaimed (twice). The EU, including Ireland, kept its mouth shut as the US fomented civil war in Palestine.

But when the National Unity Government was overthrown and replaced by the illegitimate Sayyad-led entity, the EU rushed to support it. A statement issued on 15 June 2007 said:

"The EU Presidency emphatically supports President Abbas' decision, in keeping with the Palestinian Basic Law, to dismiss the government and to appoint a caretaker government for the Palestinian territories." [6]

That promotes the lie that the Sayyad-led entity is a legitimate government established in accordance with the Basic Law. Ireland has put its name to that lie.

## More collective punishment

Since June 2007, Israel's military and economic pressure on Gaza has increased to unprecedented levels. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in Gaza in the first three months of 2008, 106 in five days from 27 February to 3 March. In a report issued on 6 March 2008, a group of NGOs including Trócaire, CAFOD, Oxfam, Amnesty International and Christian Aid said that "the situation for 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is worse now than it has ever been since the start of the Israeli military occupation in 1967" [7].

This has produced mild criticism from the EU, but nothing more. For example, an EU Presidency statement on 2 March 2008 said:

“The Presidency condemns the recent disproportionate use of force by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) against Palestinian population in Gaza and urges Israel to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from all activities that endanger civilians. Such activities are contrary to international law.” [8]

The Irish Government has reacted in a similar manner. Replying to a question in the Dail on 11 March 2008, from Labour TD, Michael D Higgins, Foreign Minister, Dermot Ahern, went so far as to describe Israel’s economic strangulation of Gaza as “collective punishment”:

“I remain deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza. It is unacceptable that Israel should isolate the people of Gaza and cut off essential supplies in order to exert pressure on them to reject Hamas. I agree with the United Nations that this constitutes collective punishment and is illegal under international humanitarian law.” [9]

Collective punishment of people under occupation is contrary to Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

## The Euro-Med Agreement

As part of what is known as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership [10], which was established in 1995, the EU has Association Agreements with a number of states on the southern and eastern Mediterranean. These Agreements involve, inter alia, preferential trade arrangements with the EU. An Agreement was signed with Israel in 1995, which came into force in 2000 [11].

Article 2 of this Agreement makes clear that Israel’s privileged access to the EU market is conditional on Israel respecting “human rights and democratic principles”. It states:

“Relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement.”

Sinn Fein TD, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, asked Dermot Ahern on 11 March 2008 “if he will call on all other EU member states to suspend preferential trade with Israel”, because of recent human rights violations by Israel. But Ahern categorically refused, saying:

“There have been calls for suspension or review of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with Israel in protest at military operations and human rights violations. The Government is opposed to any such move, which would in any case require consensus within the European Union.”

Israel has killed hundreds of Palestinians in the past few months and produced the worst humanitarian crisis in Gaza since Israel’s occupation began in 1967, by what Dermot Ahern agrees is collective punishment contrary to international humanitarian law. There isn’t the slightest doubt, therefore, that because of these actions Israel is in breach of its human rights obligations under Article 2 of the Agreement and that the Agreement should be suspended. But the

Government says No. One is left wondering what has Israel to do in order to provoke the Irish Government into supporting the suspension of the Agreement.

Dermot Ahern sought to justify the Government’s stance by saying that suspension would require “consensus within the EU”. That comes close to admitting that Ireland cannot have an independent foreign policy, because of its membership of the EU.

## Dermot Ahern continued:

“It [the suspension of the Agreement] would not serve the interests of any of the parties. Meetings of the Association Council with Israel provide the opportunity for the EU to highlight its concerns on the human rights implications of Israel’s security policies.”

That argument doesn’t stand up: on the contrary, there’s a very good chance that even a threat to suspend the Agreement would cause Israel to ease, if not cease, its collective punishment of Gaza. Israel’s privileged access to the EU market is very important to it, both economically and politically, so even a threat that this access might be denied would most likely cause it to make life easier for the people of Gaza. One thing is certain: talking to Israel at meetings of the Association Council will make no impact whatsoever on Israel.

## Dealing with Hamas

In the course of answering Michael D Higgins, Minister Ahern described Hamas as “a strong entity within the region” which “will at some stage have to be part of the solution rather than the problem”. Therefore, “we will have to find a method for dealing with it sooner rather than later”, he concluded.

This is sheer hypocrisy from a Minister in a Government which, at the behest of the US and Israel, has gone along with the Quartet policy of isolating Hamas and in June 2007 acquiesced in the overthrow of the legitimate Hamas-led National Unity Government.

An opportunity to deal with Hamas existed two years ago in January 2006, when, for the first time, it stood for PLC elections and won a majority of the seats. By the time of the elections, Hamas had engaged in no military activity against Israel, either in Israel itself or in the Occupied Territories, for nearly a year (although other groups, for example, Islamic Jihad, had done so). And Hamas spokesmen were making it clear to anybody who would listen that it was seeking a long term truce with Israel, the price being Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories.

There could hardly have been a more favourable time for “dealing with” Hamas and perhaps bringing a measure of peace to Palestine. But, instead of taking this opportunity, the EU, with the shameful acquiescence of Ireland, refused to accept the verdict of the ballot box and joined with the US

and Israel in collectively punishing Palestinians – and kept quiet while the US fomented civil war amongst Palestinians.

What is more, the EU stood idly by while the new Olmert government kidnapped Hamas PLC members in the West Bank and engaged in a fierce military assault against Hamas in Gaza, despite it being on ceasefire (see my article *Israel: The West stands idly by* [12]). More than a 100 Palestinians, over half of them non-combatants, were killed in less than 3 months.

Hamas stuck to its ceasefire, in the face of this fierce assault, until 25 June 2006 when with other groups it mounted an attack on Israeli troops at Kerem Shalom outside Gaza, as a result of which two Israeli soldiers were killed and Gilad Shalit was captured. This was the excuse for Israel to further intensify its murderous assault on Gaza and collectively punish its inhabitants by bombing its only power station. Again, the EU stood idly by. In all, nearly 700 Palestinians (and 23 Israelis, including 17 civilians) were killed in 2006, a year which began with Hamas on ceasefire.

So, how does Minister Ahern propose to “find a method for dealing” with Hamas now? He could propose in the EU that the legitimate Hamas-led National Unity Government be reinstated. But don’t hold your breath.

David Morrison  
www.david-morrison.org.uk

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## Britain in Europe? “Yes Minister!”

British humour is the best in the world because it is only through humour that the British can tell the truth about themselves.

And if some foreigner queries the meaning they can always say: “but that’s the trouble with you foreigners. You have no sense of humour. It was only a joke”.

Readers can judge for themselves if the extract below from the classic English comedy *Yes, Minister* is only a joke.

**Sir Humphrey:** Minister, Britain has had the same foreign policy objective for at least the last 500 years: to create a disunited Europe. In that cause we have fought with the Dutch against the Spanish, with the Germans against the French, with the French and Italians against the Germans, and with the French against the Germans and Italians. Divide and rule, you see. Why should we change now when it’s worked so well?

**Jim Hacker:** That’s all ancient history, surely.

**Sir Humphrey:** Yes, and current policy. We had to break the whole thing [the EEC] up, so we had to get inside. We tried to break it up from the outside, but that wouldn’t work. Now that we’re inside we can make a complete pig’s breakfast of the whole thing: set the Germans against the French, the French against the Italians, the Italians against the Dutch. The Foreign Office is terribly pleased, it’s just like old times.

