

# Irish 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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Ireland went into denial about the existence of the Second World War. Even Professor Ferriter tells us that we did. He says that we called it 'The Emergency', in our quaint Irish way which is so endearing to our betters when it is not infuriating.

What we find in the censored newspapers of the period is reporting of the World War, in which it is never called anything but the World War. But that is neither here nor there. Historical truth does not consist of sordid facts like that. Our new history is a new theology in which truth is not to be tripped up by factual detail. England plays the part of the Creator in the new theology in which all right-thinking people must believe. The Creator of the Second World War presents it to us as a universal conflict between good and evil. We did not participate in this conflict. We were doubting Thomases. And not to participate in such a conflict was much the same thing as denying its existence. And we did in fact deny that a universal conflict between good and evil was happening. And to deny that the conflict that was tearing the world apart was a general conflict between good and evil was to deny its essence. And is there any worthwhile distinction to be made between essence and existence when essence is denied? Existence without essence is rag and bone.

Therefore, while we described the rag and bone epiphenomena of Britain's Second World War of the first half of the 20th Century, we denied its transcendent moral essence which was necessary to confer an appropriate immanent moral quality on all its parts, and in doing so we denied its substantive existence. QED.

The *Irish Times*—the newspaper that Britain left behind as a sleeper—was prevented by the Irish Censorship from reporting on the war. That is to say, it was prevented from publishing warmongering propaganda. And, since in the British view the truth lies in the propaganda, it was as if it had been prevented from reporting on the War at all.

But the sleeper has awakened. And on June 28th it carried an article about Hitler's plans for Ireland, from which Britain saved us:

"What if Hitler had invaded? Dublin's Gauleiter was to have sweeping powers which could have meant the liquidation of trade unions and the GAA."

The mode of the article is transcendental, needless to say. It is not located in the factual sequence of things. It does not see history as one thing following another, by reason of the other.

Hitler had a plan for Ireland. Why? Because he was engaged in world conquest and Ireland was in the world. That is the correct doctrinal view laid down by the Creator of the World War whose view of himself as the Creator of the World is not entirely fanciful.

John Waters, an enthusiast for the war of destruction on Iraq, has said that the world needs a Master. The way he put it on Radio Eireann was that the world needs to have its ass kicked regularly, else it gets notions above itself. The United States is the great Kicker Of Ass today. The British Empire was then.

The *Irish Times* meditation begins:

"Seventy years ago this summer Adolf Hitler's general staff drew up detailed plans to invade Ireland. In June of 1940, Germany's 1st Panzer Division had just driven the British Expeditionary Force into the sea at Dunkirk. The Nazis intoxicated by

their military victory in France, considered themselves unstoppable and were determined to press their advance into Britain and Ireland..."

There is another way of putting this, which is more in accordance with factual sequence:

Seventy-one years ago the British Empire made a military alliance with France and Poland against Germany, which encouraged the Polish Government to refuse to negotiate the transfer to Germany of the German city of Danzig (now Polishised as Gdansk).

Germany responded to encirclement by striking at Poland when it saw that the British Empire was making no actual preparations to act with Poland to deny Danzig to Germany. The Anglo-Polish Treaty was a dead letter.

Britain declared war on Germany as Poland was falling but did not attempt to assist Poland.

It imposed a Naval blockade on Germany with a view to destroying it economically.

It attempted to get control of Scandinavia but was pre-empted by Germany.

While Britain was still getting over the shock of its Scandinavian bungling, Germany responded to the declaration of war on it by going on the offensive against the Anglo-French Armies on its borders. Against all expectations, including its own, Germany defeated the Anglo-French forces in a few weeks. It allowed Britain to take a large part of its Army home from Dunkirk.

It made a temporary arrangement with France, pending a general settlement of the Anglo-French declaration of war on it. Britain refused to make a settlement.

Germany had made no plans to exploit its victory over the Anglo-French Armies on the Continent, and to crush Britain.

Britain refused to make a settlement, maintained its declaration, and kept the European situation on a war footing.

And Germany made plans for a state of affairs it had not anticipated. These included a plan for Ireland.

The *Irish Times* does not show that Germany had made any plans for invading Ireland, except as an adjunct of Britain. Its plans for Ireland were in response to the British declaration of war on it. Part of Ireland was part of Britain. The whole of Ireland had been part of Britain until 1938. Three major harbours in the 26 Counties were retained in British possession until 1938, and no state on which Britain declared war could have treated the Free State as anything but a part of the British Empire. And, even though the great Appeaser, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, had transferred control of these harbours to the Irish Government, the great Anti-Appeaser who took over from him in May 1940, Winston Churchill, denied that there was a legitimate transfer of sovereignty in the transaction.

The *Irish Times* fairy story about German plans for a war on Ireland, that did not follow from the British declaration of war on it, is set out in five columns. Britain does not really figure in it until the fifth:

"Ironically, the Germans were not the only foreign power making plans for the invasion of Ireland in the summer of 1940. In June of that year, Gen. Montgomery drew up plans for the seizure of Cork and Cobh along with the remainder of the Treaty ports..."

"Ironically" !!

The adverb carries the clear implication that the German plans for an invasion of Ireland were not part of the German response to the British declaration of war.

This implication is contradicted mid-way through the article that, under the German plan, Dublin would have been "*one of six regional administrative centres for the British Isles had occupation taken place*".

Clearly the German plan was part of the response to the British declaration of war. But it has greater moral (or propaganda) resonance to present it as a German plan to conquer Ireland that was not connected with the British declaration of war.

The article ends by wondering, "*what flag would now fly over Leinster House*" if it wasn't for the Battle of Britain?

It would be at least as relevant to wonder what might have happened if Britain had not worked up a World War over the trivial issue of Danzig.

And to wonder what would have happened if Germany had made preparations in earnest for an invasion of England. Churchill made preparations for a terrorist defence in depth commanded by ex-Communist Tom Wintringham. Underground groups were set up—under the ground—with orders in the event of German occupation to come up and assassinate the probable collaborators, with Chief Constables top of the list. He had to do *something* to accompany the mood music of his fundamentalist speeches.

But does anyone who knows England actually believe that if occupation was imminent the German terms for settlement would have been refused, and England would have thrown *itself* into the melting pot? We think it more probable that Churchill himself would have made the deal rather than leave it to an Appeaser to do it.

But, since actual occupation was never imminent, and Churchill with his private access to Enigma was well aware of this, certain beliefs can be sacred—and the only empirical evidence of British conduct, the Channel Islands, is so small that it can be set aside—beliefs not put to the test can be held sacred. And yet British conduct in the Channel Islands tells us something. There was wholesale collaboration with general agreement, then and later, not to call it collaboration.

But the view that the German plan for an invasion of Ireland was not part of the response to the British declaration of war does not pass muster even as an Article of Faith.

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## New book from Belfast Historical & Educational Society

### *The Anglo-Irish War*

General Sean MacEoin, Tom Barry et al  
2010

The Anglo-Irish War (or the War of Independence), 1919-1921, was followed almost immediately (1922-23) by what is called the 'Civil War'. The revisionist and 'post-revisionist' academic historians of recent times (products of Oxford and Cambridge Irish policy for the most part) use this quick succession as evidence that the unity of the War of Independence was illusory or opportunistic. They suggest that the issue over which the 'Civil War' was fought was implicit in the War of Independence.

The articles reprinted here give the lie to that suggestion. They were contributions to an account of the War of Independence published in the late 1940s, written by those who had fought together but then become enemies in the 'Civil War'.

This book appeared around the time of the first Coalition Government, when members of the Treaty Party in the 'Civil War' disposed of the final remnant of the Treaty imposition by ending the last connection with the Empire and the Crown—formal membership of the British Empire.

If the 'Civil War' was implicit in the War of Independence, Treatyites and Anti-Treatyites could not have written a harmonious account of the War of Independence a generation later. The fact that the Treatyites produced an entirely Republican account of the War of Independence is a tacit admission that the 'Civil War' was forced on them by Britain.

That should have led to a history of the 'Civil War' as a product of manipulation by British power—and it would have done, if academic history in Ireland had not already come under British hegemony then.

In addition to the articles reprinted here, Brendan Clifford provides an introduction exploring academic history-writing.

## Who Remembers the Persians...?

(Book Review – *The Great Famine and Genocide in Persia, 1917-1919* by Dr Mohammad Gholi Majd, University Press of America, 2003.)

by Pat Walsh

This book begins with one of the most startling statements I have ever read:

“The great famine of 1917-1919 was unquestionably the greatest calamity in the history of Persia, far surpassing anything that had happened before. It is shown in this study that as much as 40% of the population of Persia was wiped out because of starvation and the associated diseases that accompany malnutrition. Unquestionably, Persia was the greatest victim of World War I. No other country had suffered casualties of this magnitude in both absolute and relative terms. Yet the great famine in Persia, one of the greatest famines of modern times, and definitely one of the largest genocides of the 20th century, has remained unknown and unexplored... Unquestionably, the most remarkable fact about the Persian Holocaust is that it has remained concealed all these years, a fact about which volumes can be written.”

Over the last decade or so I have taken a keen interest in the Great War. In writing two books about it I have read hundreds of Irish and British publications from the time and after and yet I have never come across a clue about the events in Persia to which Dr Mohammad Gholi Majd refers. In fact, the effects of the Great War on Persia seem to be shrouded in the greatest of secrecy.

The author, despite having written a number of books on the topic of the Great War in relation to Persia, did not realize, himself, the proportion of the events he was dealing with and came about them by chance. In doing research on another matter in the US State Department archives he came across a letter in which Wallace S. Murray, the American chargé d'affaires in Persia wrote:

“Persia would appear at least threatened with the situation which arose in 1917-18 when, due to the drought and the destruction of her crops by invading armies, she suffered a famine that carried off, so it is estimated, a third of her population.”

And from there he followed the lead that was to lead to a startling discovery.

The author was initially left incredulous by his discovery and was convinced that this must be an error. And so he set out to discover the truth. He made a careful search of the State Department records pertaining to Persia during the Great War. He noted that the history of Persia in the Great War was shrouded in mystery and the famine of 1917 to 1919 was practically unknown. And he discovered that the facts were even worse than he imagined:

“I discovered that Murray’s statement that Persia had lost one third of its population was an understatement. The reality was even worse.” (p.13)

What the author discovered was as follows:

“I could not believe my eyes. I had seen references to this famine in earlier reports, and was aware that this was a serious famine. But casualties of this magnitude are another matter. The matter led me to make a careful search of the records of the Department of State for Persia during 1914-1919. It turned out to be a veritable revelation. The records are immensely rich and previously unused. One by-product was a monograph on the history of Persia in World War I and its conquest by Great Britain. The other is this brief monograph on the famine-cum-genocide in Persia. Sadly, I discovered that Murray’s statement that one third of the population of Persia had been ‘carried off’ was an understatement. The reality was far worse. The statistics are simply mind-boggling. As reported in the American diplomatic dispatches, the population of Persia in 1914 was 20 million, a figure that is easily substantiated in this study. By natural progression it should have been at least 21 million in 1919. The actual population in 1919 was 11 million, showing that at least 10 million persons had been lost to famine and disease—a famine of cataclysmic proportions.” (p.3)

Dr Mohammad Gholi Majd continues in summarising the impact of these events:

“In sum, not until 1956 had Persia’s population recovered to its 1914 level. These results are absolutely revolutionary and cast a completely different light on the history of Persia in the region. Given that the famine was initially caused by war and occupation of Persia by Russia and Great Britain, and then greatly worsened and lengthened by the policies of Great Britain, Persian losses to famine were casualties of the Great War. Persian losses easily far exceeded the Armenian casualties in Turkey and they even greatly exceeded the genocide of the Jews by the Nazis. These findings provide an entirely different perspective on the modern history of Persia and World War I.” (p.4)

It was Lord Curzon, the highest representative of British sovereignty in Asia, who told the Persians of their place in the (British) world on a visit from India in 1904:

“We were here before any other Power in modern times had shown its face in these waters; we found strife, and we have created order; it was our commerce as well as your security that was threatened and called for protection at every port along the coasts; the subjects of the King of England still reside and trade with you; the great Empire of India, which it is our duty to defend, lies almost at your gates; we saved you from extinction at the hands of your neighbours; we opened these seas to the ships of all nations, and enabled their flags to fly in peace; we have not seized or held enemy territory; we have not destroyed your independence, but preserved it.”

In short, Mother England told the Persians that they were British property to be done with as Britannia saw fit—and all to their benefit, of course.

But just a couple of years later Britain saw fit to deal with the expanding Russian Empire in Asia by dividing up Persia with the Czar in order to conclude the Great Game in favour of a greater one.

In the 1907 agreement between Russia and Britain, which paved the way for war on Germany and the Ottoman Empire, the Russians and British partitioned Persia into zones of influence. One of the chief bones of contention between Russia and England had been about spheres of influence in Persia. The British agreements with the Russians to settle differences over Persia were designed so that war could be made on Germany. Persia, it was decided, was to be divided in two by the two Powers with a buffer zone in between (which England later grabbed). The zones were supposed to be “spheres of influence” but Southern Persia, adjacent to the Persian Gulf, was gradually absorbed by Britain into the Empire.

Dr Majd describes the history of Persia during this period by dividing it into a number of phases. When Britain managed to manoeuvre Turkey into the war in November 1914 British and Russian forces violated the neutrality of Persia and entered it with military forces. This occurred about the same time as the British invasion of Mesopotamia. The Russians and British then concluded a secret pact for a new division of Persia.

Persia appealed to Germany for help in resisting the invasion and German forces, along with a Turkish army, entered Persia. During 1916 and 1917 Russia and Britain established control over their respective parts of Persia, driving the Germans and Turks out. However, the Russian revolution broke up the Russian armies in Persia and they evacuated the country. The British capture of Baghdad in March 1917 and the disappearance of her Russian rival created a situation whereby Britain conquered all of Persia during 1918. During that year British forces invaded western, northern and eastern Persia and occupied regions previously held by Russia. Dr Mohammad Gholi Majd notes that

“From the beginning, the British had maintained extraordinary secrecy on the invasion of Western Persia, their ‘Dunsterforce’ being nicknamed the ‘hush-hush force’... For four and a half years all of Persia was under British military occupation. The British forces had evacuated Persia only after the coup d’État of February 1921 by which the British had installed the military dictatorship of Reza Khan, who was subsequently made Shah in 1925. For the next 30 years the British controlled Persia, until the United States took over in the late 1940s.” (pp.3-4)

Dr Majd places responsibility for the great famine and genocide in Persia during 1917-19 firmly at the door of Britain:

“Persia suffered its greatest calamity when it was under the military occupation of the British. It is shown that not only did the British do nothing to alleviate the famine (the few token relief measures had little impact) but their large-scale purchases of grain and foodstuff in Persia, failure to bring in food from India and Mesopotamia, prevention of food imports from the United States, and their financial policies—including failure to pay Persia’s oil

revenues—greatly aggravated the famine situation. Consequently, many more died as the result of British policies. This assuredly qualifies as a crime against humanity. Persia was the greatest victim of World War I, and suffered one of the worst genocides of modern time.” (p.3)

In his book Dr Mohammad Gholi Majd provides a documentary account of the famine using sources from American diplomatic dispatches, the reports of American missionaries and contemporary newspaper and eyewitness accounts on the extent of the suffering and starvation. He also uses the memoirs of British military officers such as Maj. General Dunsterforce, commanding officer of the British ‘Dunsterforce’ in Persia and Maj. Gen. Dickson, Inspector General of the East Persia cordon during 1918-19.

In Chapter 3 he provides an indication of the famine’s toll by comparing the population of Persia in 1914 with that of 1919. In this he is meticulous and thorough in investigating both the pre-war and post-war population levels of Persia so that the true extent of the famine and its effect in decimating the population of the country can be accurately ascertained. The author looks at the population figures from a number of angles and reveals that Russian and British historians who have tried to cover up the extent of the famine based their pre-war estimates of the Persian population on a 60-year-old census. In contrast, Dr Majd uses contemporary estimates of the population levels by Europeans, election figures for the urban centres, and the records of Morgan Shuster, the American Administrator General for the Finances of Persia to show the true level of Persian population in 1914.

Dr Majd describes how Persia was faced with food shortages and high prices from the end of 1916 onwards and how by the latter part of 1917 the shortages turned into a famine. He notes that when the famine developed all of Persia and the vast majority of the region around it were under British military occupation and control. The British attempted to conduct a skilful propaganda campaign to blame the Russians and the Turks for the calamity but the author proves that the situation was entirely of Britain’s doing. He shows that British trade and financial policies had been the major cause of deepening and lengthening the famine and that the Russian looting during their withdrawal was only a temporary and localized factor in the situation.

Chapter 5 examines British grain purchases in Persia during the famine. The documentary evidence shows that the large-scale purchase of grain to feed the British armies in Persia, Mesopotamia and southern Russia greatly aggravated the famine in Persia. General Dunsterforce himself acknowledged and lamented the fact that British grain purchases contributed to the food shortage and higher prices and thus resulted in the death of many more Persians.

However, Dunsterforce eased his conscience over this by blaming the wealthy merchants who made large profits from selling grain to the British “but were unwilling to help save their poorer brethren.”

British attitudes towards the starving Persians were uncannily similar to those expressed against the Irish in a similar position half a century before. The Persians themselves, and particularly the Persian resistance, were blamed for the food shortages.

Persian insurgents were blamed for hoarding food. When the British set up road-gangs to build roads for the military they suggested that this 'relief measure' was motivated by benevolence and that the Persians were ungrateful for it. Major Donohoe, for instance, claimed that

"we did not reckon upon Persian avarice, selfishness, and untrustworthiness of character... no Persians were very long in keeping his itching fingers from another person's money... men did not bother to buy bread for their starving dependents, preferring to dissipate their earnings in the nightly carouses in an opium den—the local equivalent to a British gin palace." (pp.65-6)

And upon the suspicion that the labour gangs were frittering away their money idly the British began to pay the labourers only half their money and made the rest up through soup kitchens.

The soup kitchens became a way of controlling the masses and luring them away from the Persian Democrats. Donohoe noted:

"the hungry people came and ate. The second and succeeding days they came in thousands. Barricades and armed soldiers were required to prevent their storming the distribution centres and carrying off all the available supply. And, to the dismay and horror of all good Democrats, not a single one died from poisoning. This was the death blow to the prestige of the democratic movement. It lost its grip on the people... the British were *de facto* masters of the situation. They had conquered the people of Hamadan not by the sword and halter of the Turk who had preceded them, but by the modern adoption of the miracle of loaves and fishes." (pp.67-8)

But at the same time the British destroyed many stocks of grain right in the middle of a raging famine in order to prevent the grain from falling into the hands of the Turks, who they feared, at times, might return.

It was not that the British were unaware of the suffering of the people. The author cites many reports and extracts from books written in the immediate post-war period which contain desperate descriptions of the conditions of the people. For instance, Major Donohoe described instances of cannibalism breaking out amongst the starving people:

"the foodless people, driven crazy by their sufferings, now resorted to eating human flesh. Cannibalism was a crime hitherto unknown in Persia, and no punishment exists for it in the Persian law. The offenders were chiefly women, and the victims children stolen from the doorsteps of their homes, or snatched up haphazard in the bazaar purlieus. Mothers of young children were afraid to leave them while they went to beg for bread, lest in their absence they should be kidnapped and eaten. I never went into the bazaar or through the narrow, ill paved streets without a feeling of sickly horror at the sight of the human misery revealed there. Children who were little better than human skeletons would crowd around to beg for bread or the wherewithal to purchase it, and in parting with a few coppers to them, one could not help shuddering and wondering if they, too, were destined, sooner or later, to find their way into the cooking pot... They arrested eight women who confessed that they had kidnapped, killed, and eaten a number of children, pleading that hunger had driven them to these terrible crimes... two women, mother and daughter, were caught red-

handed. They had killed the daughter's eight-year-old child, and were cooking the body, when the police interrupted the preparations for this horrible feast. The half cooked remains were removed to a basket, and an indignant crowd of well fed Democrats followed the wretched offenders to the police station, threatening them with death. The next day the women were executed." (pp.27-8)

The author is not content with describing the famine as if it were simply a natural disaster. He is determined to prove that it was anything but a natural disaster and was wholly the responsibility of the British authorities—without whose presence there would have been no famine. He describes how the famine continued unabated during the summer and autumn of 1918 despite one of the best harvests on record. He also conducts a case study of the famine in the Gilan district proving that the region was able to feed itself, and all the refugees that had arrived there, prior to British occupation, but then found its food being commandeered by the British occupation forces, leading to famine. The British grabbed the food in order to feed the British Army that was advancing towards Baku, in the circumstances of the collapse of the Russian Empire, in order to extend the British Empire up to the Caspian Sea and into the Caucasus.

Dr Majd also shows, using British military correspondence, that there was no necessity for the British Army to grab Persian grain at all as it could have been imported easily from India. However, the British authorities decided that this would use up shipping space and preferred to starve the local population than interfere with their military operations in the region. In this way Britain prevented the importation of food into Persia from India and Mesopotamia, Persia's neighbours to the west and east and even prevented the United States from using its ships to give humanitarian aid to the Persians.

In Chapter 6 the author examines the financial strangulation of Persia by the British government. The British government reneged on an agreement to pay Persia a monthly sum of customs revenues collected in the country and therefore prevented the Persians from alleviating the famine itself.

As a result of large purchases of foodstuffs by the British there was a huge appreciation of the Persian currency during the Great War and hyperinflation developed. The British government robbed the Persian authorities by paying them in fixed English pounds instead of the customs revenues that they collected in the local currency. Given the huge depreciation of Sterling the Persian government was able to get less than a third of the money they previously had got and the purchasing power of the monthly payments declined to practically nothing.

Also Britain withheld Persia's oil revenues from the Persian authorities. As the author notes, at a time when millions of Persians starved, the British government and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company confiscated Persia's oil revenues on some flimsy pretext of tribesmen damaging an oil pipeline. The amount of oil revenues due to Persia during 1914-1919 was 8,000,000 pounds—a huge sum by the standards of the time—and nearly 4 times the total annual budget of the Persian government. Had this money being paid to Persia many millions would have been spared death by starvation and disease. (In 1913 Persia had begun producing oil and very quickly became a major producer and exporter of oil.

The oil concession in Persia was held by the Anglo-Persian oil Company, two thirds of whose stock was acquired by the British government in 1914.)