**Jim Hacker:** But if that’s true, why is the foreign office pushing for higher membership?

**Sir Humphrey:** I’d have thought that was obvious. The more members an organization has, the more arguments it can stir up. The more futile and impotent it becomes.

**Jim Hacker:** What appalling cynicism.

**Sir Humphrey:** We call it diplomacy, Minister.

## Leopold H. Kerney, Irish Minister to Spain 1935 – 1946

edited by Éamon Kerney ([www.leopoldhkerney.com](http://www.leopoldhkerney.com))

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by Manus O’Riordan

In this era of new technology not all works of historical research end up in printed form. One recent publication that to date has only a website existence is by Éamon Kerney. This is a study of his father, Leopold H. Kerney, Irish Minister to Spain 1935 – 1946. Readers of the recently published Volume V of *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, which covers the years 1937 to 1939, will find fascinating correspondence from Minister Kerney concerning the course of the Spanish Civil War and Irish involvement on both sides, based on the contacts that Kerney himself maintained on all fronts. That the creation of a new Leopold H. Kerney website could not be more timely is evidenced by the fact that, in a review for the *Sunday Independent* on December 3, 2006, Professor John A. Murphy leaped forward from Volume V’s time-frame into the later Second World War period in order to denounce Kerney as a man “recently described by one Irish historian as a ‘monumental fool’.”

This not-so-recent “description” had in fact been penned by Professor Eunan O’Halpin in his book *Defending Ireland* (1999), but it is a view also shared, if not so pejoratively expressed, by both Mark Hull in *Irish Secrets* (2003) and John P. Duggan in *Herr Hempel at the Irish Legation* (2003). All three historians seem to share the assessment of Kerney published by the late Professor T. Desmond Williams in a 1953 series of articles for which, however, Kerney was to successfully sue Williams in the following year. The libel in question consisted of Williams’s spin on a meeting that Kerney had held in Madrid in August 1942 with Edmund Veessenmayer of the German Foreign Office. Veessenmayer was later convicted as a war criminal at the Nuremberg Trials on account of his role in the Holocaust of the Hungarian Jewish community, although he would be mysteriously released from prison by the US authorities not long afterwards. No doubt he had his uses as an “expert” on Eastern Europe.

The first detailed historical narrative of the issues at stake between Kerney and Williams, including the libel proceedings themselves, had been provided by Enno Stephan, in his book *Spies in Ireland* (1963). It was Seán Cronin, in his biography *Frank Ryan* (1980), who would, in turn, be the first to make use of the wartime correspondence between Kerney in Madrid and Frank Ryan in Berlin. Ryan kept Kerney informed of how he was both actively and successfully undermining the pro-Nazi and anti-de Valera machinations of the former Irish Minister to Germany, Charles

Bewley. No less importantly, Ryan gave Kerney advance warning that his meeting with Veessenmayer would be with a top official “far more capable than he appears” and whose “attitude on all questions is that of his Chief” - in other words, Hitler himself.

[Note: For more on Frank Ryan, see my review - “*Was Frank Ryan A Collaborator?*” – on [www.geocities.com/irelandscw/docs-Ryan2.htm](http://www.geocities.com/irelandscw/docs-Ryan2.htm) ; and see also [www.geocities.com/irelandscw/org-RyanComm.htm](http://www.geocities.com/irelandscw/org-RyanComm.htm) for my graveside oration on 16 October, 2005 at the International Brigade Memorial Trust’s commemoration of Frank Ryan – MO’R]

One later historian who did make an effort to present a balanced account of the Williams/ Kerney controversy was Professor Dermot Keogh in his book *Ireland and Europe* (1988). Notwithstanding his affectionate dedication of that book “in memory of T. Desmond Williams”, Keogh did not adopt the coyness of others, but openly acknowledged the dual career of Williams as both “former Professor of Modern History, UCD, and member of British Intelligence during the Second World War”. Moreover, his sense of fairness moved him to not only refer to, but also to a limited degree quote from, the full report of his meeting with Veessenmayer that Kerney wrote up on that very day and promptly forwarded to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. Such quotes included Kerney’s insight – prompted by Ryan - that “if I had looked under the table”, Veessenmayer “might have been capable of disclosing something in the nature of a cloven foot.”

Kerney won his libel action, with Williams unreservedly conceding defeat, despite the fact that Kerney had been denied any access by his Department to even a copy of his own report, while the British Foreign Office freely put at Williams’s disposal all the corresponding captured German documentation. The fact that O’Halpin, Hull and Duggan make no mention whatsoever of the 1942 Kerney report cited by Keogh makes all the more timely the full reproduction of that same report – entitled “Conversation with a German” - on this new website. As Minister Kerney had bluntly put it to Veessenmayer:

“I told him that the public declarations of the Taoiseach proved clearly that Ireland would resist the violation of our neutrality by Americans, English or Germans, ...that if

Germany were to be the aggressor, England would, in her own interest, come to Ireland's assistance ... There could be no question of us abandoning neutrality in exchange for concessions of any kind."

The Kerney website also quotes the following from a 1954 report to the Department of External Affairs by Conor Cruise O'Brien on an interview he had conducted with Veessenmayer's right-hand man, Kurt Haller: "Mr. Haller says that he saw Mr. Veessenmayer's report on his visit and that it was, from the German point of view, 'disappointing'. Mr. Kerney had simply adopted the formally correct attitude of a neutral head of mission and declined to hold out any hope that Ireland would be likely to come in on the German side, or at all. This account runs, of course, contrary to the versions published by Professor Desmond Williams in his articles in the *Leader* and in the *Irish Press*".

But perhaps the most significant new document unearthed by Éamon Kerney's own research is one revealing that the British Foreign Office shared the view that Williams had not a leg to stand on. In March 1954 Frederick Boland, Ireland's ambassador to the UK, had been shown all of the captured German documentation that Britain was making available to Williams for his libel defence. Boland reported back to Dublin his own conclusion that "if Professor Williams is relying on these ... to substantiate the allegations he made in his articles, I doubt whether he will find them of much use to him". Boland went on to point out to his Departmental Secretary that the British Foreign Office's legal adviser had also "expressed the opinion that the papers on the file did not, in his view, justify the criticism of Mr. Kerney which had been made in Professor Williams's articles in the *Leader* and in the *Irish Press*. The legal adviser commented that Mr. Kerney's attitude, in the conversations he had with the emissaries from Germany, seemed to him to have been cautious and perfectly proper in every way."

Apart from such hitherto unpublished Department of External Affairs documentation, website [www.leopoldhkerney.com](http://www.leopoldhkerney.com) - which is adorned with a full-colour portrait of Kerney himself - also draws on his own private papers and has now emerged as a valuable resource for all future researchers on Ireland's wartime foreign relations.

### **Manus O'Riordan**

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He has edited the second, expanded, 2005 edition of *Connolly Column – the Story of the Irishmen who fought in defence of the Spanish Republic 1936-1939*, authored by his late father, International Brigade veteran Michael O'Riordan [1917-2006], and first published in 1979.

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Also included is the full *Northern Star* account of the great Belfast Review and Celebration held on Bastille Day, 1792.

## Squandering goodwill: Ireland's anti-imperialist reputation

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By Conor Lynch

A constant refrain among the academic and chattering classes in Ireland is that they have left narrow nationalism behind, and that the rest of us should follow their example. What they really mean is that the break with England was all a big mistake and that it is time for us to show our maturity and become just like the English. So fashionable Irish history is produced in Cambridge or Oxford and transmitted to the country via Trinity College.

The paper media and television are Anglo-centric to an alarming degree. Even simple stories about such things as juvenile delinquency give as bad examples cases from England. Experts from England are hired to tell us what to think about moral dilemmas, scientific developments, economic theories, and, of course, the goings on in other countries. Occasionally, as with Zimbabwe, where the BBC is barred, RTE will report as though it was the BBC and will give the line that the BBC would be expected to give.

In spite of all this, the general public of Ireland continues to go its own sweet way and think in its own very un-English manner. Much to the embarrassment and annoyance of those who would have us change our minds.

In fact this follow the English game is what narrows people's minds and horizons. English history as it is taught is a succession of lies which more or less hold the place together. It lies about its Empire, about genocide, about war. We are then expected to believe all these lies in order to be deemed civilised. If it did not have serious repercussions it would all be very silly.

Irish nationalism, and especially Irish Republicanism, has been the very opposite of narrow. The United Irish, Young Ireland, the men and women of 1916-22, Fianna Fail and the modern Republican Movement have all looked out at the world, been inspired by other movements abroad and have in turn inspired them. Ho Chi Minh took careful note of what Tom Barry and others were doing in 1921. The Patricios are highly honoured in Mexico. DeValera is an icon in India. The Irish are revered wherever people have striven or are striving for liberty – that means in most of the world.

I was in the lobby of a hotel in Tehran discussing politics with someone from the Mahdi Army in Iraq, a local politician and a couple of Turks. I was immediately included because I was Irish. In Lebanon I was

made welcome in South Beirut and the villages on the Israeli border, both of which were lying in ruins at the time, also because I was Irish. There I was regaled with tales of bravery by Irish soldiers who risked, and indeed gave, their lives protecting civilians from the Israelis and their now defunct front organisation, the South Lebanon Army.

I have been “interrogated” by security officials in Nablus, Mashad and Damascus – in every case on the assumption that I was on their side. (I have also been interrogated by the British and have been well and truly beaten up!) In Alacante I spent hours in the port with Algerians wanting to discuss the film Michael Collins.

The point of all this is that Ireland has built up a great store of goodwill throughout the world. Our history is well known and something that we can be proud of. Our reputation stretches back 1,500 years. Louvain and Bilbao know who set them up. Though the English forget who taught them to read and write.

But there are many smart alocs who would squander the affection in which we are held throughout the world. They would try to insulate us from the great diversity of cultures that exist and join us umbilically to the narrow-minded and brutal entity that is England. They would have us believe that the Irishmen who fought in Flanders or at Suvla Bay were other than cannon fodder for British Imperial expansion.

And now this disease has spread to sections of the military as well as to some of their political masters in Fianna Fail. Irish soldiers have been there or thereabouts in the recent US/UK led adventures. It can be argued that the US has us over a barrel and that some token gestures were required. That sort of thing is understood abroad.

But now we are seeing soldiers in effective numbers being dispatched to Chad. This is not like Lebanon. This not defending the vulnerable. This is about protecting the interests of imperialism. In this case French imperialism.

The Celtic Tiger sees more Irish travelling the world than for many years. But if our government continues to throw its lot in with the modern imperialists we will no longer be welcomed with open arms but with other kinds of arms.

# School dinners and celebrities: how French local government works.

by Cathy Winch

Local elections took place in France in March with the usual wide media coverage; the press and television discussed the political message that would be delivered: (would the electorate express its dissatisfaction with the Sarkozy regime by voting against his party?); they also discussed the various celebrity Mayors (would Sarkozy's 21 year old son get elected?). 67% of electors turned out to vote in the first round, which was judged disappointing. In the Irish local elections of June 2004, 58% of the electorate voted. Local elections have a higher profile in France than in Britain or Ireland; there are several reasons for this: the electoral units are much smaller in France and the Mayor has real power. This situation has existed for a very long time and has withstood attempts to diminish local power.

France has one elected representative for 120 people, as compared for 2600 for England (Simon Jenkins, Guardian Wednesday 27th February 2008). Most English local authorities have a population in the range of 150,000 to 300,000 inhabitants. In Northern Ireland local districts have smaller populations (average population of about 65,000). The largest is Belfast with 267,400 and the smallest Moyle with 16,500.

In Ireland there are 32 County Councils and 5 City Councils, plus the 80 Town Councils. The largest County Council is Cork with 277,667 on the electoral register, and the smallest Leitrim with 24,563. 10 County Councils have more than 100 000 electors. The largest Borough Council has over 23 000 voters (Drogheda) and the smallest has 900 (Granard); most have several thousands.

## The French *commune*

By contrast in France, the smallest administrative and electoral unit is the *commune*, of which there were 36 782 (March 07) in all, of which 31 927 have fewer than 2000 inhabitants. The *commune* generally corresponds to a village or a town. The biggest is Paris with more than 2 million inhabitants, while more than 10 000 have fewer than 200 inhabitants. Paris is also divided into 20 *arrondissements* which each have a council and a Mayor. This division of the territory into *communes* dates from December 1789, at the time of the French Revolution, and remains in force. All the villages which have since been absorbed into large urban centres remain individual political entities. The weight of tradition helps to maintain the strength of the institution, together with the fact that the inhabitants feel that they get something from the system.

## Elected Mayors

Each *commune* is administered by a council and a Mayor, elected for 6 years. Elections show a high rate of voter participation; the rate of voter participation for this year's

elections (66, 54% in the first round) was regarded as low. Candidates are grouped in electoral lists headed by a leader who becomes the Mayor. Mayors really represent each community; their names are known. Whereas in England "the council", an anonymous entity, has done this or that, in France, a named person gets the praise or the blame for a particular action. In England Mayors are rarely known by their constituents, except for Ken Livingstone, who was elected directly by the inhabitants of London. In the Republic of Ireland, there was a move to elect the Mayor directly: "There was a firm proposal for directly-elected Mayors and council chairs, who would hold these posts on a full-time basis for four years. But the Government had second thoughts, fearing that democracy would produce a clutch of Ken Livingstones and create an alternative power centre in Dublin" (Frank Mac Donald in the Irish Times). However, now that the Greens are in government there may be changes as the party favours directly elected Mayors.

Mayors in France have extensive powers, and top politicians are often Mayors of important towns which constitute for them a power base. They keep their role of Mayor when they are elected MPs and become ministers. In England people are able to name Ken Livingstone as a Mayor, in France many famous names are included in the list of Mayors past and present who are household names: Jacques Chirac in Paris, Alain Juppé in Bordeaux, Martine Aubry in Lille, Sarkozy in Neuilly; historically, Gaston Defferre in Marseille. These figures have played an important role in their locality as well as at national level. Bertrand Delanoë is an exception in being known for being simply the Mayor of Paris, with no views, until recently, to further political power.