The author notes that:

“The combination of depriving Persia of its oil revenues and the exchange rate chicanery completed the financial strangulation of Persia, with the result that the Persian government was completely starved of funds during the war and the famine and was completely unable to provide any meaningful famine relief to the victims. Having completely deprived Persia of its financial resources, the British government had complained loudly about the inability of the Persian government to come to the aid of the famine sufferers. It should be stressed again that depriving Persia of its financial resources was consistent with the British policy of depriving Persia of its food supply. That famine and genocide had been used by the British as a deliberate act of war in the conquest of Persia there can be no doubt.” (p.10)

The author also notes that Britain played a devious trick against the Persians at the Peace Conference at Versailles. In March 1919 the Persian delegation in Paris put out a document that supposedly laid out Persia's grievances and demands for reparation. However this document completely misrepresented the causes of the famine and contained ridiculous territorial claims which sought to expand the territory of Persia by double its area.

The author concludes:

“By mixing Persia's grievances with a heavy dose of falsehood it trivialized the famine, obscured its causes and weakened Persia's claims for compensation and participation in the peace conference. It was clearly a part of a clever scheme to conceal the famine and its causes. The cover-up of Persia's greatest calamity had begun very early on.” (p.11)

Persia was intimately connected with Mesopotamia in the British strategic conception. In August 1919, Britain imposed the Anglo-Persian Agreement on the country. As Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, who drafted the document, described England's policy of adding Persia to the Imperial sphere, in a memorandum:

“If it be asked why we should undertake the task at all, and why Persia should not be left to herself and allowed to rot into picturesque decay, the answer is that her geographical position, the magnitude of our interests in the country, and the future safety of our Eastern Empire render it impossible for us any time during the last fifty years—to disinherit ourselves from what happens in Persia. Moreover, now that we are about to assume the mandate for Mesopotamia, which will make us coterminous with the western frontiers of Asia, we cannot permit the existence between the frontiers of our Indian Empire and Baluchistan and those of our new protectorate, of a hotbed of misrule, enemy intrigue, financial chaos, and political disorder. Further, if Persia were to be left alone, there is every reason to fear that she would be overrun by Bolshevik influence from the north. Lastly, we possess in the southwestern corner of Persia great assets in the shape of oil fields, which are worked for the British navy and which give us a commanding interest in that part of the world.” (Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, pp. 39-40)

And yet whilst England could never ‘give up responsibility’ for Persia as a territory it could never admit responsibility for the

welfare of its people or that its policy had been tantamount to genocide with regard to them.

After the Cairo Conference, which was organized to settle the future of the Middle East from a British point of view, Churchill made a speech to Parliament on the future of the region. *The Irish News* commented on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1921:

“England's present Government mean to hold on to the Middle East—to Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Persia. Thus, explained Mr. Churchill, ‘a valuable link in the chain of Imperial communication’ will be forged, and a shorter way round to India, Australia and New Zealand. It is an expensive venture: it will become a commitment before the end of the week. And thus a few more ‘small nations’ will be doomed to slavery.”

In the same year Major-General Ironside organized the coup in Teheran which established a British client ruler.

By all accounts Dr. Mohammad Gholi Majd had great difficulty in getting his book published in the U.S. and whilst other publications dealing with ‘genocides’ were eagerly put on the market (such as that in Rwanda) the subject of an Iranian genocide produced by British agency was considered untouchable by the same publishers.

Documents from the British War Office relating to the occupation and famine are still being withheld from scholars by today's Government in Westminster.

If it is true that Hitler once said, “Who remembers the Armenians?” it just goes to show that he was a product of the world Britain made and the history the British state had written for it. Hitler remembered the Armenians because Britain had made sure they were remembered but as for the Persians...

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## A new book from Aubane Historical Society

### *An Argument Defending The Right Of The Kingdom Of Ireland*

By Conor O'Mahony  
2010

“Enthusiastically wishing to help my country and responding to appeals by friends, I have written this vindication of the right of our kingdom, followed by a call to action”, Conor O'Mahony wrote in 1645. His *Argument Defending the Right of the Kingdom of Ireland*, which provoked fierce controversy, was the first book written in favour of Irish independence. It was written in Latin, the main European literary language, and John Minahane has translated it here for the first time.

O'Mahony, who was from Muskerry, Co. Cork, was educated in Spain and became an important Jesuit intellectual in Portugal.

In his introductory essay John Minahane explores the background and context of O'Mahony's book. He argues that the 1641 rising was essentially an attempt to restore the Gaelic civilisation, which English policy was working to destroy. It is shown that the idea of an effective, though not necessarily formal, independence of Ireland from England was very much in the air. The Irish position was weakened by deep-rooted conflicts, to which O'Mahony's *Argument* contributed. His case for complete independence, and rejection of the Stuart monarchy, was violently rejected by the Kilkenny Council and was not supported by Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill, who was implicitly his candidate for king of Ireland. However, O'Mahony's *Argument* remains the first theoretical statement of the case for Irish independence in modern times.

# Israel's nuclear weapons

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by David Morrison

Thirty years ago, on 19 June 1981, the UN Security Council passed resolution 487, demanding that Israel open its secret nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA). Paragraph 5 of the resolution states:

“[The Security Council] Calls upon Israel urgently to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards”. [1]

The resolution was passed in the aftermath of Israel's aerial attack on an Iraqi nuclear reactor on 7 June 1981. In it, the Security Council strongly condemned the attack and said that, in mounting it, Israel was “in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international conduct”. It also supported Iraq's claim for compensation.

The resolution was passed unanimously, all five veto-wielding members of the Security Council, including the US, voting for it. At the time, the US was supporting Saddam Hussein's Iraq in its aggression against Iran, which lasted from 1980 to 1988.

Israel ignored the resolution at the time and nearly 30 years later its nuclear facilities, bar a small exception, are still not subject to IAEA inspection. The small exception is a 5MW reactor supplied by the US in 1955, located at Nahal Soreq, which has been under IAEA safeguards since the early 60s, at the insistence of the US.

## No enforcement action against Israel

Since 1981, the Security Council has taken no action to force Israel to put its nuclear facilities under IAEA oversight, as required by resolution 487. It has taken no action despite the fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons and a variety of means of delivering them to targets across the Middle East and much further afield.

The Federation of American Scientists estimates that Israel has 80 warheads [2]; other experts on these matters, for example, Professor Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic & International Studies, reckon it may have as many as 400 [3]. Israel can deliver these warheads by aircraft, submarine-launched cruise missiles and ballistic missiles.

This unwillingness to apply sanctions against Israel to compel it to open its nuclear facilities to IAEA oversight contrasts starkly with the action being taken against Iran because of its nuclear activities.

Iran has been subject to Security Council imposed economic sanctions since December 2006, because it refuses to halt its uranium enrichment activities. Recently, the US and the EU have persuaded Russia and China to ramp up these sanctions for the fourth time and this was put into effect in Security Council Resolution 1929 passed on 9 June 2010. At the time of writing,

the EU, including Ireland, is about to impose additional economic sanctions of its own against Iran. Meanwhile, the EU continues to give economic privileges to Israel through the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

It should be noted that the opposition Green movement in Iran is opposed to economic sanctions. On 23 May 2010, the Daily Telegraph reported its leader, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, saying:

“In recent days, the issue of sanctions has been raised against our nation. Although we think this situation arose from tactless and adventurous foreign policies, we are against it because it will affect people's lives.” [4]

## Has Iran a nuclear weapons programme?

The US and the EU are pursuing this course of action despite the facts that Iran's nuclear facilities are subject to IAEA oversight, unlike Israel's, and that the IAEA has found no evidence that Iran has, or ever had, a nuclear weapons programme.

According to a US National Intelligence Estimate in December 2007 from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Iran halted a nuclear weapons programme in the autumn of 2003, and hasn't restarted its programme subsequently [5]. Commenting on this conclusion on 4 December 2007, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei, noted that:

“the Estimate tallies with the Agency's consistent statements over the last few years that, although Iran still needs to clarify some important aspects of its past and present nuclear activities, the Agency has no concrete evidence of an ongoing nuclear weapons program or undeclared nuclear facilities in Iran.” [6]

A recent report to the US Congress for the year 2009 by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence stated:

“We continue to assess Iran is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons though we do not know whether Tehran eventually will decide to produce nuclear weapons.” [7]

The latest IAEA report on Iran's nuclear activities (by Mohamed ElBaradei's successor, Yukiya Amano) in February 2010 [8] presents no evidence of weapons related activity. In particular, it repeats the message of earlier reports that only low enriched uranium suitable for a power generation reactor is being produced at Iran's Natanz enrichment plant and that no nuclear material has been diverted from that plant for other purposes, for example, to further enrich uranium to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon. It is true that the report says:

“Iran needs to cooperate in clarifying outstanding issues which give rise to concerns about possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme.” (paragraph 47)



There is a possibility that Iran has nuclear facilities for military purposes, which it hasn't declared to the IAEA, but the IAEA has found no evidence of this.

By contrast, there is no doubt whatsoever that Israel possesses nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them, not just to targets in the Middle East, but probably half way round the world. Nevertheless, the US and the EU demand more and more sanctions against Iran to pressurise it into halting its nuclear activities, while turning a blind eye to Israel's terrifying nuclear arsenal, which is largely unmentioned when Iran's nuclear activities are discussed.

Some states in the Middle East, notably Turkey, have become increasingly irritated by this double standard being applied by the US and its allies. As Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Erdogan, said on 30 March 2010, after talks with German Chancellor, Angela Merkel:

"We are against nuclear weapons in our region. But is there another country in our region that has nuclear weapons? Yes, there is. And have they been subjected to sanctions? No." [9]

Erdogan doesn't believe that Turkey's Iranian neighbour is developing nuclear weapons. Here's what he told the BBC on 16 March:

"Iran has consistently spoken of the fact that it is seeking to use nuclear energy for civilian purposes, that they are using uranium enrichment programmes for civilian purposes only. That's what Mr Ahmadinejad told me, many times before. But it's not very fair to manipulate this fact, and say that Iran has nuclear weapons." [10]

### **The Nixon/Meir deal**

The US never mentions the fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. It took a vow of silence on the issue over 40 years ago: to be precise, on 26 September 1969, when US President Nixon made a secret, unwritten, agreement with Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, in a one-to-one meeting in the Oval Office in the White House.

Under this deal, the US agreed not to acknowledge publicly that Israel possessed nuclear weapons, while knowing full well that it did. In return, Israel undertook to maintain a low profile about its nuclear weapons: there was to be no acknowledgment of their existence, and no testing which would reveal their existence. That way, the US would not be forced to take a public position for or against Israel's possession of nuclear weapons.

(For the fascinating story of how this came to be US policy, see *Israel crosses the threshold* by Avner Cohen and William Burr, published in the May-June 2006 issue of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* [11]).

Israel started a nuclear weapons programme in the early 50s. For many years, it went to great lengths to keep the existence of this programme secret from the US, because it feared that the US would put pressure on it to terminate the programme. After the US became aware of the existence of the nuclear facility at Dimona in 1960, the Kennedy administration insisted on inspect

ng it to confirm Israel's assertion that it was for civil purposes only. US inspectors visited the facility seven times in the 1960s, but never found direct evidence of weapons-related activities – because Israel went to extraordinary lengths to hide it from them. So, although inspectors suspected the wool was being pulled over their eyes, they were unable to prove it.

When the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) [12] was available for signing in 1968, the Johnson administration pressed Israel to sign and declare its programme, which by then the US was certain existed. Israel assured the US that it would not be the first country to "introduce" nuclear weapons into the Middle East, but refused to confirm to the US that "non-introduction" meant "non-possession" – and it refused to sign the NPT. Nixon refused to use a forthcoming sale of F-4 Phantom aircraft to Israel as a means of bringing pressure on Israel to sign.

The issue was finally resolved by the deal between Nixon and Meir in September 1969, at which point the US ceased sending inspection teams to Dimona and stopped pressing Israel to sign the NPT.

### **US "no comment" on Israel's nuclear weapons**

In accordance with the Nixon/Meir deal, the US has refused ever since to acknowledge that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. This leads to the absurd situation in which US discussion of nuclear matters has to proceed without the Israeli nuclear weapons being mentioned.

Thus, for example, in his speech in Prague on 5 April 2009, when he announced "America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" [13], Israel's nuclear arsenal was off limits. This led to an amusing exchange at a press briefing onboard Air Force One en route to Prague between a journalist and a White House briefer, Denis McDonough (see White House website [14]). The dialogue included the following:

Q. Have you included Israel in the discussion [about a world without nuclear weapons]?

MR. McDONOUGH: Pardon me?

Q. Have you included Israel in the discussion?

MR. McDONOUGH: Look, I think what you'll see tomorrow is a very comprehensive speech.

It is rare for journalists to ask the US administration awkward questions about Israel's nuclear arsenal. Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, visited Washington on 18 May 2009 for talks with President Obama. A large part of the joint press conference afterwards was concerned with the possible military aspects of Iran's nuclear programme, but no journalist thought it appropriate to ask about the undeniable military aspects of Israel's. However, at the President's press conference on 13 April 2010 after the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, Scott Wilson of the *Washington Post* asked:

"You have spoken often about the need to bring US policy in line with its treaty obligations internationally to eliminate the perception of hypocrisy that some of the world sees toward the United States and its allies. In that spirit and in that venue, will you call on Israel to declare its nuclear program and sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty? And if not, why wouldn't other countries

see that as an incentive not to sign on to the treaty that you say is important to strengthen?" [15]

President Obama replied:

"... as far as Israel goes, I'm not going to comment on their program."

That's the Nixon/Meir deal in action 40 years after it was done.

Until the President applies the same principle to Iran and says:

"... as far as Iran goes, I'm not going to comment on their [nuclear] program."

he (and the US) is wide open to the charge of hypocrisy.

### **What Israel says about its nuclear weapons**

Israel continues to adopt the position of neither confirming nor denying that it possesses nuclear weapons. Indeed, it uses exactly the same form of words today as it used in discussions with the US in 1969. In a statement to the IAEA General Conference in September 2009, Dr Shaul Chorev, Director of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, actually uttered the words:

"Israel has stated repeatedly that it will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in to the Middle East." [16]

However, on a visit to Germany in December 2006, Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, came clean about Israel's nuclear weapons, albeit without meaning to. *The Jerusalem Post* reported the story as follows:

"Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's Office denied there had been any change in Israel's long-standing policy of nuclear ambiguity, after Olmert appeared to admit that Israel had nuclear capability in an interview with the German television network SAT 1.

"Regarding Israel's alleged nuclear capabilities, during his television interview, Olmert became agitated when asked if the fact that Israel possessed nuclear power weakened the West's position against Iran.

"Israel is a democracy, Israel doesn't threaten any country with anything, never did', he said. 'The most that we tried to get for ourselves is to try to live without terror, but we never threaten another nation with annihilation. Iran openly, explicitly and publicly threatens to wipe Israel off the map. Can you say that this is the same level, when they [Iran] are aspiring to have nuclear weapons, as America, France, Israel, Russia?'" [17]

### **The US "Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone"**

Formally, the US (and the EU) are in favour of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. This may seem surprising, since putting it into effect requires Israel to give up its nuclear weapons. Of course, in accordance with the Nixon/Meir deal, in supporting a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the

It is not a policy that the US expects to realise any time soon. If it is not prepared to apply sufficient pressure to force Israel to halt settlement building, there is no chance of it applying the much greater pressure that would be necessary to force Israel to give up its nuclear weapons.

The US (and the EU) constantly say that Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons would be highly destabilising and could set off a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. In fact, the race started in the early 1950s when Israel began a nuclear weapons programme and, while initially the US made an attempt to halt this programme and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East, it gave up in September 1969 with the Nixon/Meir deal.

Like the US, Israel is also formally committed to the Middle East being free from nuclear weapons (and chemical and biological weapons). Speaking for Israel at the IAEA General Conference in September 2009, Dr Chorev said:

"It is our vision and policy to establish the Middle East as a mutually verifiable zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems." [18]

Needless to say, he didn't mention that the only obstacle to the realisation of this vision is Israel's possession of "weapons of mass destruction".

### **Universal adherence to the NPT**

Formally, it is also US policy that all states, including Israel, sign up to the NPT. Yet again, in accordance with the Nixon/Meir deal, in saying this, the US doesn't mention that in order to do so, Israel would have to give up its nuclear weapons.

Today, the NPT has 189 signatories, 5 as "nuclear-weapon" states, which, under the Treaty, are allowed to keep their nuclear weapons, and the other 184 as "non-nuclear-weapon" states, which are forbidden to acquire them.

Under Article IX(3) of the Treaty, states that "manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January, 1967" qualify as "nuclear-weapon" states. The 5 states that qualified for this privilege were China, France, Russia, the UK and the US.

Today, only four states in the world – India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea – are not signatories. India, Israel and Pakistan have never signed; North Korea did sign, but has since withdrawn. All four of them possess nuclear weapons and, since they acquired nuclear weapons after the beginning of 1967, none of them can sign the Treaty as a "nuclear-weapon" state.

If they sign the Treaty, they will have to sign as "non-nuclear-weapon" states, but to do that they would have to give up their nuclear weapons and submit their nuclear facilities to IAEA oversight. Universal adherence to the NPT isn't going to happen any time soon.

### **Withdrawing from the NPT**

Those states – India, Israel, Pakistan – that didn't sign the NPT and developed nuclear weapons broke no international treaty obligations in doing so.

Iran signed at the earliest opportunity in 1968 when the Shah was in power and, after the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, the Islamic Republic didn't withdraw. Had Iran refused to sign at the outset, or subsequently withdrawn, it would have been in the same position as Israel, that is, free to develop nuclear weapons without being in breach of any international treaty obligations.

Iran has always denied that it wants to develop nuclear weapons. It is worth noting that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issued a fatwa in September 2004 that "the production, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons are forbidden under Islam and that the Islamic Republic of Iran shall never acquire these weapons" [19]. In doing so, he was following in the footsteps of his predecessor, the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini.

Article IX of the NPT allows a state to withdraw. It states:

"Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other Parties to the Treaty and to the United Nations Security Council three months in advance. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events it regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests."

By any objective standard, Iran has had good grounds for withdrawal, namely, the build up over the past 40 years of an Israeli nuclear arsenal directed in part at it. There could hardly be a better example of "extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty", which "have jeopardized its supreme interests". And what applies to Iran applies to every other state in the Middle East.

### **Civil nuclear power an "inalienable right"**

Article IV(1) of the NPT states:

"Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty."

So, in having a civil nuclear program today Iran is exercising an "inalienable right" laid down in the Treaty. As part of a civil nuclear program, Iran has an "inalienable right" under the Treaty to establish uranium enrichment facilities, providing they are verified by the IAEA to be for non-military purposes.

Iran has said repeatedly that, by demanding that it cease uranium enrichment, the US and the EU are flying in the face of what is supposed to be an "inalienable right" of all states that have signed the NPT. The least that can be said of that is that Iran has an arguable case.

Certainly, other "non-nuclear-weapon" signatories of the NPT, for example, Brazil and Japan, have operational nuclear enrichment facilities.

### **General Assembly resolutions**

The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle

East has been the subject of resolutions in international fora since the mid 70s, when evidence began to emerge that Israel was developing nuclear weapons.

In December 1974, the UN General Assembly passed resolution 3263 (XXIX) [20] calling for the establishment of such a zone and for all states in the region to adhere to the NPT. The resolution was proposed by Egypt and Iran and adopted almost unanimously, with only Israel (and Burma) abstaining. Since the resolution didn't mention Israel specifically, let alone Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, the US was able to vote for it without infringing the Nixon/Meir deal.

For the next 30 years, the General Assembly passed a similar resolution in each annual session. From 1980 onwards, it was passed without opposition or abstention, not even by Israel. Needless to say, none of these resolutions had any effect on the ground in the Middle East.

### **1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference**

Nor did a similar resolution calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which was passed at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, attended by NPT signatories and therefore excluding Israel. The resolution [21] was co-sponsored by the US, UK and Russia. Again, since it didn't mention Israel specifically, the US was able to vote for it without infringing the Nixon/Meir deal.

The NPT was initially scheduled to last for 25 years, at the end of which, in 1995, a Conference of the signatories had to be held to decide whether to extend its operation. The Conference extended the Treaty indefinitely without dissent, but the "nuclear-weapon" signatories had to pay a price, namely, a resolution calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Many "non-nuclear-weapons" signatories, especially Israel's Arab neighbours, were unhappy that its possession of nuclear weapons made a mockery of the non-proliferation principles they were required to adhere to by the Treaty.

This 1995 resolution was reaffirmed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which called "upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place their nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards" [22] (p16).

### **Singling out Israel**

Alongside this series of General Assembly resolutions calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, but without mentioning Israel, from the late 80s onwards the General Assembly passed resolutions calling directly for Israel to accede to the NPT – and for the Security Council to force Israel to open its nuclear facilities to IAEA inspection in accordance with Security Council resolution 487. The IAEA General Conference, at which all member states of the IAEA (including Israel) are represented, passed similar resolutions. These resolutions were always opposed by the US (and Israel) since they singled out Israel and expressed concern about its nuclear activities.

This silly game is still being played today, for example, at the IAEA General Conference in September 2009. There, resolution GC(53)/RES/16 [23], titled Application of IAEA safeguards in

the Middle East, calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and for all states in the region to adhere to the NPT, was passed almost unanimously. The important parts of it were:

[The General Conference]

2. Calls upon all States in the region to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); ...

4. Affirms the urgent need for all States in the Middle East to forthwith accept the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure among all States in the region and as a step in enhancing peace and security in the context of the establishment of an NWFZ [nuclear-weapon-free zone];

5. Calls upon all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and appropriate steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a mutually and effectively verifiable NWFZ in the region, and invites the countries concerned which have not yet done so to adhere to international non-proliferation regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as a means of complementing participation in a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and of strengthening peace and security in the region;

This was passed by 103 votes to 0 with the support of the US, because it didn't specifically mention Israel (which also supported the resolution, apart from paragraph 2).

By contrast, the next day another resolution, GC(53)/RES/17 [24], titled Israeli nuclear capabilities, was opposed by the US and by EU states, including Ireland, because it addressed directly the obstacle to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the Middle East, namely, Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. The important parts of the resolution were:

[The General Conference]

1. Expresses concern about the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the security and stability of the Middle East;

2. Expresses concern about the Israeli nuclear capabilities, and calls upon Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards;

However, the resolution was passed by 49 votes to 45 against (with 16 abstentions).

### **The 2010 NPT Review Conference**

The 2010 NPT Review Conference took place in New York in May 2010. The Obama administration was anxious to avoid a repeat of the outcome of the 2005 Review Conference, which failed to agree a final consensus declaration.

A sticking point then was the lack of progress on implementing the 1995 review resolution calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The US refused to put its name to any text which involved taking additional measures to induce Israel to give up its nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT.

This time, a coalition of the 118 states in the Non-Aligned Movement [25], led by Egypt, lobbied strongly for progress on

this (and other) issues. In order to achieve a final consensus declaration, the US had to agree to "a process leading to full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East", to quote from the conference final document [26] (p30).