## The dual mandate

There have been grumbles about the "dual mandate" and attempts at doing away with it, but it is clear that it has too many advantages. It gives glamour and importance to local government, the locals feel their locality is in powerful hands; it gives politicians first hand knowledge of life at local level. In Ireland the "dual mandate" has been abolished, which has had the effect of weakening further the role of local government. Because the obligation to relinquish power at local level is not realistic, many TDs and senators barred from standing in the local elections are being replaced by a relative.

This dual mandate in France adds enormously to the interest of the public in local elections, as people watch on television to see if the great and famous will meet their downfall at the hands of local voters. This March, 22 ministers stood in the local elections, and only two were re-elected in the first round. The system of voting on two consecutive Sundays also adds to the interest, as citizens

can vote for their real favourites in the first round, and then watch the political negotiations and alliances which take place to narrow down the number of lists for the final round on the second Sunday.

## The local manager

In the Republic of Ireland a non-elected manager plays an executive role in the local council, implementing the council's policies: every city and county has a manager, who is the chief executive but is also a public servant appointed by the Public Appointments Service (formerly the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commission). Ostensibly the Manager implements policy and is at the service of the Councillors, but in practice, having a permanent "professional" in charge is bound to diminish elected power. When there is a conflict between building social housing or housing for profit, or a conflict between developing a green area or conserving it, managers tend to be "pro-development", with an eye to the revenue it would generate.

The Mayor is chosen by the councillors for a year; as far as I know the public has no say in the choosing, and as in England he or she has a largely ceremonial role. There have been famous Mayors of Irish cities, Cork for example, but they were not primarily famous for their role in the government of the city.

## Abolition of domestic rates

Local government must have the financial capability to provide services. In the Republic of Ireland since domestic rates were abolished in 1978, with far-reaching consequences for the standing of local government in Irish society, most Councils have had little room for discretionary spending on local projects.

In the Republic of Ireland, local elections mean little in one of the most centralised states in the EU. "Local councils do discharge important functions - building social housing, managing the traffic, providing public amenities and dealing with waste management being just some of them. But their powers to act are hugely constrained by limited resources and the Government's drip-feed approach." (Frank Mc Donald, Irish Times.)

In France by contrast *Communes* raise local taxes; there are three main categories (tax on furnished housing, tax on owners of properties and tax on businesses); their income from taxes is half their total income, the other half coming from central government.

Communes have extensive responsibilities: social housing; management of water; town planning, building permits; local police; crèches and primary schools, school meals, after school and holiday clubs, summer camps; sport and culture facilities; local associations (one example: the local marching band, called "l'harmonie municipale"); tourism, car parking, green spaces, local roads. The *Mairie* (Mayor's office) also has social services and a system of

social welfare payments, often in conjunction with local associations and charities.

The Mayor and the municipalities have an important function in the local economy: they can give subsidies to attract businesses and facilitate their implantation, providing jobs for their electors and extra revenue for the *commune* with the business tax (la *taxe professionnelle*).

## Mayors and the media

Not surprisingly, local elections are seen as meaningful. Mayors of all parties are regularly interviewed in the press and on television. For example *Le Monde* of 5th February carries a long article with photo about the communist Mayor of a commune in the Paris suburbs; the article quotes the Mayor explaining the shortfall in his commune's income, since most of the inhabitants are poor and there are no businesses since the closures of mid 1990s; he says "Our total grants to all our sporting associations equal that of [the neighbouring commune's] grant to their football club."

The French Mayor is also the representative of the State; he carries out administrative tasks on its behalf, such as censuses, organising elections and registering births, deaths and marriages. The Mayor in person actually conducts marriage ceremonies in a meaningful way as I had the chance to observe. This function has become part of the language: to get married is "*passer devant monsieur le maire*" (to be seen by the Mayor).

In France of course, the responsibilities of the *Commune* varies according to its size. Many services which used to be provided directly by the *mairie* are now privatised, for example school meals; but parents (all children have school meals) go to the *mairie*, or its web site to find out the cost, where and how to pay, how to apply for free or subsidized meals, and what is on the menu for each week. It is perhaps when their children are little that the French come into closest contact with the *mairie*.

## Checks on local autonomy

Communes do not have a free rein: the *département* - the immediate region in which the commune is situated, and for which there are also local elections, the *cantonales*, to vote for a "general council"-, the *région* - the 22 regions of France cover the 96 mainland *départements* - and central government all have a say in all the more important of these attributions. The *Préfet*, who is appointed by and responsible to central government, is head of the *département* and checks, after the event, that the Mayor's actions are legal. The Mayor however is still seen as holding his (or her) own against these other bodies.

This situation is under review: there are pressures to make units bigger and reduce local democracy. Communes are encouraged to join together to form bigger units (*communautés*), with different types of *communautés* according to size. Past attempts by central governments to do this have failed, so this time, communes are bribed in order



to encourage them to join together: they receive larger subsidies if they do so. The resulting bigger units are not led by democratically elected representatives.

But it is left to the *communes* how they do this. As a result, 91% have joined a community, but in practice many have done so for the sake of the subsidy, and continue to have their own autonomy. Rural communes have had to join together to deal with domestic waste management, since open air municipal dumps have been abolished. Bigger towns unite to manage water and public transport. However, this collaboration is to do with finance and economies of scale: it is in no way a political amalgamation.

There are anomalies in the way the joining together has happened; for example Paris has not joined with any of its suburbs, instead some suburbs have joined together. Rich communes refuse to include poor ones in their group, to avoid having to share their income. Communes also sometimes group together on the basis of political affiliation.

### The future

It is in the interest of all classes and all parties in France to continue to have an elected Mayor for large towns, as the post is a source of power and prestige. And the *mairie* is very much ingrained in the everyday life of the French. Everyone has something to gain from the system of local government. In the Republic of Ireland, the way forward seems to be a recent proposal to relocate departments of the civil service into 25 local branches.

To quote Simon Jenkins: "I am not starry eyed about the vigour of local democracy abroad. It is messy, bureaucratic and often corrupt. But it appears to yield communities more able to discipline themselves and their young, and more satisfied at the delivery of their public services." Without local government, "There is nothing between the individual or family unit on one hand and the central state on the other." De Tocqueville describes this atomised society, where "every man is a stranger to the destiny of others. He is beside his fellow citizens but does not see them" (Guardian 27.2.08).

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## Ireland In The Great War

The Irish Insurrection of 1916 set in its context  
of the World War

by  
Charles James O'Donnell  
(1849-1934)

and  
Brendan Clifford

A 1992 Pamphlet

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**Roger Casement:** *The Crime Against Europe*. With *The Crime Against Ireland* Introduction by B. Clifford. 184pp. Index. ISBN 0 85034 101 9. AB, 2003. **£13, £9.99.**

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

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

Casement, who had been a moving spirit in the founding of the Volunteers in 1913 and who had organised the arming of them in July 1914, gave a pro-German orientation to the Volunteer minority which rejected Redmond's leadership. He had a presence in world affairs as the diplomat who had exposed the Belgian atrocities in the Congo and the atrocities of international capital in South America. So his identification of himself with both the German cause and Irish separatism gave the Irish cause an immediate German orientation in the sphere of international opinion, *de facto*. This orientation was confirmed *de jure* when it was given Fenian backing.

## Ireland as the pivot of a league of nations

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**Michael Collins**

**Wednesday December 7, 1921**

**[guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk)**

For centuries England strove to reduce Ireland to the position of an English province. Irish civilisation was to be blotted out, the Gael was to go, Irish lands were to be given to aliens, Irish industries were to be destroyed, Irish development was to be prevented, Ireland was to be utilised according to the colonial police to feed and enrich England. A paper in the Record Office, dated 1720, says:-

“All advantageous projects for commercial gain in any colony, which are truly prejudicial to and inconsistent with the interests of the mother country, must be understood to be illegal, and the practice of them unwarrantable, because they contradict the end for which the colonies had a being.”

This policy was first applied to all the colonies, including the American Colonies, but it broke down over the American Colonies. Though they were founded by English colonists and peopled largely by their descendants the colonists were not willing to exist solely for the purpose of feeding and enriching a mother country, and they fought for and won their independence. England learnt a lesson, and in the nineteenth century the idea of freedom grew up. The other colonies by peaceful growth have developed into practical independence, and are now only willing to be associated with Great Britain in a free and equal partnership. *“We have received a position of absolute equality and freedom, not only among the other States of the Empire but among the other nations of the world”* [General Smuts, September, 1919]. *“The indomitable spirit of Canada made her incapable of accepting at the Peace Conference, in the League of Nations, or elsewhere, a status inferior to nations less advanced in their development, less amply endowed in wealth sources and population, no more complete in their sovereignty,”* [Sir R Boden, September, 1919].

Ireland has never been a British colony. She has been a separate nation kept subject by a more powerful neighbour for that neighbour's own advantage, but she has never ceased to fight for her freedom, and now, after centuries of political struggle and armed conflict, she has won independence. The British people hardly realise the change which has come and the nature of the new era which is dawning, not only for the two islands, but for the whole world. All former phases of the Anglo-Irish struggle are now seen to have been but incidents in the English claim to dominate Ireland and to control Irish destinies in England's interests. England has now, in substance, renounced that claim, and the business of the Irish Conference is to shape the form of the partnership or alliance in which two peoples of equal nationhood may be associated for the benefit of both.

The problem is not now to define a sort of provincial autonomy for Ireland such as was contemplated in the Home Rule bills, but to agree on a method by which the international concerns of the two countries - foreign affairs, defence, trade and communications - may be dealt with for their mutual security and advancement. Home Rule bills may have been “practical politics” before the recognition of the independence of the Colonies. With that recognition they are now out of date. While Anglo-Irish relations have taken on this aspect with an apparent suddenness which is almost bewildering to the ordinary British mind, it happens that at the same moment the relations between Great Britain and the Dominions have, by a different process, reached a stage in which the finding of a solution is almost as urgent in the interests of British security and world-peace. The history of Ireland as an ancient independent nation, which is now at last receiving recognition, is utterly different from that of the Colonies, who have gradually outgrown the tutelage of their mother country, but though their relation to England differs so widely, Ireland and her Dominions present new to England an immediate problem containing the same elements in essence.

The problem on both sides can only be solved by recognising without limitation the complete independence of the several countries, and only on that basis can they all be associated together by ties of co-operation and friendship. The only association which will be satisfactory to Ireland and to Great Britain and to the Dominions for Ireland to enter will be one based not on the present technical legal status of the Dominions, but on the real position which they claim and have in fact secured. In the interest of all the associated States, in the interest, above all, of England herself, it is essential that the present de facto position should be recognised de jure, and that all its implications as regards sovereignty, allegiance, constitutional independence of the Governments should be acknowledged.

An association on the foregoing conditions would be a novelty in the world. But the world is looking for such a development, and it is necessary if the old world of internecine conflict is to emerge into the new world of co-operative harmony. For such an association would be the pattern for national co-operation on a wider scale, and might form the nucleus of a real League of Nations of the world. Great Britain has now the opportunity to lay the foundations of such a new world-order in the relations to be established between the nations of the British Common-

wealth. In such a real League of Nations there would be no inequality of status. Oaths of allegiance from one nation to another would become meaningless and would be quite unnecessary where there would be real allegiance of all to the common interests. The creation of such a League is the best, indeed the only possible way for England to obtain the permanent security which she needs. General Smuts has given warning that South Africa will be restive in any association which is not a League of Free Nations. The colonies can only be kept if they are themselves on a free and equal footing and if such a footing is also conceded to Ireland as a free partner in the group. If Ireland were free all the component nations of the group would be bound firmly together.

Into such a League might not America be willing to enter? By doing so America would be on the way to secure the world ideal of free, equal, and friendly nations on which her aspirations are so firmly fixed. Ireland's inclusion as a free member of this League would have a powerful influence in consolidating the whole body, for Ireland is herself a mother country with world-wide influences, and it is scarcely to be doubted that were she a free partner in the League as sketched the Irish in America would surely wish America to be associated in such a combination. In that League the Irish in Ireland would be joined with the Irish in America, and they would both share in a common internationality with the people of America, England, and the other free nations of the League. Through the link of Ireland a co-operation and understanding would arise between England and America, and would render unnecessary those safeguards which England wishes to impose upon Ireland and which by preserving an element of restraint might render less satisfactory the new relations between the two countries. If America were able to enter such a League a further move would be made towards world-peace already begun by the agreement to be arrived at in the Washington Conference in regard to the scrapping of warships, and in addition would lead through the improved relationship to a condition of financial accommodation and stability. Without real and permanent co-operation between Britain and American world-peace is an idle dream. With such co-operation war would become impossible.

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## De Gaulle explains his “non” to British Membership of the Common Market

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This is the text (in translation) of de Gaulle putting down his first veto. The occasion was one of his presidential press conferences and was in response to a press question. The date of the press conference is also significant – it marks the first anniversary of the inauguration of the common agricultural policy. - Ed.

*The statement by Charles DeGaulle, French President, effectively vetoing, for the first time, British membership of the European Economic Community. Given on 14 January 1963 at a*

*press conference in Paris in response to a question to “define explicitly France’s position towards Britain’s entry into the Common Market and the political evolution of Europe”.*

A very clear question, to which I shall endeavour to reply clearly.

I believe that when you talk about economics — and much more so when you practise them — what you say and what you do must conform to realities, because without that you can get into impasses and, sometimes, you even head for ruin.

In this very great affair of the European Economic Community and also in that of eventual adhesion of Great Britain, it is the facts that must first be considered. Feelings, favourable though they might be and are, these feelings cannot be invoked against the real facts of the problem. What are these facts?

The Treaty of Rome was concluded between six continental States, States which are, economically speaking, one may say, of the same nature. Indeed, whether it be a matter of their industrial or agricultural production, their external exchanges, their habits or their commercial clientele, their living or working conditions, there is between them much more resemblance than difference. Moreover, they are adjacent, they inter-penetrate, they prolong each other through their communications. It is therefore a fact to group them and to link them in such a way that what they have to produce, to buy, to sell, to consume — well, they do produce, buy, sell, consume, in preference in their own ensemble. Doing that is conforming to realities.

Moreover, it must be added that, from the point of view of their economic development, their social progress, their technical capacity, they are, in short, keeping pace. They are marching in similar fashion. It so happens, too, that there is between them no kind of political grievance, no frontier question, no rivalry in domination or power. On the contrary, they are joined in solidarity, especially and primarily, from the aspect of the consciousness they have of defining together an important part of the sources of our civilisation; and also as concerns their security, because they are continentals and have before them one and the same menace from one extremity to the other of their territorial ensemble. Then, finally, they are in solidarity through the fact that not one among them is bound abroad by any particular political or military accord.