Specifically, in a resolution on the Middle East, the Conference agreed that

"The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution [the US, UK and Russia], in consultation with the States of the region, will convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States. The 2012 Conference shall take as its terms of reference the 1995 Resolution;"

The resolution also specifically stated Israel should accede to the NPT as a "non-nuclear weapon" state (ie that it should give up its nuclear weapons) and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards (p29/30). Iran's nuclear activities weren't mentioned in the resolution.

Surprisingly, the US put its name to this. Israel's interests had apparently been sacrificed in order to avoid the conference ending in failure.

But not for long. Immediately after the US had put its name to the declaration on 28 May 2010, President Obama's National Security Advisor, General James Jones, stated that the US had "serious reservations" about the proposal for a conference about a Middle East nuclear free zone [27]. He went on:

"The United States has long supported such a zone, although our view is that a comprehensive and durable peace in the region and full compliance by all regional states with their arms control and nonproliferation obligations are essential precursors for its establishment."

So, as far as the US is concerned, it is OK for Israel to keep its nuclear weapons until there is a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East.

General Jones continued:

"The United States will not permit a conference or actions that could jeopardize Israel's national security. We will not accept any approach that singles out Israel or sets unrealistic expectations. The United States' long-standing position on Middle East peace and security remains unchanged, including its unshakeable commitment to Israel's security. ...

"As a cosponsor charged with enabling this conference, the United States will ensure that a conference will only take place if and when all countries feel confident that they can attend. Because of [the] gratuitous way that Israel has been singled out, the prospect for a conference in 2012 that involves all key states in the region is now in doubt and will remain so until all are assured that it can operate in a[n] unbiased and constructive way."

So, the US will ensure that the conference will not happen if Israel doesn't want to attend – and Israel has made it clear that it isn't going to attend. So, within hours of the 189 signatories of the NPT, including the US, agreeing to the conference being held the US has unilaterally determined that the conference will not be held because Israel, which isn't a signatory to the NPT, doesn't want it to be held.

This US promise to accord Israel a veto over the holding of a conference was repeated when Prime Minister Netanyahu met President Obama in Washington on 6 July 2010 – see the official White House account of the meeting, Readout of the President's Meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel [28]. The latter also states:

“The President told the Prime Minister he recognizes that Israel must always have the ability to defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats, and that only Israel can determine its security needs.”

In that, the Obama administration accepts that Israel has a right to nuclear weapons for deterrence purposes – and the right to decide when, if ever, it no longer needs nuclear weapons for deterrence purposes. If that principle were applied universally, then every state in the world would have a right to nuclear

It is difficult to reconcile that with the Obama administration's stated view that all states in the world, including Israel, should adhere to the NPT and that there should be a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East – and “a world without nuclear weapons”.

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## Information Clearing House Newsletter

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**August 02, 2010**

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"To watch the courageous Afghan freedom fighters battle modern arsenals with simple hand-held weapons is an inspiration to those who love freedom. Their courage teaches us a great lesson—that there are things in this world worth defending. To the Afghan people, I say on behalf of all Americans that we admire your heroism, your devotion to freedom, and your relentless struggle against your oppressors." **President Ronald Reagan** - March 21, 1983

## Vichy France — Book Review

By Cathy Winch

*Une Jeunesse Française*  
*François Mitterrand, 1934-1947 (A French Upbringing and Youth, François Mitterrand, 1934-1947)*

By Pierre Péan  
Fayard, 1994

What was Vichy?

France was thrashed militarily in 1940 by Germany; at the end of May, Holland and Belgium had capitulated; the British had left the field of battle and repatriated their ten divisions. On 14 June the German army was in Paris; on the 16 it crossed the Loire, on the 19 it had reached the Atlantic coast. With more than half of the country already occupied, and only the prospect of further defeats, an armistice was decided on, in an atmosphere of cataclysmic shock.

On 10 July 1940 Parliament assembled to give full powers to Marshall Pétain; the regime was established legally and with near unanimity. 80 parliamentarians out of over 700 voted against; Communist MPs, who had been expelled from Parliament and in some cases imprisoned following the banning of the party in 1939, naturally were absent.

The government settled in the spa town of Vichy. It was recognised by many countries, for example there was a U.S. embassy there, until November 1942. Pétain was the hero of Verdun, from the time of the Great War; he had also played a useful role in 1917 at a time of mutiny; he had calmed things down and improved the lot of the ordinary soldier. He had the reputation as a hero but also as a friend of the common soldier; he was not upper class or a man of inordinate ability. He was chosen in 1940 because he mustered wide support. The great concern was to preserve national unity. The motto he adopted, *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (Work/Labour, Family, Country/Motherland) appealed; it was a time to be patriotic (*Patrie*), to atone through work, good honest toil, (there was a strong and widespread feeling of guilt associated with the defeat) and a time to return to family values. His association with Franco and with right wing movements were deemed less important than his overall prestige. He was 84 in 1940.

The armistice was signed under duress, and meant to be temporary. It stipulated that France and its colonial possessions stop fighting; part of the army would remain armed, to defend the French empire which would be untouched; the fleet would be disarmed except that portion deemed necessary for France to keep order in its colonial possessions. Prisoners of War would remain in captivity in Germany until peace was signed [*bis zum Abschluss des Friedens*]; German prisoners would be sent back to Germany as well as named Germans. Part of France would remain unoccupied.

The situation thus set up was unstable and untenable: the terms of the armistice were not and could not be respected over a long period. The unanimity formed round Pétain, under the shock of the catastrophe, unravelled as the course of the war changed and the demands of the occupier hardened. Thus Vichy was one thing in July 1940 but something else when it ended on 23 October 1944.

François Mitterrand (1916-1996) was the candidate of the Left for all elections for the Presidency from 1965 (except 1969); he was elected president in 1981, the only Socialist president in French history. The story of Mitterrand begins as the story of someone who was a marshallist (someone who rallied round Marshall Pétain) and worked in his administration, while being anti-German and anti-collaboration. The logic of his work in the prisoner movement took him to clandestine activity and brought him into contact with Resistants. Mitterrand's case was not unique. Péan said:

“A great majority of Resistants who fought to liberate France in 1944 had been marshallists.” The present reviewer has come across this idea twice in recent months. The historian and Resistant Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac provided a living illustration at the 18 June commemorative conference this year at the Institut Français when he said, in answer to a question, that he was a marshallist when, in September 1941, after captivity, he arrived in London to join De Gaulle. And in July this year Alan Massie, reviewing a book about the period in the *Literary Review*, said:

“Our authors seem surprised that so many who started in Vichy ended up in the Resistance; in fact, that was a common trajectory.”

So, this fact seems to be well established. Who would have guessed it?

Péan makes the point that the pendulum of objectivity has yet to rest over that regime; at first it was treated with silence, in the name of national reconciliation. But after the work of Robert Paxton and Serge Klarsfeld on its anti-Semitic actions, it became impossible to think of the regime as other than a “dense mass of traitors, cowards and anti-Semites”. As a result,

“There is no longer enough space given to the experience and feelings of many French people who both trusted Pétain and were anti-German, even became, sooner or later, Resistants. The fact is that a great majority of Resistants who fought to liberate France in 1944 had been marshallists.”

*Une Jeunesse Française, François Mitterrand 1934-1947*, is about one such trajectory, that of François Mitterrand. In his investigation Péan used archive material plus interviews with contemporaries: there are no secondary sources, and no bibliography, only a list of original sources. He writes as if this was “the

first book on the subject". He is also anxious to gather facts and let the reader draw their own conclusions: he presents the fragments of evidence, and readers can compose their own mosaic.

Some constants emerge: Mitterrand was Catholic, loyal to family and family friends, ambitious, a lover of high culture, fastidious; he liked danger and he liked being an influential leader.

From the beginning of his political life Mitterrand was the object of virulent attacks, especially from the right. In 1965, unbeknownst to the present reviewer leafleting in support of his first bid for presidency, his wartime record was already used against him. The more or less sympathetic 2005 film by Guédiguian *Le Promeneur du Champ de Mars* (in English, *The Last Mitterrand*), about a young man writing a biography of Mitterrand, has what could be construed as a prurient interest in the murky past. No attempt is made to give a context, or the beginning of an explanation, never mind a complete picture (it would admittedly have made a long film).

Mitterrand went to the front in 1939 at the age of 23, carrying Pascal's *Pensées* and the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*. He was involved in the fighting near the Belgian border, many of his comrades were killed around him; he was seriously wounded at Verdun on 14 June, and taken prisoner. His first POW camp in Germany housed intellectuals (teachers, priest, lawyers, students; he had just qualified as a lawyer) among whom he made useful contacts, like Bernard Finifter, a White Russian Jew, the group's interpreter. Mitterrand escaped, was caught and sent to another camp, an Oflag, POW camp for officers. This camp had a 35, 000 volume library, a daily lecture programme to which Mitterrand contributed with his brilliant erudition and eloquence, and a camp magazine for which he wrote.

He escaped again and finally ended up in Vichy in January 1942; Vichy was obviously not supposed to harbour escaped prisoners, but through contacts Mitterrand was given accommodation and an official post in the Commissariat for the Resettlement of Prisoners of War in that town. "Who you knew" overcame regulations.

There were initially two million prisoners, so the Commissariat for Prisoners of War had a lot to do. Gradually, some prisoners were released, foremost those who had fought in the 14-18 war, and those who had several children. The Commissariat helped wives and families of prisoners, and helped returning prisoners; 349, 000 had returned from captivity, either escaped or released, by the end of 1941. These men had been mobilised in 1939 and therefore had already been away over two years; they often had no work to go back to. The Commissariat provided escaped prisoners with false papers, accommodation and work. It also encouraged and facilitated escapes, by manufacturing and sending false papers for example in the "Pétain parcels" sent to POW camps in Germany, the papers hidden behind the frames of photographs of the Marshall. The expertise gained in this work carried over in the Resistance clandestine manufacturing of false papers. Mitterrand is said to have made over a dozen false sets of papers over that time.

Through the Commissariat, POW self-help groups were set up in every *département*, for practical and moral support.

Mitterrand travelled between these centres, and wrote for the internal newsletter. These groups had more than a practical purpose. Returning prisoners often did not feel welcome: they were living reminders of the defeat, especially if they had been made prisoners without being involved in any fighting. The men came back from the experience of captivity changed men, with a different mentality, and they wanted to keep that new spirit alive. Mitterrand, when himself a prisoner, observed that the hierarchy that developed within the camps was not the same as the traditional hierarchy of money and inherited privilege. Instead, the leaders emerged "one knew not how". He also observed erstwhile notables losing their self-respect and dignity when erstwhile "lesser beings" in the same situation kept theirs. This was an eye opener for him. The values of the prisoner movement were friendship, solidarity, fraternity, justice; an elite of the heart transcended differences of class and opinion. These "treasures of spirituality", and the love of the good led to a desire for a new social contract.

Prisoners were thus a fertile ground for politics; the Vichy regime, well aware of this, encouraged "Pétain circles" in the POW camps. Strange as it may sound, a classless society based on fraternity and solidarity was one of the aims of Vichy's "National Revolution" ideology. The Vichy POW Commissariat was the battleground of influence over the prisoners. There was the Pinot-Mitterrand line, led by Maurice Pinot, who was the head of the Commissariat. They lined up against the Collaborationist tendency, and against a movement headed by De Gaulle's nephew, Michel Cailliau. Collaborationists in Paris also created an "Association of POWs 39-40", with the support of the Germans. Pinot fought to limit that influence.

Another battleground for influence was the Pétain Youth movements. It had a magazine, where on 23 January 1943, Mitterrand wrote an enthusiastic and inspiring article praising the poetry of Aragon, not mentioning that Aragon was linked to the clandestine Communist Party and his poetry published underground. Was Mitterrand already inclining to the left, or did he put his love of poetry above politics? Péan does not decide. The Youth movements, created to keep the youth in the Pétain straight and narrow, were also a reservoir of manpower for the Resistance, as well as a source of employment and hiding places. There were links between the prisoner movement and the Youth movement and also with a third group Mitterrand was associated with: the Army of the Armistice; these soldiers and officers were the first to engage in acts of Resistance, hiding arms and officers in preparation for an Allied landing in the South of France. On 11 November 1942, however, they obeyed orders not to rise when the Germans occupied the Southern zone, except one officer in one location. The ORA (*Organisation de Résistance de l'Armée*) was then created in November 1942, with links to General Giraud in Algiers.

In December 1942, a collaborationist was placed at the head of the POW Commissariat, apparently without Pétain's knowledge. Pinot considered himself dismissed and left. Mitterrand was part of a group of ex-POWs presented to the Marshall; one of them told the surprised Marshall the news of the replacement. Mitterrand then resigned, but others in his position and in agreement with him were asked not to resign from the Commissariat, so as to remain as useful sources of information and resources. Mitterrand continued writing for the newsletter and to be active in one regional self-help group; he also, financed by the Giraudist

Organisation of Resistance of the Army, ORA, continued his work with the prisoner movement clandestinely under a variety of names, risking capture, deportation and death. This fate happened to others in the movement and Mitterrand narrowly escaped arrest on several occasions.

Mitterrand met De Gaulle in Algiers in December 1943, where De Gaulle approved Mitterrand as leader of the prisoner movement, in preference to his own nephew.

The aims of the movement were:

1. To protect ex-POWs in France against German police.
2. To help each other find work.
3. To facilitate escapes
4. To take part with everything in their power in the fight against the occupier.

In March 1944 the Pinot-Mitterrand, the Cailliau and the Communist prisoner movements were amalgamated. The aims of the amalgamated group were as above, plus

“To take part in the great struggle for the liberation of France and the return of all those exiled.” The movement was now categorically opposed to Vichy, and recognised only the authority of the National Council of the Resistance. This Council was led by Georges Bidault, a former colleague of Pinot.

The name of the organisation had changed, to include, as well as the POWs, the deported, that is those sent to Germany after June 1940, politicians like the ex-prime ministers Blum and Daladier, who were in Buchenwald, those involved in the resistance, Jews, Freemasons and the 600 000 Frenchmen sent for forced labour. The manifesto called on “all victims of captivity without distinction of political or religious opinion” to rally round the movement.

The prisoner movement, which included Jews, did not consider the Jews a special case; they were one category among those persecuted and deported. Neither London nor Algiers, nor De Gaulle, nor the underground press specifically mention the anti-Jewish measures, but include them with measures against Gaullists, Communists and Freemasons. The word “anti-Semitism” was not pronounced at Pétain’s trial (23 July-14 August 1945) or in any post-war editorials; the words used were “persecution of non-Aryans” or “racial policies”.

Péan quotes at length a Jewish communist, Edgar Morin, later a sociologist, a militant in the prisoner movement initially with Michel Cailliau. For Morin, from 1941 to the beginning of 1944, many people were “pétaino-gaullist”: they saw Pétain as the shield, and De Gaulle as the sword. François Mitterrand thought that way until the end of 1942. Morin described the cataclysm of 1940, itself following the panic of people faced with unexpected and formidably disturbing events from 1934. The vote of the 10 July [when Parliamentarians voted to give Pétain full powers to govern and change the constitution] was not a vote for collaboration, but the seizing of a branch by a drowning man. Here is a translation of part of the interview with Morin; note that he used the phrase “Northern zone” (*zone nord*) to mean the Northern half of France that was occupied in 1940 and which contained Paris, where the German administration was, as well as some offices of the Vichy administration, and “Southern zone” (*zone sud*) to mean the Southern half of the country which was unoccupied until 11 November 1942, and which contained the town of Vichy. The two zones remained different throughout the war because of continued differences between the Vichy and Paris administrations.

“The Vichy exclusion laws, which ostracised French Jews, did not affect me. I was a student at Toulouse and the *numerus clausus* instituted by Vichy was not implemented by the university where I was. I was however shocked by the expulsion, in autumn 1940, of two Jewish professors, Jankelevitch and Meyerson, and two Freemason professors, Albert Payet being one of them. I remember vividly Jankelevitch’s last class: I was there, and many students, among whom the one who would become my wife, manifested their support for the teacher and their anger at this measure.

What was happening in the occupied zone was very different. There was the yellow star and then the big round ups... I was personally in danger as a Resistant, but not as a Jew, because I had “Aryan” identity papers. I lived in a different world, the world of the Resistance, where I felt very well integrated. When I moved to the Northern zone, at the beginning of 1944, I felt quasi invulnerable under my identity of “Gaston Poncet”.

I learnt the horror of Auschwitz during the Occupation, end 43-beginning 44, in a thick document from the clandestine press agency directed by Martinet, containing the testimony of people who has escaped from Auschwitz. I was among the rare people who got to know. The population knew practically nothing. That is why you can’t argue from posterior knowledge, as if all French, marshallists, Resistants, victims’ families, knew that all deported Jews were going to be exterminated.

Vichy spontaneously passed anti-Jewish laws—not on the orders of the Germans—following a tradition that came from Maurras and nationalist sentiment... these measures of exclusion were obviously not taken with mass homicidal intentions. It was the extermination of the Jews decided by Hitler in 1942 which, retroactively, turned these laws into a first step in the discrimination, which facilitated their arrests. With the Touvier trial, people had reduced Vichy to the Milice and the Vel’ d’hiv. But the Vel’ d’hiv is not Vichy, it is the French police acting under German order in the Northern zone. The Milice is a late manifestation of Vichy which had grown closer and closer to Nazi Germany.

Anti-Semitism is one aspect of Vichy, but there are many other aspects. Vichy changed over time. When the Parliamentarians voted the full powers to Pétain, it was not for collaboration; that came after. The country collapsed. Alesia [the battle where Julius Caesar beat the Gauls under Vercingetorix] was small beer [*de la bibine*] compared to the debacle of one of the greatest armies of the world in June 1940. There was a feeling of cataclysm. Vichy, at the beginning, was a branch to a drowning man. There you found an odd mix, with people like Berl, renovating socialists, pacifists, the old Maurras reactionaries, and then a process of separation began. With the turn of the war, the life forces that supported Vichy haemorrhaged away. Successive separations happened. Over four years, there was a very rapid evolution, whereas people try to fix Vichy in a sort of immutable entity. That’s where they go wrong!

You must not forget also that from 1941 to the beginning of 1944, a good part of the population was pétaino-gaullist. Pétain was the shield; De Gaulle, the sword. This mentality was invisible externally, because neither the press of occupation, nor the press of the Resistance, mentioned it. Obviously, this pétaino-gaullism started crumbling from the time the Southern zone was invaded and the Allied landed in North Africa, and then it collapsed.



Finally, it must be remembered that the French defeat came on top of a previous mental confusion which it then amplified. The left, before 1933, was pacifist and against the Versailles treaty which amputated Germany; but being antifascist, it had to oppose the German claims. The right, which was anti-German, started out admiring the hitlerian "order". Strange permutations from communism to fascism, from nationalism to collaboration, from pacifism to Resistance took place.

The first year of Vichy brought together pacifists, collaborators, nationalists, and reformers around a kernel that became harder and harder, that of the marshallist order. Then from autumn 1941, the layers separated. The Resistance took off and communism came back to life, because the USSR now was the symbol of the hope for a new world.

[...]

If you don't take into account the fact that people's minds were in a state of near panic, when faced with the formidable, unexpected and bewildering events which happened from 1934 to 1944, if you don't take into account the mistakes, the lurches and you want to fix all that, then you can't understand that era in its complexity, its evolutions, its contradictions..."

Péan interviewed over a hundred people; not one mentioned the subject of anti-Semitism in connection with Mitterrand. Péan, in one of his rare conclusions, said that in the course of his research he acquired the conviction that Mitterrand was never anti-Semitic; he quoted with approval someone who said that Mitterrand was "allergic" to anti-Semitism. Even though anti-Semitism was a common sentiment, it was not general. Colonel de la Roque for example, leader of an extreme right wing movement of the thirties admired for a time by Mitterrand, said that a wave of anti-Semitism would be as disastrous for France as the wars of religion [of the sixteenth century] had been.

People criticized Mitterrand because he did not break off relations later with anti-Semitic friends, or with ex-Vichy men, who had been exonerated in the post war purges; those included businessmen and industrialists, who were mostly left alone after the war.

Péan has five chapters interspersed throughout the book, all entitled "Baggage", Baggage (1) Baggage (2) etc, where he describes the links Mitterrand had with his extended family, his seven brothers and sisters and their spouses and children, as well as family friends; these friends of the family are of a different sort from personal friends he made independently: although not related by blood, they are like family, in that you don't choose them and they are there for ever. Some of Mitterrand's family and family associates were of the extreme right; one of his sisters, after a failed marriage, lived with an ex-Cagouard who had a post in Vichy's Commissariat to Jewish Affairs (the Cagoule was a right-wing terrorist organisation). Mitterrand, a wanted man in Paris, took refuge with the mother of this man, a woman he had known well as a child, or with his own sister, the partner of this man. Mitterrand put family and friends above politics, and so did his family and friends, coming to his help when he needed it, regardless of his opinions and activities, or of the fact that his presence put them in danger.

Péan uses the modern word "baggage" to mean family loyalty, a burden which in the modern world you would discard, to conform, or to permit your ascent in the world. Putting family and friends, openly, before politics, is something that is not fashionable today. It dates Mitterrand to a previous era.

His explicit attachment to the French Empire also dates him; Mitterrand, like many people, blamed the defeat on the degeneracy of the politicians of what came to be known as the Third Republic (1975-1940); writing an editorial during the Pétain trial he cast his mind back to the greatness of France during the Great War, and during the conquest of Senegal, Morocco and Indochina. Later, he was in favour of granting independence to Tunisia and Morocco, but wanted to keep Algeria French. He was in the government when the French perpetrated atrocities in the Algerian war. But it is easier for people in the West to dwell on the Second World War than to remember the colonial wars.

After 1944, Mitterrand said that the genuine, early Resistants came from Pantin or Bobigny (working class districts), unlike those who came after the battle asking for places in the new regime:

"On the last day of the insurrection [of Paris] we reviewed some of our franc corps. Badly dressed, badly equipped, dirty, they possessed the mark of a surprising nobility. But they came from Courbevoie, Pantin, Bobigny or Montrouge. The others, or, to be more precise, the other, the bourgeoisie, waited until it was effectively all over."

Thus a Resistant, who had been a right-wing Marshallist, fought to liberate Paris in 1944 alongside working class men. Mitterrand had gone further than others in his political evolution through the influence of people he met the Resistance, and through the influence of his wife.

What makes Péan's book of interest today is that through the case of Mitterrand, we get a detailed picture of some aspects of the Vichy regime, and in particular the prisoner movement. The prisoner movement gives examples of the importance of personal contacts in Vichy, the diverse nature of the people involved, the political divergences and the infighting, the personal danger and the political thinking about the future. The word "Vichy" takes on a new meaning.

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# Ireland and the ‘Question of Palestine’:

## De Valera’s legacy

by Philip O'Connor

### Muslims and Jews in pre-independence Ireland

There were only very small numbers of Muslims and Jews in Ireland before 1900, in neither case much more than about 300. This changed around 1900 with an influx of several thousand largely poorer Orthodox Jewish immigrants from the anti-Semitic Tsarist Russian Empire, mostly Lithuania. Apart from disturbances in Limerick in 1904, provoked by the sermons of a Redemptorist missionary, and sustained by antipathy to Jews who had become involved in the money lending business in the city, political “anti-Semitism”, in the sense of a philosophical rejection of the Jews, while it certainly had adherents, had little political support. The ideology of the rising Republican and labour movements of the time opposed racial prejudice and when Michael Davitt, Frederick Ryan and others took a firm stand against some anti-Jewish articles penned by Arthur Griffith while he was in his imperial “dual monarchy” phase (and in its spirit), he quickly abandoned those positions. The “anti-Semitism” which Dermot Keogh identified in the labour movement has been shown by Manus O’Riordan not to have been the racism Keogh thought he had found (‘Citizens of the Republic: Jews in Independent Ireland’, *Dublin Review of Books*, , no. 2, Summer 2007, www.dr.ie).

When Britain launched its imperial “Great War for Civilization” in 1914, with which Redmond aligned Home Rule Ireland, it was accompanied by much racist propaganda in the pro-British and Redmondite press targeting the “barbarous Hun”. Jewish “aliens” were depicted in this context as German agents, and there were several incidents in Dublin and Belfast of pro-British mobs attacking Jews, including Sir Otto Jaffe, former Mayor of Belfast, who was deleted from the city’s role of honour and hounded from the country. With the extension of the war to an assault on the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim population, which had previously been treated as benign, also became less welcome, with the Redmondite press carrying lurid tales of the racial degeneracy of the “unspeakable Turk.”

But Redmondism and its adoption of the British imperial programme for the world represented a radical break with the anti-colonialism of the national movement before 1910, which had supported popular national struggles in Sudan, South Africa, India, Egypt and elsewhere.

The Republican tendency in the independence movement that comprehensively replaced Redmondism at the general election of 1918 and fought the War of Independence restored the movement’s republican, anti-imperialist understanding of itself.

### The independence movement and the ‘Irish Model’

The Irish achievement of independence inspired revolutionaries worldwide. Nehru and Bose in India and Aung San in Burma

were among many who took the “Irish example” as their model. The Indian National Congress counted several Irish nationalists among its leaderships and closely followed the tactics of the Irish movement. On his tour of the US in 1919-20 de Valera addressed Indian rallies under banners declaring: “President De Valera’s Message to India: Our cause is a common cause.” Irish nationalists also had close connections with the independence movement in Egypt. Richard Crossman, a British statesman, wrote that he first realized the importance of the “Irish revolution model in modern history” in the early 1950s when he met Gamal Abd-al Nasser, who told him that writings from the Irish independence movement provided the “textbook of our Egyptian revolution” (*A Nation Reborn*, 1960, p. 578).

The Irish example was also a reference point for the Palestinian Revolution of the 1930s against the British occupation regime and its sponsoring of Jewish colonisation. Branded in Britain as the “Arab Revolt”, it was ruthlessly suppressed by a British police force consisting of former Black and Tans and Zionist auxiliaries. When the British military seized the headquarters of the Palestinian leaders, they discovered what a British intelligence report called “Sinn Féin manuals” from the War of Independence era in Arabic translation - probably the 1920-21 journal for IRA Volunteers, *An t’glach*, which was also avidly studied in India.

Many members of the Irish Jewish community supported Sinn Féin after 1916 and several participated actively at important levels in the War of Independence on the side of the Republic. Robert Briscoe, from a Dublin Jewish merchant family, became an officer in Collins’ intelligence service, organised arms supplies from Germany (through the German nationalist military grouping Orgesch), was later an officer in the anti-Treaty IRA and went on to serve nearly forty years as a Fianna Fáil TD. Others who participated actively include the Dublin solicitor Michael Noyk who was a close aide of Griffith during the War. The Chief Rabbi of Ireland, Dr. Isaac Herzog, was a close friend of Eamon de Valera, provided a safe house for him when he was on the run, and remained a confidant of his throughout his life.

As none of the strands of the independence movement had an anti-Jewish programme, a specific Jewish interest did not emerge aligned with any particular political tendency. Jews were thus represented in both pro- and anti-Treaty forces and in the labour movement.

### The Irish Free State in the World

The Free State government that won the Civil War against the Republican sought to maximise the scope of Irish “dominion status” within the British Empire/Commonwealth as set down in the Treaty. In an article that in the British press on the day the Treaty was signed, Michael Collins set out a foreign policy programme for Ireland as one of the (white) Dominions within the Empire. This first dramatic statement of the foreign policy of the Irish state is not referred to at all in the officially sponsored Cambridge/Royal Irish Academy series *Documents on Irish*

*Foreign Policy*. Collins's article appeared in the *Guardian*, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1921 (and was reprinted in the first issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*). This set the course of the foreign policy pursued by the Free State in the 1920s. When a section of the defeated Republican side, regrouped as Fianna Fáil, came to power in 1932, it did so on a platform of resuming the republican agenda defeated in 1923. De Valera's foreign policy set out to wind down Ireland's involvement in the Empire and increasing instead its activity at the League of Nations.

De Valera's election to President of the League Assembly in September 1932 caused an international sensation. In his inaugural address he expressed scepticism of the League's intentions or ability to halt aggression by big powers. But he also championed the notion of international law in the interests of small nations through the upholding of the "Charter" of the League through active measures of "collective security." A colourful front page editorial in the prestigious *Journal de Geneve* (25<sup>th</sup> September 1932), caught the flavour of the impact he made:

"... Eamon de Valera, the outlaw and hero, is now at the head of all the nations of the world... [His Presidency] may become a sort of guiding light, a star in the heavens for all those oppressed peoples which are struggling for their independence – de Valera presiding over the sessions of the Council at which the Japanese will have to explain their attitude to China. Here is an astonishing occurrence, of which Gandhi and millions of Indians, Arabs, of yellow people and, perhaps, of black, will at once grasp the full import."

But de Valera's role on the world stage was not that of a revolutionary demagogue. While the success of the Independence movement and the Sinn Féin/IRA struggle of 1919-21 was the basis of Ireland's prestige, it was what de Valera was building on that base in the 1930s through the hollowing out of the Treaty, the development of the strategy of "External Relations" with the Commonwealth, the Economic War and the Irish Constitution of 1937 - that most attracted leaders of movements in countries such as India, Iraq and Egypt. Close relations with India developed on this basis, with the Indian revolutionary Subhas Chandra Bose twice meeting with de Valera in the 1930s much to the chagrin of Britain. This story has been told in full by Kate O'Malley (*Ireland, India and Empire. Indo-Irish radical connections*, 2009). In 1938 Egyptian Foreign Minister Sharara Pasha proposed to one of de Valera's closest aides, Joseph Walshe, that the former colonies combine to "change the Commonwealth's character and give us an opportunity of sliding quietly out of the King's orbit" (*Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, Vol. 5, p. 309).

De Valera's 1937 Constitution set down the principles of Ireland's "International Relations" (Article 29), committing the state to "international justice", the "peaceful settlement of international disputes", and the overriding role of the "generally recognised principles of international law." In addition, the state could, with Dáil approval, join or become associated with "any group or league of nations ... for the purpose of international co-operation in matters of common concern." Article 28 stated that "War shall not be declared and the State shall not participate in any war save with the assent of Dáil Eireann", i.e. the automatic commitment to war when Britain required inherent in the 1921 Treaty and 1922 Constitution were annulled.

At the height of the European crisis in September 1938, de Valera, addressing the League, called for "a general European peace conference or at least a peace conference between the greater Powers" to bring about "a lasting peace in Europe as a preliminary to the establishment of a League of Nations effective over the whole world... The most dangerous war is that which has its origin in just claims denied, or in a clash of opposing rights and not merely opposing interests...", and such disputes were solvable by agreement and compromise. With a system of this kind, clear aggression could be faced down militarily "with relative equanimity." He also opposed as "gratuitously criminal" attempts to "array Europe in hostile camps according to State ideology. The people of each nation or state can be depended on to evolve that form of State organisation best suited to their needs – that is their affair – and it should be made clear at once that differences in this regard are not and will not be a cause of war among the peoples" ('Only hope of lasting Peace', *Irish Press*, 27.08.1938. This keynote speech is not included in the Cambridge/RIA series *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*). In the spirit of this sentiment de Valera had been instrumental in securing the acceptance of the Soviet Union into League membership.

This was during what we are now told by historian Brian Girvin and others was at the start of Ireland's "isolationist, inward-looking" period.

### **Ireland and its Jewish population in the fascist era**

The catastrophic conditions in continental Europe resulting from the 'Great War' and the Versailles Treaty of 1919 were the impulse for the rise of modern anti-Semitism and fascism. Fascist concepts gained some foothold in Ireland, where an intellectual anti-Jewish movement arose in right-wing clerical-corporatist circles associated with the "Blueshirt" movement. This was most virulently expressed in Fr. Denis Fahey's popular pamphlet, *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World* (1936), which warned of the threat of "Jewish finance" and "Jewish Bolshevism" to European Christendom. But fascism was seen off by a republican ideology, shared across all the main political parties. Unlike across much of Europe, the Irish democratic state was never seriously challenged by Irish fascism.

During this time the views of the Irish government were given very direct expression in the *Irish Press*, the pro-Fianna Fáil newspaper, which the Fine Gael TD James Dillon later accurately described in the Dáil as "de Valera's Pravda", which was read "in every chancellery in the world ... to find out what was behind his pious affirmations in public" (*The Irish Times*, 29.11.1957). The *Irish Press* kept up a relentless negative coverage of the suppression of democracy and the persecution of the Jews and the Christian Churches in Nazi Germany, much to the chagrin of Charles Bewley, the pro-Nazi Free State ambassador in Berlin, who was subsequently sacked by de Valera in 1939. De Valera regularly denounced racial persecution in Europe and, apart from a few individualist TDs such as Paddy Belton and Oliver J. Flanagan - seen at the time as what one diplomat called the "lunatic wing" of the Dáil - Nazi anti-Semitism had few takers in Irish parliamentary politics.

The new Constitution of Ireland adopted in 1937 (*Bunreacht na heireann*) recognised the Catholic Church as having a "special position" in the state, but it also recognised the main Protestant

denominations as well as Judaism as official religions of the state. As Professor Joe Lee put it, this was “a gesture not without dignity in the Europe of 1937” (*Ireland 1922-1985*, p.203). A leading Jewish official, Rabbi M.L. Perlzweig, on a visit to Dublin during a break in negotiations in London over British plans for Palestine

“paid a high tribute to Ireland’s treatment of the Jews, which, he said, had created among Jews all over the world a feeling of help and encouragement, and a knowledge that there still were powerful forces in the world working for liberty and justice... It was a matter of interest to Jewry all over the world, he said, that Ireland in the magnanimity of her spirit chose to speak specifically in her Constitution of the Jewish community as an integral element in the Commonwealth, and as a body of persons entitled by law to their place in the country’s life.” (*The Irish Times*, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1938)

The extent of the benevolence of the de Valera regime – and de Valera personally - towards the Jewish minority has been documented by Dermot Keogh (*Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*).

## De Valera and Zionism

Benevolence towards the Jewish community and support for the Zionist project in Palestine were two very different things. Most Jews leaving Germany, Poland and Romania in the 1930s to escape increasing persecution were not Zionists and only a minority opted for Palestine. As regards the international Zionist movement, it had been fiercely pro-British since the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and the creation of the Jewish colony in Palestine under the League of Nations mandate of 1922 was regarded in Ireland as essentially a British imperial project. In British ruling circles there was a convergence between anti-Semitism and Zionism. “International Jewry” was seen as a disruptive force in the world, both in its capitalist and socialist manifestations, whilst Zionism offered the prospect of the Jews being grounded in a nationalism of their own, “the Jew” becoming a nationality rather than an internationalist, while also fulfilling an imperial function by creating a “white” colony beside the Suez Canal and on the land bridge to India. As the Governor of Palestine in the 1920s, Sir Ronald Storrs, himself explained: a colony gradually built up in Palestine would evolve for Britain into “a loyal little Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism” (Storrs, *Orientalisms*, 1937, p. 358).

The Irish Jewish republican and Fianna Fáil TD, Robert Briscoe, who on turning to Zionism in the 1930s became a supporter of its extreme “revisionist” wing led by Vladimir Ze’ev Jabotinsky. Briscoe claimed that in Palestine the “Arabs and Jews can reach agreement provided there is no outside interference or influence” (*The Irish Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1939). But Jabotinsky’s notion of the Jewish nation was that “national identity is inherent in man’s ‘blood’, in his physical-racial type ... It is physically impossible for a Jew descended from several generations of pure, unmixed Jewish blood to adopt the mental state of a German or a Frenchman, just as it is impossible for a Negro to cease being a Negro” (Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, 2009, p. 261). He foresaw the “re-settlement” of the Arab population of Palestine and Jordan to an Arab State of Iraq taking place under the oversight of a ‘Great Power’ to make way for the Jewish nation. At the World Zionist Congress in July 1931 his supporters sought to commit the movement to “the conversion of the entire mandate territory in Eretz Israel on both sides of the

Jordan into a Jewish State, in other words a commonwealth with a Jewish majority” (see Yaacov Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement 1925-48*, 1988). The Jewish community in Ireland in these years embraced the Zionist programme. Isaac Herzog spoke publicly in its favour and Dr J.A. (Con) Leventhal, paraphrasing Chaim Weizmann, stated that “despite diplomatic and political intrigue, a Jewish state would be established eventually, and it would be as Jewish as Ireland was Irish or as England was English” (*The Irish Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1937).

Given the conditions in Europe at the time, de Valera allowed Briscoe a free hand in trying to organise Jewish emigration. Briscoe travelled with de Valera’s blessing to the US and South Africa to raise money for the Jewish National Fund, which was funding migration to Palestine. With de Valera’s support, Briscoe even visited Poland in January 1939, then in the grip of a semi-fascist anti-Semitic military government, to promote Jabotinsky’s plan to solve what Briscoe called the Poles’ “Jewish Problem” by creating a Colony in Palestine with the transfer there of one million of their “unwanted Jews”. He suggested to Polish Foreign Minister, Josef Beck, that he negotiate with his British ally for Poland to take over the Palestine Mandate for this purpose. Beck expressed interest in the idea but, at a meeting with the leading rabbinical authorities, Briscoe found that the Jewish leaders of Poland – like the most of European Jewry at that time – opposed Zionism. (see reports in *The Irish Times*, 27.12.1938 and 03.01.1939, and Robert Briscoe, *For the Life of Me*, 1958, pp. 267 ff.)

While the official World Zionist Organization maintained its position of establishing a Jewish Homeland within the British protectorate of Palestine, the revisionist organisation set out to implement its more radical programme for a Jewish State through war with Britain. This lay behind its adoption of an “anti-imperialist” pose in establishing connections to Ireland in the late 1930s. Jabotinsky founded the underground military group, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* (IZL), led by Menachim Begin, that would go on to launch a terrorist war against Britain and the Palestinians, and, during the foundation of the Israeli state, to play a leading role in the expulsion of the Palestinian population. Hannah Arendt, a leading philosopher of German Jewish background, described in various articles at the time the New Zionists (as the revisionists called themselves), and particularly the Irgun, as the “fascist” wing of Zionism (See Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*).

Jabotinsky made contact with Briscoe because of his expertise as a former IRA officer, and came to Ireland in 1938 in the hope of securing the support of de Valera due to his significant role as President of the League of Nations Assembly and member of its Mandates Committee. In his memoirs (*For the Life of Me*, p. 264) Briscoe relates that he worked “closely with Jabotinsky in organizing Irgun on the lines of the I.R.A. In the course of this collaboration I made many trips to England ... I taught Jabotinsky ... the methods we had found most effective in the guerrilla war. I explained the British military weaknesses and where their strengths lay; and how to profit by the first and combat – or evade – the second...”

Through Briscoe, Jabotinsky secured a meeting with de Valera, who questioned him at length, particularly about the future the Zionists saw for the Arab population. Briscoe was unsure of the outcome of the meeting, writing in his memoirs (p. 265): “I am not sure, but I think the Chief was convinced by

[Jabotinsky's] arguments. Certain it is that I was." But the Israeli historian, Shulamit Eliash, a senior academic at the Israeli Jabotinsky Institute, has shown that the Zionist leadership in fact regarded de Valera's stance at the meeting – and at other meetings with WZO delegate Zelig Brodetsky and with Irish Jewish leaders - as non-supportive of Zionism, especially in his repeated insistence on the rights of the indigenous population not to be overwhelmed by Jewish settlers. Eliash surmises that for all de Valera's undoubted sympathy for the Jewish cause, from the perspective of the "the conflict between the different communities in Ireland" he "viewed the Arabs in Palestine as the equivalent of the Irish Catholics" (*The Harp and the Shield of David: Ireland, Zionism and the State of Israel*, 2007, pp. 39).

De Valera was to remain ambiguous on the question of Jewish settlement in Palestine, although he never publicly opposed it. At the inter-governmental conference of western countries summoned by the US and France in July 1938 to discuss the question of refugees from Germany and Austria, the Irish government position was that "while Ireland remained a country of emigration it was obvious that we could make no real contribution to the resettlement of refugees" (*Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, vol. 5, p. 327). As all other countries also gave reasons why they could not absorb large numbers of refugees, the Irish government proposed that "*The only alternative solution ... is the opening up of new or underdeveloped territory*" and hoped that the "*mass of human suffering involved in the refugee problem*" might be alleviated "*by some such means*" ('Statement to the Evian-les-Bains Refugee Conference', *ibid.*, p. 318). However, the records indicate that the "new or underdeveloped territory" was not a reference to Palestine.

### **De Valera and the Palestine question**

Despite his friendship with the leaders of the Jewish community in Ireland, and his assistance to Briscoe's rescue efforts in the context of the persecution of the Jews in 1930s Europe, de Valera distrusted British designs in Palestine and was a supporter of Arab independence movements in the British Empire.

In World War One, to gain their support in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, Britain had promised both the Jews a "National Home" in Palestine and the Arabs a great "Arab State" extending to Palestine. When the realities of these contradictory positions inevitably clashed, Britain's Peel Commission proposed the partitioning of Palestine in 1937 under an overall benevolent British mandate. In his (secret) evidence to the Commission, Churchill argued against partition, and instead in favour of British control for a century during which time a gradual increase in Jewish immigration would produce a "white" majority over time favourable to British imperial interests in the region (Angela Clifford (ed.), *Serfdom or Ethnic Cleansing. Churchill's evidence to the Peel Commission*, 2003).

Alongside the indigenous Jewish population of approximately 25,000, there were just over 10,000 Zionist settlers in Palestine in 1914. By 1922 this had grown to 30,000. They were living alongside 664,000 Arabs, of whom 73,000 were Christians predominant in urban areas. Under the mandate the Jewish population had expanded to 300,000 by 1935 and 445,000 by 1939. This growth was accompanied by large scale land purchases and the implementation of a "Jewish only" land purchase and labour employment doctrine. In 1929 and again in 1936, the

Palestinian Arab population rose in revolt. This means that the commitment in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was a promise to the Jews of Britain and America, as a Jewish population hardly existed in Palestine at all at that time. And the small native Jewish population in Palestine was hostile to Zionism not alone for religious reasons, but also because of the strife it was creating with the Arab population and the dangerous position in which it would put the large Jewish populations in Muslim states. Weizmann, the leader of the Zionist movement, had only contempt for the native religious (Challukah) Jews in Palestine, writing in his autobiography: "Historically speaking they have been the expression of the undying Jewish attachment to Palestine, but in an age which was to witness the reconstruction of the Jewish homeland they were a useless and even retarding element." (*Trial and Error*, 1949, p. 161)

Arab opinion vociferously rejected the partition "solution" proposed by Peel, and this was reported and commented upon with great sympathy in Ireland, including in the *Irish Press*, which was the voice of the de Valera government. The *Irish Independent* also opposed Britain's plans, drawing comparisons between the British suppression of the Arab resistance and the situation in Ireland in 1919-22, and naturally also expressing Catholic concerns for the fate of the Christian sacred sites in the area. An *Irish Press* editorial on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1937 stated that while both the Jews and the Arabs had defensible cases to make, the disastrous conditions of conflict in Palestine were a direct result of the duplicity of British policy since the Balfour Declaration, which, with its aim of maintaining a strategic stronghold in the Middle East under the guise of a League of Nations mandate, was now threatening the Arab population with being ruled by an immigrant Jewish majority. In an earlier article, the *Irish Press* commented that the partition proposals would see the Arabs "ousted from the coastal areas to the hills" while the proposed Jewish area would be too small to be defensible ('Partition and Palestine: Arabs and Jews opposed to Commission Proposals', *Irish Press*, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1937).

This hostility to British imperial policies in the Middle East, and a view of the Zionist project as part and parcel of it, had general currency. In an officially sponsored journal of liberal views, Owen Sheehy Skeffington wrote: "The interesting fact which lurks behind this revolt is that the Arabs are fighting for their liberty against British Imperialism which is using the Zionist movement as a willing instrument." ('A foreign commentary', *Ireland Today*, October 1936). *The Catholic Bulletin*, which despite its title promoted a rigorously republican view of world affairs and was close to the de Valera government, commented:

"What England has undertaken in the Holy Land may yet prove the destruction of her Eastern power. There seldom was a more flagrant piece of diplomatic hypocrisy than British tactics in Palestine display. During the Great War, the Arab nations were won over to the Allies by British pledges. England promised that, if the Arabs would cooperate in the overthrow of the Turkish Empire, she would establish and recognise a great free Arab State, raised on its ruin. When peace came, the promise was torn to shreds, the Arab world was split into a number of isolated kingdoms and protectorates, and a plantation of a quarter of a million Jews was made in Palestine... The promise [of an Arab State] was understood to include Palestine, but the English, seven years later, shuffled out of yielding Palestine ... In the interval the

pledge to the Jews, which flatly contravened the pledge to the Arabs, had been fulfilled by the Jewish plantation, although the Jews, too, got a double deal, since their 'National Home' was declared to mean no more than a settlement..."