Thus it was psychologically and materially possible to make an economic community of the Six, though not without difficulties. When the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, it was after long discussions; and when it was concluded, it was necessary — in order to achieve something — that we French put in order our economic, financial, and monetary affairs ... and that was done in 1959. From that moment the community was in principle viable, but then the treaty had to be applied.

However, this treaty, which was precise and complete enough concerning industry, was not at all so on the subject of agriculture. However, for our country this had to be settled. Indeed, it is obvious that agriculture is an essential element in the whole of our national activity. We cannot conceive, and will not conceive, of a Common Market in which French agriculture would not find outlets in keeping with its production. And we agree, further, that of the Six we are the country on which this necessity is imposed in the most imperative manner.

This is why when, last January, thought was given to the setting in motion of the second phase of the treaty — in other words a practical start in application — we were led to pose the entry of agriculture into the Common Market as a formal condition. This was finally accepted by our partners but very difficult and

very complex arrangements were needed — and some rulings are still outstanding. I note in passing that in this vast undertaking it was the governments that took all the decisions, because authority and responsibility are not to be found elsewhere. But I must say that in preparing and untangling these matters, the Commission in Brussels did some very objective and fitting work. Thereupon Great Britain posed her candidature to the Common Market. She did it after having earlier refused to participate in the communities we are now building, as well as after creating a free trade area with six other States, and, finally, after having — I may well say it (the negotiations held at such length on this subject will be recalled) — after having put some pressure on the Six to prevent a real beginning being made in the application of the Common Market. If England asks in turn to enter, but on her own conditions, this poses without doubt to each of the six States, and poses to England, problems of a very great dimension.

England in effect is insular, she is maritime, she is linked through her exchanges, her markets, her supply lines to the most diverse and often the most distant countries; she pursues essentially industrial and commercial activities, and only slight agricultural ones. She has in all her doings very marked and very original habits and traditions.

In short, the nature, the structure, the very situation (conjuncture) that are England's differ profoundly from those of the continentals. What is to be done in order that England, as she lives, produces and trades, can be incorporated into the Common Market, as it has been conceived and as it functions? For example, the means by which the people of Great Britain are fed and which are in fact the importation of foodstuffs bought cheaply in the two Americas and in the former dominions, at the same time giving, granting considerable subsidies to English farmers? These means are obviously incompatible with the system which the Six have established quite naturally for themselves.

The system of the Six — this constitutes making a whole of the agricultural produce of the whole Community, in strictly fixing their prices, in prohibiting subsidies, in organising their consumption between all the participants, and in imposing on each of its participants payment to the Community of any saving they would achieve in fetching their food from outside instead of eating what the Common Market has to offer. Once again, what is to be done to bring England, as she is, into this system?

One might sometimes have believed that our English friends, in posing their candidature to the Common Market, were agreeing to transform themselves to the point of applying all the conditions which are accepted and practised by the Six. But the question, to know whether Great Britain can now place herself like the Continent and with it inside a tariff which is genuinely common, to renounce all Commonwealth preferences, to cease any pretence that her agriculture be privileged, and, more than that, to treat her engagements with other countries of the free trade area as null and void — that question is the whole question.

It cannot be said that it is yet resolved. Will it be so one day? Obviously only England can answer. The question is even further posed since after England other States which are, I repeat, linked to her through the free trade area, for the same reasons as Britain, would like or wish to enter the Common Market.

It must be agreed that first the entry of Great Britain, and then these States, will completely change the whole of the actions, the agreements, the compensation, the rules which have already been established between the Six, because all these States, like Britain, have very important peculiarities. Then it will be another Common

Market whose construction ought to be envisaged; but one which would be taken to 11 and then 13 and then perhaps 18 would no longer resemble, without any doubt, the one which the Six built.

Further, this community, increasing in such fashion, would see itself faced with problems of economic relations with all kinds of other States, and first with the United States. It is to be foreseen that the cohesion of its members, who would be very numerous and diverse, would not endure for long, and that ultimately it would appear as a colossal Atlantic community under American dependence and direction, and which would quickly have absorbed the community of Europe.

It is a hypothesis which in the eyes of some can be perfectly justified, but it is not at all what France is doing or wanted to do — and which is a properly European construction.

Yet it is possible that one day England might manage to transform herself sufficiently to become part of the European community, without restriction, without reserve and preference for anything whatsoever; and in this case the Six would open the door to her and France would raise no obstacle, although obviously England's simple participation in the community would considerably change its nature and its volume.

It is possible, too, that England might not yet be so disposed, and it is that which seems to result from the long, long, so long, so long Brussels conversations. But if that is the case, there is nothing there that could be dramatic. First, whatever decision England takes in this matter there is no reason, as far as we are concerned, for the relations we have with her to be changed, and the consideration, the respect which are due to this great State, this great people, will not thereby be in the slightest impaired.

What England has done across the centuries and in the world is recognised as immense. Although there have often been conflicts with France, Britain's glorious participation in the victory which crowned the first world war — we French, we shall always admire it. As for the role England played in the most dramatic and decisive moments of the second world war, no one has the right to forget it.

In truth, the destiny of the free world, and first of all ours and even that of the United States and Russia, depended in a large measure on the resolution, the solidity and the courage of the English people, as Churchill was able to harness them. Even at the present moment no one can contest British capacity and worth.

Moreover, I repeat, if the Brussels negotiations were shortly not to succeed, nothing would prevent the conclusion between the Common Market and Great Britain of an accord of association designed to safeguard exchanges, and nothing would prevent close relations between England and France from being maintained, nor the pursuit and development of their direct cooperation in all kinds of fields, and notably the scientific, technical and industrial — as the two countries have just proved by deciding to build together the supersonic aircraft Concorde.

Lastly, it is very possible that Britain's own evolution, and the evolution of the universe, might bring the English little by little towards the Continent, whatever delays the achievement might demand, and for my part, that is what I readily believe, and that is why, in my opinion, it will in any case have been a great honour for the British Prime Minister, for my friend Harold Macmillan, and for his Government, to have discerned in good time, to have had enough political courage to have proclaimed it, and to have led their country the first steps down the path which one day, perhaps, will lead it to moor alongside the Continent."

# Exchange of letters with the Israeli Embassy on Israel's violations of UN resolutions

By David Morrison

In December 2002, when the US/UK were castigating Iraq for its violation of UN Security Council resolutions in the run up to their invasion, I wrote to the Israel Embassy in London suggesting that Israel should also heed President Bush's call that "resolutions of the world's most important multilateral body [should] be enforced".

The following correspondence ensued:-

## First letter by me

Embassy of Israel  
2 Palace Green  
LONDON W8 4QB

16 December 2002

Dear Sirs

Attached is an article on UN Security Council resolutions currently being violated by countries other than Iraq. If the information in this article is true, Israel is in breach of 32 Security Council resolutions stretching back over more than 30 years.

Do you agree that Israel is in breach of these 32 resolutions? If so, how does Israel justify this failure to accept these decisions of the Security Council, as required by Article 25 of the UN Charter?