(‘How Britain betrayed the Arabs’, *Catholic Bulletin*, February 1938)

And these were the essentials of de Valera’s understanding, informing the position he put forward at the League of Nations in 1937, as he later told the Dáil:

“The General Assembly and its [Mandates] committee was largely taken up with two or three questions of very great importance to the maintenance of general peace in the world ... With regard to Palestine, our view that no solution involving the partition of that country should be sanctioned in any way by the League of Nations was duly put on record.” (Dáil Eireann, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1938)

In developing his understanding, de Valera consulted with Jewish leaders and with Arab diplomats at Geneva, and also instructed the head of the Department of External Affairs, Joe Walshe, while on a trip to Egypt, Sudan and Palestine in May-June 1938, to report to him on opinions there (Aengus Nolan, *Joseph Walshe: Irish Foreign Policy 1922-46*, 2008, pp. 109 ff.). Walshe, some of whose correspondence has unfortunately not survived, met the British Ambassador in Egypt, who he told forcefully that de Valera was “fully conscious of the difficulty of the problems involved in the renaissance of the Jewish and Arab peoples.” He also reported that in Egypt “the Jewish people are influential among all classes here – and they have identified themselves more than any other foreign element with the aspirations of the Egyptian people.” This indeed would have been generally true of the non-Zionist inclinations of the over half million Jews then living in the various new and old states of the Middle East. When Britain abandoned its partition plan in 1939 in favour of Churchill’s proposition, Walshe wrote sarcastically to de Valera: “No doubt G.B. will consolidate her position in the meantime with both sides.”

De Valera’s opposition to the partition of Palestine was not “anti-partitionist” in the Zionist sense articulated by Briscoe and Jabotinsky, i.e. the demand for an undivided Palestine/ Jordan as the territory of a majority Jewish state, but rather an undivided territory for the people then actually living there. De Valera argued in his statement to the League: “Partition was no solution. All the Christian world interested in the Holy places, the Jews and the Arabs had, so far as there had been any opinion expressed by them, opposed the solution of partition”, and that “territorial division was the cruellest injustice that could be inflicted on a nation” (*Irish Press*, 23.09.1938). As Eliash reveals in *The Harp and the Shield* (pp. 18 ff.), at the League Mandates Committee meeting in September 1937, de Valera had sided with – and spoken in favour of – a motion proposed by France and others that rejected both the Zionist position – supported by the anti-Semitic powers of Eastern Europe and favouring a mass transplantation of European Jews to Palestine – and the partition proposals of the Peel Commission. The Irish stance at Geneva was warmly welcomed by Arab delegates (reported under the heading ‘Partition Cruellest Wrong’, *Irish Press*, 23.09.38). But it infuriated the British, who complained to the Irish High Commissioner in London, John Dulanty, that Britain’s “difficulties in this matter are increased by the line which the Irish Free State Government

had taken.” (*Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, vol. 5, p. 129)

De Valera’s position accorded with the Irish Constitution in terms of adherence to international law and, in this case, with the League Mandate for Palestine of 1922, which set down (Article 2) that “The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home ... and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.” De Valera was furious at the arrogance of Britain in unilaterally tearing up the League Mandate and imposing its own solution (partition), and specifically told the British so (see Eliash, *The Harp and the Shield*, p. 24 f.).

In 1950, five years after the end of World War Two, and of the Holocaust, and just a year after the violent conditions in which the State of Israel had come into being, de Valera travelled to Jerusalem in the company of Briscoe. He met Israeli leader Ben Gurion and some of his ministers in the home of Isaac Herzog, who had emigrated from Ireland in 1937 to take up the post of Chief Rabbi of Palestine. It was a courtesy visit and, according to Briscoe, a discussion of politics was strenuously avoided. In Israel de Valera avoided making any public statements of policy, let alone publicly endorsing the Israeli state. This contrasts dramatically with the very public positions he took on his visit to India two years before in support of the new Indian State, the common struggle for independence and the identity of interests between India and Ireland (O’Malley, *Ireland, India and Empire*). After the meeting with Ben Gurion, and against the advice of his Israeli hosts, de Valera insisted also on crossing the armistice line to Ramallah, then under Jordanian rule as, according to Briscoe (*For the Life of Me*, p.307), he “sympathised with the Arab people in their hope of independence and prosperity.” Here, where he met with King Abdullah, he also witnessed the wretched conditions of the Palestinian refugee camps.

## **Ireland, the war and the Holocaust**

Ireland, as with all other western countries, did not open its doors to a mass immigration of European refugees in the 1930s. This should be judged against a background of the Irish emigration problem and a total “alien” population in Ireland from all nations of little over 2,000 in 1939. While anti-Jewish measures, particularly legal disenfranchisement, expropriation and pressure to emigrate, were increasing in European countries in the 1930s – notably in Germany, Austria, Romania and Poland – there was at the time no intimation of the Nazi Holocaust that was to come when the war of 1939-40 between Germany and the Anglo-France alliance escalated into a continent-wide conflict from 1941. De Valera managed with great difficulty to uphold Irish neutrality throughout the conflict. As news first reached him in late 1942 of the implementation of the “Final Solution”, he mobilised the Irish diplomatic corps in Italy, Vichy France, the Vatican and even in the German Reich, to intervene repeatedly in any way possible to rescue threatened victims of the extermination programme. While this brought little success – like the efforts of other states apart from the Soviet Union, Denmark and Bulgaria – the effort was determined and noble (Keogh, *Jews of Ireland in the Twentieth Century*).

## **Post-war Ireland and the State of Israel**

Despite persistent petitioning by the new Israeli state, and the publicly expressed admiration of Israel by Foreign Minister, Seán MacBride, Ireland's first post-war Inter-Party Government decided in June 1948 not to recognize Israel officially. In February 1949 it granted it instead mere *de facto* recognition. This meant the recognition of Israel as a fact, as the state established in war exceeded by far the territory allocated to it by the United Nations. In a similar way, Ireland had initially granted Franco's insurgent government only *de facto* recognition after it had finally captured Barcelona at the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 (*Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, vol. 5, p. 398).

While the withholding of *de jure* recognition was influenced by the stance of the Vatican, it was also due to Israel's overturning of the UN partition plan, its refusal to accept an international status for Jerusalem and widespread public unease at how the expanded state of Israel had come into existence. MacBride nevertheless maintained a benevolent position towards Israel, influenced apparently by a bizarre propaganda campaign headed by his protégé Conor Cruise O'Brien, which sought to secure American Jewish support for ending Irish partition by aligning the Irish anti-partition cause with Israeli rejection of the UN partition boundaries of 1947 (Eliash, *Harp and the Shield of David*, pp. 103 ff.). The Inter-Party Government did not otherwise pursue an active policy in relation to the Middle East, and Seán MacBride tended generally towards an uncritical pro-Western alignment in foreign policy matters.

While there was considerable public discussion in Ireland of Zionist achievements, and much praise in particular for the successful restoration of Hebrew as a national language, Ireland did not formally recognise the State of Israel until 1963.

The 'Vatican Factor' is often given as the overriding explanation for Irish attitudes to the "Palestine Question" and to the recognition of the Israeli State. The Vatican had also opposed the partition of the 'Holy Land', raised concerns about the treatment of the Arab population and, in particular, was vociferous in insisting on the "internationalisation" of Jerusalem. It also withheld *de jure* recognition of the Jewish state. But de Valera and his colleagues had defied the hierarchy in 1922 in refusing to accept the Treaty and faced excommunication during the Civil War. As was popularly said at the time, they took "their religion from Rome but their politics from home." De Valera, who had annoyed the Lords of the Church by facilitating the accession of the Soviet Union to the League of Nations and by including Judaism as a state religion in his 1937 Constitution, had a world view developed from the Sinn Féin perspective on the world, which was independent minded in its anti-imperialism while working in the context of a Catholic culture. The reporting in de Valera's *Irish Press* on Palestine in the 1930s was a model of objectivity, focusing on the political issues and rarely referring to the Catholic interest as a factor. His position on the partition of Palestine in the late 1930s was based on international law and concern for the legitimate interests of the indigenous population not to be "overwhelmed" by a colonising enterprise.

Zionist writers have tried to impute "anti-Semitism" to de Valera. As there is nothing in the record to support such a view, indeed quite the contrary, the Israeli historian Shulamit Eliash (*Harp and the Shield of David*) is reduced to referring to the portrayal of de Valera by the Israeli ambassador to Britain in the

1950s, Eliahu Elath, as a "personality tainted by anti-Semitism," arising inexorably from his "Catholic devoutness" (pp. 63, 128, 178).

Following the establishment of the Israeli state and the expulsion of 700,000 of its Arab Palestinian population, Irish commentators challenged the Zionist version of events. Erskine Childers – himself a strong champion of action against European persecution of the Jews in the 1930s - exposed the Zionist myth of a voluntary Palestinian flight incited by Arab leaders ("The Other Exodus", *The Spectator*, May 1951). In *Studies*, the leading (Jesuit) intellectual journal of Catholic Ireland that continued to reflect a pro-British Redmondite view of the world, J.J.W. Murphy, reviewed the history of the Zionist colonialist project, concluding:

"Very few Arabs are left in Israel. Some 500,000, or about five-sixths of those Arabs who lived there, fled in terror of the Jewish extremists to the neighbouring Arab states or to the part of Palestine still held by Arab armies, where their condition is pitiable. A few have been allowed to return, but the Jews have taken their lands and homes for the new Jewish immigrants who are pouring into Israel; so there is little left for them to go back to." ('Background and Progress of Political Zionism,' *Studies*, September 1950, pp. 289-300).

The same writer, in another prominent Catholic journal, commented that the "The traditional picture of Cromwell's 'Hell or Connaught' policy in Ireland gives a fair idea of what happened in Palestine during 1948 to Arabs whose homes then were in what is now Jewish territory" ('Britain and Palestine', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, August 1950, pp. 116-126).

De Valera shared the outrage. When Edwin Samuel, son of the first British High Commissioner of Palestine, met de Valera, again Taoiseach, in April 1952, he found him implacably hostile to *de jure* recognition of Israel, blaming it for the Palestinian refugee problem and holding that the Catholics fared better under Arab regimes than under that of Israel, where they were subject, as Arabs, to ruthless military repression (Eliash, "*Harp and the Shield of David*", pp. 118 ff.). Eliahu Elath, the Israeli ambassador to Britain, also met with de Valera and other senior Irish politicians the following January, after which he reported that de Valera was the main opponent of upgrading the Irish diplomatic relationship with Israel, due to the issues of Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugees and the treatment of the Arab Catholic minority (*ibid.*, p. 128).

### **The UN: Frank Aiken's "3-Point Plan for the Middle East"**

Ireland was finally admitted to the UN in December 1955 at a time when, because of Cold War stalemate on the Security Council, the General Assembly played a much more prominent role in world affairs than it does today.

One of the first items on the agenda was the Anglo-French attack on Egypt following Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956, and Israel's invasion of the Sinai. The Inter-Party Minister for External Affairs, Liam Cosgrave, denounced it immediately: "Whatever the provocation may have been, it is clearly Israel that is the aggressor; it is Israel, not Egypt, that

ought to be restrained and it is the United Nations, not England and France, that ought to do the restraining” (*The Irish Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1956). He repeated this position in his address to the UN General Assembly at the end of November 1956, where he “deplored and condemned ... the Anglo-French attack” on a “traditionally friendly and anti-imperialist country.” But, he added, while he could understand the opposition of the Arab world to the establishment of Israel, they “must be ready to accept as a fact the existence of Israel and must renounce their projects for the destruction of that country.” In the spirit of the Cold War he also warned the Arab states against becoming tools of Soviet Russia, the “heir of old imperialism” (*The Irish Times*, 1<sup>st</sup> December 1956).

On returning to power in 1957, one of the first initiatives of the new de Valera government at the UN was also in relation to the Middle East. De Valera’s foreign minister, Frank Aiken, had been the last IRA Chief of Staff during the Civil War (issuing the famous “dump arms” order), and enjoyed considerable prestige among the many newly independent states as a result. Following agreement in Cabinet, Aiken held separate talks with Arab and Israeli delegations (including Golda Meir), to whom he suggested that Ireland might propose a solution whereby the Arab states would recognise Israel as a fact in return for Israel accepting its current borders as the final ones. But this was something Israel had no intention of doing, and the Irish diplomatic initiative was dropped.

On 14<sup>th</sup> August 1958 Aiken, creating a considerable stir internationally, presented a “**3-Point Peace Plan for the Middle East**” to the UN General assembly:

1. That Arab nations should have the right of self-determination to maintain a separate existence or to unite or federate;
2. That the Assembly should declare that the whole region be developed as a neutral region;
3. That the General Secretary of the UN should arrange the repatriation of refugees from Israel and for full compensation for those left behind.

This position can be seen as a continuation in the new circumstances of de Valera’s own position at the League of Nations in 1938. Aiken stated that all peoples in the region should “determine their own futures freely, with no outside pressures of any kind.” The Suez invasion of 1956, the 1958 revolution in Iraq and British and American troop landings in Jordan and Lebanon, he said, were all events “profoundly affected by decisions regarding Palestine more than ten years ago and by the fragmentation of the whole region 30 years ago” (*Irish Times*, 15.08.1958).

Aiken argued that the UN should take responsibility for the then already one million Palestinian refugees, and advocated their right of return – something Israel vociferously rejected. He called on the UN to “arrange for repatriation for the maximum possible number of those who would rather return than receive full compensation.”

The extension of Irish *de jure* recognition to Israel in December 1963 occurred – on strict Cabinet instructions - without publicity and in the context of it having already been extended to Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. Indeed, on the day it was extended to Israel, it was also extended to forty other countries, mostly newly

independent states, including Algeria and Libya. Aiken stated emphatically that in Israel’s case Irish recognition did not include Jerusalem and that he was not contemplating any exchange of diplomatic relations with Israel. Following Israeli incursions into Syria in March the previous year, the Irish UN ambassador, Frederick Boland, had rejected Israeli claims of “self-defence”. He denounced the Israeli action as a “major violation of the UN Charter” and voted for a draft UN Security Council resolution of 9<sup>th</sup> April 1962 that the Israeli attack “constitutes a flagrant violation of the General Armistice Agreement between the two states.”

## Aiken and the 1967 War

Following the Israeli “6-day war” of 1967 that led to the further expansion of Israel, its occupation of extensive additional territories, and a further wave of population expulsions, the Irish state again denounced Israeli actions, raised the right of return or compensation of Palestinian refugees and was among the most vocal supporters of Resolution 242 at the UN, which called for Israeli evacuation of the territories seized in 1967, and the creation of stable agreed frontiers.

Aiken protested at the UN when Israel extended its jurisdiction over the Old City of Jerusalem. He called for the “internationalisation” of the city and for Israel to return to its pre-1967 “positions”. Stating that while Israel had a right to defend itself, “it has no right whatsoever to annex the territory of [its] neighbours” and if UNSC did not insist on a restoration of the borders of 4<sup>th</sup> June, “the very basis of the Charter would be destroyed.” In December 1967 Aiken repeated his 1958 demands regarding the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and massively increased Ireland’s contribution to UNRWA, making it the country’s single largest foreign aid expenditure.

Aiken’s stance was attacked by the opposition media. *The Irish Times* published an extraordinary editorial attacking Aiken’s views as “idealistic” and “unrealistic” and stating that Israel had engaged not in a “war of conquest” but one for “survival” (Editorial, *Irish Times*, 29.06.67). *The Irish Independent*, *Evening Herald* and *Cork Examiner* also opposed Aiken’s stance, though more for party political reasons. Echoing the Cold War position of the opposition in the Dáil, they had also vigorously opposed Aiken’s calls for the de-militarisation of Europe through a withdrawal of NATO and for China to be allowed join the UN. Nevertheless, contrary to the claim by Rory Miller - a Dublin born professor at the Royal College of London and co-editor of *Israel Affairs* - in his book (*Ireland and the Palestine Question 1948-2004*, 2005, p. 39), that “all the major national and local newspapers ... with surprising unity” opposed Aiken’s stance, the government position was vigorously supported by the *Irish Press*, the popular pro-Fianna Fáil newspaper of the time with a far greater readership than *The Irish Times*.

In fact the Irish government position was never unconditionally hostile to Israel. Aiken in press interviews and before the Dáil stated that Israeli withdrawal should be “accompanied by other measures,” in particular a comprehensive peace agreement guaranteed by the UN Security Council that would ensure Israel’s security. In private, according to Miller (p. 72-3), Aiken urged Israel to be pragmatic, telling its Foreign Minister, Ebba Eban, that demanding Arab recognition was “too much to expect of the Arabs” who were “terrified of Israeli expansionism” and that



instead Israel should be seeking a treaty, which “would achieve the same result.” He also stressed to the Israelis that they must retreat as final borders to the pre-1967 lines. Miller also points out that the Irish position pioneered at the UN after the 1967 war was the start of the ‘Land for Peace’ approach to a negotiated settlement in the Middle East (*Ireland and the Palestine Question*, p. 50).

Aiken publicly rejected the argument common in justifying European inactivity at the time that Ireland should support Israel because of the sufferings of European Jews. In a speech on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1967 he stated:

“it would ... be altogether unacceptable that a restitution for European injustice and barbarous persecution should be at the expense of under-privileged Arab families who have been deprived of their homes and lands, and are living in miserable refugee camps.”

In an echo of de Valera’s misgivings about the Zionist project in the 1930s, Irish official Con Cremin wrote: “the Arab grievance ... is not only, nor perhaps mainly, that the State of Israel has been established in Palestine, but that its establishment has involved the expulsion of the native inhabitants who are now refugees” (Miller, *Ireland and the Palestine Question*, p. 63)

## **Ireland promotes Palestinian rights in the EEC**

The European Economic Community (EEC) did not initially adopt a common position on the Middle East, and European responses to events there were generally muted. This began to change during the 1960s, as France sought to rebuild relations with its former Arab colonies after losing its Algerian war. Miller (*Ireland and the Palestine Question*, p. 75) recounts that in 1967, at the instigation of Maurice Schumann, the 6-member EEC adopted an internal “working paper” proposing that the EEC publicly support UNSC Resolution 242, i.e. withdrawal to the positions of 4<sup>th</sup> June 1967, the internationalisation of Jerusalem, and the right of return of refugees to their former homes or compensation for their losses. But this was never adopted as an official position.

After Israel’s latest expansionist war in 1973, the EEC issued what it called its “first contribution” to the “search for a comprehensive solution”. This advocated negotiations on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338 (of 22.10.73), Israel to “end territorial occupation” of land gained in 1967, and affirming the right of each state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognised borders. A lasting peace would only be achieved if “the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” were taken into account, though it did not clarify what it meant by this.

In October 1974 the UN General Assembly voted on a Syrian motion that the PLO participate in the Assembly. Three EEC states – Ireland, France and Italy – voted in favour, leading Israel to condemn the Irish position as lending support “to an organisation of murderers”. Ireland had joined the EEC the same year and, in 1975, chaired the EEC Council. In this context, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition led by Garret Fitzgerald greatly expanded the country’s foreign service, including opening diplomatic relations with several Arab states, the USSR, and, in 1975, with Israel, through the Israeli embassy in London (a resident Israeli embassy

was not opened in Dublin until 1993, with the PLO being offered a residential office in Dublin on the same day). Ireland thus became the last EEC member state to open diplomatic relations with Israel.

While chaired by Fitzgerald, and to much protest from the Arab League, the EEC, the EEC signed a far reaching trade agreement with Israel in 1975 (forerunner of the current Association Agreement under EUROMED) while stalling on similar arrangements with the Maghreb states. As he related in his memoirs, *All in a Life* (1991), Fitzgerald undertook a tour of Arab states to allay their anger, though issued a written clarification – hotly contested by Britain’s Roy Hattersley - that it was his conviction that the new agreement with Israel did not apply to the territories occupied since 1967.

At the UN General Assembly the same year Fitzgerald insisted that any resolution of the conflict must take account of the “legitimate rights of the Palestinians ... [who] have the right to be established within secure boundaries, and the right to give effective expression in appropriate political form to their sense of their national identity ... this means they should have the right to decide for themselves whether to establish an independent entity on the territory vacated by Israel.”

## **The Irish “Bahrain Declaration,” February 1980**

In 1978 the new Fianna Fáil government contributed a battalion of Irish troops to the UN peace-keeping force in Lebanon, UNIFIL. Charles Haughey, who became Taoiseach in 1979, pursued an active foreign policy and, with regard to the Middle East, took a strong stance in support of the Palestinian cause. Labelled by hostile media as an “Arabist”, he had toured Iraq in 1976 with the head of the Irish Arab Society, Rev. Dr. John Chisolm, and as Minister for Health had arranged for the training of medical students from several Arab countries in Ireland and negotiated extensive Irish involvement in the provision of healthcare in Iraq. He also oversaw the development of an extensive Irish export trade in beef to the Arab world.

On 20<sup>th</sup> November 1979 Minister Brian Lenihan told the Dáil – to a visible stir among diplomats present, according to *The Irish Times* - that the Government “maintained contact with the PLO and other Palestinian organisations in connection with the provision of a permanent homeland for the Palestinian people” and intended to move to recognise the PLO as their “legitimate representative”. As reported by *The Irish Times*, Foreign Minister O’Kennedy, as part of the EEC “troika”, stated that Ireland, working with France and Italy, had brought the Council of Ministers to recognise the PLO as “one of the parties to the conflict” and finally to support the Palestinian “right of self-determination”, adding “though Ireland’s commitment goes further.”

These statements culminated in a major initiative by the Government on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1980 when Minister Brian Lenihan issued a joint statement while on a visit to Bahrain (“Bahrain Declaration”) stating explicitly that the Palestinian people “had a right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State in Palestine.” He called for the inclusion of the PLO in any negotiations and stated: “Ireland recognises the role of the PLO in representing the Palestinian people.” Ireland’s

official recognition of the PLO – and of a “state” for the Palestinians - was the first such stance by any European state, and was followed by high level contacts with the PLO (see the full text in the Appendix). When a story in *The Sunday Press* reported that the word “State” had been “quietly inserted by Bahraini officials”, Lenihan quickly issued an official response stating that “the word ‘State’ was in fact put forward as a considered proposal by the Irish side” (*Sunday Press*, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1980). The Arab world hailed the Declaration as “Ireland’s definitive official commitment to an independent Palestine” (Eurabia, *The Bahrain Declaration*, Dublin, 1980).

In the Dáil, opposition leaders attacked the Government, Ruairi Quinn and Frank Cluskey of Labour in particular objecting to the recognition of the PLO because of its armed struggle, and a Fine Gael spokesman questioning the wisdom of supporting statehood. Haughey was accused relentlessly by the Labour leaders of being motivated solely by “private commercial interests close to Fianna Fáil” and they denounced the Bahrain Declaration as serving only to “heighten tensions in Lebanon”, endangering the lives of Irish soldiers. This had followed quoted comments – which some saw as veiled threats - from Ireland’s Chief Rabbi, Dr. David Rosen, that the *Declaration* would lead to increased shelling of Irish UNIFIL positions by Christian militias, which were supported by Israel. In an interview on RTE radio on 27<sup>th</sup> February, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin upped the ante, declaring the Declaration “a hostile act” by Ireland against Israel and tantamount to acceptance of the PLO’s “right to destroy the Jewish state.” (*The Irish Times*, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1980)

The threat to Irish soldiers serving with UNIFIL in Lebanon became a self-fulfilling prophecy when on 7<sup>th</sup> April eight soldiers were kidnapped by the “South Lebanon Army”, an Israeli-backed Lebanese “Christian militia”, and one of them – Private Stephen Griffen from Galway – was shot and later died of his wounds. A week later, on 17<sup>th</sup> April, three soldiers were ambushed and two of them - Privates Thomas Barrett and Derek Smallhorne – were executed (“shot at close range”). In response, the Haughey government summoned an emergency conference of UNIFIL contributing states and successfully pressed for a resolution by the European Council condemning Israeli attacks on UNIFIL forces.

Over 40,000 Irish soldiers served with UNIFIL over the years of Irish participation (1978-2000). In his vivid and thorough book, *Pity the Nation. Lebanon at War* (1990), Robert Fisk recorded the experiences of Irish soldiers facing the daily arrogance of the Israeli Army, and also their affinity with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. A recent echo of this can be seen in the outspoken criticisms of Israeli behaviour by UN officials such as Denis Halliday and John Ging, men whose first experience of the region was as officers serving their country with Irish Battalion, UNIFIL. Of the 47 Irish soldiers killed while on service in Lebanon, the Irish government officially held Israel directly or indirectly responsible for at least 15.

In an interview in July 1980, Lenihan, asked why the Bahrain Declaration did not include a “denunciation of terrorism”, or mention Israel’s “right to exist”, responded:

"Paragraph 5 says the two sides agreed that the Palestinian people had the right to self-determination and to the establishment

of an independent state in Palestine within the framework of a negotiated peace settlement which would include the principles of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and these resolutions contain the condemnation of terrorism or any violent means, and also emphatically recognise the right of the State of Israel to exist, in peace and security... [Any talks] would have as an essential prerequisite a recognition of the State of Israel, pre-1967... In effect, the purpose of the whole conference should be to bring back Israel to its pre-1967 frontiers and at the same time to guarantee that state its permanence... I am certain that in 10 years’ time I will be proved right when Palestine takes her place among the nations at the UN. (*The Irish Times*, 29.07.1980)

The pro-Israeli Irish historian Rory Miller stated: “In February 1980, Ireland became the first EEC member to call publicly for the inclusion of the PLO in the political process at a time when Yasser Arafat’s group not only refused to recognize Israel’s right to exist, but was engaged in a relentless campaign of terror against Israeli and Jewish targets across the globe” (*Jerusalem Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006).

### The EEC “Venice Declaration” 1980

Following from the Bahrain Declaration, throughout 1980 the Irish Government lobbied the US Carter Administration (unsuccessfully) to recognise the PLO. At the EEC Council of Ministers, Haughey urged recognition of the PLO and Palestinian statehood, to be negotiated in a deal that would also ensure the integrity of Israel’s pre-1967 borders, something which the Israeli state has never accepted.

The Bahrain Declaration led to a number of far reaching statements by other EEC member states, notably France and Austria, supporting the Palestinian position. French President Valerie Giscard d’Estaing, in his own “Kuwait Declaration” of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1980, a month after the Irish statement, expressed France’s first official endorsement of Palestinian self-determination and promoting the inclusion of the PLO in negotiations.

In the event, the EEC adopted the Venice Declaration on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1980, which has remained the basis of EU policy to this day. The Declaration included the following statements of principle:

4. ... the time has come to promote the recognition and implementation of the two principles universally accepted by the international community: the right to existence and to security of all the states in the region, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples, which implies the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

...

6. A just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees. The Palestinian people, which is conscious of existing as such, must be placed in a position, by an appropriate process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully its right to self-determination.

7. ... These principles apply to all the parties concerned, and thus to the Palestinian people, and to the PLO, which will have to be associated with the negotiations.

8. The nine recognize the special importance of the role played

by the question of Jerusalem for all the parties concerned. The nine stress that they will not accept any unilateral initiative designed to change the status of Jerusalem and that any agreement on the city's status should guarantee freedom of access for everyone to the holy places.

9. The nine stress the need for Israel to put an end to the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967, as it has done for part of Sinai. They are deeply convinced that the Israeli settlements constitute a serious obstacle to the peace process in the Middle East. The nine consider that these settlements, as well as modifications in population and property in the occupied Arab territories, are illegal under international law.

The full text of this ground breaking position of the EEC is reproduced in the Appendix.

The Israeli government of Menachim Begin reacted with unprecedented ferocity. In a statement on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1980, his Cabinet accused the EEC of demanding the inclusion in the peace process of that “organization of murderers”, “the Arab SS known as ‘The Palestine Liberation Organization’” whose constitution sought the liquidation of Israel in words not heard since Hitler’s book, *Mein Kampf*. It continued: “The initiators of the Venice Document and its authors even tried to interfere with the status of Jerusalem, our eternal capital, which is not to be divided again, and with our right to settle and live in Eretz Israel, a right which is also an inseparable part of our defence system in the face of enemies and attackers.”

But despite this invective from the former commander of the Irgun, the EEC position established in 1980 with courageous input by the Irish state has endured as the basis of European policy since. As Garret Fitzgerald told the Dáil in 1987, the Venice Declaration represented a “major shift in European foreign policy,” with the countries of the EEC “shift[ing] towards the position we then held.”

Sixteen years after the Venice Declaration, Foreign Minister Dick Spring described it as “a cornerstone of the [European] Union’s policy” (White Paper on Foreign Policy, 1996, p. 262). More recently, on the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, the New York Times published an opinion editorial by two Israeli academics, Yonatan Touval and Sharon Pardo, stating that the Declaration established the principles that “continue to define the contours of the only plausible agreement possible between Israel and the Palestinians... [T]hree decades later the Venice declaration continues to stand out as the boldest Mideast peace initiative to come out of Europe.” (‘When Europe Spoke Out on the Mideast’, *International Herald Tribune*, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

## **The evolution of Irish policy since Venice**

The Irish policy on Palestine has retained a consistency from De Valera’s intervention in the League Mandates Committee in 1938, through Frank Aiken’s “3-Point Plan” of 1958, to the Haughey Government’s “Bahrain Declaration” of 1980. The only major change since has been the development of “shared sovereignty” with the European Union and the alignment of Irish foreign policy with that of the Union through a series of treaties incorporated into the Constitution.

The Fine Gael-Labour Coalition of 1983-7 maintained the position established, though it did not formally recognise the PLO. Foreign Minister Peter Barry set it out as follows:

“Ireland’s position on the Middle East conflict had been closely coordinated with our EEC partners and was based on the principles of: (1) recognition of the right of all peoples in the area to justice and security, including that of the Palestinian people to self-determination with all that this implied, including, in Ireland’s view, their right to a state if that was what they wished; and (2) recognition of the right of all states in the region to a secure and peaceful existence.” (*Irish Times*, 18.0.1983)

The phenomenon of Israeli settlement building in the colonised territories further drew the wrath of the Irish Government, Barry telling the Dáil on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1983 that while it had the “right [to a ] secure and peaceful existence ... Israel’s rights do not extend to the implantation of settler colonies in the West Bank and Gaza.” In an address to UN General Assembly on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1983, he further warned that “a process is in train” in the occupied territories

“which may very soon create a situation that cannot be reversed ... the West Bank and Gaza have not been annexed by Israel – at least not yet. But the infra-structural and demographic alterations being planned and rapidly put into effect there by the Israeli authorities cannot but lead to a de facto absorption by Israel of the territories ... the process is gradual and invidious. It may lack the dramatic impact of an invasion ... but is no less real for that ... [A]cquisition by Israel of the West Bank would make a mockery of the international commitment to the rights of the Palestinian people.”

[Dept. of Foreign Affairs, *Statements and Speeches*, no. 5, 1983]

In 1988, the leader of the new Fianna Fáil government, Charles Haughey, reiterated the Irish position in a statement, that the Palestinians “had been injured, were the victims of a great wrong and had the right to justice.” Ireland had been “the first [EC] member state to recognise the right to self-determination of the Palestinians and their right to an independent state... “ It was the Irish “conviction that it was for the Palestinian people to decide, within the framework of Security Council resolutions, the way in which they wished to exercise their right to self-determination and whether to do so by means of an independent state” (*The Irish Times*, 18<sup>th</sup> June 1988)

Since the 1990s Irish governments have lent considerable support to the Palestinian cause through the various “peace processes”. While the coalition Foreign Minister, Labour’s Dick Spring, was described by Simon Peres as a “Friend of Israel”, in 1995 he nevertheless visited Orient House, the unofficial PLO headquarters in East Jerusalem, much to the chagrin of the Likud Government. Spring, who opened the Israeli Embassy in Dublin in 1993, was described by *The Irish Times* at the time as “balance[ing] firm criticisms of Israeli failures to live up to their obligations, with a clear statement of understanding of their problems.”

The Workers Party, which had emerged from the Official IRA and entered the Dáil with three deputies in 1983, was particularly

close to the PLO. Following the outbreak of the First Intifada, Proinsias de Rossa demanded in the Dáil the introduction of “diplomatic or economic sanctions to protest Israeli activity”, while the following day his colleagues Joe Sherlock and Tomás MacGiolla drew comparisons between Israel and South Africa and pointed to the government support for sanctions against the latter. Haughey however rejected sanctions, saying they were as likely only “to heighten tensions in the region and harm the goal of Palestinian self-determination” (Dáil Eireann, 15.11.88).

The Irish government’s unwillingness ever since to advocate sanctions to pressurise Israel to comply with international law is the major weakness in the Irish position, while Proinsias de Rossa for his part has remained equally consistent in demanding that their use be contemplated. The position was reiterated by Foreign Minister Micheál Martin at the recent historic ICTU Conference, organised to promote a policy of sanctions, on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010:

“Minister Martin told the conference that the Government does not agree with or support any form of boycott of Israel as such an approach would be counterproductive to efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He did, however, note that he has consistently argued against any move to upgrade EU-Israel relations ‘until such time as the level of political progress on the ground warrants it.’” (*The Irish Times*, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2010)

This contrasts with Ireland’s readiness to go along with economic sanctions, however reluctantly, when directed at other states in the Middle East which have incurred the displeasure of the West. In the case of Iraq, Brian Cowen when Foreign Minister endorsed the role of sanctions in forcing that country to comply with UN arms inspectors, telling the Dáil in January 2003 – just two months before the Anglo-American invasion that utterly destroyed that country:

“Membership of the [UN Security] council has also afforded us the opportunity to improve UN sanctions regimes. While there is no doubt that specifically targeted sanctions play an important role where flagrant breaches of international law occur or there is a threat to international peace, there is a strong balancing objective to ensure that the civilian population of the country against whose government the sanctions are imposed does not suffer.” (Johnny Fallon, *Brian Cowen in his own words*, Mercier, 2009, p. 213)

Nevertheless, Ireland’s support for the Palestinian cause has remained notably forceful for a Western state. Brian Cowen, as Ireland’s foreign minister, was meeting Yassar Arafat in Ramallah when Al Quida attacked New York (9/11). At this time Israel refused to meet with foreign dignitaries who met the Palestinian leader. With the world pointing the finger at the Palestinians as “terrorist sympathizers”, Cowen held a joint press conference with the PLO leader on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2001, stressing Arafat’s condemnation of the New York attack and describing him as “the symbol of the hope of self-determination of the Palestinian people” and praised him for his “outstanding work ... tenacity, and persistence.” The basic consensus across the Irish political spectrum was reflected in a comment by former Fine Gael Taoiseach, Garret Fitzgerald, on television the following week when he condemned further Israeli killings of Palestinians and the occupation of the West Bank as “a crime against humanity.” (*The Irish Times*, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2001)

Since 2006 the state has condemned the siege of Gaza, with Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern, in the first such statement by a European government, describing it in the Dáil on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008 as “*collective punishment illegal under International Law.*” Following the Israeli onslaught on Gaza in December 2008-January 2009, Foreign Minister Martin sought its condemnation at European Council level and opposed the upgrading of EU trade relations with Israel. Ireland has also urged the inclusion of Hamas in talks and – within EU councils at least – sought an end to the EU-US boycott of them. A Dáil motion condemning the Israeli attack on the Free Gaza Flotilla in June 2010 was adopted unanimously by TDs.

### **Back to Jabotinsky? – Ireland’s official apology**

But the substance of Irish foreign policy is being eroded by a growing acceptance by official Ireland of revisionist history writing. This process was reflected in comments by Ireland’s Ambassador in Tel Aviv at a recent event.

Jabotinsky’s radical views on *Eretz Israel* have long become mainstream in Israel, and there is now an institute dedicated to his memory and his philosophy. On 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010 the Irish Ambassador, Breifne O’Reilly, addressed an event at the Jabotinsky Institute attended by its luminaries, including historian Shulamit Eliash, to apologise for various aspects of Irish history:

“... the Institute Director, Yossi Ahimeir, and archive director, Amira Stern, ... briefed their guest on ... the ties between Ze’ev Jabotinsky and his movement and the former prime minister of Ireland Eamon De Valera and his movement. While De Valera greatly esteemed the leadership of Jabotinsky, fighters in the Israeli underground also drew inspiration in their struggle to free Eretz Yisrael from the yoke of the British mandate from De Valera’s struggle for Irish independence from British sovereignty. Jabotinsky and De Valera met at the beginning of 1938. Jabotinsky convinced the Irish leader to oppose the partition of Eretz Yisrael ...”

Rather than challenge this distortion of history, Ambassador O’Reilly spoke meekly to the theme he was asked to address, which, as in tradition of visiting European dignitaries, seemed to consist largely of an apology: “*Why Did Ireland Only Recognize the State of Israel in 1963?*”:

“Among the main topics raised with Ambassador O’Reilly was the disturbing rise of anti-Semitism throughout the world. Director Ahimeir informed the Irish ambassador of the creation of the Jabotinsky International Center, which is actively engaged in combating outbursts of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment. Ambassador O’Reilly stressed that in Ireland, whose Jewish community numbers around 1,500 people, anti-Semitism is almost non-existent. ‘Our prime minister has initiated a project in cooperation with Germany to fight anti-Semitism, and during the coming year the two countries are planning to host a joint convention devoted to the issue.’

“Ambassador O’Reilly noted that Ireland apologized for not accepting Jewish refugees during the Holocaust. He agreed with Dr. Eliash that the delay in convening diplomatic relations could be attributed to Vatican pressure, to the fact that Ireland had no special economic interests with Israel, and that at the time Ireland had only a relatively small number of diplomatic representations... Today the relations between Ireland and Israel are good

ones: we do not believe in boycotts, and we draw the line between anti-Semitism and legitimate criticism.”

[<http://www.jabotinsky.org/Site/modules/newsItem.asp?sid=16&pid=146&newsID=111>]

It would appear that the fate of the indigenous population and the issue of Palestinian “self determination”, which have been central to Irish policy since the 1930s, did not even warrant a mention from him.

“Ireland still views Israel as an occupier and a colonialist entity.”

The views of the majority of Irish politicians on the Palestine-Israel conflict reflect widespread public support for the Palestinian cause. The issue is regularly aired at meetings of the Joint Oireachtas Committees on Foreign Affairs and of European Affairs, and also in Members’ questions to the Taoiseach and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Twenty-one parliamentarians are involved in the Oireachtas Friends of Palestine, convened by Terry Leyden of Fianna Fáil and Michael D. Higgins of Labour. The Labour Party’s position on the conflict – at one time most lenient towards Israel - has strengthened considerably since its amalgamation with Democratic Left (the former Workers Party) in 1999. Other politicians who have identified strongly with Palestine include Chris Andrews, Michael Mulcahy, Darragh O’Brien, and Sen. Mark Daly of Fianna Fáil, Pat Breen, Brendan Durkin and Billy Timmons of Fine Gael, Sen. Alex White and Joe Costello of Labour, Aengus Ó Snódaigh and Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin of Sinn Féin, and John Gormley, Trevor Sergeant and Ciarán Cuffe of the Green Party.

With the Celtic Tiger economic boom, Irish trade with Israel, especially in the area of computer electronics, has expanded exponentially and is now greater in value than the total of Irish trade with the Arab world. This represents a reversal of the trade relationships of the 1980s, with the Allied wars against the Muslim world since 1990 wiping out the substantial Irish medical, educational and agricultural trade with the region. A notable caution has entered the Irish political stance on its relations with Israel. There has also been the emergence since 2009 of a new group in the Dáil, the Oireachtas Friends of Israel, convened by Alan Shatter of Fine Gael and Joanna Tuffy of Labour, and involving about a dozen members, including Leo Varadkar, Charlie Flanagan and Lucinda Creighton of Fine Gael, Ruairi Quinn of Labour, and others.

As attempts to pin a history of anti-Semitism on Ireland are unsustainable, and despite the Irish Ambassador’s apologies, popular Irish attitudes to the conflict in Palestine remain stubbornly hostile to the Israeli case. This state of affairs causes some bewilderment in Israel. But Rory Miller, a pro-Israeli Irish born historian, neatly summarised the answer: “Ireland still views Israel as an occupier and a colonialist entity.” (*Jerusalem Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006)

## Appendix I

### The Irish Government’s “Bahrain Declaration”, 1980

Joint communiqué of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland, Mr. Brian Lenihan, and the Foreign Minister of the State of Bahrain, His Excellency Shaikh Muhammad Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, issued on February 10, 1980, during the State Visit of the President of Ireland, Mr. Patrick Hillery to Bahrain

#### 1-3. General Relations

1. His Excellency Mr. Brian Lenihan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland and His Excellency Shaikh Muhammad Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Foreign Minister of Bahrain, exchanged views during their meeting at Manama on 10 February 1980. They reviewed a wide range of topics covering bilateral, regional and international affairs. The discussion was held in a most constructive atmosphere. The two sides expressed their desire to strengthen further the good relationships that exist between Ireland and Bahrain and especially to promote increased practical co-operation.

2. As regards their bi-lateral co-operation, it was agreed that scope for further such co-operation exists in the economic and technical fields. The areas of electricity generation, aviation, transport and export promotion were identified, as also the medical and educational areas, as those offering most immediate prospects. The two sides agreed to form a joint Technical Committee to study ways of promoting cooperation between the two States.

3. The two sides welcomed the ever closer links between Europe and the Arab world, which they believe to be of the greatest importance for the stability and prosperity of both regions.

#### 4-7. Palestine

4. As regards the Middle East, it was agreed that a solution to the Palestinian problem was central to any peace settlement. The two sides stressed the urgent need to reach a negotiated solution which would be comprehensive, just and lasting.

5. The two sides agreed that the Palestinian people had the right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State in Palestine within the framework of a negotiated peace settlement which would include the principles of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

6. The two sides stressed that all parties including the PLO should play a full role in the negotiation of a comprehensive peace settlement. In this regard, Ireland recognises the role of the PLO in representing the Palestinian people.

7. Both parties agreed that an essential aspect of a solution to the Palestinian problem was the withdrawal of Israel from all territory occupied since the 1967 conflict, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

## 8-12. Other Issues

8. It was agreed that the Euro-Arab dialogue has the potential for substantial mutual benefit and that the dialogue should be resumed as soon as possible. The question of closer cooperation between the countries of the Gulf and the European Communities was discussed.

9. The two sides reviewed the situation in the Arabian Gulf and its strategic importance and affirmed that this region must remain a zone of peace and stability and should not be involved in the rivalry of the great powers.

10. Both parties condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which they considered as a blatant interference in the affairs of a state that belongs to the Islamic world. They stated that the invasion was contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and constituted a threat to world peace and security.

11. Both sides expressed their faith in the principles of the United Nations. They affirmed their adherence to the principles of peaceful co-existence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states.

12. Foreign Minister Brian Lenihan briefed his colleague in detail on the present situation in Northern Ireland.

4. On the bases thus set out, the time has come to promote the recognition and implementation of the two principles universally accepted by the international community: the right to existence and to security of all the states in the region, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples, which implies the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

5. All of the countries in the area are entitled to live in peace within secure, recognized and guaranteed borders. The necessary guarantees for a peace settlement should be provided by the UN by a decision of the Security Council and, if necessary, on the basis of other mutually agreed procedures. The nine declare that they are prepared to participate within the framework of a comprehensive settlement in a system of concrete and binding international guarantees, including (guarantees) on the ground.

6. A just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees. The Palestinian people, which is conscious of existing as such, must be placed in a position, by an appropriate process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully its right to self-determination.

7. The achievement of these objectives requires the involvement and support of all the parties concerned in the peace settlement which the nine are endeavouring to promote in keeping with the principles formulated in the declaration referred to above. These principles apply to all the parties concerned, and thus to the Palestinian people, and to the PLO, which will have to be associated with the negotiations.

8. The nine recognize the special importance of the role played by the question of Jerusalem for all the parties concerned. The nine stress that they will not accept any unilateral initiative designed to change the status of Jerusalem and that any agreement on the city's status should guarantee freedom of access for everyone to the holy places.

9. The nine stress the need for Israel to put an end to the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967, as it has done for part of Sinai. They are deeply convinced that the Israeli settlements constitute a serious obstacle to the peace process in the Middle East. The nine consider that these settlements, as well as modifications in population and property in the occupied Arab territories, are illegal under international law.

10. Concerned as they are to put an end to violence, the nine consider that only the renunciation of force or the threatened use of force by all the parties can create a climate of confidence in the area, and constitute a basic element for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

11. The nine have decided to make the necessary contacts with all the parties concerned. The objective of these contacts would be to ascertain the position of the various parties with respect to the principles set out in this declaration and in the light of the results of this consultation process to determine the form which such an initiative on their part could take.

## Appendix II

### The Venice Declaration of the EEC, 1980

Resolution of the heads of government and ministers of foreign affairs of the European Council (Venice Declaration), 13 June 1980

#### VENICE RESOLUTION

1. The heads of state and government and the ministers of foreign affairs held a comprehensive exchange of views on all aspects of the present situation in the Middle East, including the state of negotiations resulting from the agreements signed between Egypt and Israel in March 1979. They agreed that growing tensions affecting this region constitute a serious danger and render a comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict more necessary and pressing than ever.

2. The nine member states of the European Community consider that the traditional ties and common interests which link Europe to the Middle East oblige them to play a special role and now require them to work in a more concrete way towards peace.

3. In this regard, the nine countries of the community base themselves on (UN) Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the positions which they have expressed on several occasions, notably in their declarations of 29 June 1977, 10 September 1970, 26 March and 18 June 1979, as well as in the speech made on their behalf on 25 September 1979 by the Irish minister of foreign affairs at the 34th UN General Assembly.