In his speech to the UN on 12 September, President Bush told the UN:

"We want the United Nations to be effective, and respectful, and successful. We want the resolutions of the world's most important multilateral body to be enforced. And right now those resolutions are being unilaterally subverted by the Iraqi regime."

Is that not equally true of Israel?

Yours sincerely  
David Morrison

(I enclosed an article by Stephen Zunes, entitled *United Nations Security Council Resolutions Currently Being Violated by Countries Other than Iraq [1]*).

## First reply from the Israeli Embassy

19 December 2002

Dear Dr Morrison

Thank you for your letter of 16 November [sic].

The commonly made claim that Israel is in breach of Security Council resolutions, and therefore deserves to be treated in the same way as Iraq, is factually, historically and morally wrong.

The UN Charter is founded on the understanding that different situations and disputes require different responses, and that not every conflict requires identical action. Therefore, the UN distinguishes between two sorts of Security Council resolution. Those passed under Chapter Six deal with the peaceful resolution of disputes and entitle the council to make non-binding recommendations. Those under Chapter Seven give the council broad powers to take action, including warlike action, to deal with "threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, or acts of aggression".

Such Chapter Seven resolutions, binding on all UN members, were rare during the cold war. But they were used against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait. However, all of the resolutions relating to the Israeli-Arab conflict come under Chapter Six. By imposing sanctions – including military ones – against Iraq but not against Israel, the UN is merely acting in accordance with its own rules.

One might ask, if only for the sake of argument, what if the main Security Council resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict had been Chapter Seven resolutions? The problem would still then arise that the resolutions pertaining to the Israeli-Arab conflict are not unilateral – they can only be implemented through the actions of all parties.

Resolution 242 of 1967, passed after the six-day war and frequently cited in the double-standards argument, does not instruct Israel to withdraw unilaterally from the territories occupied in 1967. It also does not condemn Israel's conquest, for the very good reason that most western powers at that time thought it the result of a justifiable pre-emptive war. It calls for a negotiated settlement, based on the principle of exchanging land for peace. This is a very different matter.

Why? First is the question of borders. The diplomats who drafted Resolution 242 said afterwards that they intended to allow for some changes in the armistice lines that separated Israel and its Arab neighbours before the war of 1967. The resolution calls for withdrawal from "territories occupied in the recent conflict." The absence of the definite article, 'the' before the word territories, was deliberate; a complete withdrawal was not envisaged, nor possible.

Furthermore, resolution 242 cannot be implemented without arriving at a negotiated agreement.

For example, the resolution calls for a "just" settlement of the Palestinian refugee issue. The UN General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948, gives all refugees of 1948 (Palestinian and Jewish) the right to return, or to get compensation. The resolution states that these refugees have to be willing to "live at peace with their neighbours" yet the Palestinians, having rejected the UN-sanctioned partition of Palestine,

were not prepared to live in peace with the new Jewish state. More than half a century later, the Palestinians claim 3.8m refugees, making the return of all of them an impossibility if Israel is to remain a Jewish, democratic state. A compromise can certainly be negotiated, as Ehud Barak attempted at Camp David in 2000 without reciprocity from Yasser Arafat. But there exists no Security Council blueprint to solve it.

Israel has already made peace with Egypt and Jordan based on the principles set out by the Security Council in resolutions 242 and 338 (Chapter Six), and we will hopefully reach peace with our other neighbours. These resolutions were accepted by all parties as the basis of the Madrid Peace Conference. They also provided the basis for our peacemaking with the Palestinians: for our mutual recognition, for the Oslo accords, and for nearly a decade of peace negotiations. These negotiations broke off as a result of the Palestinian side's decision to revert to a strategy of violence and terrorism and its rejection, both in word and deed, of the right of States in the region to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, as required by resolutions 242 and 338.

Unlike resolutions concerning Iraq therefore, the Council's resolutions on the Israeli- Palestinian conflict do not envision Israeli actions without reciprocal commitment and implementation by other parties to the dispute. They are part and parcel of a number of interdependent actions aimed at ending the violence and terrorism and returning the parties to a political process. They cannot be compared to Chapter Seven resolutions addressing the threat posed by the aggressive intentions of one regime to both the region and the world.

But beyond all this lies a more significant, and indeed more fundamental distinction between Iraq and Israel. Israel is a country confronting the daily threat of terrorist attacks against its civilians, as well as repeated threats to destroy it, including threats from remote neighbours like Iran and Iraq. Are we to forget that just months before the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein threatened to "completely burn half of Israel", and that in the course of that war 39 Iraqi scud missiles fell on Israeli cities without any provocation?

Is there a double standard at work here? I would ask you to do a simple test. Take two states, one a dictatorship, a serial violator of mandatory, unilateral Security Council resolutions and human rights, dedicated to the acquisition of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and fighting for regional domination. The other a democracy put to the test of survival for decades, committed to the rule of law and freedom of speech, and always committed to peace, both for ourselves and for our neighbours.

I leave the answer to you.

Yours sincerely

Michael Rosen  
Public Affairs Spokesman

## Second letter by me

26 December 2002

Dear Mr Rosen

Thank you for your letter of 19 December.

You write that the "commonly made claim that Israel is in breach of Security Council resolutions ... is factually, historically and morally wrong". I am at a loss to understand how that assertion can be justified.

There are many Security Council resolutions requesting action by Israel, and Israel alone, where Israel has not carried out the action requested. To my mind therefore, it cannot be denied that Israel is in breach of Security Council resolutions.

I cite as examples those Security Council resolutions passed since 1979 calling for the dismantling of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and the cessation of further settlement activity, for example, resolution 446 passed on 22 March 1979, which:

"Calls once more upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, to rescind its previous measures and to desist from taking any action which would result in changing the legal status and geographical nature and materially affecting the demographic composition of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, not to transfer parts of its own civilian population into the occupied Arab territories."

It cannot be denied that this resolution calls for Israel to dismantle existing settlements and cease further settlement activity. It equally cannot be denied that the number of Jewish settlements, and the number of Jewish settlers, has increased dramatically since 22 March 1979. In my view therefore, it cannot be denied that Israel is in breach of Security Council resolution 446 and of subsequent Security Council resolutions calling for the end of settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza.

It is true, as you say, that all Security Council resolutions requesting action by Israel are Chapter VI resolutions. But there is nothing in the UN Charter to justify your assertion that such resolutions are merely "non-binding recommendations", unlike Chapter VII resolutions that are "binding on all UN members".

Quite the reverse. Article 25 of the Charter says that:

"The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter."

There is no distinction there between Chapter VI and Chapter VII resolutions. Since Article 25 is in Chapter V, and not in Chapter VI nor in Chapter VII, surely it must apply to both Chapter VI and Chapter VII resolutions?

That was certainly the view of the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 21 June 1971 (which arose from a request by the Security Council for an advisory opinion on the legal consequences for States of the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia). Paragraph 113 of this opinion says:

“It has been contended that Article 25 of the Charter applies only to enforcement measures adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter. It is not possible to find in the Charter any support for this view. Article 25 is not confined to decisions in regard to enforcement action but applies to ‘the decisions of the Security Council’ adopted in accordance with the Charter. Moreover, that Article is placed, not in Chapter VII, but immediately after Article 24 in that part of the Charter which deals with the functions and powers of the Security Council. If Article 25 had reference solely to decisions of the Security Council concerning enforcement action under Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter, that is to say, if it were only such decisions which had binding effect, then Article 25 would be superfluous, since this effect is secured by Articles 48 and 49 of the Charter.”

That leaves no room for doubt that, in the opinion of the International Court of Justice, Chapter VI and Chapter VII resolutions of the Security Council are equally binding. It is therefore difficult to avoid the conclusion that Israel is in breach of Security Council resolutions.

Yours sincerely

David Morrison

## Second reply from the Israeli Embassy

30 December 2002

Dear Dr Morrison

Thank you for your letter of 26 December.

The distinctiveness of Chapter VI and VII resolutions has long been acknowledged by Palestinian diplomats, and is, indeed, one of their main complaints. A Palestine Liberation Organization report, entitled “Double Standards” and published on September 24 2002, pointed out - as you have - that over the years the UN Security Council has upheld the Palestinians’ right to statehood, condemned Israel’s settlements and called for Israel to withdraw. But “no enforcement action or any other action to implement UN resolutions and international law has been ordered by the Security Council.”

The report neglects to explain the very simple reason for this, however. All Chapter VI resolutions (ones which deal with “Pacific Resolution of Disputes”) can only be implemented through a process of negotiation, conciliation, or arbitration between the parties to a dispute. All UN Security Resolutions concerning Israel fall under this category, and cannot be self-enforced by Israel alone; they all require a negotiating process.

Chapter Seven resolutions however, deal with “Threats to Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression.” When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, the UN Security Council adopted all its resolutions against Iraq under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The implementation of those resolutions was not contingent on Iraqi-Kuwaiti negotiations, for Iraq engaged in a clear-cut act of aggression. Moreover, UN resolutions on Iraq are self-enforcing, requiring Iraq alone to comply with their terms. However, the UN recognised, under Article 42 of the UN Charter, the need for special military measures to be taken if a Chapter VII resolution is ignored by an aggressor.

We can clearly spend a long time debating the minutiae of the UN Charter. However, there is surely a more pertinent observation to be made; that of the disproportionate amount of time spent debating the State of Israel within the Security Council and the wider UN organisation.

Israel is the object of more investigative committees, special representatives and rapporteurs than any other state in the UN system. The special representative of the Director-General of UNESCO visited Israel 51 times during 27 years of activity. A “Special Mission” has been sent by the Director-General of the ILO to Israel and the territories every year for the past 17 years. In addition, the Commission on Human Rights routinely adopts disproportionate resolutions concerning Israel. Of all condemnations of this agency, 26 percent refer to Israel alone, while rogue states such as Syria and Libya are never criticised.

To give but one example of the blatant double standard at work. On 24 May 2000, Israel withdrew its forces from Lebanon and redeployed them south of the international border, the “blue line” designated by the UN as separating the two countries. However, despite Israel’s full and confirmed compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), Hizbullah, with the assistance of both the Lebanese and Syrian Governments, has continually launched attacks against Israel across the Blue Line. These attacks violate basic norms of international law, most recently reaffirmed by Security Council resolution 1373, which obligates all States to prevent their territory from serving as a base for terrorist operations.

As an occupier of a neighboring country, recognised as a State that sponsors terrorism, and as a State that grants some of the world’s most vicious terrorist organisations safe harbor in its territory, Syria’s policies stand in blatant contradiction to the principles of the United Nations Charter. Yet earlier this year, Syria served as President of the UN Security Council.

The disproportionate attention accorded to Israel (a country the size of Wales with a population smaller than that of London) would be amusing if it were not so distasteful. Over the last two decades the UN has repeatedly held Emergency Special Sessions of the General Assembly on Israeli construction in Jerusalem. Such emergency special



sessions of the General Assembly are rare, having been originally conceived in 1950 for emergencies like the Korean War. However, no such session has ever been convened with respect to the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, the slaughters in Rwanda, the disappearances in Zaire or the horrors of Bosnia. So why have these sessions have been called only to condemn Israel?

The answer is abundantly clear. Candidates for the Security Council are proposed by regional blocs. In the Middle East, this means the Arab League and its allies are usually included. The automatic majority enjoyed by the Arab-Moslem bloc enables this group to pass any anti-Israel resolution, no matter how one-sided it may be. This same automatic majority blocks the adoption of any resolution that has any hint of criticism against the Palestinians or any Arab state.

In a perfect world, Israel's relationship with the United Nations would be based on the merits of its case alone; that is to say, on Israel's status as a successful and flourishing democracy well-placed and well-disposed to contribute greatly to the welfare of the international community as a whole. However, the sad reality is that the international body's treatment of Israel will continue to be linked directly to the vicissitudes of the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian relationships, as well as to the fact that the UN is now comprised of a majority of countries that are disposed towards an anti-Israel political agenda.

Barring fundamental structural reform of the way in which the UN itself operates, so as to deny Israel's enemies the ability to hijack and politicise the proceedings of important humanitarian institutions such as the UN Committee on Human Rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel's treatment at the UN and in other international institutions will continue to be uniquely politically driven.

Yours sincerely

Michael Rosen  
Public Affairs Spokesman

### Third letter by me

15 January 2003

Dear Mr Rosen

Thank you for your letter of 30 December, which I have just received.

You write:

“All Chapter VI resolutions (ones which deal with “Pacific Resolution of Disputes”) can only be implemented through a process of negotiation, conciliation, or arbitration between parties to a dispute.”

That is simply not true: Chapter VI resolutions demanding action by more than one state may indeed involve “a process of negotiation, conciliation, or arbitration between parties to a dispute”, but resolutions demanding action from only one state manifestly do not. All the state in question

has to do in order to implement the resolution is to take the action demanded.

Therefore, your assertion that “all UN Security Council Resolutions concerning Israel” (which are all under Chapter VI) “cannot be self-enforced by Israel alone” is simply not true.

For example, at any time since resolution 446 was passed in 1979, Israel could have dismantled existing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and ceased building others, as demanded by the Security Council in that resolution. There was absolutely nothing to stop resolution 446 being “self-enforced by Israel alone”. Israel chose not to “accept and carry out” this decision of the Security Council as required by Article 25 of the UN Charter. The same is true of around 30 other Security Council resolutions, which require action by Israel, and Israel alone.

Like Iraq, Israel is in breach of Security Council resolutions and, as the International Court of Justice laid down in its opinion of 21 June 1971, the Chapter VI resolutions applying to Israel are as binding as the Chapter VII resolutions applying to Iraq. The Article 25 requirement to “accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council” applies to both.

Yours sincerely  
David Morrison

### Fourth letter by me

21 April 2003

Dear Mr Rosen

You did not reply to my letter of 15 January. I write again to seek answers to the following questions:

1) Does Israel accept the ruling of the International Court of Justice (*Namibia* 1971 ICJ 16, paragraph 113) that UN member states are obliged “to accept and carry out” Chapter VI (as well as Chapter VII) Security Council resolutions in accordance with Article 25 of the UN Charter?

2) If not, why not?

3) If so, does Israel accept that as a UN member it is obliged under Article 25 “to accept and carry out” resolutions such as 446, which place obligations on Israel and no other party?

Thanking you in anticipation.  
Yours sincerely  
David Morrison

I have yet to receive a reply from the Israeli Embassy.  
David Morrison

### References:

[1] [www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0210unres.html](http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0210unres.html)