## Foreign Policy and Foreign Information, by Thomas Davis 22nd March, 1843, in *The Nation*

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[Thomas Davis was a prolific writer, poet and songwriter. His most famous song was A Nation Once Again. A couple of years ago the BBC World Service held a listeners' vote for the greatest song ever. A Nation Once Again won. Davis was born in Mallow, Co. Cork, in 1814 and died in 1845 at the early age of 31. He was an inspiration to the Fenians and 20th century Republicans.

Charles Gavan Duffy and Thomas Davis—a Northern Catholic and a Munster Protestant—were the inspiring forces behind the Young Ireland movement, which aimed to make Ireland a nation with which its disparate traditions could identify.

Their popular paper, *The Nation*, was something new in Ireland. It fostered political reflection, literary culture and endurance of will in the mass movement which O'Connell had developed. And it gave the national movement a life independent of O'Connell, after O'Connell had called off the mass meeting at Clontarf in response to a British threat that force would be used against it.

*The Nation*, a popular weekly newspaper, which was distributed by Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association, was a new and unique departure in Irish life.

O'Connell brought self-awareness to the demoralised Irish people and raised them to the status of a disciplined "mob" (to use Patrick Pearse's description). Young Ireland made that mob into a nation, capable of acting coherently, without the immediate inspiration of a charismatic leader, by developing its capacity for thought and action across the spectrum of civil society. The Nation carried philosophy, political analysis, principles of action, and literature. But for Young Ireland, there would not be an Irish State today.

The ideology of *The Nation* was liberal, but its liberalism was specific to Irish requirements and was therefore anathema to the Imperialist Liberalism of England. It was Irish-Ireland as well as Pluralist. Both qualities are relevant at a time when Ireland appears ready to make its contribution as part of an expanding Europe of the Nations.]

OUR history contains reasons for our extending the Foreign Policy of Ireland. This we tried to develop some months back.

The partial successes of the wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from **Hugh O'Neill** to **James the Second**, were in no slight degree owing to the arms and auxiliary troops of Spain and France.

Our yet more complete triumphs in the political conflicts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries owed still more to our foreign connections—witness the influence of the American war on the creation of the Volunteers, the effect of the battle of Jemappes, and of the French Fraternity of Ulster on the Toleration Act of 1793, and how much the presence of American money, and the fear of French interference, hastened the Emancipation Act of 1829.

With reference to this last period, we may state that such an effect had the articles published in *l'Etoile* on Ireland that Canning wrote a remonstrance to M. de Villele, asking him 'was it

intended that the war of pens should bring on one of swords' The remonstrance was unavailing—the French sympathy for Ireland increased, and other offices than newspaper offices began to brush up their information on Ireland. But arms yielded to the gown, and the maps and statistics of Ireland never left the War Office of France.

But our own history is not the only advocate for a Foreign Policy for Ireland.

Foreign alliances have ever stood among the pillars of national power, along with virtue, wise laws, settled customs, military organisations, and naval position. Advice, countenance, direct help, are secured by old and generous alliances. Thus the alliance of Prussia carried England through the wars of the eighteenth century, the alliance of France rescued the wavering fortunes of America, the alliance of Austria maintains Turkey against Russia, and so in a thousand instances beside.

A People known and regarded abroad will be more dignified, more consistent, and more proud in all its acts. Fame is to national manners little less than virtue to national morals. A nation with a high and notorious character to sustain will be more stately and firm than if it lived in obscurity. Each citizen feels that the national name which he bears is a pledge for his honour. The soldier's uniform much less surely checks the display of his vices, and an army's standard less certainly excites its valour than the name of an illustrious country stimulates its sons to greatness and nobility. The *prestige* of Rome's greatness operated even more on the souls of her citizens than on the hearts of her friends and foes.

Again, it is peculiarly needful for *Ireland* to have a Foreign Policy. Intimacy with the great powers will guard us from English interference. Many of the minor German states were too deficient in numbers, boundaries, and wealth to have outstood the despotic ages of Europe but for those foreign alliances, which, whether resting on friendship or a desire to preserve the balance of power, secured them against their rapacious neighbours. And now time has given its sanction to their continuance, and the progress of localisation guarantees their future safety. When Ireland is a nation she will not, with her vast population and her military character, require such alliances as a *security* against an English *re-conquest*; but they will be useful in banishing any *dreams of invasion* which might *otherwise* haunt the brain of our old enemy.

But England is a pedagogue as well as a gaoler to us. Her prison discipline requires the Helotism of mind. She shuts us up, like another **Caspar Hauser**, in a dark dungeon, and tells us what she likes of herself and of the rest of the world. And this renders foreign information most desirable for us.

She calls France base, impious, poor, and rapacious. She lies. France has been the centre of European mind for centuries. France was the first of the large states to sweep away the feudal despotism. France has a small debt and an immense army; while England has a vast debt and scanty forces. France has five millions of kindly, merry, well-fed yeomen. England swarms

with dark and withered artisans. Every seventh person you meet in France is a landowner in fee, subject to moderate taxation. Taxes and tenancies-at-will have cleared out the yeomanry of England. France has a literature surpassing England's modern literature. France is an apostle of liberty—England the turnkey of the world. France is the old friend, England, the old foe, of Ireland. From one we may judge all. England has defamed *all other countries* in order to make us and her other slaves content in our fetters.

England's eulogies on herself are as false and extravagant as her calumnies on all other states. She represents her constitution as the perfection of human wisdom; while in reality it is based on conquest, shaken by revolution, and only qualified by disorder. Her boasted tenures are the relics of a half-abolished serfdom, wherein the cultivator was nothing, and the aristocrat everything, and in which a primogeniture extending from the King to the Gentleman *often* placed idiocy on the throne, and tyranny in the senate, and *always* produced disunion in families, monopoly in land, and peculation throughout every branch of the public service. Her laws are complicated, and their administration costly beyond any others ever known. Her motley and tyrannous flag she proclaims the first that floats, and her tottering and cruel empire the needful and sufficient guardian of our liberties.

By cultivating Foreign Relations, and growing intimate with foreign states of society, we will hear a free and just criticism on England's constitution and social state. We will have a still better and fairer commentary in the condition and civil structure of other countries.

We will see *small* free states—Norway, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland, and Portugal—maintaining their homes free, and bearing their flags in triumph for long ages. We will learn from themselves how they kept their freedom afloat amid the perils of centuries. We will salute them as brethren subject to common dangers, and interested in one policy—localisation of power.

The Catholic will see the Protestant states of Prussia, Holland, Saxony, and America; and the Protestant will see the Catholic states of Belgium, Bavaria, and France, all granting full liberty of conscience—leaving every creed to settle its tenets with its conscience, and dealing, *as states*, only with citizens, not sects.

He who fancies some intrinsic objection to our nationality to lie in the co-existence of two languages, three or four great sects, and a dozen different races in Ireland, will learn that in Hungary, Switzerland, Belgium, and America, different languages, creeds, and races flourish kindly side by side, and he will seek in English intrigues the real well of the bitter woes of Ireland.

Germany, France, and America teach us that English economics are not fit for a nation beginning to establish a trade, though they may be for an old and plethoric trader; and therefore that English and Irish trading interests are directly opposed. Nor can our foreign trade but be served by foreign connections.

The land tenures of France, Norway, and Prussia are the reverse of England's. They resemble our own old tenures; they better suit our character and our wants than the loose holdings and servile wages system of modern England.

These, and a host of lessons more, will we learn if we study the books, laws, and manners, and cultivate an intimacy with the citizens of foreign states. We will thus obtain countenance, sympathy, and help in time of need, and honour and friendship in time of strength; and thus, too, we will learn toleration towards each other's creed, distrust in our common enemy, and confidence in liberty and nationality.

Till Ireland has a foreign policy, and a knowledge of foreign states, England will have an advantage over us in both military and moral ways. We will be without those aids on which even the largest nations have at times to depend; and we will be liable to the advances of England's treacherous and deceptive policy.

Let us, then, return the ready grasp of America, and the warm sympathy of France, and of every other country that offers us its hand and heart. Let us cultivate a Foreign Policy and Foreign Information as useful helps in that national existence which is before us, though its happiness and glory depend, in the first instance, on 'ourselves alone.' Ireland has a glorious future, if she be worthy of it. We must believe and act up to the lessons taught by reason and history, that England is our interested and implacable enemy—a tyrant to her dependants—a calumniator of her neighbours, and both the despot and defamer of Ireland for near seven centuries. Mutual respect for conscience, an avoidance of polemics, concession to each other, defiance to the foe, and the extension of our foreign relations, are our duty, and should be our endeavour. Vigour and policy within and without, great men to lead, educated men to organise, brave men to follow—these are the means of liberation—these are elements of nationality.

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"Every 10 years or so, the US needs to pick up some small, crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business." - **Michael Ledeen** (neo-con)

from <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/>

Did he say that?

In *The Nation*, Jack Huberman, who describes Ledeen as "the most influential and unabashed warmonger of our time", attributed this quote to Ledeen.

Jonah Goldberg, Ledeen's colleague at *National Review*, remembered Ledeen saying this in an early 1990s speech and said in 2002 that it summarises the Ledeen "doctrine".



## Letter from Stormont Castle, 6 March 1970

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[An Ambassador's report from Belfast to London in 1970 was recently released into the British Public Record Office.

Oliver Wright's formal position was not that of British Ambassador to Northern Ireland. He was the United Kingdom Representative in Northern Ireland.

Wright saw a need to define his position when reporting to his Government about this region of the state which that Governed governed. It was: "*In nature rather more than ambassadorial and rather less than gubernatorial*".

If it had been simply ambassadorial, that would have made Northern Ireland a foreign state with which the United Kingdom (of which it is an integral part) had foreign relations. Whitehall would have had foreign relations with itself.

If it had been fully "*gubernatorial*" Northern Ireland would have been akin to Egypt, which was governed for a number of generations (from the late 19th century to the mid-20th) by the British Ambassador.

Aside from the puzzling light which the Report throws on the status of Northern Ireland in its relationship with the state of which it was an integral part, the UK, it also throws a light on the conduct of the Irish Government which disturbs the official view—the view of the academic historians who are paid by the state—of Irish policy towards the North in that period:

"Mr. Lynch went to the edge of disaster last August—and stepped back in time. His courageous speech to the Party Conference in January [1970] marked a change from fantasy to realism about the Irish question..."

The official line—the line of the University historians—is that Lynch held the line against the nationalist fantasists in August 1969. But here, from the horse's mouth, is a clear statement that Lynch was himself one of the fantasists in August, and continued to be a fantasist for another six months.

If the making of military arrangements for intervention in the North, if a catastrophic situation for the Catholic minority there recurred, is fantasy, then Lynch remained a fantasist long after January, though dissimulating his position in cryptic public statements. This is demonstrated in official documents published by Angela Clifford in her book, *The Arms Conspiracy Trial* (2009).

The slightly gubernatorial Ambassador continues:

"If he recognises, as he now does, that force cannot be used to solve the problem of partition, he must come to realise that the only prospect of Irish unity lies in the seduction not the rape of the North. The South will, I suspect, be a long time a-wooing, if they ever start..."

Nice one, Olly!

*The Irish Times*, a British newspaper in Dublin—documentary evidence that it was published in consultation with Whitehall in that period has come to light—carried a brief report of Wright's report (28 May 2010) under the headline, *Seduction, Not Rape Of*

*North Advised To Hasten Irish Unity*. There is a trend in present-day feminism which holds that seduction is rape, or that certain forms of it are. But, if what Jack Lynch thought he was doing after January 1970 was seducing the North, his manner was ill-judged. His slobbering attempts at seduction had a repellent effect on their subject.

In order to seduce you must have some real interest in the inner workings of your subject, even though it might only be a passing interest serving an ulterior purpose. Neither Jack Lynch's initiatives nor any others showed the kind of interest in the Unionists/Protestants that might have caught their sympathetic attention.

Dublin could have done with an Ambassador in Belfast to report back to it on the repulsive effect its clumsy, transparently devious, sincerely insincere, efforts at wooing were having.

Professor Dermot Keogh of Cork University is a kind of official historian of the Irish state. In 1972 he was a reporter on the republican daily, *The Irish Press*, which no longer exists. He was traumatised into a nightmare of Fascism by the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin in response to the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry—realistically considered, a moderate response which let off steam. He recoiled from 26 County "*irredentism*" on the North—but found Jewish nationalist irredentism in Palestine acceptable. He became an academic, with a sharper sense of purpose derived from his traumatic vision than was usually the case in academia in Ireland. He is Editor of the series of publications of foreign affairs documents. And he has nurtured a generation of historians who write about "*the Northern Ireland state*" and its construction.

The Professor of Modern History at Trinity College has also written about "*the Northern Ireland state*".

A book published recently by Oxford is chiefly about the construction of the state in the North in 1920-21 (Simon Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68*),

Was there no state in the Six Counties in 1920? What happened to the British state in the Six Counties, which a large majority of the electors there wished to continue so that they could remain part of it? Did the IRA destroy it? Did Britain itself destroy it when setting up a form of local government there? Professors Keogh and Fitzpatrick do not tell us, nor does Simon Prince.

It seems to us that there has never been anything in the North but the British state. Britain decided to set up a subordinate layer of local government there when partitioning the country. There is a much more effective layer of devolved government in Scotland at present, but one never hears that referred to as "*the Scottish state*", even though there is a strong party in Scotland which wants Scotland to be a state. There was no party in the North which wanted a Northern Ireland state. But Britain, while retaining complete sovereignty, encourages, for its own reasons, use of the term "*the Northern Ireland state*".

But, if we are to pretend that there is a Northern Ireland state, should we not also pretend to have an Ambassador there? If not, why not? Will Professor Keogh not enlighten us?]

## CONFIDENTIAL

OFFICE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE IN NORTHERN IRELAND,

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Dunmurry,  
Belfast.

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BELFAST  
BT4 3ST

Telephone: Belfast 616280

6 March, 1970

To:  
The Right Honourable  
James Callaghan M.P.,  
Home Office,  
London S.W.1.

Sir,

To-day I leave Belfast after rather more than six months as the representative of the United Kingdom Government in Northern Ireland. The appointment was the first of its kind; it followed the rioting and mayhem which characterised this province from October 1968 to August 1969 and was one of the matters agreed upon between the central and provincial governments in the Downing Street Communiqué of the 9<sup>th</sup> of August. In nature rather more than ambassadorial and rather less than gubernatorial, it represented "the increased concern which the United Kingdom Government had necessarily acquired in Northern Ireland affairs through the commitment of the Armed Forces in the present conditions". It may be helpful if I describe the present state and future prospects of the province as they appear to me on my departure.

### **The Past**

2. If ever there were a case of the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children to the umpteenth generation, the Irish problem is it. For seven hundred years the English in their folly sought to govern the Irish and employed every method including, alas, the plantation of colonists to achieve their aim. When they grew weary of ill-doing and decided, towards the end of the nineteenth century, to leave the Irish to their own devices, their Scots-Calvinist colonists shouted: "Hey, what about us?" The inevitable non-solution was partition, with two Irish governments, an independent native Catholic one in Dublin and a subordinate, colonial, Protestant one in Belfast; the main thing, at the time, was to enable Westminster to wish the Irish problem away. It is hardly surprising that, until mid-1969, Ulster was, and felt, remote, neglected and unhappy.

3. Ulster is a land inhabited by two minorities, each with the defensive-aggressive attitude of a minority. It is a tribal society and the two tribes, the colonists who did not want to be absorbed by the natives and the natives stranded by partition on the wrong side of the border, like and trust each other about as well as dog and cat, Arab and Jew, Greek and Turkish Cypriot. Separated from birth by ghettos in the towns and from the age of five by

educational apartheid at school, it is hardly surprising that they mix as naturally as oil and vinegar. In fear of domination by the South, Unionists took care to dominate the North. Orange-Protestant ascendancy is what Ulster has been about for the fifty years of its existence; ironically enough, it has been the existence of British-style democracy based on universal adult franchise which has guaranteed and perpetuated a most un-British-style injustice towards the Catholic minority.

4. But the minority, though perhaps more sinned against than sinning, has been far from blameless. In true Irish fashion, the Micks have enjoyed provoking the Prods as much as the Prods have enjoyed retaliating. Catholic attitudes have been at best ambivalent and at worst treacherous. It makes the Prods' blood boil—and all Irish blood boils at a very low temperature—to see the Micks enjoy the superior material benefits of the British connexion while continuing to wave the tricolour at them. In the summer of 1969, it made their blood boil over to see the Civil Rights marchers demanding equality of treatment while offering in return something less than equality of loyalty.

5. So in Belfast in August 1969 the Protestant Shankill marched on their neighbours in the Catholic Falls and burned out their houses and sprayed them with bullets. Popular Catholic belief has it that the march was led by the Commissioner of Police of Belfast in person, riding in an official armoured car and shooting official bullets as he came: Mr. Justice Scarman is at present sitting in Belfast to establish the truth. And Protestant blood is still simmering under the humiliation of seeing a government of the Protestant ascendancy dispensing justice to Catholics at Westminster's insistence in the name of equality of citizenship. Altogether too many of them have only one thing in their hearts: hatred; and only one desire: vengeance. Altogether too many of them look to the one man with charisma in Ulster, a man of God, the Reverend Ian Paisley, to give it to them. It is small wonder that Ulstermen seem in my short experience to be a nation of pessimists: they have a lot to be pessimistic about.

6. Even so, although gloom tends to be the prevalent physical

and moral climate of Ulster, things are immeasurably better to-day than they were six months ago. When the Army moved in, Ulster was on the brink of civil war; to-day, a tolerable calm prevails in the streets, Catholics sleep without intolerable fear in their beds, the ban on demonstrations and marches has been lifted and marches and demonstrations take place in tolerably good order. The Army under Sir Ian Freeland has kept the peace and has even been able to reduce the number of battalions committed to aid the civil power. The police under Sir Arthur Young, disarmed and beginning to smile, are recovering their morale and increasing their numerical strength. Then, Ulster was a land of discrimination and injustice: today, the symptoms of discrimination are being treated by law and the causes of discrimination—too few houses and too few jobs—are being tackled by a substantial injection of finance from Westminster. Then, the Unionist Government was disorientated and the Opposition in a state of near-hysteria; to-day, the Government is slowly recovering its confidence and the Opposition is pretty relaxed. I attach a note by Mr. Anthony Hewins summarising the present state of the reform programme.

7. The politics of the streets are in consequence giving way to the politics of the ballot box and the centre of interest and concern is moving from the Catholic to the Protestant community. In 1969, the Civil Rights movement could get the Catholic masses on to the streets to demand the redressal of Catholic grievances and make the reputation of men like John Hume in the process. Nominated bodies—the Police Authority, the Central Housing Authority, the Community Relations Commission—representative of the whole community, are now being set up to redress the built-in injustice of undiluted democracy as it works out in practice in this province. In early 1970, therefore, the steam is going out of the Civil rights movement and men like Hume are enhancing their reputation by cooling the situation. Civil Rights demonstrations throughout the province on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February against the Public Order Act, and on subsequent week-ends in Armagh and Enniskillen, lacked real popular backing and were virtually flops. The Opposition has returned to Stormont. But in winning its cause it has lost its former purpose and now seeks a new role. In trying to form a united opposition party out of the present medley of Nationalists, Republicans, Labour and Independents, it is attempting fusion with some pretty fissionable material. But it is encouraging that the attempt is being made: a non-nationalist opposition with an economic and social programme could give a lead in breaking down the sectarian divisions of Ulster politics. It deserves support. The decision of the Northern Ireland Labour party to seek affiliation with the British Labour Party is rather at variance with this trend.

8. It is on the Unionist side that the clouds are gathering. Understandably so, since the reform programme strikes at the roots of Protestant-Orange (but not necessarily of Unionist) power: the police and local government. The Royal Ulster Constabulary has been civilianised and is in the process of conversion from a police force to a police service on the British pattern: its para-military strong-arm squad, the 'B' Specials, is to be stood down and its replacement, the Ulster Defence Regiment, stood to on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Physical power will have shifted from the Ulster Police to the British Army, political power from Stormont to Westminster. Similarly with local government. A nominated Central Housing Authority will take over the building and allocation of houses, driving a coach and horses through democratic local government, and a Review Body has been set up

to determine whether local government has a future and, if so, what. Local government councillors, the practitioners of discrimination and the cadres of the Unionist Party at the grass roots, are alarmed, understandably.

9. The Protestant backlash is already clearly visible. It is also clearly audible, since it is accompanied by a series of so far minor intimidatory bomb explosions. In constituency associations, moderates are being ousted and hard-liners voted in to office. The Prime Minister, Major Chichester-Clark, has himself lost the vice-chairmanship of his own constituency association. Two Paisleyites have won seats to that disgrace to democracy, the Belfast Corporation. Two Stormont by-elections are pending for seats originally held by Lord O'Neill and Mr. Richard Ferguson at Bannside and South Antrim: hard-liners are expected to be nominated and elected to both, this shifting rightwards the balance within the Unionist Parliamentary Party. At present, the Northern Ireland Government is genuinely committed to reform; the Cabinet is united and commands a majority in its Parliamentary Party. It is slowly recovering its confidence. But it is reforming against the prevailing mood among its supporters in the country. It is doing its best; whether its best is good enough is another matter. Fortunately the electorate, provided the Government's will and majority hold, does not have to be consulted for another four years, and in four year massive aid from Westminster ought to have improved the quality of life and therefore the mood of the province.

## The Future

10. Seen from Stormont Castle, however, 1974 seems an awful long way away. Reality consists of surviving from week-end demo to week-end demo, from back-bench meeting to back-bench meeting, from confrontation to confrontation with the Unionist Central Council. The immediate future is strewn with minor and not-so-minor pitfalls—Miss Bernadette Devlin's appeal, the Easter marches, the Stormont by-elections, the Scarman tribunal. In the middle distance looms a major hazard: the report of the Review Body on Local Government; it is expected in May and then, it is assumed, the crunch will come. That, at any rate, is what Unionist irreconcilables like William Craig and Harry West are saying. That, certainly, is what Major Chichester-Clark's Government believe during their periodic fits of depression; that, again, conditions their behaviour when their spirits are low. Still, they have taken every fence so far in tolerably good order; the horse is still running and the jockey is still up and both seem to be getting their second wind. The Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Porter, a man of great fundamental decency and liberality of view, who has borne the brunt of the battle in recent months, is piloting the Police bill through Stormont with considerable firmness and skill and the threatened hard-line opposition has turned out in practice to be distinctly paper-tigerish.

11. If the struggle for the heart and mind of the Unionist party does come to a head in May and on the issue of local government, the outcome will depend, obviously, on the resolution of the opposing forces. The essential questions are: on the one hand, will the present Government continue to maintain the will to govern: or will it prefer, as Major Chichester-Clark tells 'Panorama' and anybody else who cares to ask, to go back to farming? On the other, are the Craigs and Wests of the Unionist party conducting a shrewd, calculated campaign aiming to bring down the Government at a moment of their choosing; or are they merely

a bunch of deposed and frustrated King Lears, threatening to 'do such things, they know not what they are, but they shall be the terrors of the earth'? And what can Her Majesty's Government do to ensure that we get the right answers?

12. My own view is that Major Chichester-Clark, faced with a choice of personal preference or public duty, will opt for public duty. With one proviso, and that is that Her Majesty's Government continue to give him both their confidence and the tools to finish the job. His Army background of service to the State will, I think, encourage him to continue, but he will need all the stiffening we can give him. And this means a major economic New Deal for Northern Ireland on the basis of the Development Plan for 1970-75, including a real effort at urban renewal in the Shankill-Falls area. It is a bull point that the Minister responsible for putting through the reform of local government and setting up the Central Housing Authority is Mr. Brian Faulkner, the Minister of Development, the ablest politician in Northern Ireland. On the other side, my hunch is that the Craigs and Wests will be ready to talk but not to act: their performance on the Police Bill supports this assessment. A key figure at the fulcrum of the Unionist Parliamentary Party, Commander Anderson, has told me that he and his hard-line friends do not like the Government's policies, but they like and trust Jimmy Chichester-Clark: they will do for him what they would not do for his predecessor, Captain Terence O'Neill. But even with our full financial and moral support, it could be a close-run thing; without it, we shall have a constitutional crisis on our hands.

13. As I pack my bags therefore, I am cautiously optimistic, provided it is clear what I am being optimistic about. I am not forecasting a final solution to the Irish question, nor the merging of the two tribes of Ulster into one nation. I am setting my sights rather lower, on a containment, the management of the Ulster problem. For things are immeasurably better here than when I unpacked six months ago. This is now in the process of becoming a more just and therefore a more peaceful society: the task of producing a more prosperous and therefore a happier one is perfectly feasible. Your policy has clearly been right: to offer help, to insist on reform but to allow and enable Stormont to be the instrument of reform. Indeed there is no alternative except direct rule and no-one in their right mind wants that if it can be avoided: it would be even more difficult, even more expensive, and involve an even more open-ended military commitment.

14. The decisive factor in the equation, in my view, is the assumption by Westminster of its political and financial responsibilities and the provision of enough military power to ensure that its will prevails. During my time here, the Constitution has remained intact, but the power relationship between Westminster and Stormont has changed. In the past, Westminster was guilty of neglect and Stormont of arrogance: Westminster's sins of omission permitted Stormont's sins of commission. To-day, Westminster is deeply committed, militarily, financially, politically; Stormont is chastened but beginning to benefit from both help and supervision. The shift of power to Westminster has been necessary, beneficial and will, I hope, be lasting; but the new relationship will have to be cultivated with tact and understanding: the iron fist must be there, but in a well-padded velvet glove.

15. Since the partition of Ireland has produced a border and not a frontier, and since attitudes to partition, real or imaginary, lie at the heart of the Ulster problem, no report from Northern

Ireland would be complete without a reference to relations with the South. I agree with Sir Andrew Gilchrist that to-day the North acts: the South reacts. So long as we keep the North quiet, the South will give us no trouble, for Mr. Lynch also went to the edge of disaster last August—and stepped back in time. His courageous speech to his Party Conference in January marked a change from fantasy to realism about the Irish question. If he recognises, as he now does, that force cannot be used to solve the problem of partition, he must come to realise that the only prospect of Irish unity lies in the seduction not the rape of the North. The South will, I suspect, be a long time a-wooing, if they ever start: the Irish tend to marry late, I believe. Meanwhile our policy should continue on present lines: to re-affirm the constitutional position, but discreetly and *ex gratia* to keep the Dublin Government informed and to encourage, when the time is right, discreet contacts, starting at official level, between North and South.

### Envoi

16. It is not often given to members of her Majesty's Diplomatic Service to be able to lend a helping hand at home. It has therefore been a rare privilege for me to serve in the Home Department. I am most grateful for the opportunity of helping you in your task of bringing peace and prosperity to this troubled corner of the Realm and of working and making friends with so many new colleagues in the Home Civil Service: I would not have missed it for anything. It has also been a privilege to work with General Freeland and the Army; without the presence of the troops and the skill and tough-minded friendliness of their Commander, our political work would have been in vain and the future of Ulster bleak indeed. For them, and their tactful firmness in imposing the Queen's peace, no praise is too high.

I am sending copies of this despatch to her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, to the Secretary of State for Defence, Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Washington and Dublin, the Permanent Representative at the United Nations in New York, and to the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
with the highest respect,  
Your most obedient Servant

Oliver Wright

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## Bundestag Motion on Gaza and the Middle East Peace Process

[On 1 July 2010, for the first time in history, the Bundestag passed a resolution (below) on Israel. It was proposed jointly by all the parliamentary groups apart from the Left, that is, the CDU/CSU, the SPD, the FDP and the Greens, and passed without dissent. The Left had proposed a resolution that was more critical of Israel.

The resolution passed was prompted by the Israeli attack on the Gaza Flotilla a month earlier and by the Israeli blockade of Gaza, which gave rise to the Flotilla. It called for an international investigation into Israel's military action against the Flotilla and for the lifting of the economic blockade of Gaza while "safeguarding the security interests of Israel".

The resolution is all the more powerful for being devoid of rhetoric.]

### The Editor writes:

The Israeli press, the German press and numerous blogsites went into action in July expressing outrage and disbelief at this cross-party motion adopted by the *Bundestag* in relation to the Israeli military attack on the Turkish led aid convoy that left 18 people dead.

The Central Council of Jews in Germany expressed its "outrage." And, as quoted in the *European Jewish Press*, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2010, Rabbis Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center announced: "Hypocrisy and double standard immorality won the day in the Bundestag... We are not surprised that the Left Party, some of whose members support Hamas and Hezbollah and have had the audacity to liken Israel to Nazis, are in lockstep with efforts to demonize the Jewish State, but we are deeply shocked that mainstream German parties rushed to judgment by expressing support for yet another UN-led judicial lynching of Israel, even before the Middle East's only democracy completed its own investigation."

What is most striking about the Bundestag motion is its date – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 – nearly a month after the attack on the flotilla, which took place on 31<sup>st</sup> May. That is how long it took the main German parties to finally agree a common wording. And during that month there was an unprecedented barrage of pro-Israeli articles and letters in the press, including a half-page advertisement in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 7<sup>th</sup> June headed "Solidarity with Israel" and signed by thousands of the great and the good.

What is second most striking about it is its mildness. At every turn the Bundestag stresses its understanding for Israel's "security" needs, condemns and damns Hamas, and imputes subversive motives to the aid workers on the convoy. The Left Party, which the Wiesenthal Centre takes such exception to, is in fact the only German party since the war to have had Jews in its highest positions, notably founder and long time party chairman Gregor Gysi. The Left Party first proposed a joint resolution, yet so mealy mouthed was the final product, and so insulting to those on

the flotilla, that it refused to join in signing it, putting instead an alternative and far more forceful resolution of its own on the record of the house.

So, what then was all the fuss about? Quite simple: the resolution, which was signed by the major parties, CDU/CSU, SPD and Greens, and condemned the attack on the convoy, sought an international commission of enquiry and called for an end to the siege of Gaza, represents the first known incident since "the War" of the German political mainstream issuing anything like a reprimand to Israel for its behaviour. And that is inexcusable, and possibly a watershed.

### Document 17/2328

#### Motion

of the parliamentary groups of the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and Greens

Clarifying the events surrounding the Gaza Flotilla – Improving the situation of the people in Gaza – Supporting the Middle East Peace Process

The Bundestag hereby resolves:

I. The German Parliament has established that:

1. The military action by Israeli military forces against the "Gaza Solidarity Flotilla" in international waters close to the coast of Gaza on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010, sailing mostly under the Turkish flag, triggered strong reactions throughout the world. The tragic events cost the lives of nine people. A further 30 people, including some Israeli soldiers, were wounded.

2. The boats of the "Solidarity Flotilla", with 680 activists on board, were transporting aid and building materials for the people of Gaza. But, according to statements by the participants themselves, their main aim was to break the blockade that Israel had imposed on Gaza. There are indications that some of the organisers of the flotilla had connections with the radical Islamic Hamas and other radical Islamic organisations.

3. The Israeli soldiers employed violence involving hand guns when, according to the Israeli government, they were attacked by activists. International Law sets specific limits to the employment of sovereign military power against ships on the high seas. There are strong indications that in employing violent means the principle of proportionality was broken.

4. On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010 the Israeli cabinet decided to establish a Commission to investigate the action against the "Solidarity Flotilla" with international participation. The events are to be comprehensively clarified by the investigation, though participation by representatives of the Middle East Quartet, to which the

EU, the UN, Russia and the USA belong, would make sense.

5. Israel appeals to the right of self-defence in justifying the sea blockade and its implementation. On this basis it rejected the appeal of representatives of the “Solidarity Flotilla” to unload its cargo in Gaza harbour. Israel instead offered to allow the importation of the aid carried by the Solidarity Flotilla by land to Gaza following an inspection. But Hamas rejected the importation of aid that the Israel military forces had transferred to trucks.

6. The events of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010 have brought the attention of the world to the situation of the people in Gaza. The living conditions of the civilian population in Gaza must be improved urgently. On this the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy declared on 31<sup>st</sup> May: “The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains a cause for concern.” The EU, most recently in the Conclusions of the Council for Foreign Affairs of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010, has demanded the immediate and permanent opening of access points to Gaza for traffic in humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza, without conditions. The announcement of the Israeli government on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2010 to exchange the list of goods whose importation is allowed for a list of forbidden goods such as weapons and dual purpose materials is a proper change which should be implemented urgently.

7. Israel’s legitimate security interests must be assured. A precondition for this is that rocket fire from Gaza ceases immediately and that a system of border controls prevents the delivery of weapons into Gaza as demanded by Resolution 1860 (2009) of the Security Council of the United Nations. Israel’s right to exist must be recognised generally, and in particular by Hamas.

8. The blockade of Gaza is counter-productive, however, and in the final resort does not serve the political and security interests of Israel. The stated aim of securing the freedom of Gilad Shalit, a member of the Israeli security forces illegally held by forces of Hamas, has so far not been achieved. The Islamist Hamas has not been weakened but profits politically and economically – especially through the “tunnel economy” - from the blockade. Supplies [through the tunnels] take place under the supervision and to the economic advantage of Hamas, which levies taxes on the goods which are imported through the estimated 600 tunnels from Egypt. This means that Hamas itself has no interest in seeing legal crossings to Gaza being opened.

9. Up to 80% of the population [of Gaza] are dependent on food aid and transfer payments. While there is no shortage in Gaza of basic foodstuffs and essential medical supplies, but economic development essential for a dignified life is not possible.

10. According to the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (the aid organisation of the UN for Palestine refugees in the Middle East – UNRWA), John Ging, the blockade is impeding the work of UNRWA. Thus UNRWA cannot ensure basic education supplies as few building materials are permitted to be imported and this prevents schools being built. Hamas exploits this situation by meeting the demand for education and thus influencing the population – and particularly young people – in its sense.

11. Germany, as a partner and friend of Israel and through the framework of the European Union, plays a vital role in the Middle East Peace Process. It is in the interests of ensuring the effectiveness of European policy in the Middle East conflict to support the

so-called Proximity Talks and exploring opportunities for contributing to pragmatic progress.

12. Only a comprehensive political process, building on the Road Map, the Annapolis Process and other peace initiatives such as those of the Middle East Quartet and especially the Arab Peace Initiative, and which resolves all open questions regarding status and leads to a two-state solution, will contribute to a sustainable peace in the Middle East

II. The German Parliament calls on the Federal Government, to:

1. support the demand for an international investigation into the military action against the “Solidarity Flotilla”, as the General Secretary of the United Nations has again demanded, which should examine the actions by both sides, including any possible connections between the organisers and the radical Islamist Hamas and other radical Islamist organisations, and in which the participation of representatives of the Middle East Quartet would be meaningful;

2. make it clear that the legitimate security interests of Israel must be fully safeguarded, in particular rocket fire from Gaza must be ended immediately and weapons smuggling into Gaza must be stopped, as demanded by the Security Council of the United Nations in Resolution 1860 (2009) and the Council of Foreign Affairs of the European Union in its Conclusions of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010;

3. support emphatically the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy in all her initiatives to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza and in particular do all it can within the European Union to have the General Secretary of the United Nations instructed to negotiate with Israel regarding access to Gaza, including by sea, the creation of the necessary technical means for this so that all required goods can be imported into Gaza while safeguarding the security interests of Israel;

4. support emphatically the demand of the European Union for an immediate lifting of the blockade of Gaza and work for exchanges the list of goods allowed to be imported for a list of banned goods such as weapons and material usable for weapons;

5. work similarly to influence Egypt to enable the return of regularised border traffic that is also controlled in the interest of the security of the Israeli population;

6. make an offer through the European Union to Israel and the autonomous Palestinian Authority to build a constructive system of border management including the training of Palestinian border guards to support the supervision of the importation of supplies to Gaza to ensure that no weapons smuggling occurs;

7. support as heretofore the so-called proximity Talks initiated by the United States and in addition continue to try to influence Israel and the Palestinians to engage constructively in them to enable a rapid return to direct peace talks aimed at achieving a Two-State solution.

Berlin, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Volker Kauder, Dr. Hans-Peter Friedrich (Hof) and Parliamentary Group [CDU/CSU]

Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Parliamentary Group [SPD]

Birgit Homburger and Parliamentary Group [FDP]

Renate Kunast, Jurgen Trittin and Parliamentary Group [Greens]

## Iran Quiz (continued from p. 40)

12. Which two countries were responsible for orchestrating the 1953 overthrow of Iran's populist government of democratically elected prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh, primarily because he introduced legislation that led to the nationalization of Iranian oil?

12. The U.S. and Britain . ( Stephen Kinzer; All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror; John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; New Jersey: 2008.) -According to Kinzer, Iranians had been complaining that the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) had not been sharing profits on Iranian petroleum with Iran fairly; and Iran's parliament (Majles) had tried to renegotiate with the AIOC. When the AIOC rejected renegotiation, Mossadegh introduced the nationalization act in 1951. In response, Britain and the U.S. organized a global boycott of Iran which sent the Iranian economy into a tailspin. Later, the military coup was orchestrated that reinstated the shah. (One irony is that Britain itself had nationalized several industries in the 1940s and 1950s.)

Madeleine Albright: U.S. Secretary of State , 1997 - 2001. ( Stephen Kinzer; All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror; John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; New Jersey : 2008; p.212.) said on March 17, 2000: "In 1953 the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran's popular prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh. The Eisenhower administration believed its actions were justified for strategic reasons. But the coup was clearly a setback for Iran's political development. And it is easy to see now why many Iranians continue to resent this intervention by America in their internal affairs."

19. Who wrote the following in 2004? "Wherever U.S forces go, nuclear weapons go with them or can be made to follow in short order. The world has witnessed how the United States attacked Iraq for, as it turned out, no reason at all. Had the Iranians not tried to build nuclear weapons, they would be crazy. Though Iran is ruled by Islamic fundamentalists, most commentators who are familiar with the country do not regard its government as irrational. ... [I]t was Saddam Hussein who attacked Iran, not the other way around; since then Iran has been no more aggressive than most countries are. For all their talk of opposition to Israel , Iran 's rulers are very unlikely

to mount a nuclear attack on a country that is widely believed to have what it takes to wipe them off the map. Chemical or other attacks are also unlikely, given the meager results that may be expected and the retaliation that would almost certainly follow."

19. Martin van Creveld: Distinguished professor of military history and strategy at Hebrew University in Jerusalem . ( [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/21/opinion/21iht-edcreveld\\_ed3.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/21/opinion/21iht-edcreveld_ed3.html) ) -It should not be surprising that Creveld would deem it rational for Iran to want nuclear weapons. "For more than half a century, Britain and the US have menaced Iran . In 1953, the CIA and MI6 overthrew the democratic government of Mohammed Mossadegh, an inspired nationalist who believed that Iranian oil belonged to Iran . They installed the venal shah and, through a monstrous creation called SAVAK, built one of the most vicious police states of the modern era. The Islamic revolution in 1979 was inevitable and very nasty, yet it was not monolithic and, through popular pressure and movement from within the elite, Iran has begun to open to the outside world – in spite of having sustained an invasion by Saddam Hussein, who was encouraged and backed by the US and Britain. At the same time, Iran has lived with the real threat of an Israeli attack, possibly with nuclear weapons, about which the 'international community' has remained silent." ( <http://www.antiwar.com/orig/pilger.php?articleid=8533> )

22. What were the main elements of Iran's 2003 Proposal to the U.S., communicated during the build-up to the Iraq invasion, and how did the U.S. respond to Iran's Proposal?

22. According to the Washington Post, "Just after the lightning takeover of Baghdad by U.S. forces & an unusual two-page document spewed out of a fax machine at the Near East bureau of the State Department. It was a proposal from Iran for a broad dialogue with the United States , and the fax suggested everything was on the table -- including full cooperation on nuclear programs, acceptance of Israel and the termination of Iranian support for Palestinian militant groups. But top Bush administration officials, convinced the Iranian government was on the verge of collapse, belittled the initiative. Instead, they formally complained to the Swiss ambassador who had sent the fax with a cover letter certifying it as a genuine proposal supported by key power centers in Iran &" ( [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/17/AR2006061700727\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/17/AR2006061700727_pf.html) )

## Can You Pass The Iran Quiz?

<http://www.countercurrents.org/rudolph180608.htm>

By Jeffrey Rudolph—

24 April, 2010 Countercurrents.org

What can possibly justify the relentless U.S. diplomatic (and mainstream media) assault on Iran ?

It cannot be argued that Iran is an aggressive state that is dangerous to its neighbors, as facts do not support this claim. It cannot be relevant that Iran adheres to Islamic fundamentalism, has a flawed democracy and denies women full western-style civil rights, as Saudi Arabia is more fundamentalist, far less democratic and more oppressive of women, yet it is a U.S. ally. It cannot be relevant that Iran has, over the years, had a nuclear research program, and is most likely pursuing the capacity to develop nuclear weapons, as Pakistan, India, Israel and other states are nuclear powers yet remain U.S. allies—indeed, Israel deceived the U.S. while developing its nuclear program.

The answer to the above-posed question is fairly obvious: Iran must be punished for leaving the orbit of U.S. control. Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, when the Shah was removed, Iran, unlike, say, Saudi Arabia, acts independently and thus compromises U.S. power in two ways: i) Defiance of U.S. dictates affects the U.S.'s attainment of goals linked to Iran; and, ii) Defiance of U.S. dictates establishes a “bad” example for other countries that may wish to pursue an independent course. The Shah could commit any number of abuses—widespread torture, for example—yet his loyalty to the U.S. exempted him from American condemnation—yet not from the condemnation of the bulk of Iranians who brought him down.

The following quiz is an attempt to introduce more balance into the mainstream discussion of Iran.

1. Is Iran an Arab country?

A. 1. No. Alone among the Middle Eastern peoples conquered by the Arabs, the Iranians did not lose their language or their identity. Ethnic Persians make up 60 percent of modern Iran, modern Persian (not Arabic) is the official language, Iran is not a member of the Arab League, and the majority of Iranians are Shiite Muslims while most Arabs are Sunni Muslims. Accordingly, based on language, ancestry and religion, Iran is not an Arab country. (<http://www.slate.com/id/1008394/>)

2. Has Iran launched an aggressive war of conquest against another country since 1900?

A.2. No.

-According to Juan Cole, the Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan, Iran has not launched such a war for at least 150 years. (Juan Cole; *Engaging the Muslim World*; Palgrave Macmillan; New York: 2009; p.199.)

-It should be appreciated that Iran did not start the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s: “The war began when Iraq invaded Iran, launching a simultaneous invasion by air and land into Iranian territory on 22 September 1980 following a long history of border disputes, and fears of Shia insurgency among Iraq's long-suppressed Shia majority influenced by the Iranian Revolution. Iraq was also aiming to replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state.”

7. Which Iranian leader said the following? “This [ Israel 's] Occupation regime over Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time.”

A. 7. Ruhollah Khomeini. ( Juan Cole; *Engaging the Muslim World*; Palgrave Macmillan; New York : 2009; p.201.)

-This wasn't a surprising statement to come from the leader of the 1979 Revolution as Israel had been a firm ally of both the U.S. and the Shah.

-According to Cole, Ahmadinejad quoted this statement in 2005 yet wire service translators rendered Khomeini's statement into English as “Israel must be wiped off the face of the map.” Yet, Khomeini had referred to the occupation regime not Israel , and while he expressed a wish for the regime to go away he didn't threaten to go after Israel . In fact, a regime can vanish without any outside attacks, as happened to the Shah's regime in Iran and to the USSR. It is notable that when Khomeini made the statement in the 1980s, there was no international outcry. In fact, in the early 1980s, Khomeini supplied Israel with petroleum in return for American spare parts for the American-supplied Iranian arsenal. As both Israel and Iran considered Saddam's Iraq a serious enemy, they had a tacit alliance against Iraq during the first phase of the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. It should also be noted that Ahmadinejad subsequently stated he didn't want to kill any Jews but rather he wants a one-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. While Ahmadinejad's preferred solution is a non-starter, Israel 's refusal to pursue a comprehensive peace creates space for Arab hardliners whose agendas do not include a realistic peace with Israel .

8. True of False: Iranian television presented a serial sympathetic to Jews during the Holocaust that coincided with President Ahmadinejad's first term.

A. 8. True. Iranian television ran a widely watched serial on the Holocaust, *Zero Degree Turn* , based on true accounts of the role Iranian diplomats in Europe played in rescuing thousands of Jews in WWII.

( <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJljqWQAqCI&feature=related> )

11. True or False: Iran has formally consented to the Arab League's 2002 peace initiative with Israel.

11. True. In March 2002, the Arab League summit in Beirut unanimously put forth a peace initiative that commits it not just to recognize Israel but also to establish normal relations once Israel implements the international consensus for a comprehensive peace—which includes Israel withdrawing from the occupied territories and a just settlement of the Palestinian refugee crisis. (This peace initiative has been subsequently reaffirmed including at the March 2009 Arab League summit at Doha.) All 57 members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, including Iran , "adopted the Arab peace initiative to resolve the issue of Palestine and the Middle East ... and decided to use all possible means in order to explain and clarify the full implications of this initiative and win international support for its implementation." ( Norman G. Finkelstein; *This Time We Went Too Far: Truth and Consequences of the Gaza Invasion*; OR Books; New York : 2010; p. 42.)

(continued p.39)